



**Archdiocese of St. Louis
Office of Sacred Worship
Lectio Divina Bible
The First Book of Kings**

The Books of Kings may be divided as follows:

- I. The Reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:1–11:43)
- II. The Reign of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:1–14:20)
- III. Kings of Judah and Israel (1 Kgs 14:21–16:34)
- IV. The Story of Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1–19:21)
- V. The Story of Ahab (1 Kgs 20:1–2 Kgs 1:18)



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**I. The Reign of Solomon
1 Kings, chapter 1**

David's Old Age.

When King David was old and advanced in years, though they covered him with blankets he could not get warm. His servants therefore said to him, "Let a young virgin be sought to attend my lord the king, and to nurse him. If she sleeps with you, my lord the king will be warm." So they sought for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunamite. So they brought her to the king. The girl was very beautiful indeed, and she nursed the king and took care of him. But the king did not have relations with her.

Adonijah's Ambition.

Adonijah, son of Haggith, boasted, "I shall be king!" and he provided himself with chariots, horses, and a retinue of fifty to go before him. Yet his father would never antagonize him by asking, "Why are you doing this?" Adonijah was also very handsome, and next in age to Absalom by the same mother. He consulted with Joab, son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest, and they became Adonijah's supporters. However, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei, and David's warriors did not support Adonijah. Adonijah slaughtered sheep, oxen, and fatlings at the stone Zohelath near En-rogel and invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah; but he did not invite Nathan the prophet, or Benaiah, or the warriors, or Solomon his brother.

Solomon Proclaimed King.

Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother: "Have you not heard that Adonijah, son of Haggith, has become king, and our lord David does not know? Come now, let me advise you so that you may save your



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life and the life of your son Solomon. Go, visit King David, and say to him, ‘Did you not, my lord king, swear to your handmaid: Your son Solomon shall be king after me; it is he who shall sit upon my throne? Why, then, has Adonijah become king?’ And while you are still there speaking to the king, I will come in after you and confirm your words.”

So Bathsheba visited the king in his room. The king was very old, and Abishag the Shunamite was caring for the king. Bathsheba bowed in homage to the king. The king said to her, “What do you wish?” She answered him: “My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD, your God, ‘Solomon your son will be king after me; it is he who shall sit upon my throne.’ But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord king, do not know it. He has sacrificed bulls, fatlings, and sheep in great numbers; he has invited all the king’s sons, Abiathar the priest, and Joab, the commander of the army, but not your servant Solomon. Now, my lord king, all Israel is looking to you to declare to them who is to sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him. If this is not done, when my lord the king rests with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be considered criminals.”

While she was still speaking to the king, Nathan the prophet came in. They told the king, “Nathan the prophet is here.” He entered the king’s presence and did him homage, bowing to the floor. Then Nathan said: “My lord king, did you say, ‘Adonijah shall be king after me and shall sit upon my throne’? For today he went down and sacrificed bulls, fatlings, and sheep in great numbers; he invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest, and even now they are eating and drinking in his company and saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ But me, your servant, he did not invite; nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. If this was done by order of my lord the king, you did not tell me, your servant, who is to sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him.”

King David answered, “Call Bathsheba here.” When she entered the king’s presence and stood before him, the king swore, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress, this very day I will fulfill the oath I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Your son Solomon shall be king after me and shall sit upon my throne in my place.’” Bowing to the floor in homage to the king, Bathsheba said, “May my lord, King David, live forever!” Then King David said, “Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, son of Jehoiada.” When they had entered the king’s presence, he said to them: “Take with you the royal officials. Mount my son Solomon upon my own mule and escort him down to Gihon. There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet shall anoint him king over Israel, and you shall blow the ram’s horn and cry, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ When you come back up with him, he is to go in and sit upon my throne. It is he that shall be king in my place: him I designate ruler of Israel and of Judah.” Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, answered the king: “So be it! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so decree! As the LORD has been with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne even greater than that of my lord, King David!”

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and Pelethites went down, and mounting Solomon on King David’s mule, escorted him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. They blew the ram’s horn and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” Then all the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing so much the earth split with their shouting.

Adonijah Submits to Solomon.



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Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it, just as they ended their banquet. When Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn, he asked, "Why this uproar in the city?" As he was speaking, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said, "Come, you are a man of worth and must bring good news." Jonathan answered Adonijah, "Hardly! Our lord, King David, has made Solomon king. The king sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and Pelethites, and they mounted him upon the king's own mule. Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed him king at Gihon, and they went up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. That is the noise you hear. Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne, and moreover the king's servants have come to pay their respects to our lord, King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than your name, his throne greater than your throne!' And the king in his bed did homage. This is what the king said: 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has this day provided one to sit upon my throne, so that I see it with my own eyes.'"

All the guests of Adonijah got up trembling, and went each their way, but Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, got up and went to grasp the horns of the altar. It was reported to Solomon: "Adonijah, in fear of King Solomon, is clinging to the horns of the altar and saying, 'Let King Solomon first swear that he will not kill me, his servant, with the sword.'" Solomon answered, "If he proves worthy, not a hair of his shall fall to the ground. But if evil is found in him, he shall die." King Solomon sent to have him brought down from the altar, and he came and paid homage to King Solomon. Solomon then said to him, "Go to your house."



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1 Kings, chapter 2

David's Last Instructions and Death.

When the time of David's death drew near, he gave these instructions to Solomon his son: "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong and be a man! Keep the mandate of the LORD, your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, commands, ordinances, and decrees as they are written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in whatever you do, and wherever you turn, and that the LORD may fulfill the word he spoke concerning me: If your sons so conduct themselves that they walk before me in faithfulness with their whole heart and soul, there shall never be wanting someone of your line on the throne of Israel. "You yourself know what Joab, son of Zeruiah, did to me—what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner, son of Ner, and Amasa, son of Jether: he killed them and brought the blood of war into a time of peace, and put the blood of war on the belt about his waist and the sandal on his foot. Act with all the wisdom you possess; do not let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace. But be true to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and have them among those who eat at your table. For they were loyal to me when I was fleeing from your brother Absalom.

You also have with you Shimei, son of Gera, the Benjaminite of Bahurim, who cursed me bitterly the day I was going to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will not kill you by the sword.' But you must not let him go unpunished. You are wise; you will know what to do to send his gray head down to Sheol in blood."

David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. David was king over Israel for forty years: he was king seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

The Kingdom Made Secure.



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Then Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingship was established. Adonijah, son of Haggith, came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. “Do you come in peace?” she asked. “In peace,” he answered, and he added, “I have something to say to you.” She replied, “Speak.” So he said: “You know that the kingship was mine, and all Israel expected me to be king. But the kingship passed me by and went to my brother; by the LORD’s will it went to him. But now there is one favor I would ask of you. Do not refuse me.” And she said, “Speak on.” He said, “Please ask King Solomon, who will not refuse you, to give me Abishag the Shunamite to be my wife.” Bathsheba replied, “Very well, I will speak to the king for you.”

Then Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king’s mother, who sat at his right. She said, “There is one small favor I would ask of you. Do not refuse me.” The king said to her, “Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you.” So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunamite be given to your brother Adonijah to be his wife.” King Solomon answered his mother, “And why do you ask that Abishag the Shunamite be given to Adonijah? Ask the kingship for him as well, for he is my older brother! Ask for him, for Abiathar the priest, for Joab, son of Zeruiah!” And King Solomon swore by the LORD: “May God do thus to me and more, if Adonijah has not spoken this word at the cost of his life. And now, as the LORD lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father and made for me a house as he promised, this day shall Adonijah be put to death.” Then King Solomon sent Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, who struck him dead.

The king said to Abiathar the priest: “Go to your estate in Anathoth. Though you deserve to die, I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father and shared in all the hardships my father endured.” So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from the office of priest of the LORD, thus fulfilling the word the LORD had spoken in Shiloh against the house of Eli.

When the news came to Joab, since he had sided with Adonijah, though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and clung to the horns of the altar. King Solomon was told, “Joab has fled to the tent of the LORD and is by the altar.” He sent Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, with the order, “Go, strike him down.” Benaiah went to the tent of the LORD and said to him, “The king says, ‘Come out.’” But he answered, “No! I will die here.” Benaiah reported to the king, “This is what Joab said to me in reply.” The king answered him: “Do as he has said. Strike him down and bury him, and remove from me and from my father’s house the blood which Joab shed without provocation. The LORD will bring blood upon his own head, because he struck down two men better and more just than himself, and slew them with the sword without my father David’s knowledge: Abner, son of Ner, commander of Israel’s army, and Amasa, son of Jether, commander of Judah’s army. Their blood will be upon the head of Joab and his descendants. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD.” Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, went back, struck him down and killed him; he was buried in his house in the wilderness. The king appointed Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, over the army in his place; Zadok the priest the king put in place of Abiathar.

Then the king summoned Shimei and said to him: “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and stay there. Do not go anywhere else. For the day you leave, and cross the Wadi Kidron, be certain you shall surely die. Your blood shall be upon your own head.” Shimei answered the king: “I accept. Your servant will do just as my lord the king has said.” So Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time. But three years later, two of Shimei’s servants ran away to Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, “Your servants are



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in Gath.” So Shimei rose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish in Gath in search of his servants; and Shimei returned from Gath with his servants. When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and had returned, the king summoned Shimei and said to him: “Did I not have you swear by the LORD and warn you clearly, ‘The day you leave and go anywhere else, be certain you shall surely die’? And you answered, ‘I accept and obey.’ Why, then, have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the command that I gave you?” And the king said to Shimei: “In your heart you know very well the evil that you did to David my father. Now the LORD is bringing your own evil upon your head. But King Solomon shall be blessed, and David’s throne shall be established before the LORD forever.” The king then gave the order to Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, who went out and struck him dead. And the royal power was established in Solomon’s hand.



