EDIFIED EDITION

1 Kings

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

22	816	Old	11
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

Contents

Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18
Chapter 19
Chapter 20
Chapter 21
Chapter 22

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Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

1 Kings 1 tells how King David, now old and unable to keep warm, is cared for by Abishag the Shunammite. His son Adonijah, handsome and never crossed by his father, sets himself up as king with the support of Joab and Abiathar the priest, and holds a sacrificial feast at En-rogel, leaving out Nathan, Benaiah, the mighty men and Solomon. Nathan and Bathsheba remind David of his oath that Solomon will succeed him, and David orders Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah to set Solomon on the king's own mule, anoint him at the Gihon spring and proclaim him king. The city rings with rejoicing. Jonathan son of Abiathar brings the news to Adonijah's guests, who scatter in fear, and Adonijah takes hold of the horns of the altar until Solomon promises to spare him if he proves worthy.

1 King David was old, well on in years, and though they covered him with blankets he could not keep warm.

2 So his servants said to him, "Let a young virgin be found for my lord the king, to wait on the king and look after him. Let her lie in your arms, so that my lord the king may keep warm."

3 They searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman, and they found Abishag the Shunammite[1] and brought her to the king.

4 The young woman was exceedingly beautiful. She looked after the king and waited on him, but the king did not have relations with her.

5 Meanwhile Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, was putting himself forward, saying, “I will be king.” He provided himself with chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run ahead of him.

6 His father had never once rebuked him by asking, “Why do you behave like this?” He was also very handsome, and he was born next after Absalom.[2]

7 He conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave Adonijah their support.

8 But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei[3] and David’s mighty men did not side with Adonijah.

9 Adonijah sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Serpent’s Stone, which is beside En-rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah who were the king’s officials,

10 but he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men or his brother Solomon.

11 Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, “Have you not heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has become king, and our lord David does not know it?

12 Now come, let me give you advice, so that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon.

13 Go in at once to King David and say to him, ‘My lord the king, did you not swear to your servant, “Your son Solomon shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne”? Why then has Adonijah become king?’

14 And while you are still talking with the king, I will come in behind you and back up what you say.”

15 Bathsheba went to the king in his private room. He was now very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was taking care of him.

16 Bathsheba bowed low and paid homage to the king, and the king asked, “What is it you want?”

17 She said to him, “My lord, you yourself swore to your servant by the LORD your God, ‘Your son Solomon shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne.’

18 But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, know nothing about it.

19 He has sacrificed oxen, fattened calves and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king’s sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited your servant Solomon.

20 And now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, waiting for you to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

21 Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king has gone to rest with his ancestors, my son Solomon and I will be treated as criminals.”

22 She was still speaking with the king when Nathan the prophet arrived.

23 The king was told, “Nathan the prophet is here.” He came into the king’s presence and bowed to the king with his face to the ground.

24 Nathan said, “My lord the king, have you declared that Adonijah shall be king after you and sit on your throne?

25 For today he has gone down and sacrificed oxen, fattened calves and sheep in abundance. He has invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest, and there they are, eating and drinking in his presence and shouting, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’

26 But me, your servant, he did not invite, nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon.

27 Has my lord the king done this without letting your servants[4] know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

28 King David responded, “Bring Bathsheba back in.” She came and stood in the king’s presence.

29 The king swore an oath: “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every trouble,

30 as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, that your son Solomon would be king after me and would sit on my throne in my place, so I will do this very day.”

31 Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, paid homage to the king and said, “May my lord King David live for ever!”

32 Then King David said, “Summon Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” They came and stood before the king,

33 the king said to them, “Take your lord’s servants
with you. Set my son Solomon on my own mule
and take him down to Gihon.[5]
34 There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the
prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the
ram’s horn and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’
35 Then come up behind him, and he shall come
and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have
appointed him to be leader over Israel and Judah.”
36 Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king,
“Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the
king, confirm it.
37 The LORD was with my lord the king; may He be
with Solomon in the same way and raise his
throne higher still than the throne of my lord King
David.”
38 Then Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and
Benaiah son of Jehoiada went down with the
Cherethites and the Pelethites. They seated
Solomon on King David’s mule and led him down
to Gihon.
39 Zadok the priest brought the horn of oil out of
the tent and poured it on Solomon. The ram’s horn
sounded, and the whole crowd cried out, “Long
live King Solomon!”
40 All the people went up after him, playing pipes
and rejoicing so greatly that the ground split with
the noise.
41 Adonijah and all the guests with him heard it as
they were finishing their feast. When Joab heard
the sound of the ram’s horn, he asked, “What is
the meaning of this uproar in the city?”
42 While he was still speaking, Jonathan son of
Abiathar the priest arrived. Adonijah said, “Come
in, for you are a worthy man and must be bringing
good news.”
43 Jonathan answered Adonijah, “Far from it. Our
lord King David has made Solomon king.
44 With him the king sent Zadok the priest, Nathan
the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the
Cherethites and the Pelethites, and Solomon rode
on the king’s own mule.
45 Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have
anointed him king at Gihon, and they have come
up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in
uproar. That is the noise you heard.
46 What is more, Solomon has taken his seat on the
royal throne.
47 The king’s officials have also come to
congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May
your God make Solomon’s name more famous
than yours and his throne greater than yours!’
And the king bowed down on his bed
48 and said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of
Israel, who has granted that one of my own should
sit on my throne today, and has let me see it with
my own eyes.’”
49 At this all Adonijah’s guests rose in alarm and
went their separate ways.
50 Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, got up and went
and took hold of the horns of the altar.[6]
51 Solomon was told, “Adonijah is afraid of King
Solomon. He has taken hold of the horns of the
altar and says, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me
first that he will not put his servant to death with
the sword.’”
52 “If he proves himself an honourable man,”
Solomon replied, “not a hair of his head will touch
the ground. But if he is found doing wrong, he will
die.”
53 King Solomon had him fetched down from the
altar, and Adonijah came and bowed low before
him. “Go home,” Solomon told him.

1 From Shunem, a town in the valley of Jezreel.

2 Amnon and Absalom were dead, and Chileab is not heard of again; Adonijah was now the eldest surviving son (2 Samuel 3:2–4).

3 Or ‘Shimei and his companions’; neither man is otherwise known for certain.

4 So the written Hebrew; the traditional reading has ‘your servant’.

5 The spring on the east side of the City of David.

6 The projections at the corners of the altar; to hold them was to claim sanctuary (compare Exodus 21:13–14).

Chapter 2

1 Kings 2 tells how David, near death, charges Solomon to be strong and to keep the LORD's commands as written in the law of Moses, so that the LORD will keep His promise that David's line will not fail. He also tells him to deal with Joab, who shed the blood of war in peacetime, to show kindness to Barzillai's sons, and to deal with Shimei. David dies after reigning forty years, and Solomon's rule is established. Adonijah asks Bathsheba to obtain Abishag for him as wife, and Solomon, seeing a claim to the throne, has him put to death. He banishes Abiathar to Anathoth, fulfilling the word against Eli's house; Joab flees to the altar and is killed there by Benaiah, who becomes commander, while Zadok becomes priest. Shimei is confined to Jerusalem on pain of death, but after three years he goes to Gath after runaway slaves and is executed. So the kingdom is firmly in Solomon's hands.

1 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave his son Solomon this charge:

2 "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, then, and show yourself a man.

3 Keep the charge of the LORD your God: walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, His rules and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you turn,

4 and so that the LORD may fulfil the promise He made concerning me: 'If your sons take care how they live, walking before Me faithfully with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall never lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

5 You also know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding the blood of war in time of peace, and put the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet.[1]

6 Deal with him as your wisdom directs, but do not let his grey head go down to Sheol[2] in peace.

7 As for the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, treat them with loyal kindness and give them a place at your table. They came to my aid when I was fleeing from your brother Absalom.[3]

8 And there is Shimei son of Gera with you, the Benjaminite from Bahurim. He called down a bitter curse on me on the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.'[4]

9 But now do not hold him guiltless. You are a wise man; you will know what to do with him. Bring his grey head down to Sheol with blood."

10 Then David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David.

11 David had reigned over Israel for forty years: seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

12 So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingdom was firmly established.

13 Now Adonijah son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. She asked, "Do you come in peace?" "In peace," he answered.

14 Then he said, "I have something to say to you." "Say it," she replied.

15 He said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel looked to me to be their king. But the kingdom has passed to my brother, for it was his from the LORD.

16 Now I have one request to make of you; do not refuse me." "Go on," she said.

17 He said, "Please ask King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife."

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

19 So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. The king rose to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat at his right hand.

20 She said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." The king said to her, "Make your request, my mother, for I will not refuse you."

21 "Let your brother Adonijah have Abishag the Shunammite for his wife," she said.

22 King Solomon answered his mother, "Why do you ask for Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well ask the kingdom for him, since he is my older brother, and for him and for Abiathar the priest and for Joab son of Zeruiah!"[5]

23 Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: “May God deal with me, and more severely still, if Adonijah has not made this request at the cost of his life!

24 Now, as the LORD lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of my father David and has made me a house as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today.”

25 So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who struck him down, and he died.

26 To Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go to Anathoth, to your own estate. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David and shared in all my father’s hardships.”

27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, fulfilling the word that the LORD had spoken at Shiloh concerning the house of Eli.[6]

28 When the news reached Joab, for Joab had sided with Adonijah though he had not sided with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar.

29 King Solomon was told, “Joab has fled to the tent of the LORD and is there beside the altar.” So Solomon sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada, saying, “Go and strike him down.”

30 Benaiah came to the tent of the LORD and said to him, “The king says, ‘Come out!’” But he said, “No, I will die here.” Benaiah reported to the king, “This is what Joab said, and this is how he answered me.”

31 The king replied, “Do as he has said. Strike him down and bury him, and so remove from me and from my father’s house the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed.

32 The LORD will bring his blood back on his own head, because he attacked two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword without my father David’s knowledge: Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel’s army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah’s army.

33 So their blood shall come back on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants for ever. But for David and his descendants, his house and his throne, there shall be peace from the LORD for ever.”

34 So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck him down and killed him, and he was buried at his home in the wilderness.

35 In Joab’s place the king appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada to command the army, and he installed Zadok the priest in place of Abiathar.

36 Next the king summoned Shimei and told him, “Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem and stay there. You are not to leave it for any destination whatever.

37 On the day you go out and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure that you will die. Your blood will be on your own head.”

38 Shimei said to the king, “What you say is fair. As my lord the king has spoken, so your servant will do.” And Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

39 Three years later, however, two of Shimei’s slaves escaped to Achish son of Maacah, the king of Gath. When word came to Shimei that his slaves were in Gath,

40 he saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath to look for his slaves. Shimei went and brought his slaves back from Gath.

41 Solomon learned that Shimei had left Jerusalem for Gath and had returned.

42 the king sent for Shimei and said to him, “Did I not make you swear by the LORD and warn you solemnly, ‘On the day you go out and go anywhere at all, you can be sure that you will die’? And you said to me, ‘What you say is fair; I have heard.’

43 Why then have you not kept your oath to the LORD and the command I gave you?”

44 The king also said to Shimei, “You know in your own heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the LORD will bring your wrongdoing back on your own head.

45 But King Solomon will be blessed, and David’s throne will stand secure in the LORD’s presence for all time.”

46 Then the king gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down, and he died. So the kingdom was firmly established in Solomon’s hands.

1 See 2 Samuel 3:27 and 20:9–10.

2 The place of the dead.

3 See 2 Samuel 17:27–29 and 19:31–39.

4 See 2 Samuel 16:5–13 and 19:16–23.

5 To marry the former king's companion could be taken as a claim to the throne; compare 2 Samuel 3:7 and 16:21–22.

6 See 1 Samuel 2:27–36. Abiathar was descended from Eli; Zadok, who replaces him, was not.

Chapter 3

1 Kings 3 tells how Solomon makes a marriage alliance with Pharaoh, and how, though he loves the LORD, he and the people still sacrifice at the high places, since no house has yet been built for the LORD's name. At the great high place of Gibeon the LORD appears to him in a dream and invites him to ask for whatever he wants. Solomon, calling himself a little child, asks for an understanding heart to judge God's people and to tell good from evil. The LORD is pleased that he has not asked for long life, riches or the death of his enemies, and gives him a wise and discerning heart, and riches and honour besides. Soon afterwards two prostitutes come before him, each claiming the same living baby. Solomon calls for a sword and orders the child cut in two; the true mother begs that the baby be given to the other woman, and Solomon gives him to her. All Israel stands in awe, seeing that God's wisdom is in him to do justice.

1 Solomon became the son-in-law of Pharaoh king of Egypt. He married Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own palace, the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem.

2 The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places,[1] because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

3 Solomon loved the LORD and walked in the statutes of his father David, except that he too offered sacrifices and burnt incense at the high places.

4 Gibeon had the chief high place, so the king went there to sacrifice, and on its altar Solomon presented a thousand burnt offerings.

5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask what you would like Me to give you."

6 Solomon answered, "You have shown great loyal kindness to Your servant my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness, righteousness and uprightness of heart. You have continued this great kindness to him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as he does today.

