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1 Kings

The book of 1 Kings continues the story about David's kingdom. It begins with the end of David's life and the beginning of Solomon's rule as king. Solomon ruled Israel after his father David. For most of his life, Solomon was a wise and just king. In fact, he was so wise that other rulers from distant lands came to speak with him. Solomon also directed the building of God's Temple in Jerusalem. He wanted to follow his father's wish to build a proper place for God's presence on earth. Now it would be in the Temple instead of the Holy Tent that God's people carried with them through the desert. Solomon did many great things and is still remembered for his wisdom.

But Solomon did not always do what God told him to do. From the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God had told his people not to marry people from other nations. God knew that this would lead the Israelites to worship false gods. But Solomon did not obey this wise command. 1 Kings tells us that Solomon had many wives and slave women. These many women were from all over the world. And they brought their false gods with them into Solomon's house. In time, Solomon's relationships with these women led to relationships with their gods. He even built temples to honour these false gods.

Because Solomon worshipped false gods, God caused his kingdom to split into two parts. The northern part was called Israel, and the southern part was called Judah.

After Solomon's death, the twelve Israelite tribes were divided between these two kingdoms. This period of time is often called The Divided Kingdom. During this time, there were many battles between the two kingdoms. And many Israelites doubted that God was still with them. People wondered if they could trust God to take care of them.

As 1 Kings continues the story of 1 and 2 Samuel, it also continues the stories about the prophets. 1 Kings 17 begins the story of the prophet Elijah. And this story continues into 2 Kings. Elijah fought against the worship of idols and false gods in the northern kingdom of Israel. The kings in the north persecuted the people who followed God. They demanded that other gods, like Baal, be worshipped. But Elijah spoke God's message to these kings. God protected Elijah and gave him power to do amazing miracles. In this way God showed Israel how faithful he is to those who trust him. The book of 1 Kings tells how...

The kingdom of David continued under Solomon (1:1 – 11:43)

Solomon's kingdom is divided into two kingdoms with different kings (12:1 – 16:34)

Prophets spoke God's messages to the kings of Israel and Judah (17:1 – 22:54)

Adonijah Wants to Be King

1 King David was very old and could not keep warm. His servants covered him with blankets, but he was still cold. ²So they said to him, "We will find a young woman to care for you. She will lie next to you and keep you warm." ³So the king's servants began looking everywhere in the land of Is-

rael for a beautiful young woman to keep the king warm. They found a young woman named Abishag, from the town of Shunem, and brought her to the king. ⁴She was very beautiful. She cared for the king and served him, but King David did not have sex with her.

⁵⁻⁶ Adonijah was the son of King David and his wife Haggith. He was born after Absalom. Adonijah was a very handsome man. King David never corrected his son Adonijah, and he never made him explain his actions. Adonijah became very proud and decided that he would be the next king. He wanted very much to be the king, so he got himself a chariot, horses and 50 men to run ahead of him.

⁷ Adonijah talked with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest. They decided to help make him the new king, ⁸ but several important men did not join Adonijah. They were Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei and King David's special guard.*

⁹ One day, at Zohemoth Rock near En Rogel,[†] Adonijah sacrificed some sheep, cattle and fat calves. He invited his brothers, the other sons of King David, and all the officers from Judah. ¹⁰ But he did not invite his brother Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah or the men in the king's special guard.

Nathan Advises Bathsheba

¹¹ When Nathan heard about this, he went to Solomon's mother Bathsheba and asked her, "Have you heard what Haggith's son, Adonijah, is doing? He is making himself king. And our master, King David, knows nothing about it.

¹² You and your son Solomon are in danger, but I will tell you what to do to save yourself. ¹³ Go to King David and tell him, 'My lord and king, you promised me that my son Solomon would be the next king after you. So why is Adonijah becoming the new king?' ¹⁴ Then while you are still talking with him, I will come in. After you leave I will tell the king what has happened. This will show that what you said is true."

¹⁵ So Bathsheba went in to see the king in his bedroom. The king was very old. Abishag, the girl from Shunem, was caring for him there. ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed down to the ground before the king. The king asked, "What can I do for you?"

¹⁷ Bathsheba answered, "Sir, you made a promise to me in the name of the LORD your God. You said, 'Your son Solomon will be the next king after me. He will sit on my throne.' ¹⁸ Now, you don't know this, but Adonijah is making himself king. ¹⁹ He is giving a big fellowship meal. He has killed many cattle and the best sheep, and he has invited all your sons to the meal. He also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of your army, but he did not invite your faithful son Solomon. ²⁰ Now, my lord and king, all the Israelites are watching you. They are waiting for you to decide who will be the next king after you. ²¹ If you don't decide, then after you die, these men will say that Solomon and I are criminals."

²² While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him. ²³ The servants told the king, "Nathan the prophet is here." Nathan went in and bowed down with his face

*1:8 *Shimei, Rei ... guard* Or "Shimei and his friends, the Heroes".

[†]1:9 *En Rogel* A spring of water in the valley south of Jerusalem, about 400 metres from Gihon Spring.

to the ground before the king. ²⁴ He said, “My lord and king, did you announce that Adonijah will be the new king after you? Have you decided that he will rule the people now? ²⁵ Today he went down into the valley to offer a sacrifice of cattle, fat calves and sheep. He invited all your other sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. They are now eating and drinking with him. And they are saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ ²⁶ But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or Benaiah son of Jehoiada or your son Solomon. ²⁷ My lord and king, did you do this without telling us? Please tell us, who will be the next king after you?”

²⁸ Then King David said, “Tell Bathsheba to come in!” So she came in and stood before the king.

²⁹ Then the king made a promise: “The LORD has saved me from every danger. As surely as he lives, I make this promise to you. ³⁰ Today I will do what I promised you in the past. I made that promise by the power of the LORD, the God of Israel. I promised that your son Solomon would be the next king after me. I promised that he would take my place on my throne, and I will keep my promise!”

³¹ Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground before the king and said, “Long live King David!”

Solomon Is Anointed King

³² Then King David said, “Tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to come in here.” So the three men came in to meet with the king. ³³ Then the king said to them, “Take my officers with you. Put my son

Solomon on my mule and take him to Gihon Spring.[‡] ³⁴ There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet will anoint him to be the new king of Israel. Blow the trumpet and announce, ‘This is the new king, Solomon!’ ³⁵ Then come back here with him. Solomon will sit on my throne and be the new king in my place. I have chosen him to be the ruler of Israel and Judah.”

³⁶ Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! It is as true as if the LORD your God himself had said it, my lord and king. ³⁷ My lord and king, the LORD has been with you, and now I pray that he will be with Solomon! And I pray that King Solomon’s kingdom will grow and be even more powerful than yours, my lord and king.”

³⁸ So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah and the king’s officers obeyed King David. They put Solomon on David’s mule and went with him down to Gihon Spring. ³⁹ Zadok the priest carried the oil from the Holy Tent and poured it on Solomon’s head to show that he was the new king. They blew the trumpet and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” ⁴⁰ Then all the people followed Solomon back into the city. They were very happy and excited. They were playing flutes and making so much noise that the ground shook.

⁴¹ Meanwhile, Adonijah and his guests were just finishing their meal. They heard the sound of the trumpet, and Joab asked, “What is that noise? What is happening in the city?”

⁴² While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said, “Come here! You

[‡]1:33 *Gihon Spring* A spring of water just outside the city walls in the valley east of Jerusalem. It was the main source of water for the city of Jerusalem.

are a good man,[¶] so you must be bringing good news.”

⁴³ But Jonathan answered, “No, it is not good news for you! King David has made Solomon the new king. ⁴⁴ King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada and all the king’s officers with Solomon out to Gihon Spring. They put Solomon on the king’s mule. ⁴⁵ Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon at Gihon Spring and then went back into the city. The people followed them, and now everyone in the city is celebrating. That is the noise you hear. ⁴⁶ Yes, Solomon has now become king. ⁴⁷ Also, the king’s officers went to tell King David how happy they are for him. They said, ‘King David, we pray that God will make Solomon even more famous than you! And we pray that Solomon’s kingdom will be even greater than yours!’ Then, from his bed, the king bowed ⁴⁸ and said, ‘Praise the LORD, the God of Israel! He has put one of my sons on my throne this day, and he has let me live to see it.’”

⁴⁹ All of Adonijah’s guests were afraid and left very quickly. ⁵⁰ Adonijah was also afraid of Solomon, so he went and held onto the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ Then someone told Solomon, “Adonijah is afraid of you, King Solomon. He is at the Holy Tent holding onto the horns of the altar, and he refuses to leave. Adonijah says, ‘Tell King Solomon to promise that he will not kill me.’”

⁵² So Solomon answered, “If Adonijah shows that he is a good man, I promise that not a hair on his head will be hurt. But if he does anything wrong, he will die.” ⁵³ Then King Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah. When he was

brought in, he approached the king and bowed down before him. Then Solomon said, “Go home.”

King David Dies

2 The time came for David to die, so he gave these commands to Solomon: ² “Everyone must die, and that time for me has come. But you must be strong and brave. ³ You must do what the LORD your God commands. Live the way he wants you to live. Obey all his laws, commands, decisions and agreements as they are written in the Law of Moses. If you do this, you will be successful at whatever you do and wherever you go. ⁴ You and your descendants must always be careful how you live. You must make every effort to follow the LORD faithfully and sincerely. If you do this, he will keep his promise to me that the king of Israel will always be someone from our family.”

⁵ David also said, “You know the trouble that Joab son of Zeruiah caused me. He killed two of the commanders of Israel’s army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He acted like they were still at war, but it was during a time of peace. So killing them made him guilty of murder.” ⁶ Use your best judgement in deciding what to do with him, but don’t let him die peacefully of old age.

⁷ “Also, be kind to the children of Barzillai from Gilead. Be friends with them, and let them eat at your table, because they helped me when I ran away from your brother Absalom.

⁸ “And remember, Shimei son of Gera is still around. He is the Benjamite from Bahurim who cursed me when I ran away to Mahanaim. But when he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I

[¶]1:42 *good man* Or “important man”. This Hebrew word means a person from an important family.

§2:5 *killing them ... murder* Literally, “he put the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet.”

made a promise to him before the LORD that I would not kill him. ⁹Now, don't leave him unpunished. You are a wise man. You will know what you must do, but don't let him die peacefully of old age."

¹⁰Then David died and was buried in the City of David. ¹¹David ruled Israel for 40 years. He ruled for seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem.

Solomon and Adonijah

¹²Now Solomon was king. He sat on the throne of his father David and was in complete control of his kingdom.

¹³One day Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Solomon's mother, Bathsheba. She asked him, "Do you come in peace?"

Adonijah answered, "Yes, this is a peaceful visit. ¹⁴I have something to ask you."

Bathsheba said, "Then speak."

¹⁵Adonijah said, "You know that at one time the kingdom was mine. All the people of Israel wanted me to be their king. But things have changed, and now my brother is the king. The LORD chose him to be king. ¹⁶But now I have one thing to ask you. Please don't refuse me."

Bathsheba answered, "What do you want?"

¹⁷Adonijah said, "I know that King Solomon will do whatever you ask. So please ask him to let me marry Abishag, the woman from Shunem."

¹⁸Then Bathsheba said, "Very well, I will speak to the king for you."

¹⁹So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to talk with him. When the king saw her, he stood up, bowed before her, and then sat back down. He told some servants to bring another throne for his mother, and she sat down at his right side.

²⁰Bathsheba said to him, "I have one small thing to ask you. Please don't refuse me."

The king answered, "Ask whatever you want, mother. I will not refuse you."

²¹So Bathsheba said, "Let your brother Adonijah marry Abishag, the woman from Shunem."

²²King Solomon answered his mother, "Why are you asking me to give Abishag to Adonijah? Why don't you just ask me to give him the whole kingdom! After all, he is my older brother, and both Abiathar the priest and Joab support him."

²³Then Solomon said, "By the LORD, I swear I'll make Adonijah pay for this with his life! ²⁴The Lord made me the king of Israel. He gave me the throne of my father David. The Lord kept his promise and gave the kingdom to me and my family. Now, as surely as the LORD lives, I swear Adonijah will die today!"

²⁵King Solomon gave the command to Benaiah, and Benaiah went out and killed Adonijah.

²⁶Then King Solomon said to Abiathar the priest, "I should kill you, but I will let you go back to your home in Anathoth. I will not kill you now because you helped carry the Holy Box of the Lord GOD while marching with my father David. And I know that you shared in the hard times with him." ²⁷So Solomon told Abiathar that he could not continue to serve as a priest of the LORD. This happened as the LORD said it would when he told Eli the priest what would happen to him and his family. ^{**}

²⁸Joab had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom. But when Joab heard what had happened to Abiathar, he was frightened and ran to the LORD's tent to hold onto the horns of the altar. ²⁹Someone

****2:27 This ... family** See 1 Sam. 2:27-36.

told King Solomon that Joab was at the altar in the LORD's Tent. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

³⁰ Benaiah went into the LORD's Tent and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'"

But Joab answered, "No, I will die here."

Benaiah went back to the king and told him what Joab had said. ³¹ The king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says! Kill him there and then bury him. Then my family and I will be free of Joab's guilt from killing innocent people. ³² Joab killed two men who were much better than he was. He killed Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah. He did this without my father's knowledge. But now the LORD will punish Joab for the men he killed. ³³ He and his family will always be guilty for their deaths. But the LORD will bring peace to David, his descendants, his family of kings and his kingdom forever."