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1 Kings, chapter 3

Early Promise of Solomon's Reign.

Solomon allied himself by marriage with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He married the daughter of Pharaoh and brought her to the City of David, until he should finish building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem.

The people were sacrificing on the high places, however, for up to that time no house had been built for the name of the LORD. Although Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, he offered sacrifice and burned incense on the high places.

The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, because that was the great high place. Upon its altar Solomon sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said: Whatever you ask I shall give you. Solomon answered: "You have shown great kindness to your servant, David my father, because he walked before you with fidelity, justice, and an upright heart; and you have continued this great kindness toward him today, giving him a son to sit upon his throne. Now, LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king to succeed David my father; but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act—I, your servant, among the people you have chosen, a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant, therefore, a listening heart to judge your people and to distinguish between good and evil. For who is able to give judgment for this vast people of yours?"

The Lord was pleased by Solomon's request. So God said to him: Because you asked for this—you did not ask for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies—but you asked for discernment to know what is right—I now do as you request. I give you a heart so wise and discerning that there has never been anyone like you until now, nor after you will there be anyone to equal you. In addition,



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I give you what you have not asked for: I give you such riches and glory that among kings there will be no one like you all your days. And if you walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and commandments, as David your father did, I will give you a long life.

Solomon awoke; it was a dream! He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, sacrificed burnt offerings and communion offerings, and gave a feast for all his servants.

Solomon's Listening Heart.

Later, two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One woman said: "By your leave, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth in the house while she was present. On the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were alone; no one else was in the house with us; only the two of us were in the house. This woman's son died during the night when she lay on top of him. So in the middle of the night she got up and took my son from my side, as your servant was sleeping. Then she laid him in her bosom and laid her dead son in my bosom. I rose in the morning to nurse my son, and he was dead! But when I examined him in the morning light, I saw it was not the son I had borne."

The other woman answered, "No! The living one is my son, the dead one is yours." But the first kept saying, "No! the dead one is your son, the living one is mine!" Thus they argued before the king.

Then the king said: "One woman claims, 'This, the living one, is my son, the dead one is yours.' The other answers, 'No! The dead one is your son, the living one is mine.'" The king continued, "Get me a sword." When they brought the sword before the king, he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other." The woman whose son was alive, because she was stirred with compassion for her son, said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby—do not kill it!" But the other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours. Cut it in two!" The king then answered, "Give her the living baby! Do not kill it! She is the mother."

When all Israel heard the judgment the king had given, they were in awe of him, because they saw that the king had in him the wisdom of God for giving right judgment.



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1 Kings, chapter 4

Solomon's Riches: Domestic Affairs.

Solomon was king over all Israel, and these were the officials he had in his service:

Azariah, son of Zadok, the priest; Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, the chancellor; Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, in charge of the army; Zadok and Abiathar, priests; Azariah, son of Nathan, in charge of the governors; Zabud, son of Nathan, priest and companion to the king; Ahishar, master of the palace; and Adoniram, son of Abda, in charge of the forced labor.

Solomon's Royal State

Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel who supplied food for the king and his household, each having to provide for one month in the year. Their names were: the son of Hur in the hill country of Ephraim; the son of Deker in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon Beth-hanan; the son of Heshed in Arubboth, as well as in Socoh and the whole region of Hephher; the son of Abinadab, in all Naphath-dor; he was married to Taphath, Solomon's daughter; Baana, son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo and all Beth-shean near Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah to beyond Jokmeam; the son of Geber in Ramoth-gilead, having charge of the villages of Jair, son of Manasseh, in Gilead; and of the district of Argob in Bashan—sixty large walled cities with gates barred with bronze; Ahinadab, son of Iddo, in Mahanaim; Ahimaaz, in Naphtali; he was married to Basemath, another daughter of Solomon; Baana, son of Hushai, in Asher and Aloth; Jehoshaphat, son of Paruah, in Issachar; Shimei, son of Ela, in Benjamin; Geber, son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og, king of Bashan.

There was one governor besides, in the land of Judah. Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sands by the sea; they ate and drank and rejoiced.



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1 Kings, chapter 5

Solomon's Riches: International Affairs.

Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, down to the border of Egypt; they paid Solomon tribute and served him as long as he lived.

Solomon's provisions for each day were thirty kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, ten fatted oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, and a hundred sheep, not counting harts, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.

He had dominion over all the land west of the River, from Tiphshah to Gaza, and all its kings, and he had peace on all his borders round about. Thus Judah and Israel lived in security, everyone under their own vine and fig tree from Dan to Beer-sheba, as long as Solomon lived.

Solomon's Riches: Chariots and Horses.

Solomon had forty thousand stalls for horses for chariots and twelve thousand horsemen.

The governors, one for each month, provided food for King Solomon and for all the guests at King Solomon's table. They left nothing unprovided. For the chariot horses and draft animals also, each brought his quota of barley and straw to the required place.

Solomon's Renown.

Moreover, God gave Solomon wisdom, exceptional understanding, and knowledge, as vast as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed that of all the peoples of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else—wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, or Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the musicians—and his fame spread throughout the neighboring peoples. Solomon also uttered three thousand proverbs, and



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his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke of plants, from the cedar on Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall, and he spoke about beasts, birds, reptiles, and fishes. People from all nations came to hear Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

Preparations for the Temple.

When Hiram, king of Tyre, heard that Solomon had been anointed king in place of his father, he sent an embassy to him; for Hiram had always been David's friend. Solomon sent back this message to Hiram: "You know that David my father, because of the wars that beset him, could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God until such time as the LORD should put his enemies under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD, my God, has given me rest on all sides, without adversary or misfortune. So I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD, my God, as the LORD said to David my father: Your son whom I will put upon your throne in your place shall build the house for my name. Give orders, then, to have cedars from the Lebanon cut down for me. My servants shall accompany yours, and I will pay you whatever you say for your servants' wages. For you know that there is no one among us who is skilled in cutting timber like the Sidonians."

When Hiram had heard the words of Solomon, he was overjoyed, and said, "Blessed be the LORD this day, who has given David a wise son over this numerous people." Hiram then sent word to Solomon, "I have heard the proposal you sent me, and I will provide all the cedars and fir trees you desire. My servants shall bring them down from the Lebanon to the sea, and I will arrange them into rafts in the sea and bring them wherever you say. There I will break up the rafts, and you shall take the lumber. You, for your part, shall furnish the provisions I desire for my household."

So Hiram continued to provide Solomon with all the cedars and fir trees he desired, while Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand kors of wheat to provide for his household, and twenty kors of hand-pressed oil. Solomon gave Hiram all this every year. The LORD gave Solomon wisdom as he promised him. So there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a covenant.

King Solomon raised thirty thousand forced laborers from all Israel. He sent them to the Lebanon for a month in relays of ten thousand, so that they spent one month in the Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain, in addition to three thousand three hundred overseers answerable to Solomon, who were in charge of the work and directed the people engaged in the work. By order of the king, fine, large blocks of stone were quarried to give the house a foundation of hewn stone. Solomon's and Hiram's builders, along with others from Gebal, shaped them, and prepared the wood and stones for building the house.



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1 Kings, chapter 6

Building of the Temple.

In the fourth hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv (the second month), he began to build the house of the LORD.

The house which King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty wide, and thirty high. The porch in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits from side to side along the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house. Windows with closed lattices were made for the house, and adjoining the wall of the house he built a substructure around its walls that enclosed the nave and the inner sanctuary, and he made side chambers all around. The lowest story was five cubits wide, the middle one six cubits wide, the third seven cubits wide, because he put recesses along the outside of the house to avoid fastening anything into the walls of the house. The house was built of stone dressed at the quarry, so that no hammer or ax, no iron tool, was to be heard in the house during its construction. The entrance to the middle story was on the south side of the house; stairs led up to the middle story and from the middle story to the third. When he had finished building the house, it was roofed in with rafters and boards of cedar. He built the substructure five cubits high all along the outside of the house, to which it was joined by cedar beams.

The word of the LORD came to Solomon: As to this house you are building—if you walk in my statutes, carry out my ordinances, and observe all my commands, walking in them, I will fulfill toward you my word which I spoke to David your father. I will dwell in the midst of the Israelites and will not forsake my people Israel.



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When Solomon finished building the house, its inside walls were lined with cedar paneling: he covered the interior with wood from floor to ceiling, and he covered its floor with fir planking. At the rear of the house a space of twenty cubits was set off by cedar panels from the floor to the ceiling, enclosing the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies. The house was forty cubits long, that is, the nave, the part in front. The cedar in the interior of the house was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers; all was of cedar, and no stone was to be seen. In the innermost part of the house he set up the inner sanctuary to house the ark of the LORD's covenant. In front of the inner sanctuary (it was twenty cubits long, twenty wide, and twenty high, and he covered it with pure gold), he made an altar of cedar. Solomon covered the interior of the house with pure gold, and he drew golden chains across in front of the inner sanctuary, and covered it with gold. He covered the whole house with gold, until the whole house was done, and the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he covered with gold.