7 And now, LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, though I am only a little child and do not know how to go out or come in.[2]

8 Your servant is here among the people You have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted.

9 So give Your servant a listening heart[3] to govern Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?"

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked for this.

11 So God said to him, "Because you have asked for this, and not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for discernment to understand what is just,

12 I now do as you have asked. I give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, and none like you will arise after you.

13 I also give you what you have not asked for, both riches and honour, so that no king will be your equal all your days.

14 And if you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, I will give you a long life."

15 Then Solomon awoke, and he knew it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his servants.

16 Later on, two prostitutes came and presented themselves before the king.

17 One of the women said, "Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a baby while she was there with me.

18 On the third day after my baby was born, this woman also gave birth. We were alone; there was

no one else with us in the house, only the two of us.

19 During the night this woman's son died, because she lay on him.

20 So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your servant was asleep. She laid him at her breast and laid her dead son at mine.

21 When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that he was not the son I had borne."

22 The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours." But the first woman insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine." So they argued in front of the king.

23 Then the king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"

24 "Fetch me a sword," the king ordered, and a sword was brought to him.

25 Then he said, "Divide the living baby in two. Give one half to the first woman and the other half to the second."

26 Then the woman whose son was alive spoke to the king, for her heart went out to her son: "Please, my lord, give her the living child. Whatever you do, do not kill him!" But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours. Cut him in two!"

27 Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the first woman the living child. Do not kill him; she is his mother."

28 When all Israel heard the judgement the king had given, they held the king in awe, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

1 Hebrew *bamot*, local shrines, often on hilltops. The law looked forward to one place of worship that the LORD would choose (Deuteronomy 12:5–14).

2 That is, how to conduct the affairs of leadership.

3 Or 'an understanding mind'; Hebrew *lev shomea*, 'a hearing heart'.

Chapter 4

1 Kings 4 lists Solomon's chief officials and the twelve district governors who each provide food for the king's household for one month of the year. Judah and Israel are as numerous as the sand by the sea, eating, drinking and rejoicing. Solomon rules all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt, and his court consumes vast daily provisions. Throughout his reign Judah and Israel live in safety, everyone under his own vine and fig tree, from Dan to Beersheba. God gives Solomon wisdom and understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore, greater than that of all the people of the east and of Egypt. He speaks three thousand proverbs and composes over a thousand songs, and teaches about trees, animals, birds, reptiles and fish, and people come from all nations to hear his wisdom.

1 So Solomon reigned as king of all Israel,

2 and these were his chief officials: Azariah son of Zadok was the priest;

3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha, were secretaries; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder;

4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada commanded the army; Zadok and Abiathar served as priests;

5 Azariah son of Nathan was over the district governors; Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and the king's friend;[1]

6 Ahishar was in charge of the palace; and Adoniram son of Abda was over the forced labour.

7 Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one had to provide for one month of the year.

8 Their names were these: Ben-hur[2] for the hill country of Ephraim;

9 Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh and Elon-beth-hanan;

10 Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (Socoh and all the land of Hepher were his);

11 Ben-abinadab, in all Naphath-dor (he had Taphath daughter of Solomon as his wife);

12 Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo and all Beth-shean, which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean as far as Abel-meholah and beyond Jokmeam;

13 Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead, and the region

of Argob in Bashan, sixty large towns with walls and bronze bars);

14 Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim;

15 Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he too had married a daughter of Solomon, Basemath);

16 Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;

17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar;

18 Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin;

19 Geber son of Uri for the land of Gilead, the territory once ruled by Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan. In addition there was one governor for the land of Judah.[3]

20 Judah and Israel were as many as the grains of sand on the seashore; they ate and drank and were happy.

21 Solomon's rule extended over every kingdom from the River[4] to Philistine territory and on to the frontier of Egypt. Throughout his life these kingdoms paid him tribute and were subject to him.

22 Solomon's provisions for a single day were thirty cors[5] of fine flour and sixty cors of meal,

23 ten fattened oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures and a hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks and fattened fowl.

24 For he had dominion over all the region west of the River, from Tiphsah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River,[6] and he had peace on every side.

25 All Solomon's days Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan to Beersheba, each family under its own vine and under its own fig tree.

26 Solomon had forty thousand[7] horse stalls for his chariot teams and twelve thousand cavalrymen.

27 Those governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table; they let nothing be lacking.

28 They also brought barley and straw for the chariot horses and the swift steeds to the places where they were needed, each according to his duty.

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore.

30 His wisdom was greater than all the wisdom of the peoples of the east and all the learning of Egypt.

31 He was wiser than anyone else, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol,[8] and his fame spread through all the surrounding nations.

32 Three thousand proverbs are credited to him, and a thousand and five songs.

33 He could speak about plants, from the cedar of Lebanon down to the hyssop sprouting from a wall, and about beasts and birds, reptiles and fish.

34 People came from every nation to hear Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

1 An official title, 'the king's companion' or adviser; compare 2 Samuel 15:37.

2 Several of the governors are known only as 'son of' someone (Hebrew *ben*), perhaps because the record was damaged.

3 So the Greek; the Hebrew ends 'and one governor who was in the land', without naming Judah.

4 The Euphrates. Verses 21–34 are 5:1–14 in the Hebrew text, and 5:1–18 in English are 5:15–32 in Hebrew.

5 A cor was about 220 litres (6 bushels).

6 Hebrew 'beyond the River', seen from Mesopotamia.

7 Some Greek manuscripts and 2 Chronicles 9:25 have 'four thousand'.

8 Ethan and Heman are named in the titles of Psalms 88 and 89; compare 1 Chronicles 2:6.

Chapter 5

1 Kings 5 tells how Hiram king of Tyre, a lifelong friend of David, sends envoys to Solomon. Solomon replies that David could not build a house for the LORD's name because of his wars, but now the LORD has given rest on every side, and Solomon intends to build it as the LORD promised David. He asks Hiram for cedars from Lebanon, cut by Sidonian woodsmen, in return for wages. Hiram rejoices and agrees to float cedar and juniper logs by sea, in exchange for wheat and oil for his household each year, and the two kings make a treaty. Solomon conscripts thirty thousand men from Israel to work in Lebanon in shifts, besides seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, and they quarry great costly stones for the foundation of the house.

1 Hiram king of Tyre sent his envoys to Solomon
when he heard that he had been anointed king in
his father's place, for Hiram had always been a
friend of David.
2 Solomon sent back this message to Hiram:
3 "You know that my father David could not build a
house for the name of the LORD his God because
of the wars waged against him on every side, until
the LORD put his enemies under the soles of his
feet.
4 But now the LORD my God has given me rest on
every side. There is no adversary and no
misfortune.
5 I therefore plan to build a house for the name of
the LORD my God, just as the LORD promised my
father David when He said, 'Your son, whom I will
place on your throne after you, is the one who will
build the house for My name.'
6 Now give orders for cedars of Lebanon to be
felled for me. My servants will work alongside
yours, and I will pay you whatever wages you set
for your servants, for you know that none of us is
as skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians."
7 When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was
delighted and said, "Blessed be the LORD today,
who has given David a wise son to rule over this
great people!"
8 Hiram sent word to Solomon: "I have received
the message you sent me, and I will do all you
wish with regard to the cedar and juniper[1] timber.
9 My men will bring the logs down from Lebanon
to the sea, and I will make them into rafts and
float them by sea to whatever place you name.
There I will have them broken up, and you can
take them away. In return you shall meet my
wishes by supplying food for my household."
10 So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar
and juniper timber he wanted,
11 and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors
of wheat as food for his household and twenty
cors[2] of pressed olive oil. Solomon gave Hiram
this every year.
12 The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, just as He had
promised. Hiram and Solomon were at peace with
each other, and they made a formal treaty.
13 King Solomon raised a levy of forced labour
from all Israel, thirty thousand men.
14 He sent them to Lebanon in relays of ten
thousand a month, so that they spent one month
in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram
was in charge of the forced labour.
15 Solomon also had seventy thousand porters and
eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills,
16 besides three thousand three hundred[3] foremen
who supervised the work and directed the
labourers.
17 At the king's command they quarried large,
costly blocks of stone to lay the foundation of the
house with dressed stone.
18 So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders,
together with the men of Gebal,[4] cut and prepared
the timber and the stone to build the house.

1 Or 'cypress' or 'pine'; the exact tree is uncertain.
2 So the Hebrew; the Greek and 2 Chronicles 2:10 have 'twenty thousand baths'.
3 The Greek and 2 Chronicles 2:2 have 'three thousand six hundred'.
4 Byblos, a Phoenician city north of Sidon.

Chapter 6

1 Kings 6 tells how, in the four hundred and eightieth year after Israel came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign, Solomon begins to build the house of the LORD. It is sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high, with a porch in front and storeys of side rooms around it, built of stone dressed at the quarry so that no sound of hammer or iron tool is heard on the site. The word of the LORD comes to Solomon: if he walks in His statutes, the LORD will fulfil His promise to David and dwell among Israel. Inside, the house is lined with cedar carved with gourds and open flowers, and the floor with juniper. At the back is the inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place, a cube of twenty cubits overlaid with pure gold, for the ark of the covenant. In it stand two cherubim of olive wood ten cubits high, whose outstretched wings touch the walls and each other. Walls and doors are carved with cherubim, palm trees and flowers and overlaid with gold. The house is finished in the eleventh year, after seven years' work.

1 Four hundred and eighty years after the
Israelites left Egypt, in the month of Ziv, the

second month of the fourth year of his reign over Israel,[1] Solomon began building the house of the LORD.

2 The house that King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[2]

3 The porch in front of the main hall[3] of the house was twenty cubits across, matching the width of the house, and it projected ten cubits from the front of the house.

4 He made windows for the house with recessed frames.[4]

5 Against the wall of the house, round the walls of both the main hall and the inner sanctuary, he built a structure of several storeys, with side rooms all round.

6 The lowest storey was five cubits wide, the middle one six cubits and the third seven, for he made ledges round the outside of the house, so that the beams would not be set into the walls of the house.

7 The house was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer, axe or any iron tool was heard in the house while it was being built.

8 The entrance to the lowest[5] storey was on the south side of the house, and stairways[6] led up to the middle storey and from there to the third.

9 So he built the house and completed it, and he roofed it with beams and planks of cedar.

10 He built the side structure against the whole house, each storey five cubits high, and it was joined to the house with cedar beams.

11 Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon:

12 "As for this house you are building, if you walk in My statutes, carry out My rules and keep all My commandments by walking in them, then I will fulfil through you the promise I made to your father David.

13 And I will live among the people of Israel; I will never abandon My people Israel."

14 So Solomon built the house and completed it.

15 He lined the inside walls of the house with cedar boards, panelling them with wood from the floor of the house up to the rafters of the ceiling, and he covered the floor of the house with boards of juniper.

16 At the rear of the house he partitioned off twenty cubits with cedar boards from floor to rafters, and built it inside as an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place.

17 The house in front of it, that is, the main hall, was forty cubits long.

18 The cedar inside the house was carved with gourds and open flowers. All was cedar; no stone was to be seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary within the house to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there.

20 The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the altar of cedar.[7]

21 Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and he drew gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which he overlaid with gold.

22 In this way the entire house was covered in gold from end to end. He also covered with gold the whole of the altar that stood before the inner sanctuary.

23 For the inner sanctuary he carved two cherubim from olive wood,[8] each of them ten cubits tall.

24 One wing of the first cherub measured five cubits and its other wing five cubits, ten cubits from wingtip to wingtip.

25 The second cherub also measured ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape.

26 Each cherub stood ten cubits tall.

27 He placed the cherubim in the innermost room of the house. Their wings were spread out, so that a wing of one touched one wall and a wing of the other touched the other wall, while their inner wings met in the middle of the room.

28 The cherubim too he covered with gold.

29 On all the walls round the house, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved engravings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers.

30 He overlaid the floor of the house with gold, in both the inner and outer rooms.

31 For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood; the lintel and doorposts formed a pentagon.[9]

32 On the two olive-wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and he overlaid them with gold, hammering the gold onto the cherubim and the palm trees.

33 In the same way he made doorposts of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall, four-sided,

34 and two doors of juniper wood, each having two leaves that folded.

35 He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them, and overlaid them with gold evenly applied over the carving.

36 He built the inner courtyard with three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams.

37 The foundation of the house of the LORD was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv.

38 The house was completed in all its parts and to every specification in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, the eighth month.[10] It had taken him seven years to build.

1 Ziv is April to May. For ‘four hundred and eighty’, the Greek has ‘four hundred and fortieth year’.

2 A cubit was about 45 centimetres (18 inches); the house was about 27 metres long, 9 metres wide and 13.5 metres high.

3 Hebrew *heykal*, the ‘temple’ or main hall, called the Holy Place, as distinct from the inner sanctuary; so also in verses 5, 17 and 33.