³⁴ So Benaiah son of Jehoiada killed Joab, and he was buried near his home in the desert. ³⁵ Solomon then made Benaiah son of Jehoiada the commander of the army. Solomon also made Zadok the new high priest in Abiathar's place. ³⁶ Next, the king sent for Shimei and said to him, "Build yourself a house here in Jerusalem to live in and don't leave the city. ³⁷ If you leave the city and go any further than Kidron Brook, you will be killed, and it will be your own fault."

³⁸ Shimei answered, "Yes, my king. I will obey you." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time. ³⁹ But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran away. They went to King Achish of Gath, who was the son of Maacah. Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath, ⁴⁰ so he saddled his donkey and went

to King Achish at Gath to find them. He found them there and brought them back home.

⁴¹ But someone told Solomon that Shimei had left Jerusalem and gone to Gath and back. ⁴² So Solomon sent for him and said, "I made you promise in the LORD's name not to leave Jerusalem. And I warned you that if you went anywhere, you would die. And you agreed to what I said. You said that you would obey me. ⁴³ So why didn't you obey me? Why did you break your promise to the LORD? ⁴⁴ You know all the bad things you did to my father David. Now the LORD will punish you for it. ⁴⁵ But the LORD will bless me and keep David's throne before him forever."

⁴⁶ Then the king ordered Benaiah to kill Shimei, and he did. So Solomon had full control of his kingdom.

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

3 Solomon made a peace treaty with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter. Solomon brought her to the City of David. This was when Solomon was still building his palace, the Temple of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. ² The Temple to honour the LORD had not yet been finished, so the people were still making animal sacrifices on altars at the other places of worship. ³ Solomon showed that he loved the LORD by obeying everything his father David told him to do. But Solomon continued to go to those other places of worship to offer sacrifices and to burn incense.

⁴ King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice because that was the most important place of worship. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ While Solomon was at Gibeon, the LORD came to him at night in a dream

and said to him, "Ask me for whatever you want me to give you."

⁶Solomon answered, "You were very kind and loyal to your servant, my father David. He was faithful to you and lived a good, honest life. And you showed him the greatest kindness when you let his son take his place as king. ⁷LORD my God, you have made me the king in my father's place, but I am like a small child. I don't have the wisdom I need to do what I must do. ⁸I am your servant here among your chosen people. There are so many that they cannot be counted. ⁹So I ask you to give me the wisdom to rule and judge them well and to help me know the difference between right and wrong. Without such great wisdom, it would be impossible to rule this great nation."

¹⁰The Lord was happy that Solomon asked for wisdom. ¹¹So God said to him, "You did not ask for long life and riches for yourself. You did not ask for the death of your enemies. You asked for the wisdom to listen and make the right decisions. ¹²So I will give you what you asked for. I will make you wise and intelligent. I will make you wiser than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live. ¹³And I will also give you what you did not ask for. You will have riches and honour all your life. There will be no other king in the world as great as you. ¹⁴And I will give you a long life if you follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did."

¹⁵Solomon woke up and knew that God had spoken to him in the dream. Then Solomon went to Jerusalem and stood before the Box of the LORD's Agreement. He offered a burnt offering and fellowship offerings to the Lord and then gave a party for all his officials.

Proof of Solomon's Wisdom

¹⁶One day two prostitutes came to Solomon and stood before the king. ¹⁷One of the women said, "Sir, this woman and I live in the same house. We were both pregnant and ready to give birth to our babies. I had my baby while she was there with me. ¹⁸Three days later, she also gave birth to her baby. There was no one else in the house with us, just the two of us. ¹⁹One night in her sleep, she accidentally rolled on top of the baby, and the baby died. ²⁰That night while I was asleep, she took my son from my bed and carried him to her bed. Then she put the dead baby in my bed. ²¹In the morning I woke up and was about to feed the baby when I saw that he was dead. When I looked at him more closely, I saw that he was not my baby."

²²But the other woman said, "No! The dead baby is yours, and the one still alive is mine!"

But the first woman said, "No, you are wrong! The dead baby is yours! The one that is still alive is mine." So the two women argued in front of the king.

²³Then King Solomon said, "Each of you says that the living baby is your own and that the dead baby belongs to the other woman." ²⁴Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword. ²⁵He told the servant, "Cut the living baby in two and give one half of the baby to each woman."

²⁶The second woman said, "Yes, cut him in two. Then neither of us will have him." But the first woman, the real mother, loved her son and said to the king, "Please, sir, don't kill the baby! Give him to her."

²⁷Then King Solomon said, "Stop, don't kill the baby. Give him to this woman. She is the real mother."

²⁸The people of Israel respected the king when they heard about this decision. They saw he had the wisdom of God^{††} to make the right decisions.

Solomon's Kingdom

4 King Solomon ruled over all Israel. ²These are the names of his leading officials:

Azariah son of Zadok was the priest;

³Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha, had the job of writing notes about what happened in the courts;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud wrote notes about the history of the people;

⁴Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the commander of the army;

Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

⁵Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors;

Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and an adviser to King Solomon;

⁶Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king's palace;

Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the slaves.

⁷Israel was divided into twelve districts. Solomon chose governors to rule over each district. These governors were ordered to gather food from their districts and give it to the king and his family. Each of the twelve governors was responsible for giving food to the king for one month each year. ⁸These are the names of the twelve governors:

Ben Hur was governor of the hill country of Ephraim.

⁹Ben Deker was governor of Makaz, Shaalvim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan.

¹⁰Ben Hessed was governor of Arubboth, Socoh and Hepher.

¹¹Ben Abinadab was governor of Naphoth Dor. He was married to Taphath, daughter of Solomon.

¹²Baana son of Ahilud was governor of Taanach and Megiddo and all of Beth Shean next to Zarethan. This was below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah across from Jokmeam.

¹³Ben Geber was governor of Ramoth Gilead. He was governor of all the towns and villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead. He was also governor of the district of Argob in Bashan. In this area there were 60 cities with big walls around them. These cities also had bronze bars on the gates.

¹⁴Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor of Mahanaim.

¹⁵Ahimaaz was governor of Naphtali. He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.

¹⁶Baana son of Hushai was governor of Asher and Aloth.

¹⁷Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor of Issachar.

¹⁸Shimei son of Ela was governor of Benjamin.

¹⁹Geber son of Uri was governor of Gilead. There had been two kings in this area, King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan, but Solomon appointed only one governor for that district.

²⁰In Judah and Israel there were as many people as grains of sand on the seashore. The people were happy and had plenty to eat and drink.

²¹Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines. His kingdom went as far as the border of Egypt. These

^{††}3:28 *the wisdom of God* Or "very great wisdom".

countries sent gifts to Solomon, and they obeyed him all his life.^{‡‡}

^{22–23} This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day for all the people he was responsible for: 6600 litres^{¶¶} of fine flour, 13,200 litres^{§§} of meal, 10 grain-fed cattle, 20 pasture-fed cattle, 100 sheep, wild animals such as deer, gazelles, roe deer and game birds.

²⁴ Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River, from Tiph-sah to Gaza. And Solomon had peace along all the borders of his kingdom.

²⁵ During Solomon's life everyone in Judah and Israel, all the way from Dan to Beersheba, lived in peace and security. The people were at peace, sitting under their own fig trees and grapevines.

²⁶ Solomon had places to keep 4000* horses for his chariots, and he had 12,000 horses for riding. ²⁷ And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon everything he needed for all the people who ate at the king's table. ²⁸ Each governor also brought enough straw and barley to where it was needed for the chariot horses and the riding horses.

Solomon's Wisdom

²⁹ God made Solomon very wise. Solomon could understand more than anyone could imagine. ³⁰ He was wiser than anyone in the East or in Egypt. ³¹ He was wiser than anyone on earth, even Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of Mahol—Heman, Calcol and Darda. King

Solomon became famous in all the surrounding countries. ³² By the end of his life, he had written[†] 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs.

³³ Solomon taught about many different kinds of plants—everything from the great cedar trees of Lebanon to the little vines that grow out of the walls. He also taught about animals, birds and snakes.[‡]

³⁴ People from every nation came to listen to Solomon's wisdom. Kings all over the world sent their people to listen to him.

Solomon and Hiram

5 Hiram was the king of Tyre. He had always been David's friend. So when Hiram heard that Solomon had become the new king after David, he sent his servants to Solomon. ² This is the message that Solomon sent to King Hiram:

³ "You remember that my father, King David, had to fight many wars all around him. So he was never able to build a temple to honour the LORD his God. King David was waiting until the LORD allowed him to defeat all his enemies. ⁴ But now the LORD my God has given me peace along all the borders of my country. I have no enemies, and my people are in no danger.

⁵ "The LORD made a promise to my father David. He said, 'I will make your son king after you, and he will build a temple to honour me.' So now I plan to build that tem-

^{‡‡}4:21 *sent gifts ... life* This showed that these countries had made peace agreements with Solomon because of his great power.

^{¶¶}4:22-23 *6600 litres* Literally, "30 cors".

^{§§}4:22-23 *13,200 litres* Literally, "60 cors".

*4:26 *4000* This is found in some copies of the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has 40,000, but see 2 Chr. 9:25.

[†]4:32 *written* Literally, "spoken".

[‡]4:33 *snakes* Literally, "creeping things". These can be anything: insects, lizards, snakes or fish.

ple to honour the LORD my God.

⁶And so I ask you to help me. Send your men to Lebanon to cut down cedar trees for me. My men will work with them, and I will pay you whatever wages you want for your workers. As you know, we have no one as skilled in cutting timber as your men from Sidon.”

⁷Hiram was very happy when he heard what Solomon asked. He said, “I praise the LORD today for giving David a wise son to rule this great nation!” ⁸Then Hiram sent this message to Solomon:

“I heard what you asked for. I will give you all the cedar trees and the pine trees you want. ⁹My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. Then I will tie them together and float them down the shore to the place you choose. There I will separate the logs, and you can take them from there. As payment for this, you can give food to all those who live in my palace.”

¹⁰So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and pine logs that he wanted.

¹¹Solomon gave Hiram about 2000 tonnes[¶] of wheat and about 440,000 litres[§] of pure olive oil every year for his family.

¹²The LORD made Solomon wise as he had promised. Hiram and Solomon made a treaty between themselves and were at peace with each other.

¹³King Solomon forced 30,000 men from all over Israel to help in this work.

¹⁴He chose a man named Adoniram to be in charge of them. Solomon divided the men into three groups with 10,000 men in each group. Each group worked for one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months. ¹⁵Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country cutting stone. There were also 70,000 men to carry the stones. ¹⁶There were 3300 men^{**} to supervise the workers. ¹⁷King Solomon commanded them to cut large, expensive stones for the foundation of the Temple. ¹⁸Solomon’s and Hiram’s builders were joined by men from Byblos^{††} to carve the stones and prepare the logs and the stones for use in building the Temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 So in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year, during Solomon’s fourth year as king, he began work on the Temple for the LORD. This was 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt.^{‡‡}

²The Temple was 27 metres^{¶¶} long, 9 metres^{§§} wide and 13.5 metres^{*} high.

³The porch at the front of the Temple was 9 metres across, the same as the width of the Temple. It was 4.5 metres[†] wide.

⁴The Temple walls had narrow openings that were smaller on the outside than on the inside. ⁵A row of rooms was built against the outside wall of the main part of the Temple. These rooms

[¶]5:11 **2000 tonnes** Literally, “20,000 cors”.

[§]5:11 **440,000 litres** Literally, “20,000 baths”. This is from the ancient Greek version and the parallel passage in 2 Chr. 2:10. The traditional Hebrew text has “20 cors”.

^{**}5:16 Some ancient Greek copies have “3600 men”. See 2 Chr. 2:2.

^{††}5:18 **Byblos** Literally, “Gebal”.

^{‡‡}6:1 **480 years ... Egypt** This was about 960 BC.

^{¶¶}6:2 **27 metres** Literally, “60 cubits”.

^{§§}6:2 **9 metres** Literally, “20 cubits”. Also in verses 16,20.

^{*}6:2 **13.5 metres** Literally, “30 cubits”. The ancient Greek version has “25 cubits”.

[†]6:3 **4.5 metres** Literally, “10 cubits”. Also in verses 23,24-26.

were all the way around this part of the building. ⁶This row of rooms was three storeys high. The wood beams that held up these side rooms rested on ledges built out from the Temple wall, so they were not fastened to the Temple wall itself. The rooms on the bottom floor were just over 2 metres[‡] wide. The rooms on the middle floor were almost 3 metres[¶] wide. The rooms on top were just over 3 metres[§] wide. ⁷The stones were completely finished before they were brought into the Temple area, so there was no noise of hammers, axes or any other iron tools at the Temple.

⁸The entrance to these rooms was on the bottom floor at the south side of the Temple. Inside there were stairs that went up to the second floor and from there to the third floor.

⁹Solomon had the workers put up a ceiling to complete the main part of the Temple building. The ceiling was made from cedar beams and planks. ¹⁰Then they finished building the rooms around the Temple. Each of the three stories was just over 2 metres tall. The cedar beams above these rooms rested on edges around the Temple wall.

¹¹The LORD said to Solomon, ¹²“If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do for you what I promised your father David. ¹³I will live among the people of Israel in this Temple that you are building, and I will never leave the people of Israel.”

¹⁴When the stonework on the Temple was finished, Solomon had ¹⁵the stone walls inside the Temple covered with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. Then the stone floor was covered with pine

boards. ¹⁶The workers built an inner room 9 metres long in the back part of the Temple. It was called the Most Holy Place. They covered the walls with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. ¹⁷In front of the Most Holy Place was the main part of the Temple. This room was 18 metres^{**} long. ¹⁸They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards so that none of the stones could be seen. They carved designs of flowers and gourds into the cedar.