In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim, each ten cubits high, made of pine. Each wing of a cherub was five cubits so that the span from wing tip to wing tip was ten cubits. The second cherub was also ten cubits: the two cherubim were identical in size and shape; the first cherub was ten cubits high, and so was the second. He placed the cherubim in the inmost part of the house; the wings of the cherubim were spread wide, so that one wing of the first touched the side wall and the wing of the second touched the other wall; the wings pointing to the middle of the room touched each other. He overlaid the cherubim with gold.

The walls of the house on all sides of both the inner and the outer rooms had carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The floor of the house of both the inner and the outer rooms was overlaid with gold. At the entrance of the inner sanctuary, doors of pine were made; the doorframes had five-sided posts. The two doors were of pine, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors were overlaid with gold, and the cherubim and the palm trees were also covered with beaten gold. He did the same at the entrance to the nave, where the doorposts were of pine and were four-sided.

The two doors were of fir wood, each door consisting of two panels hinged together; and he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and plated them with gold. He walled off the inner court with three courses of hewn stones and one course of cedar beams.

The foundations of the LORD's house were laid in the month of Ziv in the fourth year, and it was finished, in all particulars, exactly according to plan, in the month of Bul, the eighth month, in the eleventh year. Thus Solomon built it in seven years.



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1 Kings, chapter 7

To finish the building of his own house Solomon took thirteen years. He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon one hundred cubits long, fifty wide, and thirty high; it was supported by four rows of cedar columns, with cedar beams upon the columns. Moreover, it had a ceiling of cedar above the rafters resting on the columns; these rafters numbered forty-five, fifteen to a row. There were lattices in three rows, each row facing the next, and all the openings and doorposts were squared with lintels, each facing across from the next. He also made the Porch of Columns, fifty cubits long and thirty wide. The porch extended across the front, and there were columns with a canopy in front of them. He also made the Porch of the Throne where he gave judgment—that is, the Porch of Judgment; it was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling beams. The house in which he lived was in another court, set in deeper than the Porch and of the same construction. (Solomon made a house like this Porch for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.)

All these buildings were of fine stones, hewn to size and trimmed front and back with a saw, from the foundation to the bonding course and outside as far as the great court. The foundation was made of fine, large blocks, some ten cubits and some eight cubits. Above were fine stones hewn to size, and cedar wood. The great court had three courses of hewn stones all around and a course of cedar beams. So also were the inner court of the house of the LORD and its porch.

Furnishing of the Temple

King Solomon brought Hiram from Tyre. He was a bronze worker, the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali; his father had been from Tyre. He was endowed with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge for doing any work in bronze. He came to King Solomon and did all his metal work.



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He fashioned two bronze columns, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference. He also made two capitals cast in bronze, to be placed on top of the columns, each of them five cubits high. There were meshes made like netting and braid made like chains for the capitals on top of the columns, seven for each capital. He also cast pomegranates, two rows around each netting to cover the capital on top of the columns. The capitals on top of the columns (in the porch) were made like lilies, four cubits high. And the capitals on the two columns, both above and adjoining the bulge where it crossed out of the netting, had two hundred pomegranates in rows around each capital. He set up the columns at the temple porch; one he set up to the south, and called it Jachin, and the other to the north, and called it Boaz. The top of the columns was made like a lily. Thus the work on the columns was completed.

Then he made the molten sea; it was made with a circular rim, and measured ten cubits across, five in height, and thirty in circumference. Under the brim, gourds encircled it for ten cubits around the compass of the sea; the gourds were in two rows and were cast in one mold with the sea. This rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east, with their haunches all toward the center; upon them was set the sea. It was a handbreadth thick, and its brim resembled that of a cup, being lily-shaped. Its capacity was two thousand baths.

He also made ten stands of bronze, each four cubits long, four wide, and three high. When these stands were constructed, panels were set within the framework. On the panels within the frames there were lions, oxen, and cherubim; and on the frames likewise, above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths in hammered relief.

Each stand had four bronze wheels and bronze axles. The four legs of each stand had cast braces, which were under the basin; they had wreaths on each side. The mouth of the basin was inside, and a cubit above, the crown, whose opening was round, made like a receptacle, a cubit and a half in depth. There was carved work at the opening, on panels that were square, not circular. The four wheels were below the paneling, and the axletrees of the wheels and the stand were of one piece. Each wheel was a cubit and a half high. The wheels were constructed like chariot wheels; their axletrees, rims, spokes, and hubs were all cast. The four braces reached the four corners of each stand, and formed part of the stand. At the top of the stand there was a raised collar half a cubit high, and the handles and panels on top of the stand formed part of it. On the flat ends of the handles and on the panels, wherever there was a bare space, cherubim, lions, and palm trees were carved, as well as wreaths all around. This was how he made the ten stands, all of the same casting, the same size, the same shape.

He made ten bronze basins, each four cubits in diameter with a capacity of forty baths, one basin atop each of the ten stands. He placed the stands, five on the south side of the house and five on the north. The sea he placed off to the southeast from the south side of the house.

When Hiram had made the pots, shovels, and bowls, he finished all his work for King Solomon in the house of the LORD: two columns; two nodes for the capitals on top of the columns; two pieces of netting covering the two nodes for the capitals on top of the columns; four hundred pomegranates in double rows on both pieces of netting that covered the two nodes of the capitals on top of the columns; ten stands; ten basins on the stands; one sea; twelve oxen supporting the sea; pots, shovels, and bowls. All these articles which Hiram made for King Solomon in the house of the LORD were of burnished bronze.



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The king had them cast in the neighborhood of the Jordan, between Succoth and Zarethan, in thick clay molds. Solomon did not weigh all the articles because they were so numerous; the weight of the bronze, therefore, was not determined.

Solomon made all the articles that were for the house of the LORD: the golden altar; the table on which the showbread lay; the lampstands of pure gold, five to the right and five to the left before the inner sanctuary; their flowers, lamps, and tongs of gold; basins, snuffers, bowls, cups, and firepans of pure gold; hinges of gold for the doors of the innermost part of the house, or holy of holies, and for the doors of the outer room, the nave.

When all the work undertaken by King Solomon in the house of the LORD was completed, he brought in the votive offerings of his father David, and put the silver, gold, and other articles in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.



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1 Kings, chapter 8

Dedication of the Temple.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the princes in the ancestral houses of the Israelites. They came to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from the city of David (which is Zion). All the people of Israel assembled before King Solomon during the festival in the month of Ethanim (the seventh month). When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark; and they brought up the ark of the LORD and the tent of meeting with all the sacred vessels that were in the tent. The priests and Levites brought them up.

King Solomon and the entire community of Israel, gathered for the occasion before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen too many to number or count. The priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, the inner sanctuary of the house, the holy of holies, beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim had their wings spread out over the place of the ark, sheltering the ark and its poles from above. The poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary. They cannot be seen from outside, but they remain there to this day. There was nothing in the ark but the two stone tablets which Moses had put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they went forth from the land of Egypt.

When the priests left the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD so that the priests could no longer minister because of the cloud, since the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. Then Solomon said, "The LORD intends to dwell in the dark cloud; I have indeed built you a princely house, the base for your enthronement forever."



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The king turned and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while the whole assembly of Israel stood. He said: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his own mouth spoke a promise to David my father and by his hand fulfilled it, saying: Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city out of any tribe of Israel for the building of a house, that my name might be there; but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel. When David my father wished to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, the LORD said to him: In wishing to build a house for my name, you did well. But it is not you who will build the house, but your son, who comes from your loins; he shall build the house for my name. Now the LORD has fulfilled the word he spoke: I have succeeded David my father, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD has spoken, and I have built this house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. I have provided there a place for the ark in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Solomon’s Prayer.

Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel, and stretching forth his hands toward heaven, he said, “LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below; you keep covenant and love toward your servants who walk before you with their whole heart, the covenant that you kept toward your servant, David my father, what you promised him; your mouth has spoken and your hand has fulfilled this very day. And now, LORD, God of Israel, keep toward your servant, David my father, what you promised: There shall never be wanting someone from your line to sit before me on the throne of Israel, provided that your descendants keep to their way, walking before me as you have. Now, God of Israel, may the words you spoke to your servant, David my father, be confirmed.

“Is God indeed to dwell on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you, how much less this house which I have built! Regard kindly the prayer and petition of your servant, LORD, my God, and listen to the cry of supplication which I, your servant, utter before you this day. May your eyes be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, My name shall be there; listen to the prayer your servant makes toward this place. Listen to the petition of your servant and of your people Israel which they offer toward this place. Listen, from the place of your enthronement, heaven, listen and forgive.

“If someone sins in some way against a neighbor and is required to take an oath sanctioned by a curse, and comes and takes the oath before your altar in this house, listen in heaven; act and judge your servants. Condemn the wicked, requiting their ways; acquit the just, rewarding their justice.

“When your people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they sinned against you, and then they return to you, praise your name, pray to you, and entreat you in this house, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave their ancestors.

“When the heavens are closed, so that there is no rain, because they have sinned against you, but they pray toward this place and praise your name, and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel (for you teach them the good way in which they should walk). Give rain to this land of yours which you have given to your people as their heritage.