4 Or ‘narrow windows with lattices’; the meaning is uncertain.

5 So the Greek; the Hebrew has ‘the middle’.

6 Or ‘trapdoors’; the meaning is uncertain.

7 Probably the altar of incense, which stood in front of the inner sanctuary (verse 22; compare Exodus 30:1–6).

8 Hebrew ‘trees of oil’; perhaps wild olive or some other oily wood.

9 Or ‘the doorposts were a fifth of the width of the wall’; the Hebrew is uncertain. So also ‘four-sided’ in verse 33.

10 October to November.

Chapter 7

1 Kings 7 tells how Solomon spends thirteen years building his own palace complex: the House of the Forest of Lebanon with its rows of cedar pillars, the Hall of Pillars, the Hall of the Throne where he gives judgement, his own residence and a house for Pharaoh’s daughter, all of costly dressed stone. He brings Hiram, a skilled bronze-worker from Tyre whose mother was a widow of Naphtali, who casts for the LORD’s house the two great bronze pillars named Jachin and Boaz, with capitals of lily-work and pomegranates; the huge bronze Sea standing on twelve bronze oxen; ten bronze stands on wheels, richly decorated, with ten basins; and the pots, shovels and bowls. They are cast in the clay of the Jordan plain, and the bronze is too much to weigh. Solomon also makes the golden furnishings for the house: the altar, the table for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands and the utensils. When the work is finished he brings in the silver, gold and vessels his father David had dedicated and puts them in the treasuries.

1 Solomon took thirteen years to build his own palace, and then his whole palace was complete.

2 He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon,[1] a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, on four rows of cedar pillars with cedar beams resting on the pillars.

3 It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the pillars, forty-five of them, fifteen to a row.

4 There were window frames in three rows, facing each other in three tiers.

5 All the doorways and doorposts had square frames, with window facing window in three tiers.

6 He made the Hall of Pillars fifty cubits long and thirty wide, with a porch in front of it, and pillars and a canopy in front of them.

7 He made the Hall of the Throne, the Hall of Judgement, where he was to give judgement, and it was panelled with cedar from floor to ceiling.[2]

8 His own house where he was to live, in the other court set back from the hall, was of the same workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh’s daughter, whom he had married.

9 All these were built of costly stone, blocks cut to size and trimmed with saws on the inner and outer faces, from foundation to coping, and on the outside as far as the great courtyard.

10 The foundations were laid with costly stones, huge stones, some of ten cubits and some of eight.

11 Above them were costly stones cut to measure, and cedar beams.

12 The great courtyard all round had three courses
of dressed stone and a course of trimmed cedar
beams, just like the inner courtyard of the house
of the LORD and its porch.

13 King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram.[3]

14 He was the son of a widow from the tribe of
Naphtali, and his father had been a man of Tyre, a
worker in bronze. Hiram was full of skill,
understanding and knowledge for every kind of
work in bronze. He came to King Solomon and
carried out all his work.

15 He cast the two bronze pillars. Each pillar was
eighteen cubits high, and a cord of twelve cubits
would go round it.[4]

16 He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set
on the tops of the pillars. Each capital was five
cubits high.

17 There were networks of lattice and wreaths of
chainwork for the capitals on the tops of the
pillars, seven for each capital.

18 He made the pomegranates[5] in two rows round
each network to cover the capitals on top of the
pillars, and he did the same for the other capital.

19 The capitals on top of the pillars in the porch
were shaped like lilies, four cubits high.

20 On the capitals of both pillars, above the
rounded bulge next to the network, there were
two hundred pomegranates in rows all round each
capital.

21 He set up the pillars at the porch of the main
hall. He set up the pillar on the south and named
it Jachin, and the pillar on the north and named it
Boaz.[6]

22 The tops of the pillars were shaped like lilies. So
the work on the pillars was finished.

23 Then he made the Sea of cast metal,[7] circular in
shape, ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits
high. A line of thirty cubits would measure round
it.

24 Under its rim, gourds encircled it, ten to a cubit,
going right round the Sea. The gourds were in two
rows, cast in one piece with it.

25 It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north,
three facing west, three facing south and three
facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and
their hindquarters were all towards the centre.

26 It was a handbreadth[8] thick, and its rim was
made like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It
held two thousand baths.[9]

27 He also made the ten stands of bronze. Each
stand was four cubits long, four wide and three
high.

28 This is how the stands were made: they had
panels, and the panels were set between the
uprights.

29 On the panels between the uprights were lions,
oxen and cherubim, and on the uprights the same.
Above and below the lions and oxen were wreaths
of hammered work.

30 Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze
axles, and at its four corners were supports cast
for the basin, with wreaths on each side.

31 Its opening inside the crown at the top was one
cubit deep. The opening was round, made like a
pedestal, a cubit and a half across, and on it were
carvings. Its panels were square, not round.

32 The four wheels were under the panels, and the
axles of the wheels were fixed to the stand. Each
wheel was a cubit and a half high.

33 The wheels were made like chariot wheels; their
axles, rims, spokes and hubs were all of cast
metal.

34 There were four supports at the four corners of
each stand, cast in one piece with the stand.

35 Round the top of each stand ran a circular rim
half a cubit high, and the braces and side panels
at the top were cast as part of the stand itself.

36 On the surfaces of its braces and on its panels
he engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees,
wherever there was space, with wreaths all round.

37 That is how he made the ten stands; all of them
were cast in the same mould, with the same size
and shape.

38 He made ten basins of bronze, each holding
forty baths and measuring four cubits across, one
basin for each of the ten stands.

39 He placed five stands on the south side of the
house and five on the north side, and he placed
the Sea at the south-east corner of the house.

40 Hiram also made the pots,[10] the shovels and the
bowls. So Hiram finished all the work he did for
King Solomon on the house of the LORD:

41 In all, there were the two pillars; the two bowl-
shaped capitals crowning them; and the two
lattice networks covering those bowl-shaped
capitals;

42 the four hundred pomegranates arranged in a
double row on each network, to cover the bowl-

shaped capitals at the tops of the pillars;

43 the ten stands, with the ten basins on the stands;

44 the one Sea, and the twelve oxen under the Sea;

45 and the pots, the shovels and the bowls. All these articles that Hiram made for King Solomon for the house of the LORD were of burnished bronze.

46 The king had them cast in clay moulds in the plain of the Jordan, between Succoth and Zarethan.

47 Solomon left all these articles unweighed, because there were so very many; the weight of the bronze was never determined.

48 Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the house of the LORD: the golden altar; the golden table on which the bread of the Presence[11] was set;

49 the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south and five on the north, in front of the inner sanctuary; the flowers, the lamps and the tongs, of gold;

50 the cups, snuffers, bowls, dishes and firepans, of pure gold; and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and for the doors of the main hall.

51 When all the work that King Solomon did for the house of the LORD was finished, Solomon brought in the things his father David had dedicated, the silver, the gold and the vessels, and placed them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

1 So called because of its many cedar pillars, like a forest; it served as an armoury and treasury (10:17; Isaiah 22:8).

2 So the Syriac and Latin; the Hebrew has ‘from floor to floor’.

3 Not the king of Tyre (5:1) but a craftsman; called Huram-abi in 2 Chronicles 2:13.

4 About 8 metres high and 5.4 metres round. The Greek, Jeremiah 52:21 and some versions add ‘it was hollow, four fingers thick’.

5 So two manuscripts and the Greek; most Hebrew manuscripts have ‘pillars’ here and ‘pomegranates’ later in the verse, apparently with the two words exchanged.

6 Jachin probably means ‘He establishes’, and Boaz ‘In Him is strength’.

7 A great basin for the priests to wash in (2 Chronicles 4:6).

8 About 7.5 centimetres (3 inches).

9 A bath was about 22 litres (5 gallons); the Sea held about 44,000 litres. 2 Chronicles 4:5 has ‘three thousand baths’.

10 So many manuscripts and verse 45; most have ‘basins’.

11 See Leviticus 24:5–9.

Chapter 8

1 Kings 8 tells how Solomon assembles the elders of Israel at the festival in the seventh month, and the priests bring the ark of the covenant from Zion into the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim; it holds only the two tablets of stone. The cloud fills the house of the LORD, and the priests cannot stand to minister because of the glory of the LORD. Solomon blesses the people and praises the LORD for keeping His promise to David. Standing before the altar with hands spread towards heaven, he prays: there is no God like the LORD, who keeps covenant and loyal kindness; even the highest heavens cannot contain Him, much less this house, yet may His eyes be open towards the place where He has put His name. He asks the LORD to hear from heaven and forgive when His people pray towards this house: in disputes, defeat, drought, famine and disease, when a foreigner comes to pray, in war, and even when they are carried into exile for their sin and turn back to Him. Then he blesses the assembly, urging them to keep their hearts wholly true to the LORD. Solomon and all Israel offer vast numbers of sacrifices and dedicate the house, and keep the festival for fourteen days; on the eighth day the people go home joyful for all the good the LORD has done.

1 Then Solomon assembled before him in Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the leaders of the ancestral families of the Israelites, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion.

2 All the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon at the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.[1]

3 When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark.

4 They brought up the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting and all the holy vessels in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up.

5 King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel who had gathered to him were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

6 Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim.

7 For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and so the cherubim formed a covering above the ark and its poles.

8 The poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside. They are there to this day.

9 There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of the land of Egypt.[2]

10 When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

11 The priests were unable to remain at their duties because of the cloud, since the LORD's glory had filled His house.

12 Then Solomon declared, "The LORD has chosen to live in deep darkness.

13 I have indeed built You a lofty house, a place for You to live in for ever."

14 Then the king turned round and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while the whole assembly of Israel stood.

15 He said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with His own mouth made a promise to my father David and with His own hand has fulfilled it, saying,

16 'From the time I led My people Israel out of Egypt I have chosen no city among all Israel's tribes as the site of a house for My name. Instead I chose David to rule My people Israel.'

17 My father David had longed to build a house for the name of the LORD, Israel's God.

18 But the LORD told him, 'You wanted to build a house for My name, and it was good that you wanted to.

19 Yet you are not the one to build the house; your son, who will come from your own body, shall build the house for My name.'

20 Now the LORD has kept the promise He made. I have succeeded my father David and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

21 There I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that He made with our ancestors when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands towards heaven.

23 He prayed, "LORD God of Israel, there is no God like You, in the heavens above or on the earth beneath. You keep Your covenant and Your loyal kindness towards Your servants who live wholeheartedly in Your presence.

24 You have kept what You promised to Your servant David my father. You spoke with Your mouth, and with Your hand You have fulfilled it this day.

25 Now, LORD, God of Israel, keep for Your servant David my father what You promised him when You said, 'You shall never lack a man to sit before Me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take care how they live, walking before Me as you have walked before Me.'

26 And now, God of Israel, let Your word that You spoke to Your servant David my father be confirmed.

27 But will God really dwell on the earth? Even the heavens, the very highest heavens, cannot hold You, much less this house that I have built!

28 Yet turn to Your servant's prayer and his plea, LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer that Your servant is praying before You today,

29 that Your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there,' so that You may hear the prayer Your servant offers towards this place.

30 Listen when Your servant and Your people Israel plead with You, praying towards this place. Listen from heaven where You dwell, and as You listen, forgive.

31 If someone wrongs his neighbour and is required to take an oath, and he comes and swears the oath before Your altar in this house,

32 then hear in heaven and act. Judge between Your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing

his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the innocent by rewarding him for his innocence.

33 When Your people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against You, and they turn back to You and confess Your name, praying and pleading with You in this house,

34 then listen from heaven, forgive Your people Israel their sin, and restore them to the land that You gave their ancestors.

35 When the heavens are shut and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, and they pray towards this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin because You have afflicted them,

36 then listen from heaven and pardon the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel. Show them the right road to walk on, and send rain on this land of Yours that You gave Your people to possess.

37 When there is famine in the land, or plague, blight or mildew, locust or caterpillar, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities,[3] whatever disaster or sickness there may be,

38 whatever prayer or plea is made by anyone among all Your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and spreading out his hands towards this house,

39 then hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, and forgive and act. Deal with each person according to all his ways, since You know his heart, for You alone know the hearts of all people,

40 so that they will revere You as long as they live in the land You gave our ancestors.

41 Likewise, when a foreigner who is not of Your people Israel comes from a distant land for Your name's sake,

42 since they will learn of Your great name and Your strong hand and outstretched arm, and he comes to pray facing this house,

43 then listen from heaven where You dwell and grant whatever the foreigner asks of You. Then every people on earth will come to know Your name and revere You as Your people Israel do, and will know that Your name is called over this house I have built.

44 When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and they pray to the LORD towards the city You have chosen and the house I have built for Your name,

45 then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

46 When they sin against You, for there is no one who does not sin, and You are angry with them and give them over to an enemy, who carries them away captive to his own land, far off or near,

47 yet if they come to their senses in the land where they are captives, and turn back and plead with You in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong; we have acted wickedly,'

48 and if, in the land of the enemies who carried them off, they return to You wholeheartedly and with all their soul, and pray to You facing the land You gave their ancestors, the city You chose and the house I built for Your name,

49 then hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

50 Forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all the offences they have committed against You, and cause their captors to show them compassion,

51 for they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.

52 May Your eyes be open to the plea of Your servant and to the plea of Your people Israel, and may You listen to them whenever they call to You.

53 For You set them apart from all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You declared through Your servant Moses when You brought our ancestors out of Egypt, Lord GOD."

54 When Solomon had finished offering all this prayer and plea to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out towards heaven.

55 Standing up, he pronounced a blessing over the whole assembly of Israel, calling out loudly:

56 "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, just as He promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises He made through His servant Moses.