¹⁹The inner room at the back of the Temple was for the Box of the LORD’s Agreement. ²⁰This room was 9 metres long, 9 metres wide and 9 metres high. Solomon had the walls covered with pure gold. The cedar altar was also covered with gold, ²¹as was the inside of the Temple. He had gold chains put across the entrance to the Most Holy place, which was also covered with pure gold. ²²So the inside of the Temple was completely covered with gold, including the altar in front of the Most Holy Place.

²³The workers made two statues of winged creatures. They made the statues from olive wood and put them in the Most Holy Place. Each angel was 4.5 metres tall. ²⁴⁻²⁶Both winged creatures were the same size and built the same way. Each one had two wings. Each wing was just over 2 metres long. From the end of one wing to the end of the other wing was 4.5 metres. And each winged creature was 4.5 metres tall. ²⁷They put the winged creatures beside each other in the Most Holy Place. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each

[‡]6:6 2 metres Literally, “5 cubits”. Also in verses 10,24-26.

[¶]6:6 3 metres Literally, “6 cubits”.

[§]6:6 3 metres Literally, “7 cubits”.

^{**}6:17 18 metres Literally, “40 cubits”.

side wall. ²⁸The two winged creatures were covered with gold.

²⁹The walls around the main room and the inner room were carved with designs of winged creatures, palm trees and flowers. ³⁰The floor of both rooms was covered with gold.

³¹The workers made two doors from olive wood. They put these doors at the entrance of the Most Holy Place. The frame around the doors was made with five sides.^{††} ³²They made the two doors from olive wood. The workers carved designs of winged creatures, palm trees and flowers on the doors. Then they covered the doors with gold.

³³They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square doorframe.

³⁴There were two doors made from pine. Each door had two parts that folded together. ³⁵They carved designs of winged creatures, palm trees and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

³⁶Then they built a wall around the inner courtyard. Each wall was made from cut stones and cedar timbers. One row of timbers followed every three rows of stones.

³⁷They started working on the LORD's Temple in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. This was during Solomon's fourth year as king of Israel.

³⁸The Temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year, in Solomon's eleventh year as king. It took seven years to build the Temple. It was built exactly as planned.

Solomon's Palace

7 King Solomon also built a palace for himself. It took 13 years to build Solomon's palace. ²One building, called the Forest-of-Lebanon House, was 44 metres^{‡‡} long, 22 metres^{¶¶} wide and 13.5 metres^{§§} high. It had four rows of cedar pillars. On top of each pillar was a cedar capital. ³There were cedar beams going across the rows of pillars. There were 15 beams for each section of pillars, making a total of 45 beams. On top of these beams there were cedar boards for the ceiling. ⁴There were three rows of windows across from each other on the side walls. ⁵There were three doors at each end. All the doorways and windows had rectangular frames.

⁶Solomon also built the Hall of Pillars. It was 22 metres long and 13.5 metres wide. Along the front was a porch with a covering supported by pillars.

⁷He also built a throne room where he judged people. He called this the Judgement Hall. The room was covered with cedar from floor to ceiling.

⁸Behind the Judgement Hall was a courtyard. The palace where Solomon lived was built around that courtyard and looked like the Judgement Hall. He also built the same kind of palace for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

⁹All these buildings were made with expensive blocks of stone. The stones were cut to the right size with a saw and then smoothed on front and back. These expensive stones went from the foundation all the way up to the top layer of the wall. Even the wall around the court-

^{††}6:31 *The frame ... sides* This may mean the top of the frame was two sections that formed a pointed arch.

^{‡‡}7:2 *44 metres* Literally, "100 cubits".

^{¶¶}7:2 *22 metres* Literally, "50 cubits". Also in verse 6.

^{§§}7:2 *13.5 metres* Literally, "30 cubits". Also in verses 6,23.

yard was made with expensive blocks of stone.¹⁰ And the foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 4.5 metres* long and the others were 3.5 metres† long.¹¹ On top of these stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams.¹² There were walls around the palace courtyard and around the courtyard and porch of the LORD's Temple. The walls were built with three rows of stone and one row of cedar timbers.

¹³ King Solomon sent for a man named Hiram‡ who lived in Tyre and brought him to Jerusalem.¹⁴ Hiram's mother was an Israelite from the tribe of Naphtali. His father, who was from Tyre, had been skilled in making things from bronze. Hiram was also very skilled and experienced in working with bronze. He came and did all the work King Solomon gave him to do.

¹⁵ Hiram made two bronze pillars for the porch. Each pillar was 8 metres¶ tall and more than 5 metres§ around. The pillars were hollow and their metal walls were over 75 millimetres** thick.††¹⁶ He also made two bronze capitals that were just over 2 metres‡‡ tall. He put these capitals on top of the pillars.¹⁷ He made two nets of chains to decorate the capitals on top of the two pillars.¹⁸ Then he made two rows of bronze pomegranates. He put the bronze pomegranates on the

nets of each pillar, covering the capitals at the top of the pillars.¹⁹ The capitals on top of the pillars were shaped like flowers and were almost 2 metres¶¶ tall.²⁰ The capitals were on top of the pillars, above the bowl-shaped net. There were 200 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals.²¹ Hiram put these two bronze pillars at the porch of the Temple. One pillar was put on the south side of the entrance and one was put on the north side of it. The pillar on the south was named Jakin. The pillar on the north was named Boaz.§§²² They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the pillars, and the work on the two pillars was finished.

²³ Then Hiram melted bronze to make a large round basin called the Sea. It was 4.5 metres across from rim to rim. It was 2 metres deep and 13.5 metres around.²⁴ Below the rim of the basin were images of gourds in two rows all the way around. They were moulded in place as part of the basin, 10 gourds every 44 centimetres.²⁵ The large basin rested on top of twelve large statues of bulls. Three bulls looked towards the north, three towards the west, three towards the south and three towards the east. The large basin was on top of these bulls, which all faced out from the centre.²⁶ The sides of the basin were 75 millimetres thick. The rim was like the rim of a cup or the

*7:10 4.5 metres Literally, "10 cubits". Also in verse 23.

†7:10 3.5 metres Literally, "8 cubits".

‡7:13 Hiram Or "Hiram". Also in verses 15,23,27,37,38,40-45.

¶7:15 8 metres Literally, "18 cubits".

§7:15 5 metres Literally, "12 cubits".

**7:15 75 millimetres Literally, "1 handbreadth". Also in verse 26.

††7:15 *The pillars ... 75 millimetres thick* This is from the ancient Greek version.

‡‡7:16 2 metres Literally, "5 cubits". Also in verse 23.

¶¶7:19 2 metres Literally, "4 cubits". Also in verses 27,38.

§§7:21 *Jakin, Boaz* In Hebrew, Jakin seems to mean "he establishes" and Boaz "in him is strength".

flower of a lily. The basin held 44,000 litres* of water.

²⁷ Then Hiram made ten bronze carts. Each cart was almost 2 metres long, almost 2 metres wide and almost 1.5 metres† high. ²⁸ The carts were made with square panels set in frames. ²⁹ On the panels and frames were bronze bulls, lions and winged creatures. There were designs of flowers hammered into the bronze above and below the bulls and lions. ³⁰ Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the corners there were bronze supports for a large bowl. The supports had designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. ³¹ There was a frame around the top with an opening for the bowl. The frame was 44 centimetres‡ tall, and the opening was 66 centimetres¶ in diameter. There were designs carved into the bronze on the frame. The frame was square, not round. ³² There were four wheels under the frame. The wheels were 66 centimetres in diameter. The axles between the wheels were made as one piece with the cart. ³³ The wheels were like the wheels on a chariot. Everything on the wheels—the axles, the rims, the spokes and the hubs were made from bronze.

³⁴ There were supports at each of the four corners of the carts. They were made as one piece with the cart. ³⁵ There was a strip of bronze around the top of each cart. It was made as one piece with the cart. ³⁶ The sides of the cart and the frames were covered with carved designs of winged creatures, lions and palm trees that were surrounded with

flower designs. ³⁷ Hiram made ten carts, and they were all the same. Each cart was made from bronze. The bronze was melted and poured into a mould. So all the carts were the same size and shape.

³⁸ Hiram also made ten bowls. There was one bowl for each of the ten carts. Each bowl was almost 2 metres across and could hold about 800 litres.§ ³⁹ He put five carts on the south side of the Temple and five carts on the north side. He put the large basin at the south-east corner of the Temple. ^{40–45} He also made the pots, shovels and bowls.

So Hiram finished everything King Solomon wanted him to make for the Temple of the LORD:

2 pillars;
 2 bowl-shaped capitals for the top of the pillars;
 2 nets made of bronze chains to decorate the capitals;
 400 pomegranates to make two rows around each net covering the capitals;
 10 carts with a bowl on each cart;
 the large basin with 12 bulls under it;
 the pots, shovels and bowls.
 These were all the things King Solomon wanted Hiram to make for the LORD's Temple. He made them all from polished bronze. ^{46–47} Solomon never weighed the bronze that was used to make these things. There was too much to weigh, so the total weight was never known. The king ordered these things to be made near the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan. They made them by melting the bronze and pouring it into moulds in the ground.

*7:26 44,000 litres Literally, "2000 baths".

†7:27 1.5 metres Literally, "3 cubits".

‡7:31 44 centimetres Literally, "1 cubit".

¶7:31 66 centimetres Literally, "1 1/2 cubits".

§7:38 800 litres Literally, "40 baths".

48-50 Solomon also commanded that all these things be made from gold for the Temple:

the golden altar;

the golden table that held the holy bread offered to God;

the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north side in front of the Most Holy Place;

the gold flowers, lamps and tongs**;

the pure gold bowls, lamp snuffers, small bowls, dishes for incense and pans for carrying coals;

the gold hinges for the doors to the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors to the main room of the Temple.

51 When all the work was completed on the LORD's Temple, Solomon brought in everything his father David had set aside for the Temple. Solomon put the silver, the gold and the utensils into the storerooms in the LORD's Temple.

The Box of the Agreement in the Temple

8 Then Solomon commanded all the leaders of Israel, the leaders of the tribes and the leaders of the families of Israel to meet together in Jerusalem. He did this so that they could bring the Box of the LORD's Agreement up to the Temple from the City of David, that is, Zion.

2 So during the special festival†† in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month of the year, all the men of Israel came to the meeting with King Solomon.

3-4 When all the leaders of Israel arrived, the priests and Levites carried the Holy Box of the LORD up to the Tem-

ple. They also carried the Meeting Tent and all the holy things that were in it up to the Temple. 5 King Solomon and all the Israelites met together before the Box of the Agreement and sacrificed so many sheep and cattle that no one was able to count them all. 6 The priests carried the Box of the LORD's Agreement to its proper place inside the Most Holy Place in the Temple, under the wings of the winged creatures. 7 The wings of the winged creatures covered the Holy Box and the poles that were used to carry it. 8 The poles were so long that their ends could not be seen from anywhere outside the Most Holy Place except right in front of the entrance. The poles are still there today. 9 The only things inside the Holy Box were the two tablets that Moses put there at Mount Horeb. This is where the LORD made his agreement with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

10 When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud‡‡ filled the LORD's Temple. 11 The priests could not continue their work because the Temple was filled with the glory of the LORD.

12 Then Solomon said:

“LORD, you caused the sun to shine in the sky,
but you have said that you would live in a dark cloud.”¶¶

13 Now I have built a beautiful Temple for you to live in forever.”

Solomon's Speech

14 Then King Solomon turned towards the gathering of all the Israelites as they

**7:48-50 *tongs* A tool used to hold hot coals.

††8:2 *the special festival* That is, the Festival of Shelters. See Festival of Shelters in the Word List.

‡‡8:10 *cloud* The special sign that showed God was with his people.

¶¶8:12 *LORD ... dark cloud* This is from the ancient Greek version, which places verses 12-13 after verse 53. In verse 12 the traditional Hebrew text has only “The LORD said he would live in thick darkness.”

stood there before him and asked God to bless them. ¹⁵ He said,

“Praise the LORD, the God of Israel! He has done what he promised my father David. He told my father, ¹⁶ ‘I brought my people, Israel, out of Egypt long ago. From that time until now, I had not chosen a city from among the tribes of Israel as a place to build a temple where people could honour me. And I had not chosen a man to be the leader over my people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem to be the city where I will be honoured.’^{§§} And I have chosen David to rule over my people Israel.’

¹⁷ “My father David wanted to build a temple to honour the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But the LORD said to my father, ‘It is good that you want to build a temple to honour me. ¹⁹ But you are not the one to build it. Your son will build the Temple to honour me.’

²⁰ “So now the LORD has done what he said he would do. I have taken my father’s place as the king of Israel, as the LORD promised. And I have built this Temple to honour the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ And inside the Temple I have made a place for the Holy Box, which holds the Agreement that the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt.”

Solomon’s Prayer

²² Solomon stood and faced the LORD’s altar, with all the Israelites gathered behind him. He lifted his hands towards heaven ²³ and said,

“LORD, God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth. You keep the agreement that you made with your people. You are kind and loyal to those who follow you with all their heart. ²⁴ You made a promise to your servant, my father David, and you kept that promise. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you made it come true today. ²⁵ Now, LORD, God of Israel, keep the other promises you made to your servant David, my father. You said, ‘David, if your sons carefully obey me as you did, you will always have someone from your family ruling the people of Israel.’ ²⁶ Again, God of Israel, I ask you to keep the promise you made to your servant, my father David.

²⁷ “But, God, will you really live here on the earth? The whole sky and the highest heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this Temple that I built cannot contain you either. ²⁸ But I beg you to listen to my prayer. I am your servant, and you are the LORD my God. I cry out to you! Hear this prayer that I am praying to you today. ²⁹ Please watch over this Temple, night and day, the place you promised to make your home. And listen to my prayer as I turn towards this Temple and pray to you. ³⁰ And please listen to my prayers and the prayers of your people Israel when we turn towards this place and pray to you. Hear us from heaven where you live. And when you hear our prayers, forgive us.