“If there is famine in the land or pestilence; or if blight comes, or mildew, or locusts, or caterpillars; if an enemy of your people presses upon them in the land and at their gates; whatever plague or sickness there may be; whatever prayer or petition any may make, any of your people Israel, who know heartfelt remorse



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and stretch out their hands toward this house, listen in heaven, the place of your enthronement; forgive and take action. Render to each and all according to their ways, you who know every heart; for it is you alone who know the heart of every human being. So may they revere you as long as they live on the land you gave our ancestors.

“To the foreigners, likewise, who are not of your people Israel, but who come from a distant land for the sake of your name (since people will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm), when they come and pray toward this house, listen in heaven, the place of your enthronement. Do all that the foreigner asks of you, that all the peoples of the earth may know your name, may revere you as do your people Israel, and may know that your name has been invoked upon this house that I have built.

“When your people go out to war against their enemies, by whatever way you send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city you have chosen and the house I have built for your name, listen in heaven to their prayer and petition, and uphold their cause.

“When they sin against you (for there is no one who does not sin), and in your anger against them you deliver them to an enemy, so that their captors carry them off to the land of the enemy, far or near, and they have a change of heart in the land of their captivity and they turn and entreat you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked’; if with their whole heart and soul they turn back to you in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, the city you have chosen, and the house I have built for your name, listen in heaven, your dwelling place, to their prayer and petition, and uphold their cause. Forgive your people who have sinned against you and all the offenses they have committed against you, and grant them mercy in the sight of their captors, so that these will be merciful to them. For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace.

“Thus may your eyes be open to the petition of your servant and to the petition of your people Israel; thus may you listen to them whenever they call upon you. For you have set them apart from all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, Lord my GOD.”

After Solomon finished offering this entire prayer and petition to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling, hands outstretched toward heaven. He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, saying in a loud voice: “Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised. Not a single word has gone unfulfilled of the entire gracious promise he made through Moses his servant. May the LORD, our God, be with us as he was with our ancestors and may he not forsake us nor cast us off. May he draw our hearts to himself, that we may walk in his ways and keep the commands, statutes, and ordinances that he enjoined on our ancestors. May these words of mine, the petition I have offered before the LORD, our God, be present to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel as each day requires, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and there is no other. Your heart must be wholly devoted to the LORD, our God, observing his statutes and keeping his commandments, as on this day.”

The king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. Solomon offered as communion offerings to the LORD twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. Thus the king



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and all the Israelites dedicated the house of the LORD. On that day the king consecrated the middle of the court facing the house of the LORD; he offered there the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the communion offerings, because the bronze altar before the LORD was too small to hold the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat of the communion offering.

On this occasion Solomon and all Israel with him, a great assembly from Lebo-hamath to the Wadi of Egypt, celebrated the festival before the LORD, our God, for seven days. On the eighth day he dismissed the people, who blessed the king and went to their tents, rejoicing and glad of heart because of all the blessings the LORD had given to David his servant and to his people Israel.



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1 Kings, chapter 9

Promise and Warning to Solomon.

After Solomon finished building the house of the LORD, the house of the king, and everything else that he wanted to do, the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon. The LORD said to him: I have heard the prayer of petition which you offered in my presence. I have consecrated this house which you have built and I set my name there forever; my eyes and my heart shall be there always. As for you, if you walk before me as David your father did, wholeheartedly and uprightly, doing all that I have commanded you, keeping my statutes and ordinances, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father: There shall never be wanting someone from your line on the throne of Israel. But if ever you and your descendants turn from following me, fail to keep my commandments and statutes which I set before you, and proceed to serve other gods and bow down to them, I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them and repudiate the house I have consecrated for my name. Israel shall become a proverb and a byword among all nations, and this house shall become a heap of ruins. Every passerby shall gasp in horror and ask, "Why has the LORD done such things to this land and to this house?" And the answer will come: "Because they abandoned the LORD, their God, who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods, bowing down to them and serving them. That is why the LORD has brought upon them all this evil."

After Building the Temple.

After the twenty years during which Solomon built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the house of the king—Hiram, king of Tyre, supplying Solomon with all the cedar wood, fir wood, and gold he wished, and King Solomon giving Hiram in return twenty cities in the land of Galilee—Hiram left Tyre to see the cities Solomon had given him, but he was not satisfied with them. So he said, "What are these cities you



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have given me, my brother?” And he called them the land of Cabul, as they are called to this day. Hiram, however, had sent King Solomon one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

This is an account of the conscript labor force King Solomon raised in order to build the house of the LORD, his own house, Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer (Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had come up and taken Gezer and, after destroying it by fire and slaying all the Canaanites living in the city, had given it as a farewell gift to his daughter, Solomon’s wife; Solomon then rebuilt Gezer), Lower Beth-horon, Baalath, Tamar in the desert of Judah, all his cities for supplies, cities for chariots and cities for cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in the entire land under his dominion. All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not Israelites—those of their descendants who were left in the land and whom the Israelites had not been able to destroy under the ban—these Solomon conscripted as forced laborers, as they are to this day. But Solomon made none of the Israelites forced laborers, for they were his fighting force, his ministers, commanders, adjutants, chariot officers, and cavalry. There were five hundred fifty overseers answerable to Solomon’s governors for the work, directing the people engaged in the work.

As soon as Pharaoh’s daughter went up from the City of David to her house, which he had built for her, Solomon built Millo.

Three times a year Solomon used to offer burnt offerings and communion offerings on the altar which he had built to the LORD, and to burn incense before the LORD. Thus he completed the temple.

Solomon’s Gifts.

King Solomon also built a fleet at Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. To this fleet Hiram sent his own servants, expert sailors, with the servants of Solomon. They went to Ophir, and obtained four hundred and twenty talents of gold and brought it to King Solomon.



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1 Kings, chapter 10

Solomon's Listening Heart: the Queen of Sheba.

The queen of Sheba, having heard a report of Solomon's fame, came to test him with subtle questions. She arrived in Jerusalem with a very numerous retinue, and with camels bearing spices, a large amount of gold, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and spoke to him about everything that she had on her mind. King Solomon explained everything she asked about, and there was nothing so obscure that the king could not explain it to her.

When the queen of Sheba witnessed Solomon's great wisdom, the house he had built, the food at his table, the seating of his ministers, the attendance and dress of his waiters, his servers, and the burnt offerings he offered in the house of the LORD, it took her breath away. "The report I heard in my country about your deeds and your wisdom is true," she told the king. "I did not believe the report until I came and saw with my own eyes that not even the half had been told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report I heard.

Happy are your servants, happy these ministers of yours, who stand before you always and listen to your wisdom. Blessed be the LORD, your God, who has been pleased to place you on the throne of Israel. In his enduring love for Israel, the LORD has made you king to carry out judgment and justice." Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty gold talents, a very large quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again did anyone bring such an abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

Hiram's fleet, which used to bring gold from Ophir, also brought from there a very large quantity of almuq wood and precious stones. With this wood the king made supports for the house of the LORD and for the house of the king, and harps and lyres for the singers. Never again was any such almuq wood brought or seen to the present day.



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King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired and asked for, besides what King Solomon gave her from Solomon's royal bounty. Then she returned with her servants to her own country.

Solomon's Riches: Domestic Affairs.

The gold that came to Solomon in one year weighed six hundred and sixty-six gold talents, in addition to what came from the tolls on travelers, from the traffic of merchants, and from all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country. King Solomon made two hundred shields of beaten gold (six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield) and three hundred bucklers of beaten gold (three minas of gold went into each buckler); and the king put them in the house of the Forest of Lebanon. The king made a large ivory throne, and overlaid it with refined gold. The throne had six steps, a back with a round top, and an arm on each side of the seat, with two lions standing next to the arms, and twelve other lions standing there on the steps, two to a step, one on either side of each step. Nothing like this was made in any other kingdom. All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the utensils in the house of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver, for in Solomon's time silver was reckoned as nothing. For the king had a fleet of Tarshish ships at sea with Hiram's fleet. Once every three years the fleet of Tarshish ships would come with a cargo of gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

Solomon's Renown.

Thus King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And the whole world sought audience with Solomon, to hear the wisdom God had put into his heart. They all brought their yearly tribute: vessels of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses and mules—what was due each year.

Solomon's Riches: Chariots and Horses.

Solomon amassed chariots and horses; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses; these he allocated among the chariot cities and to the king's service in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as numerous as the sycamores of the Shephelah. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Cilicia, where the king's merchants purchased them. A chariot imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, a horse one hundred and fifty shekels; they were exported at these rates to all the Hittite and Aramean kings.



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1 Kings, chapter 11

The End of Solomon's Reign.

King Solomon loved many foreign women besides the daughter of Pharaoh—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites—from nations of which the LORD had said to the Israelites: You shall not join with them and they shall not join with you, lest they turn your hearts to their gods. But Solomon held them close in love. He had as wives seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines, and they turned his heart.

When Solomon was old his wives had turned his heart to follow other gods, and his heart was not entirely with the LORD, his God, as the heart of David his father had been. Solomon followed Astarte, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and he did not follow the LORD unreservedly as David his father had done. Solomon then built a high place to Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and to Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain opposite Jerusalem. He did the same for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

The LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and commanded him not to do this very thing, not to follow other gods. But he did not observe what the LORD commanded. So the LORD said to Solomon: Since this is what you want, and you have not kept my covenant and the statutes which I enjoined on you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. But I will not do this during your lifetime, for the sake of David your father; I will tear it away from your son's hand. Nor will I tear away the whole kingdom. I will give your son one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.