57 May the LORD our God be with us as He was with our ancestors. May He never leave us or forsake us.

58 May He turn our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments,

statutes and rules, which He commanded our ancestors.

59 And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, so that He may uphold the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel as each day requires,

60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.

61 So let your hearts be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in His statutes and keeping His commandments, as on this day."

62 Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD.

63 Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the house of the LORD.

64 On that same day the king consecrated the middle of the courtyard in front of the house of the LORD. There he offered the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar before the LORD was too small to hold them all.

65 So at that time Solomon held the festival, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God for seven days and seven more days, fourteen days in all.[4]

66 On the eighth day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and went home, joyful and glad at heart for all the good the LORD had done for His servant David and for His people Israel.

1 September to October; the festival is the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:33–36). The house had been finished in the eighth month (6:38), so this was probably eleven months later.

2 Compare Hebrews 9:4, which also mentions the jar of manna and Aaron's staff (Exodus 16:33–34; Numbers 17:10).

3 Hebrew 'in the land of their gates'; the Greek and Syriac have 'in one of their cities'.

4 The Greek has only 'seven days'; compare 2 Chronicles 7:8–10, where the dedication took seven days and the festival another seven.

Chapter 9

1 Kings 9 tells how the LORD appears to Solomon a second time, as at Gibeon. He has heard his prayer and consecrated the house, and His eyes and heart will be there for ever. If Solomon walks before Him as David did, his throne will stand; but if he or his sons turn to other gods, Israel will be cut off from the land and this house will become a ruin that makes passers-by ask why. Solomon gives Hiram twenty towns in Galilee, which Hiram dislikes and calls the land of Cabul. The chapter records Solomon's forced labour for his building projects at Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, which Pharaoh had captured and given to his daughter, and his store cities and chariot cities. The surviving Canaanite peoples are made slaves, but Israelites serve as soldiers and officials. Solomon offers sacrifices three times a year, and builds a fleet at Ezion-geber which, with Hiram's sailors, brings gold from Ophir.

1 When Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all that he had set his heart on doing,

2 the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon.

3 The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and the plea you made before Me. I have consecrated this house that you have built by putting My name there for ever. My eyes and My heart will be there at all times.

4 As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing all I have commanded you and keeping My statutes and My rules,

5 then I will establish your royal throne over Israel for ever, as I promised your father David when I said, 'You shall never lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

6 But if you or your sons turn away from following Me and do not keep the commandments and statutes I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them,

7 then I will cut Israel off from the land I have given them, and I will cast out of My sight this house that I have consecrated for My name. Israel will become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.

8 And this house, now so exalted,[1] will make everyone who passes by it appalled. They will hiss

and say, ‘Why has the LORD done this to this land and to this house?’

9 And people will answer, ‘Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, and clung to other gods, worshipping and serving them. That is why the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.’”

10 At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the royal palace,

11 Hiram king of Tyre having supplied Solomon with all the cedar and juniper and gold he wanted, King Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the land of Galilee.

12 But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the towns Solomon had given him, they did not please him.

13 “What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?” he asked. So they have been called the land of Cabul[2] to this day.

14 Hiram had sent the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold.[3]

15 This is the account of the forced labour that King Solomon conscripted to build the house of the LORD, his own palace, the Millo,[4] the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

16 Pharaoh king of Egypt had come up and captured Gezer and burned it down. He had killed the Canaanites who lived in the town and had given it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon’s wife.

17 So Solomon rebuilt Gezer. He also built Lower Beth-horon,

18 Baalath, and Tamar[5] in the wilderness, within the land,

19 as well as all the store cities he had, the cities for his chariots and for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout the territory he ruled.

20 All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, who were not Israelites,

21 their descendants who remained in the land, whom the Israelites had been unable to devote to destruction, Solomon conscripted as slave labour, as they are to this day.

22 But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites. They were his soldiers, his officials, his commanders, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and horsemen.

23 These were also the chief officers in charge of Solomon’s work: five hundred and fifty who supervised the people doing the work.

24 As soon as Pharaoh’s daughter had moved up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he built the Millo.

25 Three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, burning incense with them before the LORD. So he completed the house.[6]

26 King Solomon also had ships built at Ezion-geber, close to Eloth on the coast of the Red Sea[7] in Edomite territory.

27 Hiram sent his own men, experienced sailors, to serve in the fleet with Solomon’s men.

28 They sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred and twenty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

1 Or ‘this house will become a heap of ruins’, following the Syriac and Latin.

2 Perhaps ‘as good as nothing’.

3 About 4 tonnes. A talent was about 34 kilograms (75 pounds).

4 ‘The filling’; see the note at 2 Samuel 5:9.

5 So the written Hebrew; the traditional reading and 2 Chronicles 8:4 have ‘Tadmor’, later Palmyra.

6 Or ‘and fulfilled the obligations of the house’; the Hebrew is uncertain.

7 Hebrew ‘Sea of Reeds’; here the Gulf of Aqaba.

Chapter 10

1 Kings 10 tells how the queen of Sheba hears of Solomon's fame and comes to Jerusalem with a great caravan of spices, gold and precious stones to test him with hard questions. Solomon answers them all, and when she sees his wisdom, his palace, the food on his table, his servants and the burnt offerings at the house of the LORD, she is left breathless. She confesses that the report did not tell her half, blesses the LORD for setting Solomon on Israel's throne to do justice and righteousness, and gives him gold and an unequalled quantity of spices, before he gives her all she desires and she returns home. The chapter describes Solomon's wealth: six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold a year, gold shields, a great ivory throne overlaid with gold, gold drinking vessels, silver as common as stones, ships bringing gold, ivory, apes and peacocks, and horses and chariots traded from Egypt and Kue. All the earth seeks his presence to hear the wisdom God has put in his heart.

1 When the queen of Sheba[1] heard of Solomon's
fame, which brought honour to the name of the
LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.
2 She arrived in Jerusalem with a very great
retinue, with camels carrying spices, a vast
amount of gold and precious stones. When she
came to Solomon, she talked with him about
everything she had on her mind.
3 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was
too obscure for the king to explain to her.
4 The queen of Sheba took in the full extent of
Solomon's wisdom and the palace he had built,
5 the food on his table, the seating of his officials,
the attendance and dress of his servants, his
cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he offered at
the house of the LORD,[2] it took her breath away.
6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my
own country about your achievements and your
wisdom was true.
7 But I did not believe it until I came and saw it
with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told
me! Your wisdom and prosperity far exceed the
report I heard.
8 How blessed your people must be! How blessed
these servants of yours, who stand before you
continually and hear your wisdom!
9 Blessed be the LORD your God, who has
delighted in you and set you on the throne of
Israel! Because of the LORD's everlasting love for
Israel, He has made you king, to maintain justice
and righteousness."
10 Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty
talents of gold, a great quantity of spices and
precious stones. Never again did such an
abundance of spices come in as those the queen of
Sheba gave to King Solomon.
11 Hiram's fleet, which brought gold from Ophir,
also brought from Ophir great cargoes of almug
wood[3] and precious stones.
12 The king used the almug wood to make supports
for the house of the LORD and for the royal
palace, and to make lyres and harps for the
musicians. No such almug wood has ever come in
or been seen again to this day.
13 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she
desired and asked for, besides what he gave her
out of his royal bounty. Then she turned and went
back to her own country with her servants.
14 Each year Solomon received six hundred and
sixty-six talents[4] of gold by weight,
15 besides what came from the merchants and the
profits of the traders, and from all the kings of
Arabia and the governors of the land.
16 King Solomon made two hundred large shields
of beaten gold; six hundred shekels[5] of gold went
into each shield.
17 He also made three hundred small shields of
beaten gold, with three minas[6] of gold in each
shield. The king put them in the House of the
Forest of Lebanon.
18 The king also made a great throne inlaid with
ivory and overlaid it with the finest gold.
19 The throne had six steps, and its back had a
rounded top. On either side of the seat were
armrests, with a lion standing beside each
armrest.
20 Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at each
end of each step. Nothing like it was ever made
for any other kingdom.
21 Every cup King Solomon drank from was gold,
and every vessel in the House of the Forest of
Lebanon was of pure gold. There was no silver, for
in Solomon's time silver counted for nothing.
22 The king had ships of Tarshish[7] at sea alongside
Hiram's ships, and every third year they returned

laden with gold, silver and ivory, with apes and baboons.[8]

23 In wealth and in wisdom King Solomon outshone every other king on earth.

24 The whole world sought an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

25 Year after year, each of them brought a gift: articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons and spices, horses and mules.

26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horsemen. He had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as the sycamore-fig trees of the lowlands.

28 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue;[9] the royal traders bought them from Kue at the going price.

29 A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. In the same way they were exported through the royal traders to all the kings of the Hittites and of Aram.

1 Probably in south-west Arabia (modern Yemen). Jesus calls her 'the Queen of the South' (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31).
2 Or 'the ascent by which he went up to the house of the LORD'.
3 A fine wood, perhaps red sandalwood; called 'algum' in 2 Chronicles 9:10.
4 About 23 tonnes.
5 About 6.9 kilograms (15 pounds).
6 About 1.7 kilograms (3¾ pounds); a mina was fifty shekels.
7 Large ocean-going ships, perhaps named after a distant port.
8 Or 'peacocks'; the meaning of the last word is uncertain.
9 Probably Cilicia, in the south-east of modern Turkey.

Chapter 11

1 Kings 11 tells how King Solomon loves many foreign women from the nations the LORD had forbidden Israel to marry, and has seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. In his old age they turn his heart after other gods, and he builds high places for Chemosh of Moab and Molech of Ammon, so that his heart is not wholly true to the LORD as David's was. The LORD is angry and declares that He will tear the kingdom from Solomon, though not in his lifetime, and will leave one tribe to his son for David's and Jerusalem's sake. The LORD raises up adversaries against him: Hadad the Edomite, who had grown up at Pharaoh's court, and Rezon, who rules in Damascus. Jeroboam son of Nebat, an able man in charge of the labour gangs of the house of Joseph, also rebels. The prophet Ahijah of Shiloh meets him, tears his new cloak into twelve pieces and gives him ten, promising him the ten tribes and a lasting house if he obeys the LORD. Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam, who flees to Shishak in Egypt. Solomon dies after reigning forty years, and his son Rehoboam succeeds him.

1 King Solomon loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women.

2 They were from the nations of whom the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, nor they with you, for they will surely turn your hearts away after their gods."[1] Yet Solomon held fast to them in love.

3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as the heart of his father David had been.

5 Solomon followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD fully, as his father David had done.

7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the hill east of Jerusalem, and for Molech[2] the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their

gods.

9 So the LORD was angry with Solomon, because
his heart had turned away from the LORD, the
God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice

10 and had commanded him about this very thing,
that he should not follow other gods. But he did
not keep what the LORD commanded.

11 So the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this is
what you have done, and you have not kept My
covenant and My statutes, which I commanded
you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you
and give it to one of your servants.

12 Yet for the sake of your father David I will not do
it in your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of
your son.

13 Even so, I will not tear away the whole kingdom;
I will give your son one tribe,[3] for the sake of My
servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem,
which I have chosen.”

14 Then the LORD raised up an adversary[4] against
Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, who was of the
royal house of Edom.

15 In the past, while David was fighting Edom, Joab
the army commander had gone up to bury the
dead, and he had killed every male in Edom.[5]

16 For six months Joab remained there with the
whole Israelite army until every male in Edom had
been wiped out.

17 But Hadad fled to Egypt with some Edomites
who had served his father. Hadad was then only a
small boy.

18 They set out from Midian and came to Paran.
Taking men with them from Paran, they came to
Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a
house, assigned him food and gave him land.

19 Hadad won great favour with Pharaoh, so that
Pharaoh gave him in marriage the sister of his
own wife, the sister of Queen Tahpenes.

20 The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named
Genubath, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh’s
palace. Genubath lived in Pharaoh’s household
among Pharaoh’s own sons.

21 While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David
had gone to rest with his ancestors and that Joab
the commander of the army was also dead. Then
Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, so that I may
return to my own country.”

22 “What have you lacked here with me,” Pharaoh
asked him, “that you now want to go back to your
own country?” “Nothing,” he replied, “but do let
me go.”

23 God also raised up against Solomon another
adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from
his master Hadadezer king of Zobah.

24 He gathered men around him and became
leader of a raiding band when David was
slaughtering the men of Zobah.[6] They went to
Damascus, settled there and ruled in Damascus.

25 He was Israel’s adversary as long as Solomon
lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. He
loathed Israel and ruled over Aram.[7]

26 Jeroboam son of Nebat also rebelled against the
king. He was an Ephraimite from Zeredah, one of
Solomon’s officials, and his mother was a widow
named Zeruah.

27 This is how he came to rebel against the king.
Solomon was building the Millo and closing the
gap in the wall of the City of David his father.

28 Now Jeroboam was a capable man, and when
Solomon saw how well the young man did his
work, he put him in charge of all the forced labour
of the house of Joseph.

29 About that time, as Jeroboam was going out of
Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh met him
on the road. Ahijah was wearing a new cloak, and
the two of them were alone in the open country.

30 Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was
wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.

31 Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for
yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of
Israel, says: ‘I am about to tear the kingdom out of
Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes.