³¹ “Those who do wrong to others will be brought to this altar. If they

^{§§} **8:16 And I ... honoured** This is from a Hebrew scroll from Qumran and the ancient Greek version. It is also found in the traditional Hebrew text of 2 Chr 6:5-6, but not here.

are not guilty, they will make an oath and promise that they are innocent. ³²Please listen from heaven and judge them. If they are guilty, show that they are guilty. And if they are innocent, show that they are not guilty. Give them what they deserve.

³³“Sometimes your people Israel will sin against you, and their enemies will defeat them. Then the people will come back to you and praise you. They will pray to you in this Temple. ³⁴Please listen to them from heaven, and forgive your people Israel for their sins. And let them have their land again, the land you gave to their ancestors.

³⁵“Sometimes they will sin against you, and you will stop the rain from falling on their land. Then they will pray towards this place and praise your name. And they will turn from their sins because of your punishment. ³⁶Then please listen from heaven to their prayers and forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live. Then, Lord, please send rain to the land you gave them to be their own.

³⁷“The land might become too dry to produce food. Or maybe a great sickness will spread among the people. Maybe all the food that is growing will be destroyed by insects. Or your people might be attacked in some of their cities by their enemies. Or many of your people might get sick. ³⁸When any of these things happen, and people are troubled and feel the need to lift their hands in prayer towards this Temple, ³⁹please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven.

Forgive them and help them. Only you know what people are really thinking, so only you can judge them fairly. ⁴⁰Do this so that your people will fear and respect you all the time that they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors.

^{41–42}“People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this Temple. ⁴³From your home in heaven, please listen to their prayers. Please do everything the people from other places ask you. Then people everywhere will fear and respect you the same as your people Israel. And they will know that this Temple I built is for your honour.

⁴⁴“Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn towards this city that you have chosen and the Temple that I built in your honour, and they will pray to you, LORD. ⁴⁵Please listen from heaven to their prayers and help them.

⁴⁶“I know that your people will sin against you, because everyone sins, and you will be angry with your people. You will let their enemies defeat them, and their enemies will take them away as captives to a faraway land. ⁴⁷In that faraway land, your people will think about what happened. They will be sorry for their sins, and they will pray to you. They will say, ‘We have sinned and done wrong.’ ⁴⁸They will be in that faraway land of their enemies, but they will turn back to you. They will feel sorry for their sins with their whole heart and soul. They will turn towards the land you gave their ancestors. They will look

towards the city you chose and towards the Temple I built, and they will pray to you. ⁴⁹Please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and do what is right. ⁵⁰Forgive your sinful people for all the things they have done against you. Make their enemies be kind to them. ⁵¹Remember that they are your people and that you brought them out of Egypt. It was as if you saved them by pulling them out of a hot oven!

⁵²“Please listen to my prayers and to the prayers of your people Israel. Listen to their prayers any time that they ask you for help. ⁵³You have chosen them from all the peoples of the earth to be your own special people. Lord GOD, you promised to do that for us. You used your servant Moses to make that promise when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

⁵⁴When Solomon prayed this prayer to the LORD, he was on his knees in front of the LORD’s altar and his arms were raised towards heaven. When he finished praying, he stood up. ⁵⁵Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said:

⁵⁶“Praise the LORD! He promised to give rest to his people Israel. And he has given us rest! Through his servant Moses, he made many good promises to the people of Israel. And he has kept every one of them! ⁵⁷I pray that the LORD our God will be with us, as he was with our ancestors. I pray that he will never leave us. ⁵⁸I pray that we will turn to him and follow him. Then we will obey all the laws, decisions and commands that he gave our ances-

tors. ⁵⁹I pray that the LORD our God will always remember this prayer and what I have asked. I pray that he will do these things for his servant, the king and for his people Israel. I pray that he will do this every day. ⁶⁰If he will do these things, all the people of the world will know that the LORD is the only true God. ⁶¹You people must be loyal and true to the LORD our God. You must always follow and obey all his laws and commands. You must continue to obey in the future as you do now.”

⁶²Then King Solomon and all the Israelites with him offered sacrifices to the LORD. ⁶³Solomon killed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings to the LORD. In this way, the king and all the Israelites dedicated the Temple to the LORD.

⁶⁴That same day, King Solomon also dedicated the middle of the courtyard, the part that is in front of the LORD’s Temple. There he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat from the animals that were used as fellowship offerings. He made these offerings in the courtyard because the bronze altar in front of the LORD’s Temple was too small to hold them all.

⁶⁵So there at the Temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the festival.* People came from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the border of Egypt in the south. This huge crowd of people enjoyed themselves together with the LORD our God for seven days. Then they stayed for another seven days. They celebrated for a total of 14 days.† ⁶⁶The next day, Solomon told the people to go home. All the people wished God’s

*8:65 *festival* The Festival of Shelters. See verse 2.

†8:65 *Then ... 14 days* This is not in the ancient Greek version.

blessings on the king as they said good-bye and went home. They were happy because of all the good things that the LORD had done for his servant David and for his people Israel.

God Appears to Solomon Again

9 So Solomon finished building the LORD's Temple and his own palace. Solomon built everything that he wanted to build. ²Then the LORD appeared to Solomon again, just as he had done at Gibeon. ³The LORD said to him,

"I heard your prayer and what you asked me to do. You built this Temple, and I have made it a holy place. So I will be honoured here forever. I will watch over this place. It will always be important to me. ⁴You must serve me with a pure and honest heart, just as your father David did. You must obey my laws and do everything that I commanded you. ⁵If you do, I will make sure that your family will always rule Israel, just as I promised your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by one of his descendants.

⁶⁻⁷"But if you or your children stop following me and don't obey the laws and commands that I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, I will force you Israelites to leave the land that I have given to you. And I will leave this Temple that I have made holy as a place for me to live. And Israel will be a nation that people everywhere will make fun of as a total failure. ⁸This Temple will be de-

stroyed.[‡] And everyone who sees it will be shocked at what has happened. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do such a terrible thing to this land and to this Temple?' ⁹Other people will answer, 'This happened because they left the LORD their God. He brought their ancestors out of Egypt, but they decided to follow other gods. They began to worship and serve those gods. That is why the LORD caused all these bad things to happen to them.'"

¹⁰It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the LORD's Temple and the king's palace. ¹¹Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar, pine and gold that he wanted, so Solomon gave him 20 cities in Galilee. ¹²Hiram travelled from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him. But Hiram was not pleased when he saw them. ¹³King Hiram said, "What are these towns that you have given me, my brother?" So he named that land the Land of Cabul.[¶] And that area is still called Cabul today. ¹⁴Hiram had sent King Solomon more than 4000 kilogrammes[§] of gold.

¹⁵King Solomon forced slaves to work for him to build the LORD's Temple and his palace. Then he used these slaves to build many other things. He built the Millo and the city wall around Jerusalem. Then he rebuilt the cities of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

¹⁶In the past the king of Egypt had fought against the city of Gezer and burned it. He killed the Canaanites who lived there. When Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, Pharaoh gave him that city as a wedding present.

[‡]**9:8 will be destroyed** This is from the Syriac and Old Latin versions. The traditional Hebrew text has "will become high".

[¶]**9:13 Cabul** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "worthless".

[§]**9:14 4000 kilogrammes** Literally, "120 talents".

¹⁷Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the city of Lower Beth Horon. ¹⁸He also built the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the Judean desert. ¹⁹He also built cities where he could store grain, and he built places for his chariots and his horses. King Solomon built whatever he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon and all the places he ruled.

²⁰There were people left in the land who were not Israelites. There were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ²¹These were descendants of the nations that the Israelites were not able to destroy completely. So Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. ²²Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The Israelites were soldiers, government officials, officers, the king's special forces,** and chariot commanders and drivers. ²³There were 550 supervisors over the men working on Solomon's projects.

²⁴Pharaoh's daughter moved from the City of David to the palace that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

²⁵Three times each year Solomon offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he built for the LORD. King Solomon also burned incense before the LORD and supplied what was needed for the Temple.

²⁶King Solomon also had a fleet of ships built at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. ²⁷King Hiram sent Solomon some skilled sailors who knew the sea well to join Solomon's

men in sailing the ships. ²⁸They sailed to Ophir^{††} and brought back about 16 tonnes^{‡‡} of gold for King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10 The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon and how close he was to the LORD, so she came to test him with hard questions. ²She travelled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels and a lot of gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. ³Solomon answered all her questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain. ⁴The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built. ⁵She saw the food at the king's table. She saw his officials as they were seated. She saw the well-dressed servants—those who served the food and those who served the wine. And she saw all the burnt offerings that Solomon offered in the LORD's Temple. She was so amazed, she could hardly breathe!

⁶Then she said to King Solomon, "Everything I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. ⁷I did not believe it until I came and saw it with my own eyes. But what I have seen here is far more than what I had heard. Your wealth and wisdom are much greater than what people told me. ⁸Your wives^{¶¶} and officers are very fortunate, because they serve you and hear your wisdom every day. ⁹Praise the LORD your God! He was pleased to

**9:22 *king's special forces* A special group of soldiers who formed three-man squads and went on special missions for the king.

††9:28 *Ophir* A place where there was much gold. Today no one knows where Ophir was. Also in 10:11.

‡‡9:28 *16 tonnes* Literally, "420 talents" (14,000 kilogrammes).

¶¶10:8 *wives* This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "men".

make you king of Israel. Because of the LORD's unending love for Israel, he has made you king to rule with justice and fairness."

¹⁰Then the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon more than 4000 kilogrammes^{§§} of gold, a huge amount of spices and precious stones. She gave him more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel since.

¹¹King Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir. They also brought jewels and juniper wood.* ¹²Solomon used this special wood to build supports in the Temple and the palace and for harps and lyres for the singers. That was the last time such a large shipment of that kind of wood was brought to Israel. There hasn't been any seen around here since then.†

¹³King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she asked for. He gave her more than she brought to give him. Then the queen of Sheba and her servants left and went back to their own country.

Solomon's Great Wealth

¹⁴Every year King Solomon received almost 23,000 kilogrammes[‡] of gold. ¹⁵In addition to the gold brought in by the travelling merchants and traders, all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon.

¹⁶King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. He used almost 7 kilogrammes[¶] of gold for each shield. ¹⁷He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. He used almost 2 kilogrammes[§] of gold for each shield. The king put them in the Forest-of-Lebanon House.**

¹⁸King Solomon also built a large throne with ivory decorations. It was covered with pure gold. ¹⁹There were six steps leading up to the throne. The back of the throne was round at the top. There were armrests on both sides of the throne, and there were statues of lions on the sides of the throne under the armrests. ²⁰There were also two lions on each of the six steps, one at each end. There was nothing like it in any other kingdom.

²¹All of Solomon's drinking cups and all the dishes^{††} in the Forest-of-Lebanon House were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. Silver was so common in Solomon's time that people did not think it was worth much.

²²The king also had a fleet of cargo ships^{‡‡} that sailed the sea together with Hiram's ships. Every three years the ships would return with a load of gold, silver, ivory, monkeys and baboons.

²³King Solomon became the richest and wisest of all the kings on earth. ²⁴People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon and listen to the great wisdom

§§10:10 4000 kilogrammes Literally, "120 talents".

*10:11 juniper wood Or "sandalwood". Literally, "almug wood".

†10:12 since then Literally, "to this day", that is, when the book of Kings was written.

‡10:14 23,000 kilogrammes Literally, "666 talents".

¶10:16 7 kilogrammes Hebrew, "600 shekels". Also in verse 29.

§10:17 2 kilogrammes Hebrew, "3 minas".

**10:17 Forest-of-Lebanon House The largest of king Solomon's palace buildings. See 1 Kgs 7:2-5.

††10:21 dishes The Hebrew word can mean "dishes", "tools" or "weapons".

‡‡10:22 cargo ships Literally, "ships of Tarshish".

that God had given him. ²⁵Every year people came to see the king and brought gifts made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses and mules.

²⁶Solomon started gathering horses and chariots for his army. He had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He kept some in the cities he had built for storing chariots, and he kept the rest of them close to Jerusalem for protection. ²⁷King Solomon had brought a lot of wealth into Jerusalem. He had as much silver as there were rocks in the city. And he had as much valuable cedar timber as the wood in all the sycamore trees on the hills of Judah. ²⁸Solomon got his horses from Egypt and Kue.[¶] His traders bought the horses in Kue for a set price. ²⁹A chariot from Egypt could be bought for 600 pieces^{§§} of silver and a horse for 150.* So they sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

Solomon and His Many Wives

11 King Solomon loved many foreign women, including the daughter of Pharaoh and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon and the Hittites. ²In the past the LORD had said to the Israelites, “You must not marry people from other nations. If you do, they will cause you to follow their gods.” But Solomon fell in love with these women. ³He had 700 wives who were the daughters of leaders from other nations. He also had 300 slave women who were like wives to him. His wives caused him to turn away from God. ⁴When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to follow other gods, so he did not follow the LORD

completely as his father David had done. ⁵Solomon worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon, and Milcom, the disgusting god of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did what the LORD says is evil. He did not follow the LORD completely as his father David had done.

⁷On the mountain next to Jerusalem, Solomon built a place for worshipping Chemosh, that disgusting idol of the Moabites. On the same mountain, Solomon built a place for worshipping Molech, that disgusting idol of the Ammonites. ⁸Solomon did the same thing for all his foreign wives who burned incense and gave sacrifices to their gods.