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Threats to Solomon's Kingdom.

The LORD then raised up an adversary against Solomon: Hadad the Edomite, who was of the royal line in Edom. Earlier, when David had conquered Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, while going to bury the slain, killed every male in Edom. Joab and all Israel remained there six months until they had killed off every male in Edom. But Hadad, with some Edomite servants of his father, fled toward Egypt. Hadad was then a young boy. They left Midian and came to Paran; they gathered men from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt; he gave Hadad a house, appointed him rations, and assigned him land.

Hadad won great favor with Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage his sister-in-law, the sister of Queen Tahpenes, his own wife. Tahpenes' sister bore Hadad a son, Genubath. Tahpenes weaned him in Pharaoh's palace. And Genubath lived in Pharaoh's house, with Pharaoh's own sons. When Hadad in Egypt heard that David rested with his ancestors and that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead, he said to Pharaoh, "Give me leave to return to my own land." Pharaoh said to him, "What do you lack with me, that you are seeking to return to your own land?" He answered, "Nothing, but please let me go!"

God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer, king of Zobah, when David was slaughtering them. Rezon gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band. They went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus. Rezon was an adversary of Israel as long as Solomon lived, in addition to the harm done by Hadad, and he felt contempt for Israel. He became king over Aram.

Ahijah Announces Jeroboam's Kingship.

Solomon had a servant, Jeroboam, son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zeredah with a widowed mother named Zeruah. He rebelled against the king. This is how he came to rebel. King Solomon was building Millo, closing up the breach of the City of David, his father. Jeroboam was a very able man, and when Solomon saw that the young man was also a good worker, he put him in charge of all the carriers conscripted from the house of Joseph. At that time Jeroboam left Jerusalem, and the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the road. The prophet was wearing a new cloak, and when the two were alone in the open country, Ahijah took off his new cloak, tore it into twelve pieces, and said to Jeroboam:

"Take ten pieces for yourself. Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I am about to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and will give you ten of the tribes. He shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. For they have forsaken me and have bowed down to Astarte, goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh, god of Moab, and Milcom, god of the Ammonites. They have not walked in my ways or done what is right in my eyes, according to my statutes and my ordinances, as David his father did. Yet I will not take any of the kingdom from Solomon himself, but will keep him a prince as long as he lives, for the sake of David my servant, whom I have chosen, who kept my commandments and statutes. But I will take the kingdom from his son's hand and give it to you—that is, the ten tribes. I will give his son one tribe, that David my servant may always have a holding before me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen, to set my name there. You I will take and you shall reign over all that you desire and shall become king of Israel. If, then, you heed all that I command you, walking in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments like David my servant, I will be with you. I will build a lasting house for you, just as I did for David; I will give Israel to you. I will humble David's line for this, but not forever."



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When Solomon tried to have Jeroboam killed, Jeroboam fled to Shishak, king of Egypt. He remained in Egypt until Solomon's death.

The rest of the acts of Solomon, with all that he did and his wisdom, are recorded in the book of the acts of Solomon. Solomon was king in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. Solomon rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David, his father, and Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.



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**II. The Reign of Jeroboam
1 Kings, chapter 12**

Political Disunity.

Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had come to make him king. When Jeroboam, son of Nebat, heard about it, he was still in Egypt. He had fled from King Solomon and remained in Egypt, and they sent for him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and they said to Rehoboam, "Your father put a heavy yoke on us. If you now lighten the harsh servitude and the heavy yoke your father imposed on us, we will be your servants." He answered them, "Come back to me in three days," and the people went away. King Rehoboam asked advice of the elders who had been in his father Solomon's service while he was alive, and asked, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" They replied, "If today you become the servant of this people and serve them, and give them a favorable answer, they will be your servants forever." But he ignored the advice the elders had given him, and asked advice of the young men who had grown up with him and were in his service. He said to them, "What answer do you advise that we should give this people, who have told me, 'Lighten the yoke your father imposed on us'?" The young men who had grown up with him replied, "This is what you must say to this people who have told you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy; you lighten it for us.' You must say, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. My father put a heavy yoke on you, but I will make it heavier. My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions.'" Jeroboam and the whole people came back to King Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had instructed them: "Come back to me in three days." Ignoring the advice the elders had given him, the king gave the people a harsh answer. He spoke to them as the young men had advised: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will make it heavier. My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions."



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The king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD: he fulfilled the word the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam, son of Nebat. When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king:

“What share have we in David? We have no heritage in the son of Jesse. To your tents, Israel! Now look to your own house, David.”

So Israel went off to their tents. But Rehoboam continued to reign over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah. King Rehoboam then sent out Adoram, who was in charge of the forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam then managed to mount his chariot and flee to Jerusalem. And so Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they summoned him to an assembly and made him king over all Israel. None remained loyal to the house of David except the tribe of Judah alone.

Divine Approval.

On his arrival in Jerusalem, Rehoboam assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—one hundred and eighty thousand elite warriors—to wage war against the house of Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam, son of Solomon. However, the word of God came to Shemaiah, a man of God: Say to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and to Benjamin, and to the rest of the people: Thus says the LORD: You must not go out to war against your fellow Israelites. Return home, each of you, for it is I who have brought this about. They obeyed the word of the LORD and turned back, according to the word of the LORD. Jeroboam built up Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. Then he left it and built up Penuel.

Jeroboam’s Cultic Innovations.

Jeroboam thought to himself: “Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, the hearts of this people will return to their master, Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam, king of Judah.” The king took counsel, made two calves of gold, and said to the people: “You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” And he put one in Bethel, the other in Dan. This led to sin, because the people frequented these calves in Bethel and in Dan. He also built temples on the high places and made priests from among the common people who were not Levites.

Divine Disapproval.

Jeroboam established a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month like the pilgrimage feast in Judah, and he went up to the altar. He did this in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. He stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places he had built. Jeroboam went up to the altar he built in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, the month he arbitrarily chose. He established a feast for the Israelites, and he went up to the altar to burn incense.



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1 Kings, chapter 13

A man of God came from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, while Jeroboam was standing at the altar to burn incense. He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "Altar, altar, thus says the LORD: A child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, who shall slaughter upon you the priests of the high places who burn incense upon you, and they shall burn human bones upon you." He also gave a sign that same day and said: "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: The altar shall be torn apart and the ashes on it shall be scattered."

When the king heard the word of the man of God which he was crying out against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched forth his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched forth against him withered, so that he could not draw it back. (The altar was torn apart and the ashes from the altar were scattered, in accordance with the sign the man of God gave by the word of the LORD.) Then the king said to the man of God, "Entreat the LORD, your God, and intercede for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored as it was before. The king told the man of God, "Come with me to the house for some refreshment so that I may give you a present." The man of God said to the king, "If you gave me half your palace, I would not go with you, nor eat bread or drink water in this place. For I was instructed by the word of the LORD: Do not eat bread or drink water, and do not return by the way you came." So he departed by another road and did not go back the way he had come to Bethel.

Prophetic Disunity.

There was an old prophet living in Bethel, whose son came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. When his sons repeated to their father the words the man of God had spoken to the king, the father asked them, "Which way did he go?" So his sons pointed out to him the road taken by the man of



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God who had come from Judah. Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” When they had saddled it, he mounted and followed the man of God, whom he found seated under a terebinth. When he asked him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” he answered, “Yes.” Then he said, “Come home with me and have some bread.” “I cannot return with you or go with you, and I cannot eat bread or drink water with you in this place,” he answered, “for I was told by the word of the LORD: You shall not eat bread or drink water there, and do not go back the way you came.” But he said to him, “I, too, am a prophet like you, and an angel told me by the word of the LORD: Bring him back with you to your house to eat bread and drink water.” But he was lying to him.

So he went back with him, and ate bread and drank water in his house. But while they were sitting at table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back, and he cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah: “Thus says the LORD: Because you rebelled against the charge of the LORD and did not keep the command which the LORD, your God, gave you, but returned and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you, Do not eat bread or drink water, your corpse shall not be brought to the grave of your ancestors.”

After he had eaten bread and drunk, they saddled for him the donkey that belonged to the prophet who had brought him back, and he set out. But a lion met him on the road, and killed him. His body lay sprawled on the road, and the donkey remained standing by it, and so did the lion. Some passersby saw the body lying in the road, with the lion standing beside it, and carried the news to the city where the old prophet lived. On hearing it, the prophet who had brought him back from his journey said: “It is the man of God who rebelled against the charge of the LORD. The LORD has delivered him to a lion, which mangled and killed him, according to the word which the LORD had spoken to him.” Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me,” and they saddled it. He went off and found the body sprawled on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had not eaten the body nor had it harmed the donkey. The prophet lifted up the body of the man of God and put it on the donkey, and brought him back to the city to mourn and to bury him. He laid the man’s body in his own grave, and they mourned over it: “Alas, my brother!” After he had buried him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his. For the word which he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the temples on the high places in the cities of Samaria shall certainly come to pass.”

Even after this, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again made priests for the high places from among the common people. Whoever desired it was installed as a priest of the high places. This is the account of the sin of the house of Jeroboam for which it was to be cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth.