32 But he shall have one tribe, for the sake of My
servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the
city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.

33 For they[8] have abandoned Me to worship
Ashtoreth, goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh,
god of Moab, and Milcom, god of the Ammonites.
They have not lived as I directed, doing right in
My eyes and keeping My statutes and rules as his
father David did.

34 Yet I will not take the whole kingdom out of his
hand. I will make him ruler all the days of his life
for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose
and who kept My commandments and My
statutes.

35 It is from his son that I will take the kingship,
and I will hand ten of the tribes over to you.

36 To his son I will give one tribe, so that My
servant David may always have a lamp[9] before Me
in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put
My name.

37 As for you, I will take you, and you shall reign
over all that your heart desires; you shall be king
over Israel.

38 If you listen to all that I command you and walk
in My ways, doing what is right in My sight by
keeping My statutes and My commandments, as
My servant David did, I will be with you. I will
build you a lasting house, as I built for David, and
I will give Israel to you.

39 Because of this I will humble David's
descendants, but not for ever.'"

40 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam
fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and stayed
in Egypt until Solomon died.

41 The other events of Solomon's reign, all that he
did and the wisdom he showed, are recorded in
the Book of the Acts of Solomon.[10]

42 Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel
forty years.

43 Then Solomon rested with his ancestors and was
buried in the City of David his father. And his son
Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

1 See Exodus 34:16 and Deuteronomy 7:3–4; also Deuteronomy 17:17, 'He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.'

2 Probably the same god as Milcom (verse 5); the name may have been altered to the vowels of *boshet*, 'shame'.

3 Judah; Benjamin was also counted with it (12:21). The 'ten tribes' of verse 31 and the 'one tribe' make up the twelve pieces of Ahijah's cloak only roughly.

4 Hebrew *satan*; so also in verses 23 and 25.

5 Compare 2 Samuel 8:13–14.

6 See 2 Samuel 8:3–8.

7 The Greek has 'Edom', applying the last sentence to Hadad.

8 The Greek, Syriac and Latin have 'he', referring to Solomon.

9 A picture of a continuing royal line; compare 2 Samuel 21:17.

10 A royal chronicle now lost; similar records are cited for the later kings.

Chapter 12

1 Kings 12 tells how all Israel gathers at Shechem to make Rehoboam king. Jeroboam, back from Egypt, and the assembly ask him to lighten the heavy yoke his father laid on them. The older men advise him to serve the people and speak kindly, but Rehoboam follows the young men he grew up with and answers harshly that his little finger is thicker than his father's waist, and where his father used whips he will use scorpions. This comes about from the LORD, to fulfil Ahijah's word. Israel rejects the house of David, stones the overseer of forced labour, and makes Jeroboam king; only Judah stays loyal to Rehoboam. When Rehoboam musters Judah and Benjamin for war, the man of God Shemaiah tells them not to fight their brothers, and they obey. Jeroboam, fearing that worship in Jerusalem will win the people back to Rehoboam, makes two golden calves, sets them at Bethel and Dan, and tells the people, "Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from Egypt." He builds shrines on high places, appoints priests who are not Levites, and institutes a festival of his own devising in the eighth month, and this becomes a sin.

1 All Israel had gathered at Shechem to crown
Rehoboam king, so he went there.

2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of this, he
was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King
Solomon, and Jeroboam was living in Egypt.[1]

3 So they sent for him, and Jeroboam and the
whole assembly of Israel came and said to
Rehoboam,

4 "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten
the harsh labour your father imposed and the
heavy yoke he laid on us, and we will serve you."

5 He said to them, "Go away for three days, and
then come back to me." So the people went away.

6 King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had
served his father Solomon during his lifetime.
"How do you advise me to answer these people?"
he asked.

7 They said to him, "If today you will be a servant
to these people and serve them, and give them a
favourable answer, they will be your servants for
ever."

8 But he rejected the advice the elders gave him
and consulted the young men who had grown up
with him and were now serving him.
9 He asked them, “What is your advice? How
should we answer these people who have said to
me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father laid on us’?”
10 The young men who had grown up with him said
to him, “This is what you should tell these people
who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy,
but you must lighten it for us.’ Tell them, ‘My little
finger is thicker than my father’s waist.
11 My father laid a heavy yoke on you, but I will
make it heavier still. My father disciplined you
with whips, but I will discipline you with
scorpions.’”[2]
12 Three days later Jeroboam and all the people
came back to Rehoboam, as the king had told
them: “Come back to me on the third day.”
13 The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting
the advice the elders had given him,
14 he spoke to them as the young men had advised:
“My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to
it. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will
discipline you with scorpions.”
15 So the king did not listen to the people, for this
turn of events came from the LORD, to fulfil the
word the LORD had spoken through Ahijah of
Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat.
16 When all Israel saw that the king would not
listen to them, the people answered the king:
“What share have we in David? We have no
inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents,
Israel! Now look after your own house, David!” So
Israel went home to their tents.
17 But as for the Israelites who lived in the towns
of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.
18 Then King Rehoboam sent out Adoram,[3] who
was in charge of the forced labour, but all Israel
stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to
get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem.
19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house
of David to this day.
20 When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had
returned, they sent for him and summoned him to
the assembly and made him king over all Israel.
No one followed the house of David except the
tribe of Judah alone.
21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he
mustered the whole house of Judah and the tribe
of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand
chosen warriors, to fight against the house of
Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son
of Solomon.
22 But God’s word came to Shemaiah, a man of
God:
23 “Tell Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah,
and all the people of Judah and Benjamin, and
everyone else there,
24 ‘This is what the LORD says: You must not go up
to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go
home, every one of you, for this thing is from
Me.’” So they obeyed the word of the LORD and
went home again, as the LORD had told them.
25 Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of
Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out
and fortified Penuel.
26 Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom may
well go back now to the house of David.
27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the
house of the LORD in Jerusalem, their hearts will
turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah.
They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”
28 So after taking advice, the king made two
golden calves. He said to the people, “You have
been going up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are
your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of the
land of Egypt.”[4]
29 He set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in
Dan.
30 This became a cause of sin, for the people
travelled all the way to Dan to worship before the
calf there.[5]
31 Jeroboam also built shrines on the high places
and appointed priests from all sorts of people, who
were not Levites.
32 Jeroboam instituted a festival on the fifteenth
day of the eighth month, like the festival held in
Judah,[6] and he offered sacrifices on the altar. He
did this in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had
made, and he installed at Bethel the priests of the
high places he had made.
33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a
month of his own choosing, he went up to the altar
he had made at Bethel. He instituted a festival for
the Israelites and went up to the altar to burn
incense.

1 So the Hebrew; the Greek and 2 Chronicles 10:2 have ‘Jeroboam returned from Egypt’.

2 Probably whips with barbed or weighted thongs.

3 Called Adoniram in 4:6 and 5:14.

4 The same words as at the golden calf in Exodus 32:4, 8.

5 The Greek adds ‘and before the other at Bethel’.

6 The Feast of Booths, held in Judah on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:34).

Chapter 13

1 Kings 13 tells how a man of God comes from Judah to Bethel at the LORD’s word while Jeroboam stands at his altar, and cries out that a son of David’s house named Josiah will one day sacrifice the priests of the high places on it. As a sign the altar splits and its ashes pour out. When Jeroboam stretches out his hand to seize him, it withers, and is restored only when the man of God prays for him. The man of God refuses the king’s hospitality, for the LORD has forbidden him to eat or drink there or to return by the same road. But an old prophet of Bethel follows him and, lying that an angel has told him to, brings him home to eat. At the table the word of the LORD comes to the old prophet: because the man of God disobeyed, his body will not lie in his ancestors’ tomb. On his way home a lion kills him, but stands beside the body without eating it or the donkey. The old prophet buries him in his own tomb, mourns him as a brother and asks to be buried beside him, for his word against Bethel will come true. Even after this Jeroboam does not turn from his evil way, and his sin brings about the destruction of his house.

1 Just then a man of God came from Judah to
Bethel at the word of the LORD, as Jeroboam was
standing by the altar to burn incense.

2 At the LORD’s command he called out against
the altar: “Altar, altar! The LORD declares: ‘A child
will be born into David’s family, and his name will
be Josiah. Upon you he will slaughter the priests
of the high places who now burn incense here,
and men’s bones will be burned upon you.’”[1]

3 That same day he gave a sign: “This is the sign
that the LORD has spoken: the altar will be split
apart, and the ashes on it will be poured out.”

4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God
cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched
out his hand from the altar and said, “Seize him!”
But the hand he stretched out against him
withered, so that he could not draw it back.

5 At that moment the altar broke apart and its
ashes spilled out, just as the man of God had
foretold by the LORD’s word.

6 Then the king said to the man of God, “Plead
with the LORD your God and pray for me, so that
my hand may be restored.” So the man of God
pleaded with the LORD, and the king’s hand was
restored and became as it was before.

7 The king said to the man of God, “Come home
with me and have something to eat, and I will give
you a gift.”

8 But the man of God answered, “You could give
me half of everything you own, and still I would
not come home with you, or eat or drink anything
here.

9 For I was commanded by the word of the LORD:
‘You must not eat bread or drink water, and you
must not return by the way you came.’”

10 So he went off by another road and did not
return by the way he had come to Bethel.

11 Now there was an old prophet living in Bethel.
His sons[2] came and told him everything the man
of God had done there that day. They also told
their father what he had said to the king.

12 Their father asked them, “Which way did he
go?” His sons had seen[3] which road the man of
God from Judah had taken.

13 So he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for
me.” When they had saddled the donkey for him,
he mounted it

14 and rode after the man of God. He found him
sitting under an oak tree and asked him, “Are you
the man of God who came from Judah?” “I am,” he
replied.

15 “Come back to my house,” the old man said,
“and have a meal.”

16 But he answered, “I cannot turn back and go
with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with
you in this place.

17 For I have been told by the word of the LORD,
‘You must not eat bread or drink water there, or
go back by the way you came.’”

18 The old prophet said to him, “I too am a prophet,
as you are. An angel spoke to me by the word of
the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to
your house so that he may eat bread and drink
water.’” But he was lying to him.

19 So the man of God went back with him and ate
bread and drank water in his house.

20 While they were sitting at the table, the word of
the LORD came to the prophet who had brought
him back,

21 and he cried out to the man of God who had
come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says:
‘You have defied the word of the LORD and have
not kept the command the LORD your God gave
you.

22 You came back and ate bread and drank water
in the place where He told you not to eat bread or
drink water. Therefore your body will not come to
the tomb of your ancestors.’”

23 When the man of God had finished eating and
drinking, the prophet who had brought him back
saddled the donkey for him.

24 As he went on his way, a lion met him on the
road and killed him. His body lay flung on the
road, with the donkey standing beside it and the
lion standing beside the body.

25 Some men passing by saw the body thrown
down on the road, with the lion standing beside
the body, and they went and reported it in the
town where the old prophet lived.

26 When the prophet who had brought him back
from his journey heard it, he said, “It is the man of
God who defied the word of the LORD. The LORD
has given him over to the lion, which has mauled
him and killed him, as the word of the LORD
warned him.”

27 He told his sons to saddle his donkey, and they
did so.

28 He went and found the body lying on the road,
with the donkey and the lion standing beside it.
The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled
the donkey.

29 The prophet picked up the body of the man of
God, laid it on the donkey and brought it back to
his own town to mourn him and bury him.

30 He laid the body in the tomb he had made for
himself, and they lamented over it, crying, “Oh,
my brother!”

31 When the burial was over, he told his sons,
“When I die, put me in the same tomb as the man
of God, with my bones next to his.

32 What he declared at the LORD’s command
against the altar at Bethel and against every
hilltop shrine in the towns of Samaria[4] is certain
to happen.”

33 Even after this, Jeroboam did not turn from his
evil way, but again appointed priests for the high
places from all sorts of people. Anyone who
wanted to be a priest he ordained[5] as a priest of
the high places.

34 This became the sin of the house of Jeroboam,
which led to its being cut off and destroyed from
the face of the earth.

1 Fulfilled about three hundred years later; see 2 Kings 23:15–20.

2 So the Greek, Syriac and Latin; the Hebrew has ‘son’ here but ‘sons’ later in the verse.

3 So the Greek and other versions; the Hebrew has ‘had seen’. Some read ‘showed him’.

4 Samaria was not yet founded (16:24); the name is used for the northern kingdom as it was later known.

5 Hebrew ‘he filled his hand’, the expression for installing a priest (Exodus 28:41).

Chapter 14

1 Kings 14 tells how, when Jeroboam's son Abijah falls ill, Jeroboam sends his wife in disguise to the blind old prophet Ahijah at Shiloh. The LORD warns Ahijah, who greets her by name with heavy news: because Jeroboam has done more evil than all before him, making other gods and casting the LORD behind his back, the LORD will sweep away his house; the boy will die as she enters the town, the only one of Jeroboam's family to be mourned and buried, and Israel will one day be uprooted and scattered beyond the Euphrates. It happens as Ahijah said. Jeroboam reigns twenty-two years, and his son Nadab succeeds him. In Judah, Rehoboam, son of an Ammonite mother, reigns seventeen years in Jerusalem. Judah provokes the LORD with high places, sacred pillars, Asherah poles and shrine prostitutes, imitating the nations. In Rehoboam's fifth year Shishak king of Egypt carries off the treasures of the LORD's house and the palace, including Solomon's gold shields, which Rehoboam replaces with bronze ones. There is war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually, and Abijam succeeds Rehoboam.