⁹So Solomon did not remain faithful to the LORD, the God of Israel, even though God had appeared to him twice. The LORD became angry with him. ¹⁰He had told Solomon that he must not follow other gods, but Solomon did not obey the LORD’s command. ¹¹So the LORD said to Solomon, “You have chosen to break your agreement with me. You have not obeyed my commands. So I promise that I will tear your kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. ¹²But I loved your father David, so I will not take your kingdom away from you while you are alive. I will wait until your son becomes king. Then I will take it from him. ¹³But, I will not tear away all the kingdom from your son. I will leave him one tribe to rule. I will do this for my servant David and for Jerusalem, the city I chose.”

Solomon’s Enemies

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite to become Solomon’s enemy. Hadad was from the royal family

[¶]10:28 *Kue* Or “Cilicia”, a country in what is now southern Turkey.

^{§§}10:29 *600 pieces* Literally, “600 *shekels*”.

* 10:29 *150* Literally, “150 *shekels*”.

of Edom. ¹⁵This is how it happened: in the past David had fought against Edom. Joab was the commander of David's army. Joab went to Edom to bury his dead soldiers. While he was there, Joab killed all the Edomite men who were still alive. ¹⁶Joab and the men of Israel stayed in Edom for six months until they had killed all the men of Edom. ¹⁷At the time Hadad was only a young boy. He and some of his father's servants ran away to Egypt. ¹⁸They left Midian and went to Paran. In Paran some other people joined them and the whole group went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and asked for help. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house, some land and food to eat.

¹⁹Pharaoh liked Hadad so much that he gave Hadad a wife. She was Pharaoh's sister-in-law. (Pharaoh's wife was Queen Tahpenes.) ²⁰Hadad and the sister of Tahpenes had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes let Genubath grow up in Pharaoh's house with his children.

²¹In Egypt Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead. So Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go home to my own country."

²²But Pharaoh answered, "I have given you everything you need here. Why do you want to go back to your own country?"

Hadad answered, "Please, just let me go home."

²³God also raised up another man to become one of Solomon's enemies. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. ²⁴After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and became the leader of a small

army. He went to Damascus and stayed there to rule from Damascus. ²⁵Rezon became the king of Aram. He was an enemy of Israel throughout Solomon's life and added to the trouble that Hadad created for Israel.

²⁶There was also another person who became an enemy of Solomon. He was Jeroboam son of Nebat. He was an Ephraimite from the town of Zeredah. His mother was a widow named Zeruah. He was one of Solomon's servants, but he rebelled against the king.

²⁷This is the story about how Jeroboam turned against the king: Solomon was building the Millo and repairing the wall around the city of his father David. ²⁸Jeroboam was a very capable man. Solomon saw that this young man was a skilled worker, so he made him the supervisor over all the workers from the tribes that descended from Joseph. ²⁹One day as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him on the road. They were alone out in the country, and Ahijah was wearing a new coat.

³⁰Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces of this coat for yourself because the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'I will tear the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten of the tribes. ³²I will let David's family keep only one tribe. I will do this because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem, the city that I chose from among all the tribes of Israel. ³³I will take the kingdom from Solomon because he[†] stopped following me and began worshipping Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon; Chemosh, the god of Moab; and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites.

[†]11:33 *he* This is from the ancient Greek, Syriac and Old Latin versions. The traditional Hebrew text has "they".

Solomon stopped following my ways and doing what I say is right. He does not obey my laws and commands as his father David did. ³⁴ So I will take the kingdom away from Solomon's family. I chose David because he obeyed all my laws and commands. So for my servant David, I will let Solomon be the king for the rest of his life. ³⁵ But Jeroboam, I will take the ten tribes away from his son and give them to you. ³⁶ I will let Solomon's son keep one tribe to rule over. I will do this for my servant David so that he will always have someone to rule near me in Jerusalem, the city that I chose to be my own. ³⁷ But I will make you king of Israel. ³⁸ You will rule over everything you want. ³⁸ If you do what is right and obey all my commands, as David did, I will be with you and make your family a family of kings, just as I did for David. And you will have Israel as your kingdom. ³⁹ I will punish David's descendants because of what Solomon did, but not forever."

Solomon's Death

⁴⁰ Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to King Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

⁴¹ Everything else Solomon did while he was king is recorded in the book, *The History of Solomon*. ⁴² Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. ⁴³ Then he died and was buried with his ancestors in the city of his father David. Then Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became the next king after him.

Civil War

12¹⁻² Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt, where he had gone to escape from Solomon. When he heard the news about the king, he returned to Zeredah, his home in the hills of Ephraim.¹

Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all the Israelites had gone to make him king. ³ The people said to Rehoboam,[§] ⁴ "Your father forced us to work very hard. Now, make it easier for us. Stop the heavy work that your father forced us to do, and we will serve you."

⁵ Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days, and I will answer you." So the people left.

⁶ There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, "How do you think I should answer the people?"

⁷ They answered, "If you are willing to help these people today by giving them the answer they want, they will be your servants from now on."

⁸ But Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men. He went to the younger men he had grown up with, who now served him by giving him advice. ⁹ Rehoboam asked them, "What do you think? These people asked me to give them easier work than my father gave them. How do you think I should answer them?"

¹⁰ These young friends of his answered, "Here's how you should answer

[‡]11:37 *Israel* That is, the northern ten tribes.

[¶]12:1-2 *returned to ... Ephraim* This is from 11:43 in the ancient Greek version, which in some copies is found here. The traditional Hebrew text has "stayed in Egypt".

[§]12:3 *The people said to Rehoboam* This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "They sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam".

those people who asked you to give them easier work than your father did. Tell them, ‘Compared to me, my father was nothing!’^{**} ¹¹ My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father beat you with whips, but I will use whips with sharp tips that sting.”^{††}

¹² Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came back to Rehoboam, just as he had told them to do. ¹³ But the king had cruel things to say to them. He did not follow the advice from the older men. ¹⁴ Instead, he did what his young friends had advised him to do and said, “My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father beat you with whips, but I will use whips with sharp tips that sting.” ¹⁵ So the king did not do what the people wanted. The LORD caused this to happen. He did this in order to keep the promise he had made to Jeroboam son of Nebat when he sent the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh to speak to him.

¹⁶ When the Israelites saw that the king refused to listen to them, they shouted back at him, “David’s family of kings means nothing to us!

We will not get any of his land. So, people of Israel, let’s go to our homes and let David take care of his own family!”

So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷ But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸ A man named Adoniram was one of the men who directed the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram to talk to the people, but the Israelites threw stones at

him until he died. King Rehoboam ran to his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and this is how things are even today.

²⁰ When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had come back, they called him to a meeting and made him king over all Israel. The tribe of Judah was the only tribe that continued to follow the family of David.

²¹ Rehoboam went back to Jerusalem and gathered an army of 180,000 men from the families of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. Rehoboam wanted to go and fight against the Israelites and take back his kingdom. ²² But God spoke to a man of God named Shemaiah. He said, ²³ “Speak to Solomon’s son Rehoboam, the king of Judah, and to all the people of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people. ²⁴ Say to them, “The LORD says that you must not go to war against your brothers. Everyone, go home! I made all this happen.”” So all the men in Rehoboam’s army obeyed the LORD. They went home, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁵ Jeroboam rebuilt the city of Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. Later he went to the city of Penuel^{‡‡} and rebuilt it.

^{26–27} Jeroboam said to himself, “If the people keep going to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the LORD’s Temple, someday they will want to be ruled by their old masters. They will want to be ruled by King Rehoboam of Judah. And then they will kill me.” ²⁸ So the king asked his advisers what to do. They gave him their advice, and King Jeroboam made

^{**}12:10 *Compared ... nothing* Literally, “My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins.”

^{††}12:11 *use ... sting* Literally, “punish you with scorpions”.

^{‡‡}12:25 *Penuel* Or “Peniel”.

two gold calves. He said to the people, “You don’t have to go to Jerusalem to worship any more. Israel, here are the gods that brought you out of Egypt.”^{¶¶}
²⁹King Jeroboam put one gold calf in Bethel and the other one far north in the city of Dan. ³⁰What a terrible sin this was, because the Israelites started going to the cities of Dan and Bethel^{§§} to worship the calves.

³¹Jeroboam also built temples at the places of worship and chose priests from among the different tribes of Israel. (He did not choose priests only from the tribe of Levi.) ³²Then King Jeroboam started a new festival that was like the festival* in Judah, but it was on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. At this time the king offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. He and the priests he chose offered the sacrifices to the calves that he had set up at the places of worship he had made. ³³So King Jeroboam chose his own time for a festival for the Israelites, the fifteenth day of the eighth month. And during that time he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the altar he had built at Bethel.

A Prophet Speaks Against Bethel

13 The LORD commanded a man of God from Judah to go to the city of Bethel. King Jeroboam was standing at the altar offering incense when a prophet of God arrived. ²The LORD had commanded the prophet to speak against the altar. He said,

“Altar, the LORD says to you: ‘David’s family will have a son. His name will be Josiah. The priests of the places of wor-

ship are now burning incense on you, but Josiah will offer the priests on you and burn human bones on you, so you can never be used again!’”

³The prophet gave proof to the people that this would happen. He said, “This is the proof that the LORD told me about. He said, ‘This altar will break apart, and the ashes on it will fall onto the ground.’”

⁴When King Jeroboam heard the message from the man of God about the altar in Bethel, he took his hand off the altar and pointed at the man. He said, “Arrest that man!” But when the king said this, his arm became paralysed. He could not move it. ⁵Then the altar broke into pieces, and all its ashes fell onto the ground. This proved that what the man of God had said came from the LORD. ⁶Then King Jeroboam said to the man of God, “Please pray to the LORD your God for me. Ask him to heal my arm.”

So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king’s arm was healed. It was as useful as ever. ⁷Then the king said to the man of God, “Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift.”

⁸But the man of God said to the king, “I will not go home with you, even if you give me half of your kingdom! I will not eat or drink anything in this place. ⁹The LORD commanded me not to eat or drink anything here. He also commanded me not to go back the same way I came.” ¹⁰So he took a different road home. He did not go back the same way he had come to Bethel.

^{¶¶}**12:28 Israel ... out of Egypt** Or “Israel, here is your God, who brought you out of Egypt.” This is the same thing Aaron said when he made the gold calf in the desert. See Exod. 32:4.

^{§§}**12:30 and Bethel** This is from the ancient Greek version.

***12:32 the festival** Probably the Festival of Shelters. See Festival of Shelters in the Word List.

¹¹ There was an old prophet living in Bethel. His sons[†] came and told him what the man of God did that day in Bethel and what he said to King Jeroboam. ¹² The old prophet said, “Which way did he go when he left?” So the sons showed their father which road the man of God from Judah had taken. ¹³ The old prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey. They put the saddle on the donkey, and he left.

¹⁴ The old prophet went after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked him, “Are you the man of God who just came from Judah?”

The man of God answered, “Yes, I am.”

¹⁵ So the old prophet said, “Please come home and eat with me.”

¹⁶ But the man of God said, “I cannot go home with you. I cannot eat or drink anything in this place. ¹⁷ The LORD said to me, ‘You must not eat or drink anything in that place, and you must go back on a different road.’”

¹⁸ The old prophet lied to him and said, “But I am a prophet like you. And an angel from the LORD came to me and told me to bring you home and give you something to eat and drink.”

¹⁹ So the man of God went to the old prophet’s house and ate and drank with him. ²⁰ While they were sitting at the table, the LORD spoke to the old prophet, ²¹ and the old prophet spoke to the man of God from Judah. He said, “The LORD said that you did not obey him! You did not do what he commanded. ²² He told you not to eat or drink anything in this place, but you came back here and ate and drank. So your body will not be buried in your family grave.”

²³ The man of God finished eating and drinking. Then the old prophet saddled his own donkey for the man. ²⁴ On the way home, a lion attacked and killed the man of God. His body was lying on the road while the lion stood next to it. The donkey stood nearby. ²⁵ Some people came walking by and saw the body and the lion standing by it. They went into the city where the old prophet lived and told the people what they had seen on the road.

²⁶ The old prophet heard the story and said, “This is the man of God who did not obey the LORD’s command, so the LORD sent a lion to attack him. The lion has killed him, just as the LORD said it would happen.” ²⁷ Then the old prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey, and they did. ²⁸ He went to find the body lying on the road. The donkey and the lion were still standing near it. The lion had not eaten the body or hurt the donkey.

²⁹ The old prophet put the body of the man of God on his donkey and carried it back to the city to cry for him and bury him. ³⁰ The old prophet buried the man in his own family grave. He cried for him and said, “Oh, my brother, I am sorry for you.” ³¹ So the old prophet buried the body. Then he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in this same grave where I buried the man of God. Put my bones next to his. ³² The LORD used him to speak against the altar at Bethel and against the places of worship in the other towns in Samaria. And what he said will certainly happen.”

³³ King Jeroboam did not change. He continued doing evil. He continued to choose people from different tribes to serve as priests[‡] at the places of worship.

[†]**13:11 sons** This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has “son”.

[‡]**13:33 people ... priests** The Law taught that only people from the tribe of Levi could become priests.

Whoever wanted to be a priest was allowed to be one. ³⁴This is the sin that caused the ruin and destruction of his kingdom.

Jeroboam's Son Dies

14 At that time Jeroboam's son Abijah became very sick. ²Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go to Shiloh and see the prophet Ahijah. He is the one who said that I would become king of Israel. Dress yourself so that people will not know that you are my wife. ³Give the prophet ten loaves of bread, some cakes and a jar of honey. Then ask him what will happen to our son, and he will tell you."