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**III. Kings of Judah and Israel
1 Kings, chapter 14**

Ahijah Announces Jeroboam's Downfall.

At that time Abijah, son of Jeroboam, took sick. So Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go and disguise yourself so that no one will recognize you as Jeroboam's wife. Then go to Shiloh, where you will find Ahijah the prophet. It was he who spoke the word that made me king over this people. Take along ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the child." The wife of Jeroboam did so. She left and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see because age had dimmed his sight.

But the LORD said to Ahijah: Jeroboam's wife is coming to consult you about her son, for he is sick. Thus and so you must tell her. When she comes, she will be in disguise. So Ahijah, hearing the sound of her footsteps as she entered the door, said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why are you in disguise? For my part, I have been commissioned to give you bitter news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I exalted you from among the people and made you ruler of my people Israel. I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you. Yet you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me with his whole heart, doing only what is right in my sight. You have done more evil than all who were before you: you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke me; but me you have cast behind your back. Therefore, I am bringing evil upon the house of Jeroboam: I will cut off from Jeroboam's line every male—bond or free—in Israel; I will burn up what is left of the house of Jeroboam as dung is burned, completely. Anyone of Jeroboam's line who dies in the city, dogs will devour; anyone who dies in the field, the birds of the sky will devour. For the LORD has spoken!' As for you, leave, and go home! As you step inside the city, the child will die, and all Israel will mourn him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam's line will be laid in the grave, since in him alone of Jeroboam's



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house has something pleasing to the LORD, the God of Israel, been found. The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam—today, at this very moment! The LORD will strike Israel like a reed tossed about in the water and will pluck out Israel from this good land which he gave their ancestors, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they made asherahs for themselves, provoking the LORD. He will give up Israel because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and caused Israel to commit.”

So Jeroboam’s wife left and went back; when she came to Tirzah and crossed the threshold of her house, the child died. He was buried and all Israel mourned him, according to the word of the LORD spoken through his servant Ahijah the prophet. The rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he fought and how he reigned, these are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The length of Jeroboam’s reign was twenty-two years. He rested with his ancestors, and Nadab his son succeeded him as king.

Reign of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, became king in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city in which, out of all the tribes of Israel, the LORD chose to set his name. His mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonite.

Judah did evil in the LORD’s sight and they angered him even more than their ancestors had done. They, too, built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and asherahs, upon every high hill and under every green tree. There were also pagan priests in the land. Judah imitated all the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the Israelites’ way.

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem. He took everything, including the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the house of the king, even the gold shields Solomon had made. To replace them, King Rehoboam made bronze shields, which he entrusted to the officers of the guard on duty at the entrance of the royal house. Whenever the king visited the house of the LORD, those on duty would carry the shields, and then return them to the guardroom.

The rest of the acts of Rehoboam, with all that he did, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. Rehoboam rested with his ancestors; he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. His mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonite. His son Abijam succeeded him as king.



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1 Kings, chapter 15

Reign of Abijam.

In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, son of Nebat, Abijam became king of Judah; he reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah, daughter of Abishalom. He followed all the sins his father had committed before him, and his heart was not entirely with the LORD, his God, as was the heart of David his father. Yet for David's sake the LORD, his God, gave him a holding in Jerusalem, raising up his son after him and permitting Jerusalem to endure, because David had done what was right in the sight of the LORD and did not disobey any of his commands as long as he lived, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite. There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.

The rest of the acts of Abijam, with all that he did, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. Abijam rested with his ancestors; they buried him in the City of David, and his son Asa succeeded him as king.

Reign of Asa.

In the twentieth year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, Asa, king of Judah, became king; he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah, daughter of Abishalom. Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD like David his father, banishing the pagan priests from the land and removing all the idols his ancestors had made. He also deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made an outrageous object for Asherah. Asa cut down this object and burned it in the Wadi Kidron. The high places did not disappear; yet Asa's heart was entirely with the LORD as long as he lived. He brought into the house of the LORD his father's and his own votive offerings of silver and gold and various vessels.



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There was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days. Baasha, king of Israel, attacked Judah and fortified Ramah to blockade Asa, king of Judah. Asa then took all the silver and gold remaining in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the house of the king. Entrusting them to his ministers, King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion, king of Aram, who ruled in Damascus. He said: "There is a treaty between you and me, as there was between your father and my father. I am sending you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Baasha, king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me." Ben-hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the leaders of his troops against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinnereth, besides all the land of Naphtali. When Baasha heard of it, he left off fortifying Ramah, and stayed in Tirzah. Then King Asa summoned all Judah without exception, and they carried away the stones and beams with which Baasha was fortifying Ramah. With them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

All the rest of the acts of Asa, with all his valor and all that he did, and the cities he built, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. But in his old age, Asa had an infirmity in his feet. Asa rested with his ancestors; he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David his father, and his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king.

Reign of Nadab.

Nadab, son of Jeroboam, became king of Israel in the second year of Asa, king of Judah. For two years he reigned over Israel. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, walking in the way of his father and the sin he had caused Israel to commit. Baasha, son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, plotted against him and struck him down at Gibbethon of the Philistines, which Nadab and all Israel were besieging. Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa, king of Judah, and succeeded him as king. Once he was king, he killed the entire house of Jeroboam, not leaving a single soul but destroying Jeroboam utterly, according to the word of the LORD spoken through his servant, Ahijah the Shilonite, because of the sins Jeroboam committed and caused Israel to commit, by which he provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger.

The rest of the acts of Nadab, with all that he did, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. There was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days.

Reign of Baasha.

In the third year of Asa, king of Judah, Baasha, son of Ahijah, became king of all Israel in Tirzah for twenty-four years. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, walking in the way of Jeroboam and the sin he had caused Israel to commit.



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1 Kings, chapter 16

The word of the LORD came to Jehu, son of Hanani, against Baasha: Inasmuch as I exalted you from the dust and made you ruler of my people Israel, but you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have caused my people Israel to sin, provoking me to anger by their sins, I will burn up what is left of Baasha and his house; I will make your house like that of Jeroboam, son of Nebat: One of Baasha's line who dies in the city, dogs will devour; One who dies in the field, the birds of the sky will devour.

The rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did and his valor, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Baasha rested with his ancestors; he was buried in Tirzah, and his son Elah succeeded him as king. (Through the prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, the word of the LORD came against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil Baasha did in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger by his deeds so that he became like the house of Jeroboam, and because of what he destroyed.)

Reign of Elah.

In the twenty-sixth year of Asa, king of Judah, Elah, son of Baasha, became king of Israel in Tirzah for two years. His servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, plotted against him. As he was in Tirzah, drinking to excess in the house of Arza, master of his palace in Tirzah, Zimri entered; he struck and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, and succeeded him as king. Once he was king, seated on the throne, he killed the whole house of Baasha, not sparing a single male relative or friend of his. Zimri destroyed the entire house of Baasha, according to the word the LORD spoke against Baasha through Jehu the prophet, because of all the sins which Baasha and his son Elah committed and caused Israel to commit, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.



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The rest of the acts of Elah, with all that he did, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Reign of Zimri.

In the twenty-seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, Zimri became king for seven days in Tirzah. The army was encamped at Gibbethon of the Philistines when they heard, “Zimri has formed a conspiracy and has killed the king.” So that day in the camp all Israel made Omri, commander of the army, king of Israel. Omri and all Israel with him marched up from Gibbethon and besieged Tirzah. When Zimri saw that the city was captured, he entered the citadel of the king’s house and burned it down over him. He died because of the sins he had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight by walking in the way of Jeroboam and the sin he had caused Israel to commit.

The rest of the acts of Zimri, with the conspiracy he carried out, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Civil War.

At that time the people of Israel were divided in two, half following Tibni, son of Ginath, to make him king, and half for Omri. The partisans of Omri prevailed over those of Tibni, son of Ginath. Tibni died and Omri became king.

Reign of Omri.

In the thirty-first year of Asa, king of Judah, Omri became king of Israel for twelve years; the first six of them he reigned in Tirzah. He then bought the mountain of Samaria from Shemer for two silver talents and built upon the mountain the city he named Samaria, after Shemer, the former owner. But Omri did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, more than any of his predecessors. In every way he imitated the sinful conduct of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and the sin he had caused Israel to commit, thus provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.

The rest of the acts of Omri, what he did and his valor, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Omri rested with his ancestors; he was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son succeeded him as king.

Reign of Ahab.

Ahab, son of Omri, became king of Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa, king of Judah. Ahab, son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria for twenty-two years. Ahab, son of Omri, did what was evil in the LORD’s sight more than any of his predecessors. It was not enough for him to follow the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat. He even married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal, and worship him. Ahab set up an altar to Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria, and also made an asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than any of the kings of Israel before him.

During his reign, Hiel from Bethel rebuilt Jericho. At the cost of Abiram, his firstborn son, he laid the foundation, and at the cost of Segub, his youngest son, he set up the gates, according to the word of the LORD spoken through Joshua, son of Nun.



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**IV. The Story of Elijah
1 Kings, chapter 17**

Elijah Proclaims a Drought.

Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab: "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, during these years there shall be no dew or rain except at my word." The word of the LORD came to Elijah: Leave here, go east and hide in the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan. You shall drink of the wadi, and I have commanded ravens to feed you there. So he left and did as the LORD had commanded. He left and remained by the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan. Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.