1 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam fell ill,

2 and Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go and disguise yourself, so that no one will know you are Jeroboam's wife. Then go to Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there, the one who told me I would be king over this people.

3 Take ten loaves with you, and some cakes and a jar of honey, and visit him. He will tell you how things will go with the boy."

4 Jeroboam's wife did so. She set out and went to Shiloh and came to Ahijah's house. Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were fixed because of his age.

5 But the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son, for he is ill. Tell her such and such. When she arrives, she will pretend to be someone else."

6 So when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be someone else? I have been sent to you with bad news.

7 Go and tell Jeroboam, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I raised you up from among the people and made you leader over My people Israel.

8 I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you. But you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and followed Me with all his heart, doing only what was right in My sight.

9 You have done more evil than all who were before you. You have gone and made yourself other gods, idols of cast metal, provoking Me to anger, and you have thrust Me behind your back.

10 Therefore I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every male,[1] whether slave or free,[2] in Israel. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns up dung, until it is all gone.

11 Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the town, the dogs will eat; and anyone who dies in the open country, the birds of the air will eat. For the LORD has spoken.'

12 As for you, get up and go home. As soon as your feet enter the town, the child will die.

13 All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one of Jeroboam's family who will be laid in a grave, because in him, alone of the house of Jeroboam, the LORD, the God of Israel, has found something good.

14 The LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam on that day. What then? Even now![3]

15 The LORD will strike Israel, so that it sways like a reed in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land He gave to their ancestors and scatter them beyond the Euphrates,[4] because they made their Asherah poles,[5] provoking the LORD to anger.

16 He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he committed and which he made Israel commit."

17 Then Jeroboam's wife got up and left, and came to Tirzah. As she crossed the threshold of the house, the boy died.

18 They buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, as the LORD had said through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

19 The other events of Jeroboam's reign, how he made war and how he reigned, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.[6]

20 Jeroboam reigned for twenty-two years. Then he rested with his ancestors, and his son Nadab succeeded him as king.

21 Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He came to the throne at the age of forty-one and reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from all Israel's tribes as the place for His name. His mother was Naamah the Ammonite.

22 Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. By the sins they committed they provoked Him to jealousy more than all their ancestors had done.

23 They also set up high places for themselves, with sacred pillars[7] and Asherah poles, on every lofty hill and beneath every spreading tree.

24 There were even male shrine prostitutes[8] in the land. They practised all the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

25 In Rehoboam's fifth year Shishak[9] king of Egypt marched against Jerusalem.

26 He carried off the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made.

27 So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and entrusted them to the commanders of the guard who kept the entrance of the royal palace.

28 Whenever the king went into the house of the LORD, the guards carried the shields, and afterwards they brought them back to the guardroom.

29 The other events of Rehoboam's reign, and all that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.

30 Rehoboam and Jeroboam were at war with each other throughout their reigns.

31 Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. And his son Abijam[10] succeeded him as king.

1 Hebrew 'everyone who urinates against a wall', a coarse expression; so also in 16:11 and 21:21.

2 Or 'whether shut up or left at large'; the meaning of the phrase is uncertain.

3 The Hebrew is obscure; perhaps 'This is the day, and what is more, even now'.

4 Hebrew 'the River'. Fulfilled in the Assyrian exile (2 Kings 17:6).

5 Wooden poles or trees standing for the Canaanite goddess Asherah (Deuteronomy 16:21).

6 A royal record now lost, as also 'the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah' (verse 29). It is not the book of Chronicles in the Bible.

7 Standing stones used in Canaanite worship, forbidden in Deuteronomy 16:22.

8 Hebrew *qadesh*, 'consecrated one'; forbidden in Deuteronomy 23:17.

9 Sheshonq I of Egypt, whose own inscription at Karnak lists towns he captured in Judah and Israel, about 925 BC.

10 Called Abijah in 2 Chronicles 12:16.

Chapter 15

1 Kings 15 tells how Abijam reigns three years over Judah, walking in his father's sins, though for David's sake the LORD keeps a lamp burning in Jerusalem. His son Asa reigns forty-one years and does what is right in the sight of the LORD, as David did: he banishes the shrine prostitutes, removes the idols, deposes his grandmother Maacah for making an obscene image for Asherah and burns it in the Kidron Valley, though the high places remain. When Baasha king of Israel fortifies Ramah against him, Asa sends the remaining treasures of the LORD's house to Ben-hadad of Damascus to break his treaty with Baasha. Ben-hadad attacks northern Israel, Baasha withdraws, and Asa uses the stones of Ramah to fortify Geba and Mizpah. In Israel, Jeroboam's son Nadab reigns two years before Baasha of Issachar kills him and wipes out the whole house of Jeroboam, as Ahijah had foretold. Baasha then reigns twenty-four years at Tirzah and walks in the way of Jeroboam.

1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah,

2 He reigned in Jerusalem for three years. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom.[1]

3 He walked in all the sins his father had committed before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as the heart of his ancestor David had been.

4 Nevertheless, for David’s sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, raising up his son after him and keeping Jerusalem secure.

5 For David had done what was right in the sight of the LORD and had not turned aside from anything He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

6 There was war between Rehoboam[2] and Jeroboam all his life.

7 The other events of Abijam’s reign, and all that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. Abijam and Jeroboam were at war with each other.

8 Abijam rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And his son Asa succeeded him as king.

9 Asa came to the throne of Judah in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel,

10 and he ruled in Jerusalem for forty-one years. His grandmother[3] was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom.

11 Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his ancestor David had done.

12 He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols his fathers had made.

13 He even removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made an obscene image for Asherah. Asa cut down her image and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

14 Although the high places were not removed, Asa’s heart was wholly true to the LORD all his life.

15 He brought into the house of the LORD the silver, the gold and the vessels that he and his father had dedicated.

16 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

17 Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah, to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.

18 Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the royal palace. He entrusted it to his officials and sent them to Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who ruled in Damascus, with this message:

19 “Let there be a treaty between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.”

20 Ben-hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah and all Chinneroth, together with all the land of Naphtali.

21 When Baasha heard of it, he stopped fortifying Ramah and stayed in Tirzah.

22 Then King Asa issued a proclamation to all Judah, with no one exempt, and they carried away the stones and timber with which Baasha had been fortifying Ramah. With them King Asa fortified Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah.

23 All the other events of Asa’s reign, all his achievements, all that he did and the towns he built, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. But in his old age he suffered from a disease in his feet.

24 Asa rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. And his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king.

25 In the second year of Asa king of Judah, Nadab son of Jeroboam came to the throne of Israel, and he ruled Israel for two years.

26 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of his father and in his sin, which he made Israel commit.

27 Baasha son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, plotted against him and struck him down at Gibbethon, a Philistine town, while Nadab and all Israel were besieging it.

28 Baasha killed Nadab in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place.

29 As soon as he became king, he struck down the whole house of Jeroboam. He did not leave Jeroboam a single living soul, but destroyed them all, according to the word the LORD had spoken through His servant Ahijah of Shiloh,

30 because of the sins Jeroboam had committed and had made Israel commit, and because he had provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger.

31 The other events of Nadab’s reign, and all that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah became king over all Israel at Tirzah, and he reigned twenty-four years.

34 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he made Israel commit.

1 Probably Absalom son of David; she was perhaps his granddaughter (compare 2 Chronicles 13:2).

2 Some manuscripts have ‘Abijam’; the verse may repeat 14:30.

3 Hebrew ‘mother’s’; the queen mother, Maacah, was in fact Abijam’s mother (verse 2).

Chapter 16

1 Kings 16 tells how the prophet Jehu son of Hanani announces that Baasha’s house will be swept away like Jeroboam’s. Baasha’s son Elah reigns two years, until Zimri, a chariot commander, kills him while he is drunk at Tirzah and destroys Baasha’s whole family. Zimri reigns only seven days: the army makes its commander Omri king, besieges Tirzah, and Zimri burns the palace over himself. After a struggle with Tibni, Omri becomes king over all Israel and reigns twelve years. He buys the hill of Samaria from Shemer and builds his capital there, and he does more evil than all before him. His son Ahab reigns twenty-two years in Samaria and does more evil still: he marries Jezebel daughter of the king of the Sidonians, serves Baal, builds him a temple and altar in Samaria, and makes an Asherah pole. In his time Hiel of Bethel rebuilds Jericho at the cost of his eldest and youngest sons, as Joshua had foretold.

1 Then the LORD’s word came to Jehu son of Hanani, against Baasha:

2 “I lifted you up from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel, but you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have made My people Israel sin, provoking Me to anger with their sins.

3 So now I will sweep Baasha and his family away; I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat.

4 Anyone belonging to Baasha who dies in the town, the dogs will eat; and anyone of his who dies in the open country, the birds of the air will eat.”

5 The other events of Baasha’s reign, what he did and his achievements, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

6 Baasha rested with his ancestors and was buried in Tirzah. And his son Elah succeeded him as king.

7 The word of the LORD came through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, both because of all the evil he had done in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger by the work of his hands and becoming like the house of Jeroboam, and also because he had destroyed that house.[1]

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king over Israel at Tirzah, and he reigned two years.

9 His servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, plotted against him. Elah was at Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was in charge of the palace at Tirzah.

10 Zimri went in, attacked him and killed him, and took the throne himself. It was the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah.

11 As soon as he began to reign and was seated on the throne, he struck down the whole house of Baasha. He did not leave him a single male,[2] whether relative or friend.

12 So Zimri destroyed the whole house of Baasha, according to the word the LORD had spoken against Baasha through Jehu the prophet,

13 because of all the sins of Baasha and the sins of his son Elah, which they committed and made Israel commit, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger with their worthless idols.[3]

14 The other events of Elah’s reign, and all that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days at Tirzah. The army was encamped against Gibbethon, a Philistine town.

16 When the troops in the camp heard it said, “Zimri has conspired and has also struck down the king,” all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that very day in the camp.

17 Then Omri and all Israel with him marched up from Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah.

18 When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the royal palace, set the palace

on fire around him and died,

19 because of the sins he had committed, doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of Jeroboam and in the sin he had committed to make Israel sin.

20 The other events of Zimri's reign, and the conspiracy he carried out, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

21 Then the people of Israel were split in two. Half the people followed Tibni son of Ginath, to make him king, and the other half followed Omri.

22 But Omri's followers proved stronger than those who followed Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni died, and Omri became king.

23 In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and he reigned twelve years, six of them in Tirzah.[4]

24 He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents[5] of silver. He built a city on the hill and named it Samaria, after Shemer, the former owner of the hill.

25 Omri did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did more evil than all who were before him.

26 He walked in all the way of Jeroboam son of Nebat and in the sins he made Israel commit, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger with their worthless idols.

27 The other events of Omri's reign, what he did and the achievements he won, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

28 Omri rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. And his son Ahab succeeded him as king.

29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel, and he reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.

30 Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.

31 As though it were a small thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and he went and served Baal and worshipped him.

32 He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria.

33 Ahab also set up an Asherah pole. More than any king of Israel before him, he did what provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger.

34 In his days Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of Abiram his firstborn and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD spoken through Joshua son of Nun.[6]

1 Baasha carried out God's judgement on Jeroboam's house (15:29), but he did it for his own ends, and so is himself condemned for the bloodshed; compare Hosea 1:4.

2 See the note at 14:10.

3 Hebrew *hevel*, 'breath, vapour'; the word made familiar by Ecclesiastes ('vanity').

4 His twelve years are counted from the start of the struggle with Tibni in Asa's twenty-seventh year (verse 15).

5 About 68 kilograms (150 pounds).

6 See Joshua 6:26.

Chapter 17

1 Kings 17 tells how Elijah the Tishbite tells Ahab that, as the LORD lives, there will be neither dew nor rain except at his word. The LORD sends him to hide by the Brook Cherith east of the Jordan, where ravens bring him bread and meat morning and evening and he drinks from the brook. When the brook dries up, the LORD sends him to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. She has only a handful of flour and a little oil, and is gathering sticks for a last meal for herself and her son; but at Elijah's word she first makes him a small loaf, and her jar of flour and jug of oil do not run out until the rain returns. When her son falls ill and stops breathing, she blames Elijah, who carries the boy to the upper room, stretches himself over him three times and cries to the LORD, and the boy's life returns. The widow declares that she now knows he is a man of God and that the LORD's word in his mouth is true.

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe[1] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there will be neither dew nor rain in these years except at my word."[2]

2 Then the word of the LORD came to him:

3 "Leave here, turn eastwards and hide yourself by the Brook Cherith, east of the Jordan.