⁴So the king's wife did what he said. She went to the home of Ahijah the prophet in Shiloh. Ahijah was very old and had become blind. ⁵But the LORD said to him, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son because he is sick. I will tell you what to say to her."

When she came to Ahijah's house, she pretended to be someone else. ⁶But when Ahijah heard her coming to the door, he said, "Come in! I know who you are. You are Jeroboam's wife. Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have some bad news for you. ⁷Go back and tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Jeroboam, I chose you from among all the Israelites. I made you the ruler of my people. ⁸David's family was ruling the kingdom of Israel, but I took the kingdom away from them and gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David. He always obeyed my commands and made every effort to please me. He did only what I accepted. ⁹But you have sinned more than anyone who ruled before you. You stopped following me and made other gods for yourself. You

made those statues to make me angry. ¹⁰So Jeroboam, I will bring troubles to your family. I will kill all the men in your family. I will destroy your family completely, just as fire burns up straw.

¹¹Anyone from your family who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And anyone from your family who dies in the fields will be eaten by birds. The LORD has spoken."

¹²Then Ahijah said, "Now, go home. Your son will die as soon as you enter the city. ¹³All Israel will cry for him. They will bury him, but he is the only one from Jeroboam's family who will be buried. This is because he is the only one in Jeroboam's family who pleased the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴Soon, the LORD will put a new king over Israel who will destroy Jeroboam's family. ¹⁵Then the LORD will punish Israel. The Israelites will be so full of fear that they will shake like tall grass in the water. He will pull Israel up from this good land that he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them to the other side of the Euphrates River. The LORD will do this because the people made him angry when they built sacred poles.[†] ¹⁶He will let the Israelites be defeated because Jeroboam sinned and caused the Israelites to sin too."

¹⁷Jeroboam's wife went back to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped into the house, the boy died. ¹⁸They buried him and all the people of Israel cried for him. This happened just as the LORD had said it would through his servant, the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹Everything else King Jeroboam did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. It includes the wars he fought and the way he ruled. ²⁰Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. When

[†]14:15 *sacred poles* People used these to worship false gods.

he died, his son Nadab became the new king after him.

Rehoboam, King of Judah

²¹ Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was 41 years old when he became king of Judah. Rehoboam ruled for 17 years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD chose for his own. He chose this city from all the other tribes of Israel. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.

²² The people of Judah did what the LORD says is evil. They made him angry with all their sins—more than any of their ancestors had done. ²³ They built places of worship and set up special stones and sacred poles.[§] They put them on every high hill and under every green tree. ²⁴ There were also male prostitutes in the land. So the people of Judah did the same disgusting things as the nations that the LORD took the land away from to give it to the Israelites.

²⁵ In the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt came to attack Jerusalem. ²⁶ He took the treasures from the LORD's Temple and from the king's palace. He took everything, even the gold shields that Solomon had made. ²⁷ King Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places, but they were made from bronze. He gave them to the guards on duty at the palace gates. ²⁸ Every time the king went to the LORD's Temple, the guards carried those shields and went with him. Afterwards, they put the shields back on the wall in the guardroom.

²⁹ Everything else King Rehoboam did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ³⁰ Rehoboam and Jer-

oboam were always at war with each other.

³¹ When Rehoboam died, he was buried among his ancestors in the City of David. (His mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.) Rehoboam's son Abijah became the next king after him.

Abijah, King of Judah

15 Abijah became the new king of Judah during the eighteenth year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel. ² Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.

³ He did all the same sins that his father before him had done. Abijah was not faithful to the LORD his God, as his great-grandfather David had been. ⁴ But because of David, the LORD gave Abijah a kingdom in Jerusalem and allowed him to have a son. He also kept Jerusalem safe. ⁵ David had always done what the LORD said was right. He had always obeyed his commands. The only time David did not obey the Lord was when he sinned against Uriah the Hittite.

⁶ Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other.** ⁷ Everything else Abijah did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

Abijah and Jeroboam were always at war during the time Abijah was king. ⁸ When Abijah died, he was buried in the City of David. Abijah's son Asa became the new king after him.

Asa, King of Judah

⁹ During Jeroboam's twentieth year as king over Israel, Asa became king of Judah. ¹⁰ He ruled in Jerusalem for 41

§14:23 *places of worship, special stones, sacred poles* People used these things to worship false gods.

**15:6 This is not in the ancient Greek version.

years. His grandmother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.

¹¹ Asa did what the LORD said is right, as his ancestor David had done. ¹² During Asa's time there were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. Asa forced them to leave the country. He took away the idols that his ancestors had made. ¹³ King Asa also took away the right of his grandmother Maacah to be queen. He did this because she had set up one of those disgusting poles to honour the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down the pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁴ Asa did not destroy the places of worship, even though he was faithful to the LORD all his life. ¹⁵ Asa and his father had given some special gifts to God. Asa put these gifts of gold, silver and other things in the LORD's Temple.

¹⁶ King Asa and King Baasha of Israel were always at war with each other. ¹⁷ One time, Baasha sent his army into Judah and captured the town of Ramah. He made it a military headquarters to keep anyone from leaving or entering King Asa's territory in Judah. ¹⁸ So Asa took gold and silver from the treasuries of the LORD's Temple and the king's palace. He gave it to his officials and sent them to King Ben-Hadad of Aram. Ben-Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion. Damascus was Ben-Hadad's capital city. ¹⁹ Asa sent this message: "My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement with you. I am sending you this gift of gold and silver. Please break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel and make him leave us alone."

²⁰ King Ben-Hadad made the agreement with King Asa and sent his army to fight against the Israelite towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, the towns near

Lake Galilee and the area of Naphtali.

²¹ When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped all his military preparations in Ramah and moved back to Tirzah. ²² Then King Asa gave an order that required everyone in Judah to help. They had to go to Ramah and remove all the stone and wood that Baasha had used to make the town stronger. They took it all to Geba, a town in the territory of Benjamin, and to Mizpah. They used it to make those two cities stronger.

²³ All the other things Asa did, including the great things he achieved and the cities he built, are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. When Asa became old, his feet became infected. ²⁴ He died and was buried in the tombs of his family in Jerusalem, the city of his ancestor David. Then Asa's son Jehoshaphat became the new king after him.

Nadab, King of Israel

²⁵ During Asa's second year as king of Judah, Jeroboam's son Nadab became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years. ²⁶ He did what the LORD says is evil. Like his father Jeroboam, he sinned and caused the Israelites to sin too.

²⁷ Baasha was the son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar. Baasha made a plan to kill King Nadab. Nadab and all Israel were fighting against the Philistine town of Gibbethon so that is where Baasha killed Nadab. ²⁸ This happened during Asa's third year as king of Judah. So Baasha became the next king of Israel.

Baasha, King of Israel

²⁹ When Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboam's family. He left none of them alive. This happened just as the LORD had said it would when he spoke through his ser-

vant Ahijah at Shiloh. ³⁰It happened because King Jeroboam had committed many sins and had caused the Israelites to sin too. This made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

³¹The other things that Nadab did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ³²King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel were always at war with each other.

King Baasha Rules Over Israel

³³Ahijah's son Baasha became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years. ³⁴But he did what the LORD says is evil. Like his father Jeroboam, he sinned and caused the Israelites to sin too.

16 The prophet Jehu son of Hanani spoke this message from the LORD to King Baasha: ²"I made you an important prince over my people Israel. But you have done the same things Jeroboam did. You have caused my people Israel to sin. Their sins have made me angry. ³So Baasha, I will destroy you and your family, just as I did Jeroboam son of Nebat and his family. ⁴Anyone from your family who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And anyone from your family who dies in the fields will be eaten by birds."

⁵The rest of the story about Baasha and the great things he achieved are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ⁶Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the new king after him.

⁷The LORD gave that message to Jehu the prophet about Baasha and his family because Baasha had done what the LORD says is evil. All the evil things he did and the way he destroyed Jeroboam's family made the Lord very an-

gry. So the story of Baasha's family is just like the story of Jeroboam's family.

Elah, King of Israel

⁸Elah son of Baasha became king during the twenty-sixth year that Asa was the king of Judah. He ruled in Tirzah for two years.

⁹Zimri was one of King Elah's officers. Zimri commanded half of Elah's chariots, but Zimri made plans to kill Elah. King Elah was in Tirzah, drinking and getting drunk at Arza's home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace at Tirzah. ¹⁰Zimri went into the house and killed King Elah. Then Zimri became the new king of Israel after Elah. This was during the twenty-seventh year that Asa was king in Judah.

Zimri, King of Israel

¹¹After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baasha's family and friends. He did not let any male in Baasha's family live. ¹²So Zimri destroyed Baasha's family just as the LORD said he would when he spoke against Baasha through the prophet Jehu. ¹³This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and his son Elah. They sinned and they caused the Israelites to sin. They worshipped worthless idols, and this made the LORD, the God of Israel, angry.

¹⁴Everything else Elah did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

¹⁵Zimri became king of Israel during the twenty-seventh year that Asa was king of Judah. Zimri ruled in Tirzah for only seven days. This is what happened: The army of Israel was at Gibbethon, which was under Philistine control. ¹⁶Omri was the commander of the army of Israel. The men in the camp heard that Zimri had made secret plans against King Elah and had killed him.

So in the camp that day, all the soldiers made Omri the new king. ¹⁷ Then Omri and all the soldiers of Israel left Gibbethon and went to Tirzah. They surrounded the city and attacked it. ¹⁸ When Zimri saw the city had been captured, he ran to the palace fortress, but the soldiers burned it down with him still in it. ¹⁹ So Zimri died because he did what the LORD says is evil. Like Jeroboam, he sinned and caused the Israelites to sin too.

²⁰ The story about Zimri's secret plans and the other things that he did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

Omri, King of Israel

²¹ Then the Israelites were divided among themselves. Half of the people followed Tibni son of Ginath and wanted to make him king. The other half of the people followed Omri. ²² But Omri's followers were stronger than the followers of Tibni son of Ginath. Tibni died, and Omri became king.

²³ Omri became king of Israel during Asa's thirty-first year as the king of Judah. Omri ruled over Israel for 12 years. Six of those years he ruled from Tirzah. ²⁴ Then Omri bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for about 6000 pieces^{††} of silver. Omri built a city on that hill. He named the city Samaria after the name of its owner, Shemer.

²⁵ Omri did what the LORD says is evil. He was worse than all the kings before him. ²⁶ He committed all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had committed when he caused the Israelites to sin. They worshipped worthless idols, and

this made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

²⁷ The rest of the story about Omri and the great things he achieved are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ²⁸ Omri died and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became the new king after him.

Ahab, King of Israel

²⁹ Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel during the thirty-eighth year that Asa was king of Judah. Ahab ruled Israel from the city of Samaria for 22 years.

³⁰ He did what the LORD says is evil. Ahab was worse than all the kings who were before him. ³¹ It was not enough for Ahab to commit the same sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had done. Ahab also married Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon. Then Ahab began to serve and worship Baal. ³² He built a temple and an altar in Samaria for worshipping Baal. ³³ He also set up a sacred pole.^{‡‡} Ahab did more to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry than all the other kings who were before him.

³⁴ During Ahab's time, Hiel from Bethel rebuilt the town of Jericho. When Hiel started work on the city, his oldest son Abiram died. And when Hiel built the gates of the city, his youngest son Segub died. This happened just as the LORD had said it would happen when he spoke through Joshua son of Nun.^{¶¶}

Elijah and the Time Without Rain

17 Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. He said to King Ahab, "I serve the LORD, the God of Israel. By his power, I promise that no dew or rain will fall for the next few

^{††}16:24 **6000 pieces** Literally, "2 talents".

^{‡‡}16:33 **sacred pole** People used these to worship false gods.

^{¶¶}16:34 **This happened ... Joshua son of Nun** See Josh. 6:26.

years. The rain will fall only when I command it to fall.”

²Then the LORD said to Elijah, ³“Leave this place and go east. Hide near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. ⁴You can get your water from that stream, and I have commanded ravens to bring food to you there.” ⁵So Elijah did what the LORD told him to do. He went to live near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. ⁶Ravens brought Elijah food every morning and every evening, and he drank water from the stream.

⁷There was no rain, so after a while the stream became dry. ⁸Then the LORD said to Elijah, ⁹“Go to Zarephath in Sidon and stay there. There is a widow there that I have commanded to take care of you.”

¹⁰So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there gathering wood for a fire. She was a widow. Elijah said to her, “Would you bring me a small cup of water to drink?”

¹¹As she was going to get the water, Elijah said, “Bring me a piece of bread too, please.”

¹²The woman answered, “I promise you, before the LORD your God, that I have nothing but a handful of flour in a jar and a little bit of olive oil in a jug. I came here to gather a few pieces of wood for a fire to cook our last meal. My son and I will eat it and then die from hunger.”

¹³Elijah said to the woman, “Don’t worry. Go home and cook your food as you said. But first make a small piece of bread from the flour that you have and bring it to me. Then cook some for yourself and your son. ¹⁴The LORD, the God of Israel, says, “That jar of flour will never be empty, and the jug will always have oil in it. This will continue until the day the LORD sends rain to the land.””

¹⁵So the woman went home and did what Elijah told her to do. And Elijah, the woman and all those in her house had enough food for a long time. ¹⁶The jar of flour and the jar of oil were never empty. This happened just as the LORD had said through Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. He became worse and worse until he stopped breathing. ¹⁸Then the woman said to Elijah, “Man of God, what do you want from me? Did you come here only to remind me of my sins and to make my son die?”

¹⁹Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” He took the boy from her and carried him upstairs. He laid him on the bed in the room where he was staying.