Elijah and the Widow.

After some time, however, the wadi ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land. So the word of the LORD came to him: Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to feed you. He arose and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a crust of bread." She said, "As the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a few sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Afterwards you can prepare something for yourself and your son. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth." She left and did as Elijah had said. She had enough to eat for a long time—he and she and her household. The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD spoken through Elijah.



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Some time later the son of the woman, the owner of the house, fell sick, and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing. So she said to Elijah, “Why have you done this to me, man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?” Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” Taking him from her lap, he carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. He called out to the LORD: “LORD, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?” Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times and he called out to the LORD: “LORD, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child.” The LORD heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child’s body and he lived. Taking the child, Elijah carried him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, “See! Your son is alive.” The woman said to Elijah, “Now indeed I know that you are a man of God, and it is truly the word of the LORD that you speak.”



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1 Kings, chapter 18

Elijah Ends the Drought.

Long afterward, in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah: Go, present yourself to Ahab, that I may send rain upon the earth. So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

Now the famine in Samaria was severe, and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, master of his palace, who greatly revered the LORD. When Jezebel was slaughtering the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets, hid them away by fifties in caves, and supplied them with food and water. Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all sources of water and to all the wadis. We may find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, so that we shall not have to slaughter any of the beasts." Dividing the land to explore between them, Ahab went one way by himself, Obadiah another way by himself.

As Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him. Recognizing him, Obadiah fell prostrate and asked, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?" He said to him, "Yes. Go tell your lord, 'Elijah is here!'" But Obadiah said, "What sin has your servant committed, that you are handing me over to Ahab to be killed? As the LORD, your God, lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent in search of you. When they replied, 'He is not here,' he made each kingdom and nation swear they could not find you. And now you say, 'Go tell your lord: Elijah is here!' After I leave you, the spirit of the LORD will carry you to some place I do not know, and when I go to inform Ahab and he does not find you, he will kill me—though your servant has revered the LORD from his youth! Have you not been told, my lord, what I did when Jezebel was murdering the prophets of the LORD—that I hid a hundred of the prophets of the LORD, fifty each in caves, and supplied them with food and water? And now you say, 'Go tell your lord: Elijah is here!' He will kill me!" Elijah answered, "As the LORD of hosts lives, whom I serve, I will present myself to him today."



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So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and informed him, and Ahab came to meet Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is it you, you disturber of Israel?” He answered, “It is not I who disturb Israel, but you and your father’s house, by forsaking the commands of the LORD and you by following the Baals. Now summon all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, as well as the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.” So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and had the prophets gather on Mount Carmel.

Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you straddle the issue? If the LORD is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him. So Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. Give us two young bulls. Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood, but start no fire. I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood, but shall start no fire. You shall call upon the name of your gods, and I will call upon the name of the LORD. The God who answers with fire is God.” All the people answered, “We agree!”

Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one young bull and prepare it first, for there are more of you. Call upon your gods, but do not start the fire.” Taking the young bull that was turned over to them, they prepared it and called upon Baal from morning to noon, saying, “Baal, answer us!” But there was no sound, and no one answering. And they hopped around the altar they had prepared. When it was noon, Elijah taunted them: “Call louder, for he is a god; he may be busy doing his business, or may be on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears according to their ritual until blood gushed over them. Noon passed and they remained in a prophetic state until the time for offering sacrifice. But there was no sound, no one answering, no one listening.

Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” When they drew near to him, he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been destroyed. He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the LORD had said: Israel shall be your name. He built the stones into an altar to the name of the LORD, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two measures of grain. When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood. He said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood.” “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a third time,” he said, and they did it a third time. The water flowed around the altar; even the trench was filled with the water.

At the time for offering sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came forward and said, “LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back to you.” The LORD’s fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and lapped up the water in the trench. Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, “The LORD is God! The LORD is God!”

Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Let none of them escape!” They seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon and there he slaughtered them. Elijah then said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” So Ahab went up to eat and drink, while Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, crouched down to the earth, and put his head between his knees. He said to his servant, “Go up and look out to sea.” He went up and looked, but reported, “There is nothing.” Seven times



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he said, “Go look again!” And the seventh time the youth reported, “There is a cloud as small as a man’s hand rising from the sea.” Elijah said, “Go and say to Ahab, ‘Harness up and go down the mountain before the rain stops you.’” All at once the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and a heavy rain fell. Ahab mounted his chariot and headed for Jezreel. But the hand of the LORD was on Elijah. He girded up his clothing and ran before Ahab as far as the approaches to Jezreel.



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1 Kings, chapter 19

Flight to Horeb.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done—that he had murdered all the prophets by the sword. Jezebel then sent a messenger to Elijah and said, "May the gods do thus to me and more, if by this time tomorrow I have not done with your life what was done to each of them." Elijah was afraid and fled for his life, going to Beer-sheba of Judah. He left his servant there and went a day's journey into the wilderness, until he came to a solitary broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death: "Enough, LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." He lay down and fell asleep under the solitary broom tree, but suddenly a messenger touched him and said, "Get up and eat!" He looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he ate and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat or the journey will be too much for you!" He got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. But the word of the LORD came to him: Why are you here, Elijah? He answered: "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. They have destroyed your altars and murdered your prophets by the sword. I alone remain, and they seek to take my life." Then the LORD said: Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will pass by. There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake; after the earthquake, fire—but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, a light silent sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, Why are you here, Elijah? He replied, "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. They have destroyed your altars and murdered your prophets by the sword. I alone remain, and they seek to take my life." The LORD said to him:



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Go back! Take the desert road to Damascus. When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king of Aram. You shall also anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king of Israel, and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, as prophet to succeed you. Anyone who escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill. Anyone who escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. But I will spare seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bent to Baal, every mouth that has not kissed him.

Call of Elisha.

Elijah set out, and came upon Elisha, son of Shaphat, as he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; he was following the twelfth. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak on him. Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, “Please, let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will follow you.” Elijah answered, “Go back! What have I done to you?” Elisha left him and, taking the yoke of oxen, slaughtered them; he used the plowing equipment for fuel to boil their flesh, and gave it to the people to eat. Then he left and followed Elijah to serve him.



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**V. The Story of Ahab
1 Kings, chapter 20**

Ahab's Victories over Aram.

Ben-hadad, king of Aram, gathered all his forces and, accompanied by thirty-two kings with horses and chariotry, set out to besiege and attack Samaria. He sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, within the city, and said to him, "This is Ben-hadad's message: 'Your silver and gold are mine, and your wives and your fine children are mine.'" The king of Israel answered, "Just as you say, my lord king, I and all I have are yours." But the messengers came again and said, "This is Ben-hadad's message: 'I sent you word: Give me your silver and gold, your wives and your children. But now I say: At this time tomorrow I will send my servants to you, and they shall ransack your house and the houses of your servants. They shall seize and take away whatever you consider valuable.'"

The king of Israel then summoned all the elders of the land and said: "Understand clearly that this man is intent on evil. When he sent to me for my wives and children, my silver and my gold, I did not refuse him." All the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen. Do not give in." Accordingly he directed the messengers of Ben-hadad, "Say this: 'To my lord the king: I will do all that you demanded of your servant the first time. But this I cannot do.'" The messengers left and reported this. Ben-hadad then responded, "May the gods do thus to me and more, if there will remain enough dust in Samaria to make handfuls for all my followers." The king of Israel replied, "Tell him, 'Let not one who puts on armor boast like one who takes it off.'" Ben-hadad was drinking in the pavilions with the kings when he heard this reply. He commanded his servants, "Get ready!"; and they got ready to storm the city.

Then a prophet came up to Ahab, king of Israel, and said: "The LORD says, Do you see all this vast army? Today I am giving it into your power, that you may know that I am the LORD." But Ahab asked, "Through



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whom will it be given over?" He answered, "The LORD says, Through the aides of the provincial governors." Then Ahab asked, "Who is to attack?" He replied, "You are." So Ahab mustered the aides of the provincial governors, two hundred thirty-two of them. Behind them he mustered all the Israelite soldiery, who numbered seven thousand in all. They marched out at noon, while Ben-hadad was drinking heavily in the pavilions with the thirty-two kings who were his allies. When the aides of the provincial governors marched out first, Ben-hadad received word, "Some men have marched out of Samaria." He answered, "Whether they have come out for peace or for war, take them alive." But when these had come out of the city—the aides of the provincial governors with the army following them—each of them struck down his man. The Arameans fled with Israel pursuing them, while Ben-hadad, king of Aram, escaped on a chariot horse. Then the king of Israel went out and destroyed the horses and chariots. Thus he inflicted a severe defeat on Aram.

Then the prophet approached the king of Israel and said to him: "Go, regroup your forces. Understand clearly what you must do, for at the turning of the year the king of Aram will attack you." Meanwhile the servants of the king of Aram said to him: "Their gods are mountain gods. That is why they defeated us. But if we fight them on level ground, we shall be sure to defeat them. This is what you must do: Take the kings from their posts and put prefects in their places. Raise an army as large as the army you have lost, horse for horse, chariot for chariot. Let us fight them on level ground, and we shall surely defeat them." He took their advice and did this.