4 The brook will give you water to drink, and I
have ordered ravens to bring you food there.”
5 So he did as the LORD had said. He went and
stayed by the Brook Cherith, east of the Jordan.
6 Morning and evening the ravens carried bread
and meat to him, and he drank water from the
brook.
7 Some time later the brook dried up, because
there had been no rain in the land.
8 Then the word of the LORD came to him:
9 “Set out for Zarephath in the region of Sidon and
live there. I have instructed a widow in that place
to provide for you.”
10 He set off for Zarephath, and as he reached the
entrance to the town he saw a widow collecting
firewood. He called out to her, “Would you fetch
me a little water in a cup to drink?”
11 As she was going to fetch it, he called after her,
“And please bring me a piece of bread as well.”
12 She replied, “As the LORD your God lives, I have
nothing baked, only a handful of flour in the jar
and a little oil in the jug. I am gathering a couple
of sticks so that I can go home and prepare it for
myself and my son, so that we may eat it and then
die.”
13 Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid. Go and do
as you have said. But first make me a small loaf
from it and bring it out to me; afterwards make
something for yourself and your son.
14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the
jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD
sends rain on the land.’”
15 She went and did as Elijah said, and she and he
and her household had food for many days.
16 The jar of flour was not used up and the jug of
oil did not run dry, according to the word of the
LORD spoken through Elijah.
17 Some time later the son of the woman who
owned the house fell ill. His illness grew so severe
that at last there was no breath left in him.
18 She said to Elijah, “What have you against me,
man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin
to remembrance and to kill my son?”
19 “Give me your son,” he replied. He took him
from her arms, carried him up to the upper room
where he was staying, and laid him on his own
bed.
20 Then he cried out to the LORD, “LORD my God,
have You brought disaster even on this widow with
whom I am staying, by killing her son?”
21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three
times and cried out to the LORD, “LORD my God,
please let this boy’s life come back into him!”
22 The LORD listened to Elijah’s voice, and the
boy’s life came back into him, and he lived.
23 Elijah picked up the boy, brought him down from
the upper room into the house and gave him to his
mother. “Look,” Elijah said, “your son is alive.”
24 The woman told Elijah, “Now I can be sure you
are a man of God, and that what the LORD says
through you is true.”

1 So the Greek; the Hebrew has ‘from the settlers’.

2 Compare James 5:17 and Luke 4:25, which speak of three and a half years.

Chapter 18

1 Kings 18 tells how, in the third year of the drought, the LORD sends Elijah back to Ahab. Ahab’s steward Obadiah, who fears the LORD and has hidden a hundred prophets from Jezebel in caves, meets Elijah while searching for grass, and fearfully agrees to announce him. Ahab greets Elijah as the troubler of Israel, but Elijah answers that Ahab’s house is the troubler, for abandoning the LORD for the Baals. On Mount Carmel, before all Israel and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, Elijah demands how long the people will waver between two opinions. Each side prepares a bull, and the god who answers by fire is to be God. Baal’s prophets call from morning to evening, dancing and gashing themselves while Elijah mocks them, but there is no answer. Elijah repairs the LORD’s altar with twelve stones, drenches the offering three times with water and prays, and the fire of the LORD falls and consumes everything. The people fall on their faces crying that it is the LORD who is God and the prophets of Baal are killed at the Kishon. Elijah prays on the top of Carmel until a cloud as small as a man’s hand rises from the sea, the sky grows black, heavy rain falls, and with the LORD’s power on him Elijah runs ahead of Ahab’s chariot to Jezreel.

1 After many days, in the third year, the word of
the LORD came to Elijah: “Go and present

yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.”

2 So Elijah went to meet Ahab. By now the famine
in Samaria was severe,

3 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in
charge of his palace. (Obadiah feared the LORD
greatly.

4 When Jezebel was killing off the LORD’s
prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets
and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had kept
them supplied with bread and water.)

5 Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all
the springs and all the valleys. Perhaps we can
find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so
that we do not lose any of the animals.”

6 They split the country between them for the
search, Ahab setting off alone in one direction and
Obadiah alone in another.

7 As Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him.
Obadiah recognised him, fell on his face and said,
“Is it you, my lord Elijah?”

8 “It is,” he answered. “Go and tell your master,
‘Elijah is here.’”

9 But Obadiah said, “What sin have I committed,
that you would hand your servant over to Ahab to
be put to death?

10 As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is
no nation or kingdom where my master has not
sent to look for you. And whenever they said, ‘He
is not here,’ he made that kingdom or nation
swear that they had not found you.

11 And now you say, ‘Go and tell your master,
“Elijah is here.”’

12 As soon as I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD
will carry you off I know not where. When I go and
tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me.
Yet your servant has feared the LORD from my
youth.

13 Has my lord not been told what I did when
Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I
hid a hundred of the LORD’s prophets, fifty to a
cave, and kept them supplied with bread and
water.

14 And now you say, ‘Go and tell your master,
“Elijah is here.”’ He will kill me!”

15 “As surely as the LORD of Armies lives, whom I
serve,” Elijah replied, “I will show myself to Ahab
this very day.”

16 Obadiah went off to find Ahab and gave him the
message, and Ahab came to meet Elijah.

17 As soon as he saw him, Ahab said, “So there you
are, the man who brings trouble on Israel!”

18 Elijah answered, “I have not brought trouble on
Israel. You have, you and your father’s house, by
forsaking the commandments of the LORD and
following the Baals.

19 Now send word and gather all Israel to me on
Mount Carmel, with the four hundred and fifty
prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of
Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and
gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

21 Elijah came near to all the people and said,
“How long will you keep hopping between two
opinions?[1] If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if
Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer
him a word.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I am the only
one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal’s
prophets number four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let two bulls be given to us. Let them choose
one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces and lay it
on the wood, but put no fire to it. I will prepare
the other bull, lay it on the wood and put no fire to
it.

24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will
call on the name of the LORD. The god who
answers by fire, he is God.” All the people
answered, “That is fair.”

25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one
bull for yourselves and prepare it first, since there
are so many of you. Call on the name of your god,
but put no fire to it.”

26 So they took the bull that was given them and
prepared it. They called on the name of Baal from
morning until noon, shouting, “Baal, answer us!”
But there was no voice, and no one answered. And
they hopped about the altar they had made.

27 At noon Elijah began to mock them. “Shout
louder!” he said. “He is a god, after all! Perhaps
he is lost in thought, or he has gone aside,[2] or he
is on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be
woken!”

28 So they shouted louder and, as was their
custom, cut themselves with swords and spears
until the blood gushed over them.

29 Midday passed, and they went on raving until
the time of the evening offering. But there was no
voice, no one answered, no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to
me.” All the people came near to him, and he
repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn
down.
31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the
tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of
the LORD had come: “Israel shall be your name.”[3]
32 With the stones he built an altar in the name of
the LORD, and he dug a trench round the altar
large enough to hold two seahs[4] of seed.
33 He arranged the wood, cut the bull in pieces and
laid it on the wood.
34 Then he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour
it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” “Do it
again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a
third time,” he said, and they did it a third time.
35 The water ran down round the altar, and he
filled the trench with water as well.
36 When the hour came for the evening offering,
Elijah the prophet stepped forward and prayed:
“LORD, God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel,
show today that You are God in Israel, that I am
Your servant, and that it was at Your command
that I have done all this.
37 Answer me, LORD, answer me, so that this
people may know that You, LORD, are God, and
that You are turning their hearts back again.”
38 The LORD’s fire came down and burned up the
offering and the wood, and the stones and the
earth as well, and it dried up the water in the
trench.
39 At the sight of it all the people threw themselves
face down, shouting, “It is the LORD who is God!
It is the LORD who is God!”
40 “Seize the prophets of Baal!” Elijah commanded
them. “Let none of them get away!” So they seized
them, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon
Valley and put them to death there.
41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink,
for there is the sound of a rushing of rain.”
42 While Ahab went off to eat and drink, Elijah
climbed to the summit of Carmel. There he bent
down to the ground with his face between his
knees.
43 He said to his servant, “Go up and look towards
the sea.” He went up and looked and said, “There
is nothing.” Seven times Elijah said, “Go again.”
44 The seventh time the servant said, “Look, a
cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the
sea.” Elijah said, “Go up and tell Ahab, ‘Harness
your chariot and go down before the rain stops
you.’”
45 Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds and
wind, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab rode off
and went to Jezreel.
46 The hand of the LORD came on Elijah. He
tucked his cloak into his belt and ran ahead of
Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

1 Hebrew ‘limping over two branches’ or ‘two crutches’; the same verb describes the prophets’ ‘dance’ in verse 26.

2 Perhaps a polite way of saying ‘relieving himself’.

3 See Genesis 32:28 and 35:10.

4 About 15 litres (3½ gallons); or ‘an area that two seahs of seed would sow’.

Chapter 19

1 Kings 19 tells how Jezebel, hearing what Elijah has done, swears to kill him, and he flees for his life to Beersheba and on into the wilderness. Under a broom tree he asks the LORD to take his life, but an angel twice wakes him and gives him bread and water, and in the strength of that food he travels forty days and nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. In a cave there the LORD asks, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah answers that he has been very zealous for the LORD, for Israel has forsaken His covenant and killed His prophets, and he alone is left. A great wind, an earthquake and a fire pass by, but the LORD is not in them; then comes a low, gentle sound, and Elijah wraps his face in his cloak. The LORD sends him to anoint Hazael king of Aram, Jehu king of Israel and Elisha as prophet in his place, and tells him that He has kept seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed to Baal. Elijah finds Elisha ploughing and throws his cloak over him; Elisha slaughters his oxen, feeds the people and follows Elijah as his servant.

1 Ahab reported to Jezebel everything Elijah had
done, including how he had put all the prophets to
the sword.
2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say,
“May the gods deal with me, and more severely

still, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like the life of one of them.”

3 Elijah was afraid,[1] and he got up and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,

4 while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “It is enough,” he said. “Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”

5 Then he lay down and fell asleep under the broom bush. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”

6 He looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”

8 So he got up, ate and drank, and in the strength of that food he travelled forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.[2]

9 There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

10 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies. The Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are trying to take my life.”[3]

11 The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” A great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

12 After the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a low, gentle sound.[4]

13 At the sound Elijah covered his face with his cloak, went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And a voice asked him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies. The Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are trying to take my life.”

15 The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

16 Also anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

17 Whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will put to death; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will put to death.[5]

18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”[6]

19 So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with twelve pairs of oxen ahead of him, and he himself was with the twelfth pair. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak over him.

20 Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will follow you.” “Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”[7]

21 So Elisha turned back from him, took the pair of oxen and slaughtered them. He boiled their meat over a fire made from the oxen’s yokes and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

1 So many manuscripts and the Greek; others read ‘He saw’.

2 Another name for Sinai, where the LORD gave the law to Moses; compare Exodus 24:18 and 34:28.

3 Quoted in Romans 11:3.

4 Hebrew ‘a sound of thin silence’; traditionally ‘a still small voice’.

5 Fulfilled in 2 Kings 8–10; Elisha himself anointed Jehu through one of his disciples (2 Kings 9:1–10).

6 Quoted in Romans 11:4, ‘I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal’.

7 Perhaps ‘Go, but remember what I have done to you’; compare Luke 9:61–62.

Chapter 20

1 Kings 20 tells how Ben-hadad king of Aram, with thirty-two allied kings, besieges Samaria and demands Ahab's silver, gold, wives and children. Ahab yields at first, but when Ben-hadad demands to search his palace, the elders tell him to refuse, and Ahab answers that a man putting on his armour should not boast like one taking it off. A prophet promises victory, and the young officers of the district governors lead a sortie at noon while Ben-hadad is drinking; the Arameans are routed. The next spring the Arameans, believing that Israel's God is a god of the hills, fight in the plain at Aphek, but a man of God declares that the LORD will give them into Ahab's hand, and a hundred thousand Arameans fall in one day, and a wall falls on twenty-seven thousand more. Ben-hadad's servants come in sackcloth to beg for his life; Ahab calls him his brother, makes a treaty and lets him go. A prophet, wounded and disguised, tricks Ahab into pronouncing his own sentence: because he set free the man the LORD had devoted to destruction, his life will go for Ben-hadad's life. Ahab goes home to Samaria sullen and angry.

1 Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army. With him were thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots. He went up and besieged Samaria and attacked it.

2 He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel

3 with this message: "This is what Ben-hadad says: 'Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine.'"

4 The king of Israel answered, "As you say, my lord the king, I am yours, and all that I have."

5 The messengers came back and said, "This is what Ben-hadad says: 'I sent to tell you to hand over your silver and gold, your wives and your children.

6 But about this time tomorrow I will send my servants to you, and they will search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will lay hands on everything you value and carry it away.'"

7 Then the king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said, "See for yourselves how this man is looking for trouble. When he sent to me for my wives and children, my silver and gold, I did not refuse him."

8 All the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen to him or give in to him."

9 So he said to Ben-hadad's messengers, "Tell my lord the king, 'Your servant will do all that you demanded the first time, but this demand I cannot meet.'" The messengers went and took the answer back.

10 Then Ben-hadad sent another message to him: "May the gods deal with me, and more severely still, if there is enough dust left in Samaria to give each of my men a handful."

11 The king of Israel replied, "Tell him, 'One who is putting on his armour should not boast like one who is taking it off.'"

12 Ben-hadad received this reply while he and the kings were drinking in their shelters.[1] He ordered his men, "Take up positions!" So they took up positions against the city.

13 Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

14 "By whom?" Ahab asked. He replied, "This is what the LORD says: 'By the young officers of the district governors.'" "Who will begin the battle?" Ahab asked. "You will," he answered.