²⁰Then Elijah cried out to the LORD. He said, “LORD my God, this widow is letting me stay in her house. Why did you do this terrible thing to her? Why did you cause her son to die?” ²¹Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. He prayed, “LORD my God, let this boy live again!”

²²The LORD answered Elijah’s prayer. The boy began breathing again and was alive. ²³Elijah carried the boy downstairs, gave him to his mother, and said, “Look, your son is alive!”

²⁴The woman answered, “Now I know for sure that you are a man of God. I know that the LORD really speaks through you!”

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

18 During the third year that no rain fell, the LORD said to Elijah, “Go and meet with King Ahab, and I will make it rain.” ²So Elijah went to meet with Ahab.

The famine was very bad in Samaria. ³So King Ahab told Obadiah to come to him. Obadiah was the man in charge

of the king's palace. (Obadiah was a true follower of the LORD. ⁴Once when Jezebel was killing all the LORD's prophets, Obadiah hid 100 prophets in two caves. He put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. Then he brought them food and water.) ⁵King Ahab said to Obadiah, "Come, let's go^{§§} look at every spring and every stream in the land. We will see if we can find enough grass to keep our horses and mules alive. Then we will not have to kill our animals." ⁶They decided where each of them would go to look for water. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself. ⁷As Obadiah was walking along the road, he looked up, and there was Elijah. Obadiah recognized him and bowed down to show his respect. He said, "Elijah? Is it really you, master?"

⁸Elijah answered, "Yes, it is me. Now, go and tell your master, the king, that I am here."

⁹Obadiah said, "If I tell Ahab that I know where you are, he will kill me! I have done nothing wrong to you. Why do you want me to die? ¹⁰As surely as the LORD your God lives, the king has been looking for you everywhere. He has sent people to every country to find you. He even made the rulers of those countries swear that you were not there. ¹¹Now you want me to go and tell him that you are here! ¹²If I go and tell King Ahab that you are here, the Spirit of the LORD might carry you away. Then when King Ahab comes here and cannot find you, he will kill me! I have followed the LORD since I was a boy. ¹³Surely you have heard what I did when Jezebel was

killing the LORD's prophets. I hid 100 of the LORD's prophets in caves. I put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 in another. I brought them food and water. ¹⁴Now you want me to go and tell the king that you are here. The king will kill me!"

¹⁵Elijah answered, "I serve the LORD All-Powerful. As surely as he lives, I promise that I will stand before the king today."

¹⁶So Obadiah went to King Ahab and told him where Elijah was. King Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷When Ahab saw Elijah he said, "Is that really you, the troublemaker of Israel?"

¹⁸Elijah answered, "I have not made trouble for Israel. You and your father's family caused all the problems when you stopped obeying the LORD's commands and began following the false gods. ¹⁹Now tell all the people of Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. And bring the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah, who get their support from Queen Jezebel."*

²⁰So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel. ²¹Elijah came to all the people and said, "You must decide what you are going to do. How long will you keep jumping from one side to the other? If the LORD is the true God, follow him. But if Baal is the true God, then follow him!"

The people said nothing. ²²So Elijah said, "I am the only prophet of the LORD here, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. ²³So bring us two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal have one bull. Let them kill it, cut it into pieces and then put the meat on the wood. But don't start the fire. I will do the same with the other bull, and I

§§18:5 *Come, let's go* This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "Go".

*18:19 *who get ... Jezebel* Literally, "who eat at Jezebel's table".

will not start the fire either. ²⁴ Prophets of Baal, pray to your god, and I will pray to the LORD. Whichever god answers the prayer and starts the fire is the true God.”

All the people agreed that this was a good idea.

²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “There are many of you, so you go first. Choose a bull and prepare it, but don’t start your fire.”

²⁶ So the prophets took the bull that was given to them and prepared it. They started praying to Baal and prayed until noon. They said, “Baal, please answer us!” But there was no sound. No one answered. Then they began jumping around on the altar they had built.

²⁷ At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. He said, “If you are sure Baal is really a god, maybe you should pray louder! Maybe he is busy thinking about something, or he is in the bathroom! Perhaps he took a trip somewhere! Or he could be sleeping, so maybe you need to wake him up!” ²⁸ So the prophets prayed louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears, as was their way of worshipping. They cut themselves until they were bleeding all over. ²⁹ The afternoon passed but the fire still had not started. The prophets were out of control and continued to act this way until the time came for the evening sacrifice. But nothing happened—there was no answer from Baal. There was no sound. There was no one listening.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, “Now come here.” So they gathered around Elijah. The LORD’s altar had been torn down, so Elijah repaired it. ³¹ Elijah found twelve stones. There was one stone for each of the twelve tribes. These twelve tribes were named for the

twelve sons of Jacob, the man who the LORD had named Israel. ³² Elijah used these stones to repair the altar to honour the LORD. He dug a small ditch around the altar. It was wide enough and deep enough to hold about 14 litres[†] of water. ³³ Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces and laid the pieces on the wood. ³⁴ Then he said, “Fill four jars with water. Pour the water on the pieces of meat and on the wood.” Then Elijah said, “Do it again.” Then he said, “Do it a third time.” ³⁵ The water ran down off the altar and filled the ditch.

³⁶ At about the time for the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, “LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I ask you now to prove that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant. Show these people that it was you who commanded me to do all these things. ³⁷ LORD, answer my prayer. Show these people that you, LORD, are God and that you are the one who is bringing them back to you.”

³⁸ Then fire came down from the LORD and burned the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the ground around the altar. Then it dried up all the water in the ditch. ³⁹ All the people saw this happen and bowed down to the ground and began saying, “The LORD is God! The LORD is God!”

⁴⁰ Then Elijah said, “Get the prophets of Baal! Don’t let any of them escape!” So the people captured all the prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Creek and killed them all.

The Rain Comes Again

⁴¹ Then Elijah said to King Ahab, “Now go, eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming.” ⁴² So King Ahab went to eat. At the

[†]18:32 14 litres Literally, “2 seahs of seed”.

same time Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. At the top of the mountain, Elijah bent down. He put his head between his knees. ⁴³ Then Elijah said to his servant, “Go up higher and look towards the sea.”

The servant went and looked. He came back and said, “I saw nothing.” Elijah told him to go and look again. This happened seven times. ⁴⁴ The seventh time, the servant came back and said, “I saw a small cloud the size of a man’s fist that was coming in from the sea.”

Elijah told the servant, “Go and tell King Ahab to get his chariot ready and to go home now. If he does not leave now, the rain will stop him.”

⁴⁵ After a short time the sky was covered with dark clouds. The wind began to blow, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab got into his chariot and started back to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came to Elijah. He used his belt to hold up the bottom of his robe away from his feet. Then he ran ahead of King Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah at Mount Horeb (Sinai)

19 King Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal with a sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah and said, “I swear that by this time tomorrow, you will be just as dead as those prophets. If I don’t succeed, may the gods do the same or worse to me.”

³ When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him, and they went to Beersheba in Judah. Then Elijah left his servant in Beersheba ⁴ and walked all

day into the desert. Then he sat down under a bush and asked to die. He said, “I have had enough, LORD! Take my life. I am no better than my ancestors.”

⁵ Then Elijah lay down under the bush and went to sleep. An angel came to him and touched him. The angel said, “Get up and eat!” ⁶ Elijah looked around, and by his head there was a cake that had been baked over coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then went back to sleep.

⁷ Later the angel of the LORD came to him again, touched him, and said, “Get up and eat! If you don’t, you will not be strong enough to make the long journey.” ⁸ So Elijah got up. He ate and drank and felt strong. Then Elijah walked for 40 days and nights to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There Elijah went into a cave and spent the night.

Then the LORD said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”

¹⁰ Elijah answered, “LORD God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best I can, but the Israelites have broken their agreement with you. They have destroyed your altars and killed your prophets. I am the only prophet left alive, and now they are trying to kill me!”

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Elijah, “Go out and stand in front of me on the mountain. I, the LORD, will pass by you.”[‡] Then a very strong wind blew. The wind caused the mountains to break apart. It broke large rocks in front of the LORD. But that wind was not the LORD. After the wind, there was an earthquake. But that earthquake was not the LORD. ¹² After the earthquake, there was a fire.

[‡]19:11 *Go out ... you* This is like the time God appeared to Moses. See Exod. 33:12-23.

But that fire was not the LORD. After the fire, there was a quiet, gentle voice.[¶]

¹³When Elijah heard the voice, he used his coat to cover his face and went to the entrance of the cave and stood there. Then a voice said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”

¹⁴Elijah said, “LORD God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best I can, but the Israelites broke their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars and killed your prophets. I am the only prophet left alive, and now they are trying to kill me.”

¹⁵The LORD said, “Go back. Take the road that leads to the desert around Damascus. Go into Damascus and anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel. Next, anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah. He will be the prophet who takes your place. ¹⁷Jehu will kill anyone who escapes Hazael’s sword, and Elisha will kill anyone who escapes from Jehu’s sword. ¹⁸I still have 7000 people in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed that idol.”

Elisha Becomes a Prophet

¹⁹So Elijah left that place and went to find Elisha son of Shaphat. Elisha was ploughing a field with a team of oxen. He had eleven other men in front of him, each ploughing with one of his teams of oxen. Elijah went to Elisha and put his coat[§] on Elisha. ²⁰Elisha immediately left his oxen and ran after Elijah. Elisha said, “Let me kiss my mother and father goodbye. Then I will follow you.”

Elijah answered, “You can do that. I will not stop you.”^{**}

²¹Elisha turned away from him and went back. He killed the oxen and used the yoke for firewood. He boiled the meat, gave it to the people, and they all ate together. Then Elisha went to follow Elijah, and he became his helper.

Ben-Hadad and Ahab Go to War

20 King Ben-Hadad of Aram gathered his army. There were 32 kings with him and many horses and chariots. They surrounded Samaria and attacked it. ²The king sent messengers to King Ahab of Israel who was inside the city. ³The message was, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘Your silver and your gold are mine, and so are the best of your wives and children.’”

⁴The king of Israel answered, “Yes, my lord and king, I am yours now, and everything I have belongs to you.”

⁵Then the messengers came back to Ahab. They said, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘I told you before that all your silver and gold and your wives and children belong to me. So give them to me! ⁶Tomorrow I will send my men to search through your house and through the houses of your officials. Give my men all your valuables, and they will bring them back to me.’”

⁷So King Ahab called a meeting of all the leaders of his country and said, “Look, Ben-Hadad is looking for trouble. First he told me that I must give him my wives and children and my silver and gold. I agreed to give them to him.”

⁸But the leaders and all the people said, “Don’t obey him or do what he says.”

[¶]19:12 *voice* Or “sound”.

[§]19:19 *coat* A special robe that prophets wore. Elijah put this coat on Elisha to show that Elisha would take his place as a prophet.

^{**}19:20 *I will not stop you* Literally, “What have I done to you?” or “What will I do to you?”

⁹So Ahab sent a message to Ben-Hadad that said, “I will do what you said at first, but I cannot obey your second command.”

King Ben-Hadad’s men took the message to the king. ¹⁰Then they came back with another message from Ben-Hadad that said, “I will completely destroy Samaria. I promise that there will be nothing left of that city! There will not be enough of that city left for my men to find any souvenirs^{††} to take home. May the gods destroy me if I don’t do this!”

¹¹King Ahab answered, “Tell Ben-Hadad that the man who puts on his armour should not boast as much as the man who lives long enough to take it off.”

¹²King Ben-Hadad was drinking in his tent with the other rulers when the messengers came back and gave him the message from King Ahab. King Ben-Hadad commanded his men to prepare to attack the city, so the men moved into their places for the battle.

¹³Then a prophet went to King Ahab and said, “King Ahab, the LORD says to you, ‘Do you see that great army? I will defeat that army for you today. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

¹⁴Ahab said, “Who will you use to defeat them?”

The prophet answered, “The LORD says, ‘The young soldiers who serve the district governors.’”

Then the king asked, “Who will lead the army?”

The prophet answered, “You will.”

¹⁵So Ahab gathered the young soldiers of the district governors. There were 232 of these men. Then the king called together the army of Israel. The total number was 7000.

¹⁶King Ahab began his attack at noon, while King Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings were getting drunk in their tents. ¹⁷The young soldiers went out first. King Ben-Hadad sent out scouts, and they told him that some soldiers had come out of Samaria. ¹⁸So Ben-Hadad said, “They might be coming to fight, or they might be coming to ask for peace. Capture them alive.”

¹⁹The young officers of the district governors came out of the city first, followed by the rest of the army of Israel. ²⁰Each Israelite soldier killed the man who came to fight against him. That’s when the Arameans began to run away, and the army of Israel chased them. King Ben-Hadad escaped on a horse with some of his horsemen. ²¹But King Ahab led the army and destroyed all the horses and chariots. Ahab and his army completely defeated the Arameans.

²²Then the prophet went to King Ahab and said, “The king of Aram will come back to fight again next spring. So go back and strengthen your army and make careful plans to defend yourself against him.”

Ben-Hadad Attacks Again

²³King Ben-Hadad’s officers said to him, “The gods of Israel are the gods of the mountains. We fought in a mountain area, so the Israelites won. If we fight them on level ground, we will win. ²⁴Also, don’t let the 32 kings command the armies. Put your commanders in charge of the armies. ²⁵Let’s gather an army like the one that was destroyed. Gather as many men, horses and chariots as before, and fight the Israelites on level ground. Then we will win.” Ben-Hadad

^{††}20:10 *souvenirs* Things that help people remember places they have been. Literally, the Hebrew text has “handfuls of dust”.

followed their advice and did what they said.

²⁶ So in the spring, Ben-Hadad gathered the Aramean army and went to Aphek to fight against Israel.