At the turning of the year, Ben-hadad mustered Aram and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. The Israelites, too, were mustered and supplied with provisions; then they went out to meet the enemy. The Israelites, encamped opposite, looked like little flocks of goats, while Aram covered the land. A man of God approached and said to the king of Israel: "The LORD says, Because Aram has said the LORD is a god of mountains, not a god of plains, I will give all this vast army into your power that you may know I am the LORD."

They were encamped opposite each other for seven days. On the seventh day battle was joined, and the Israelites struck down one hundred thousand foot soldiers of Aram in one day. The survivors fled into the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-seven thousand of them. Ben-hadad, too, fled, and took refuge within the city, in an inner room.

His servants said to him: "We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Allow us, therefore, to garb ourselves in sackcloth, with cords around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life." Dressed in sackcloth girded at the waist and wearing cords around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-hadad says, 'Spare my life!'" He asked, "Is he still alive? He is my brother." Hearing this as a good omen, the men quickly took him at his word and said, "Ben-hadad is your brother." He answered, "Go and get him." When Ben-hadad came out to him, the king had him mount his chariot. Ben-hadad said to him, "The cities my father took from your father I will restore, and you may set up bazaars for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Ahab replied, "For my part, I will set you free on those terms." So he made a covenant with him and then set him free.

Prophetic Condemnation.

Acting on the word of the LORD, one of the guild prophets said to his companion, "Strike me." But he refused to strike him. Then he said to him, "Since you did not obey the voice of the LORD, a lion will attack



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you when you leave me.” When he left him, a lion came upon him and attacked him. Then the prophet met another man and said, “Strike me.” The man struck him a blow and wounded him. The prophet went on and waited for the king on the road, disguising himself with a bandage over his eyes. As the king was passing, he called out to the king and said: “Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and suddenly someone turned and brought me a man and said, ‘Guard this man. If he is missing, you shall have to pay for his life with your life or pay out a talent of silver.’ But while your servant was occupied here and there, the man disappeared.” The king of Israel said to him, “That is your sentence. You have decided it yourself.” He quickly removed the bandage from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. He said to him: “The LORD says, Because you have set free the man I put under the ban, your life shall pay for his life, your people for his people.” Disturbed and angry, the king of Israel set off for home and entered Samaria.



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- The third reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?*" Notice what thoughts, feelings, and reflections arise within you. Let the words resound in your heart. What might God be asking of you through the scripture? In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.
- The fourth reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*I believe that God wants me to today/this week.*" Notice any prayerful response that arises within you, for example a small prayer of gratitude or praise. In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.

1 Kings, chapter 21

Seizure of Naboth's Vineyard.

Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel next to the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. Some time later, Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard to be my vegetable garden, since it is close by, next to my house. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or, if you prefer, I will give you its value in money." Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give you my ancestral heritage." Ahab went home disturbed and angry at the answer Naboth the Jezreelite had given him: "I will not give you my ancestral heritage." Lying down on his bed, he turned away and would not eat.

His wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, "Why are you so sullen that you will not eat?" He answered her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Sell me your vineyard, or, if you prefer, I will give you a vineyard in exchange.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" Jezebel his wife said to him, "What a king of Israel you are! Get up! Eat and be cheerful. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and, having sealed them with his seal, sent them to the elders and to the nobles who lived in the same city with Naboth. This is what she wrote in the letters: "Proclaim a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people. Next, set two scoundrels opposite him to accuse him: 'You have cursed God and king.' Then take him out and stone him to death." His fellow citizens—the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city—did as Jezebel had ordered in the letters she sent them. They proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people. Two scoundrels came in and sat opposite Naboth, and the scoundrels accused him in the presence of the people, "Naboth has cursed God and king." And they led him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned to death." When Jezebel learned that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Go, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite which



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he refused to sell you, because Naboth is not alive, but dead.” When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he started on his way down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

Prophetic Condemnation.

Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: Go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, who is in Samaria. He will be in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. Tell him: “Thus says the LORD: After murdering, do you also take possession?” And tell him, “Thus says the LORD: In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, the dogs shall lick up your blood, too.” Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me out, my enemy?” He said, “I have found you. Because you have given yourself up to doing evil in the LORD’s sight, I am bringing evil upon you: I will consume you and will cut off every male belonging to Ahab, whether bond or free, in Israel. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me by leading Israel into sin.” Against Jezebel, too, the LORD declared: The dogs shall devour Jezebel in the confines of Jezreel. Anyone of Ahab’s line who dies in the city, dogs will devour; Anyone who dies in the field, the birds of the sky will devour. Indeed, no one gave himself up to the doing of evil in the sight of the LORD as did Ahab, urged on by his wife Jezebel. He became completely abominable by going after idols, just as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD drove out of the Israelites’ way.

When Ahab heard these words, he tore his garments and put on sackcloth over his bare flesh. He fasted, slept in the sackcloth, and went about subdued. Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Since he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his time. I will bring the evil upon his house in his son’s time.



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1 Kings, chapter 22

Ahab's Defeat by Aram.

Three years passed without war between Aram and Israel. In the third year, however, King Jehoshaphat of Judah came down to the king of Israel. The king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you not know that Ramoth-gilead is ours and we are doing nothing to take it from the king of Aram?" He asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you come with me to fight against Ramoth-gilead?" Jehoshaphat answered the king of Israel, "You and I are as one, and your people and my people, your horses and my horses as well."

Prophetic Condemnation.

Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "Seek the word of the LORD at once." The king of Israel assembled the prophets, about four hundred of them, and asked, "Shall I go to fight against Ramoth-gilead or shall I refrain?" They said, "Attack. The Lord will give it into the power of the king." But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no other prophet of the LORD here we might consult?" The king of Israel answered, "There is one other man through whom we might consult the LORD; but I hate him because he prophesies not good but evil about me. He is Micaiah, son of Imlah." Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say that."

So the king of Israel called an official and said to him, "Get Micaiah, son of Imlah, at once." The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, were seated, each on his throne, clothed in their robes of state in the square at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them. Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, made himself two horns of iron and said, "The LORD says, With these you shall gore Aram until you have destroyed them." The other prophets prophesied in a similar vein, saying: "Attack Ramoth-gilead and conquer! The LORD will give it into the power of the king."



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Meanwhile, the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah said to him, “Look now, the prophets are unanimously predicting good for the king. Let your word be the same as any of theirs; speak a good word.” Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, I shall speak whatever the LORD tells me.”

When he came to the king, the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to fight at Ramoth-gilead, or shall we refrain?” He said, “Attack and conquer! The LORD will give it into the power of the king.” But the king answered him, “How many times must I adjure you to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” So Micaiah said:

“I see all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd, And the LORD saying, These have no master! Let each of them go back home in peace.”

The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you, he does not prophesy good about me, but only evil?” Micaiah continued: “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD seated on his throne, with the whole host of heaven standing to his right and to his left. The LORD asked: Who will deceive Ahab, so that he will go up and fall on Ramoth-gilead? And one said this, another that, until this spirit came forth and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will deceive him.’ The LORD asked: How? He answered, ‘I will go forth and become a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.’ The LORD replied: You shall succeed in deceiving him. Go forth and do this. So now, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours; the LORD himself has decreed evil against you.”

Thereupon Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, came up and struck Micaiah on the cheek, saying, “Has the spirit of the LORD, then, left me to speak with you?” Micaiah said, “You shall find out on the day you go into an inner room to hide.” The king of Israel then said, “Seize Micaiah and take him back to Amon, prefect of the city, and to Joash, the king’s son, and say, ‘This is the king’s order: Put this man in prison and feed him scanty rations of bread and water until I come back in safety.’” But Micaiah said, “If you return in safety, the LORD has not spoken through me.” (He also said, “Hear, O peoples, all of you.”)

Ahab at Ramoth-gilead.

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead, and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your own robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and entered the battle. In the meantime the king of Aram had given his thirty-two chariot commanders the order, “Do not fight with anyone, great or small, except the king of Israel alone.” When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they cried out, “There is the king of Israel!” and wheeled to fight him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the chariot commanders, seeing that he was not the king of Israel, turned away from him. But someone drew his bow at random, and hit the king of Israel between the joints of his breastplate. He ordered his charioteer, “Rein about and take me out of the ranks, for I am wounded.” The battle grew fierce during the day, and the king, who was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans, died in the evening. The blood from his wound flowed to the bottom of the chariot. At sunset a cry went through the army, “Every man to his city, every man to his land!” And so the king died, and came back to Samaria, and they buried him there. When they washed out the chariot at the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood and prostitutes bathed there, as the LORD had prophesied.



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The rest of the acts of Ahab, with all that he did, including the ivory house he built and all the cities he built, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Ahab rested with his ancestors, and his son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

Reign of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab, king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi. He walked in the way of Asa his father unceasingly, doing what was right in the LORD's sight. Nevertheless, the high places did not disappear, and the people still sacrificed on the high places and burned incense there. Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

The rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, with his valor, what he did and how he fought, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. He removed from the land the rest of the pagan priests who had remained in the reign of Asa his father. There was no king in Edom, but an appointed regent. Jehoshaphat made Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold; but in fact the ships did not go, because they were wrecked at Ezion-geber. That was the time when Ahaziah, son of Ahab, had said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants accompany your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not agree. Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors; he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David his father, and his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

Reign of Ahaziah.

Ahaziah, son of Ahab, became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; he reigned two years over Israel. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of his father, his mother, and Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him, thus provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.