15 So Ahab mustered the young officers of the district governors, two hundred and thirty-two men. After them he mustered all the rest of the Israelites, seven thousand in all.

16 They set out at noon, while Ben-hadad and the thirty-two kings allied with him were in their shelters getting drunk.

17 The young officers of the district governors went out first. Ben-hadad sent out scouts, who reported, "Men are coming out of Samaria."

18 "Take them alive," he ordered, "whether they have come out to make peace or to make war."

19 The young officers of the district governors marched out of the city, with the army behind them,

20 and each one struck down his man. The Arameans fled, with Israel in pursuit, but Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some horsemen.

21 The king of Israel advanced and struck down the horses and chariots, inflicting a great defeat on the Arameans.

22 Then the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, “Go and strengthen your forces, and consider carefully what you must do, for in the spring the king of Aram will attack you again.”

23 Meanwhile the officials of the king of Aram advised him, “Their gods are gods of the hills; that is why they were too strong for us. But if we fight them on the plain, we shall surely be stronger than they are.

24 Do this: remove all the kings from their commands and put governors in their place.

25 Then raise an army like the army you lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot, so that we can fight them on the plain. Then we shall surely be stronger than they are.” He took their advice and did so.

26 In the spring Ben-hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel.

27 The Israelites were also mustered and supplied, and they went out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside.

28 The man of God came and said to the king of Israel, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because the Arameans have said, “The LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys,” I will give all this vast army into your hand, and you will know that I am the LORD.’”

29 For seven days they camped opposite each other, and on the seventh day the battle was joined. The Israelites struck down a hundred thousand Aramean foot soldiers in a single day.

30 The rest fled into the town of Aphek, where the wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left. Ben-hadad also fled into the town and hid in an inner room.

31 His officials told him, “We have heard that the kings of Israel’s royal house are men of mercy. Let us go out to the king of Israel with sackcloth round our waists and ropes on our heads. He may spare your life.”

32 So with sackcloth round their waists and ropes round their heads they came to the king of Israel and said, “Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please let me live.’” He replied, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.”

33 The men took this as a good sign and were quick to take him at his word. “Yes, your brother Ben-hadad,” they said. “Go and bring him,” the king said. When Ben-hadad came out to him, Ahab had him come up into his chariot.

34 Ben-hadad said to him, “I will give back the towns my father took from your father, and you may set up your own market areas in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.” Ahab said, “On the basis of a treaty I will set you free.” So he made a treaty with him and let him go.

35 By the word of the LORD one of the sons of the prophets[2] said to his companion, “Strike me.” But the man refused to strike him.

36 So he said to him, “Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, as soon as you leave me a lion will kill you.” And when he left him, a lion found him and killed him.

37 The prophet found another man and said, “Strike me, please.” So the man struck him and wounded him.

38 Then the prophet went and waited for the king by the road, disguising himself with a bandage over his eyes.

39 As the king passed by, he called out to the king, “Your servant went out into the thick of the battle, and someone turned aside and brought a man to me and said, ‘Guard this man. If he goes missing, it will be your life for his life, or else you must pay a talent[3] of silver.’

40 While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared.” The king of Israel said to him, “That is your sentence; you have pronounced it yourself.”

41 Then the prophet quickly removed the bandage from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognised him as one of the prophets.

42 He said to the king, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because you have let go the man I had devoted to destruction, your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.’”

43 So the king of Israel went home to Samaria, sullen and angry.

1 Or ‘at Succoth’; so also in verse 16.

2 A member of a company or guild of prophets; compare 2 Kings 2:3–7.

3 About 34 kilograms (75 pounds), a sum far beyond a common soldier’s means.

Chapter 21

1 Kings 21 tells how Naboth of Jezreel refuses to sell Ahab his vineyard next to the palace, since the LORD forbids him to give up his ancestral inheritance. Ahab goes home sullen and will not eat. Jezebel mocks him, then writes letters in his name to the elders of Jezreel, telling them to proclaim a fast, seat Naboth prominently and bring two worthless men to accuse him of cursing God and the king. Naboth is stoned outside the city, and Ahab goes down to take the vineyard. The LORD sends Elijah to meet him there: "Have you murdered a man and also seized his land?" Where the dogs licked Naboth's blood they will lick Ahab's; his house will be cut off like Jeroboam's and Baasha's, and dogs will eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. No one sold himself to do evil like Ahab, urged on by his wife. Yet when Ahab tears his clothes, fasts and goes about in sackcloth, the LORD tells Elijah that because he has humbled himself the disaster will come in his son's days, not his own.

1 Some time after this there was an incident
involving Naboth of Jezreel. He had a vineyard in
Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of
Samaria.

2 Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard
to use as a vegetable garden, since it is close to
my palace. In exchange I will give you a better
vineyard, or if you prefer, I will pay you what it is
worth in silver."

3 But Naboth answered Ahab, "The LORD forbid
that I should give you the inheritance of my
ancestors!"[1]

4 So Ahab went home sullen and angry because of
what Naboth of Jezreel had said to him, "I will not
give you the inheritance of my ancestors." He lay
on his bed, turned his face away and would not
eat.

5 His wife Jezebel came in to him and asked, "Why
are you so downcast? Why will you not eat?"

6 He told her, "Because I spoke to Naboth of
Jezreel and said, 'Sell me your vineyard, or if you
would rather, I will give you another vineyard in
its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my
vineyard.'"

7 His wife Jezebel said to him, "Is this how you act
as king over Israel? Get up, eat something and
cheer up. I will get you the vineyard of Naboth of
Jezreel."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them
with his seal and sent them to the elders and
nobles who lived in Naboth's town with him.

9 In the letters she wrote: "Proclaim a fast and give
Naboth a seat of honour among the people.

10 Then seat two scoundrels opposite him and have
them testify against him, saying, 'You have
cursed[2] God and the king.' Then take him out and
stone him to death."

11 The elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's
town did as Jezebel had instructed them in the
letters she had sent.

12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a
place of honour among the people.

13 Then the two scoundrels came in, sat opposite
him and brought charges against Naboth before
the people: "Naboth has cursed God and the
king." So they took him outside the town and
stoned him to death.

14 Then they sent a message to Jezebel: "Naboth is
dead; he has been stoned."

15 As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been
stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and
take possession of the vineyard that Naboth of
Jezreel refused to sell you. Naboth is no longer
alive; he is dead."

16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got
up and went down to take possession of Naboth's
vineyard.

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the
Tishbite:

18 "Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules
in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where
he has gone to take possession of it.

19 Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have
you murdered a man and also seized his land?'
Then say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: In
the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's
blood, dogs will lick up your blood too.'"[3]

20 Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my
enemy!" "I have found you," he answered,
"because you have sold yourself to do what is evil
in the sight of the LORD.

21 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will sweep
you away and cut off from Ahab every male,[4]
whether slave or free, in Israel.

22 I will deal with your family as I dealt with the
family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and with the
family of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have
roused My anger and led Israel into sin.'

23 And concerning Jezebel the LORD also says:
'The dogs will eat Jezebel by the wall[5] of Jezreel.'

24 Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the town,
the dogs will eat; and anyone who dies in the open
country, the birds of the air will eat."

25 (There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold
himself to do what was evil in the sight of the
LORD, urged on by his wife Jezebel.

26 He behaved in the most detestable way by going
after idols, just as the Amorites had done, whom
the LORD drove out before the Israelites.)

27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his
clothes, put sackcloth on his body and fasted. He
lay in sackcloth and went about meekly.

28 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the
Tishbite:

29 "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself
before Me? Because he has humbled himself
before Me, I will not bring the disaster in his
lifetime. I will bring the disaster on his house in
his son's days."

1 Family land was held in trust from the LORD and was not to be sold outside the family for good (Leviticus 25:23; Numbers 36:7).

2 Hebrew 'blessed', a scribal substitute to avoid writing 'cursed God'; so also in verse 13 (compare Job 1:5, 11).

3 Compare 22:38, and 2 Kings 9:25–26, where it is fulfilled in Ahab's son.

4 See the note at 14:10.

5 So most manuscripts; some manuscripts and 2 Kings 9:36 have 'in the plot of ground'.

Chapter 22

1 Kings 22 tells how, after three years of peace with Aram, Ahab persuades Jehoshaphat king of Judah to join him in retaking Ramoth-gilead. Four hundred prophets promise victory, but Jehoshaphat asks for a prophet of the LORD, and Micaiah son of Imlah is summoned, though Ahab hates him because he never prophesies good about him. Micaiah first echoes the others, then, pressed for the truth, sees Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and describes the LORD on His throne sending a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets to lure him to his death. Zedekiah strikes Micaiah, and Ahab sends him to prison on bread and water until he returns safely; Micaiah replies that if he returns safely the LORD has not spoken through him. Ahab goes into battle in disguise, but an arrow shot at random strikes him between the joints of his armour, and he dies at evening propped up in his chariot. The dogs lick his blood at the pool of Samaria, as the LORD had said. The chapter then records the reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah, who does what is right but leaves the high places, and whose ships are wrecked at Ezion-geber; and the beginning of the reign of Ahab's son Ahaziah in Israel, who serves Baal as his father did.

1 For three years there was no war between Aram
and Israel.

2 But in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah
went down to visit the king of Israel.

3 The king of Israel had said to his officials, "You
know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, yet we are
doing nothing to take it back from the king of
Aram."

4 He asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you join me in
attacking Ramoth-gilead?" "We are as one, you
and I," Jehoshaphat told the king of Israel. "My
troops and my horses are yours to command."

5 But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel,
"First seek the word of the LORD."

6 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets,
about four hundred men, and asked them, "Shall I
go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I hold
back?" "Go," they answered, "for the Lord will
give it into the king's hand."

7 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no other
prophet of the LORD here whom we can consult?"

8 The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There
is still one man through whom we can enquire of
the LORD, Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him,
because he never prophesies anything good about
me, only evil." "The king should not say such a
thing," Jehoshaphat replied.

9 So the king of Israel called one of his officials and
said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

10 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of
Judah, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on
their thrones at the threshing floor by the

entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them.

11 Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had made himself iron horns, and he declared, “This is what the LORD says: ‘With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.’”

12 All the prophets were prophesying the same thing: “Attack Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give it into the king’s hand.”

13 The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, “Look, the prophets are all agreed in promising success to the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favourably.”

14 But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, I will speak whatever the LORD tells me.”

15 When he arrived, the king asked him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or shall we hold back?” He answered, “Attack and be victorious, for the LORD will give it into the king’s hand.”

16 The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?”

17 Then Micaiah said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, ‘These have no master. Let each of them go home in peace.’”

18 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, only evil?”

19 Micaiah went on, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, with all the host of heaven standing round Him on His right and on His left.

20 And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth-gilead and falling there?’ One suggested this, and another that.

21 Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ‘By what means?’ the LORD asked.

22 ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. ‘You will entice him, and you will succeed,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’

23 So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.”

24 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah went up, struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, “Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go when He left me to speak to you?”

25 Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go into an inner room to hide.”

26 The king of Israel then gave orders: “Seize Micaiah and take him back to Amon, the city governor, and to Joash, the king’s son.

27 and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this man in prison and give him nothing but scant rations of bread and water until I come back safely.’”

28 Micaiah said, “If you ever come back safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” And he added, “Mark my words, all you peoples!”[1]

29 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah then marched against Ramoth-gilead.

30 “I will go into the battle disguised,” the king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, “but you keep your royal robes on.” So the king of Israel put on a disguise and went into battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, “Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel alone.”

32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, “Surely this is the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out,

33 and when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

34 But someone drew his bow without taking aim and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour. The king said to his chariot driver, “Turn round and get me out of the fighting, for I am wounded.”

35 The battle raged all that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran down into the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died.

36 As the sun was setting, a cry went through the army: “Every man to his town! Every man to his land!”

37 So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there.

38 They washed the chariot at the pool of Samaria, where the prostitutes bathed,[2] and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the LORD had declared.

39 The other events of Ahab’s reign, all that he did, the ivory house[3] he built and all the towns he

fortified, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

40 Ahab rested with his ancestors, and his son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

41 Jehoshaphat son of Asa came to the throne of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

42 He was thirty-five when he came to the throne, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

43 He followed in all the ways of his father Asa and did not turn from them, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. Yet the high places were not taken away, and the people continued to sacrifice and burn incense there.[4]

44 Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

45 The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, the power he showed and the wars he fought, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.

46 He rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there from the days of his father Asa.

47 At that time there was no king in Edom; a deputy ruled as king.

48 Jehoshaphat built ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they never sailed, for they were wrecked at Ezion-geber.

49 Then Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with your men," but Jehoshaphat refused.

50 Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. And his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

51 In the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Ahaziah son of Ahab came to the throne of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned over Israel two years.

52 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of his father and his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel sin.

53 He served Baal and worshipped him, and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done.

1 The same words open the book of Micah (Micah 1:2).

2 Or 'and they washed his armour'; the Hebrew is uncertain.

3 A palace panelled with ivory; ivory carvings of this period have been found at Samaria (compare Amos 3:15).

4 The last sentence is 22:44 in the Hebrew text, and 22:44–53 in English are 22:45–54 in Hebrew.