²⁷ The Israelites also prepared for battle and marched out to fight the Aramean army. They set up camp across from the Arameans. The Aramean soldiers filled the land, but Israel's army looked like two small flocks of goats.

²⁸ A man of God came to the king of Israel with this message: "The LORD said, 'The Arameans said that I, the LORD, am a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys. So I will let you defeat this great army. Then you will all know that I am the LORD, wherever you are!'"

²⁹ The armies were camped across from each other for seven days. On the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites killed 100,000 Aramean soldiers in one day. ³⁰ The survivors ran away to the city of Aphek. The wall of the city fell on 27,000 of those soldiers. Ben-Hadad also ran away to the city and hid in a room. ³¹ His servants said to him, "We heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Let's dress in rough cloth with ropes on our heads.‡ Then let's go to the king of Israel. Maybe he will let us live."

³² They dressed in rough cloth with ropes on their heads and went to the king of Israel. They said, "Your servant, Ben-Hadad, says, 'Please let me live.'"

Ahab said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother."[¶]

³³ Ben-Hadad's men wanted King Ahab to say something to show that he would not kill King Ben-Hadad. When Ahab called Ben-Hadad his brother, the

advisers quickly said, "Yes! Ben-Hadad is your brother."

Ahab said, "Bring him to me." And when Ben-Hadad came, King Ahab asked him to get in the chariot with him.

³⁴ Ben-Hadad said to him, "Ahab, I will give you the towns that my father took from your father. And you can put shops in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Ahab answered, "If you agree to this, I will let you go free." So the two kings made a peace agreement. Then King Ahab let King Ben-Hadad go free.

A Prophet Speaks Against Ahab

³⁵ One of the prophets told another prophet, "Hit me!" He said that because the LORD had commanded it. But the other prophet refused to hit him. ³⁶ So the first prophet said, "You did not obey the LORD's command. So a lion will kill you when you leave this place." When the second prophet left, a lion killed him.

³⁷ The first prophet went to another man and said, "Hit me!"

This man hit the prophet and hurt him.

³⁸ So the prophet wrapped his face with a cloth. This way no one could see who he was. The prophet went and waited for the king by the road. ³⁹ The king came by, and the prophet said to him, "I went to fight in the battle. One of our men brought an enemy soldier to me. The man said, 'Guard this man. If he runs away, you will have to give your life in his place, or you will have to pay a fine of 3000 pieces^{§§} of silver.'" ⁴⁰ While I was busy doing other things, the man ran away."

‡**20:31 rough cloth ... heads** This showed that they were being humble and that they wanted to surrender.

¶**20:32 brother** People who signed peace agreements often called each other "brother". It was as if they were one family.

§§**20:39 3000 pieces** Literally, "1 talent".

The king of Israel answered, “You admitted that you are guilty, so you know the answer. You must do what the man said.”

⁴¹ Then the prophet quickly took the cloth from his face, and the king of Israel saw that he was one of the prophets.

⁴² Then the prophet said to the king, “The LORD says to you, ‘You set free the man I said should die. So you will take his place—you and your people will die!’”

⁴³ Then the king went back home to Samaria, worried and upset.

Naboth’s Vineyard

21 There was a vineyard near King Ahab’s palace in Samaria. A man from Jezreel named Naboth owned it. ² One day Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard that is near my palace. I want to make it a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in its place. Or if you prefer, I will pay you for it.”

³ Naboth answered, “By the LORD, I will never give my land to you. This land belongs to my family.”

⁴ So Ahab went home angry and upset because Naboth told him, “I will not give you my family’s land.” Ahab went to bed, turned away from everyone and refused to eat.

⁵ His wife Jezebel went to him and asked him, “Why are you upset? Why do you refuse to eat?”

⁶ Ahab answered, “I asked Naboth from Jezreel to give me his vineyard. I told him that I would pay him the full price. Or, if he preferred, I would give him another vineyard. But he refused to give it to me.”

⁷ Jezebel answered, “But you are the king over Israel! Get out of bed and eat something, and you will feel better. I will get Naboth’s vineyard for you.”

⁸ Then Jezebel wrote some letters. She signed Ahab’s name to them and sealed them with his seal. Then she sent them to the leaders and important men who lived in the same town as Naboth. ⁹ This is what the letter said:

“Announce that there will be a day when the people will eat nothing. Then call all the people of the town together for a meeting. At the meeting we will talk about Naboth.

¹⁰ Find some men who will tell lies about him. They should say that they heard Naboth speak against the king and against God. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him with stones.”

¹¹ So the leaders and important men of Jezreel obeyed the command. ¹² The leaders announced that there would be a day when all the people would eat nothing. On that day they called all the people together for a meeting. They put Naboth in a special place before the people. ¹³ Then two men told the people that they heard Naboth speak against God and the king. So the people carried Naboth out of the city and killed him with stones. ¹⁴ Then the leaders sent a message to Jezebel that said: “Naboth has been killed.”

¹⁵ When Jezebel heard this, she said to Ahab, “Naboth is dead. Now you can go and take the vineyard that you wanted.” ¹⁶ So Ahab went to the vineyard and took it for his own.

¹⁷ Then the LORD spoke to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe: ¹⁸ “Go to King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth’s vineyard. He is there to take the vineyard as his own. ¹⁹ Tell Ahab that I, the LORD, say to him, ‘Ahab! You killed the man Naboth, and now you are taking his land. So I, the LORD, tell you this: Where the dogs

licked up the blood of Naboth, they will lick up your blood as well.”

²⁰ So Elijah went to Ahab. When Ahab saw him, he said, “So, my enemy, you found me!”

Elijah answered, “Yes, I did. You have given yourself completely to what the LORD says is evil. ²¹ So this is what he says to you: ‘I will make something bad happen to you. I will kill you and every male in your family. ²² I will destroy your family just as I destroyed the family of King Jeroboam son of Nebat and the family of King Baasha. I will do this to you because you have made me angry by sinning and by causing the Israelites to sin too.’ ²³ The LORD also says this about your wife Jezebel: ‘Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel by the wall of the city of Jezreel. ²⁴ As for the family of Ahab, whoever dies in the city will be eaten by dogs, and whoever dies in the fields will be eaten by birds.’”

²⁵ So Ahab gave himself completely to what the LORD says is evil. There is no one who did as much evil as Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who caused him to do these things. ²⁶ Ahab committed the disgusting sin of worshipping those filthy idols, just as the Amorites did. And that is why the LORD took the land from them and gave it to the Israelites.

²⁷ When Ahab heard what Elijah said, he showed how sorry he was by tearing his clothes and wearing rags, even when he slept. He also refused to eat. He was very sad and upset.

²⁸ The LORD said to the prophet Elijah from Tishbe, ²⁹ “Look, Ahab has humbled himself before me. So I will not make that disaster happen during his lifetime. I will wait until his son is king. Then I will destroy his family.”

Micaiah Warns King Ahab

22 For the next two years there was peace between Israel and Aram. ² Then during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.

³ Ahab asked his officials, “Remember when the king of Aram took Ramoth Gilead from us? That city is ours, so why have we done nothing to get it back?”

⁴ So Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with me to attack Ramoth Gilead?”

Jehoshaphat answered, “Yes, you and I will be as one—my men and my horses will be as yours. ⁵ But first let’s ask the LORD for advice.”

⁶ So Ahab called a meeting of the prophets. There were about 400 prophets at that time. Ahab asked the prophets, “Should I go and attack the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead or not?”

The prophets answered Ahab, “Yes, because the Lord will let you defeat Ramoth Gilead.”

⁷ But Jehoshaphat said, “Doesn’t the LORD have another prophet here? Let’s ask him the same question.”

⁸ King Ahab answered, “Yes, there is another prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him because his message from the LORD is never good news for me. He always says that something bad is going to happen.”

Jehoshaphat said, “As king, you should not say things like that!”

⁹ So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

¹⁰ At that time the two kings were sitting on their thrones with their royal robes on. They were at the judgement place near the gates of Samaria. All the prophets were standing before them, prophesying. ¹¹ One of the prophets was named Zedekiah son of Kenaanah.

Zedekiah made some iron horns* and said to Ahab, “This is what the LORD says, ‘You will use these iron horns to fight against the army of Aram. You will defeat them and destroy them.’”¹² All the other prophets agreed with Zedekiah and said, “Your army should march now to go and fight against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. You will win the battle. The LORD will let you defeat them.”

¹³ While this was happening, the officer went to find Micaiah. When he found him, the officer told him, “All the other prophets have said that the king will succeed, so you should say the same thing.”

¹⁴ But Micaiah answered, “As surely as the LORD lives, I can say only what the LORD says to me.”

¹⁵ Micaiah went and stood before King Ahab. The king asked him, “Micaiah, should we go and attack the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead or not?”

Micaiah answered, “Yes, go and win the battle! The LORD will let you take the city.”

¹⁶ But Ahab answered, “How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me the truth. What does the LORD say?”

¹⁷ So Micaiah answered, “I can see the army of Israel scattered all over the hills, like sheep with no one to lead them. This is what the LORD says, ‘These men have no leaders. Let them go home in peace.’”

¹⁸ Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “See, I told you! This prophet never has a good message for me. He always says that something bad is going to happen.”

¹⁹ But Micaiah said, “Listen to this message from the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side.²⁰ The LORD said, ‘Which of you will go and trick King Ahab into attack-

ing the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead so that he will be killed?’ The angels discussed many different plans.²¹ Then a spirit went and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will trick him!’ The LORD asked, ‘How will you do it?’²² The spirit answered, ‘I will go to Ahab’s prophets and cause them to tell lies.’ So the Lord said, ‘Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that.’

²³ “So that is what has happened here. The LORD made your prophets lie to you. The LORD himself decided to bring this disaster to you.”

²⁴ Then the prophet Zedekiah went to Micaiah and hit him in the face. Zedekiah said, “How is it that the Spirit of the LORD left me and went to speak to you?”

²⁵ Micaiah answered, “Listen! You will see that what I said will happen. And you will be hiding in the most secret place you can find!”

²⁶ Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers to arrest Micaiah. Ahab said, “Arrest him and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to the king’s son Joash.²⁷ Tell them to put Micaiah in prison. Give him nothing but bread and water to eat. Keep him there until I come home safely from the battle.”

²⁸ Micaiah said to King Ahab, “If you come back alive from the battle, it will mean that what I told you was not from the LORD.” Then he said to the others there, “Remember what I said, everyone!”

The Battle at Ramoth Gilead

²⁹ So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead.³⁰ Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “When we go into battle, I will dress differently so that no

*22:11 *iron horns* These were a symbol of great strength.

one will recognize me. But you wear your royal uniform.” So the king of Israel went into battle dressed like an ordinary soldier.

³¹The king of Aram had 32 chariot commanders. He gave them this command, “Don’t go after anyone except the king of Israel, no matter how important they are.” ³²When the chariot commanders saw King Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel, and they went to attack him. Jehoshaphat started shouting. ³³When the commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him.

³⁴Then an Aramean soldier pulled back on his bow and shot an arrow into the air without aiming. The arrow happened to hit the king of Israel where two parts of his armour came together. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, “I’ve been hit! Turn the chariot around and take me off the battlefield!”

³⁵The battle continued all that day. King Ahab leaned against the side of his chariot to hold himself up as he looked out towards the Arameans. When evening came, he died. The blood from his wound covered the floor of the chariot. ³⁶At sunset all the Israelites cheered when they were told to go home. So they all went back to their home towns.

³⁷And that is how King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria and buried him there. ³⁸They took his chariot and washed it by the pool in Samaria where prostitutes bathed. And the dogs licked Ahab’s blood that was on the chariot. This happened as the LORD had said.

³⁹Everything else King Ahab did during the time he ruled is recorded in the

book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. That book tells about all the cities he built and about all the ivory that he used to decorate his palace. ⁴⁰When Ahab died, his son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

Summary of Jehoshaphat’s Rule

⁴¹Jehoshaphat son of Asa became the king of Judah in Ahab’s fourth year as king of Israel. ⁴²Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was a good king and continued to do what the LORD says is right. But he did not destroy the places where people went to worship false gods. So the people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense in those places.

⁴⁴Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement with the king of Israel. ⁴⁵Jehoshaphat was very brave and fought many wars. Everything else he did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

⁴⁶Jehoshaphat forced all the male prostitutes to leave the land. Some of them were still there from the time when his father Asa was king.

⁴⁷In those days Edom did not have a king; it was ruled by a governor who was chosen by the king of Judah.

⁴⁸King Jehoshaphat built some cargo ships. He wanted the ships to sail to Ophir for gold, but they never went there—they were destroyed in their home port at Ezion Geber. ⁴⁹At that time King Ahaziah of Israel had offered to let some of his own sailors join Je-

hoshaphat's men on the ships,[†] but Jehoshaphat refused to accept his help.

⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat died and was buried in the tombs of his family in Jerusalem, the city of his ancestor David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

Ahaziah, King of Israel

⁵¹ Ahaziah was the son of Ahab. He became king of Israel during the seventeenth year that King Jehoshaphat ruled

Judah. Ahaziah ruled in Samaria for two years. ⁵²He did what the LORD says is evil. Like his parents Ahab and Jezebel and like Jeroboam son of Nebat, he sinned and caused Israel to sin too. ⁵³Ahaziah served the false god Baal and worshipped him, just as his father had done before him. He did all the things that his father had done to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry.

[†]22:49 *King Ahaziah ... ships* Jehoshaphat controlled the port of Ezion Geber which was Israel's only way to the Red Sea and the coasts of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the coasts leading to the Persian Gulf and India. Ahaziah thought he could get control of that area by "helping" Jehoshaphat.