

1 Kings

Adonijah Wants to Be King

1 King David was very old and could not keep warm. His servants covered him with blankets, but he was still cold. ²So they said to him, "We will find a young woman to care for you. She will lie next to you and keep you warm." ³So the king's servants began looking everywhere in the country of Israel for a beautiful young woman to keep the king warm. They found a young woman named Abishag, from the town of Shunem, and brought her to the king. ⁴She was very beautiful. She cared for the king and served him, but King David did not have sexual relations with her.

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

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

⁹One day, at Zohelth Rock near En Rogel,^b Adonijah sacrificed some sheep, cattle, and fat calves as a fellowship offering.* He invited his brothers (the other sons of King David) and all the officers from Judah. ¹⁰But he did not invite his brother Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, or the men in the king's special guard.

Nathan Advises Bathsheba

¹¹When Nathan heard about this, he went to Solomon's mother Bathsheba and asked her, "Have you heard what Haggith's son, Adonijah, is doing? He is making himself king. And our master, King David, knows nothing about it. ¹²You and your son Solomon are in danger, but I will tell you what to do to save yourself. ¹³Go to King David and tell

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

^b**1:9** *En Rogel* A spring of water in the valley south of Jerusalem, about 1/4 mile from Gihon Spring.

him, 'My lord and king, you promised me that my son Solomon would be the next king after you. So why is Adonijah becoming the new king?' ¹⁴Then while you are still talking with him, I will come in. After you leave I will tell the king what has happened. This will show that what you said is true."

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

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

²²While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him. ²³The servants told the king, "Nathan the prophet is here." Nathan went in to speak to the king. He bowed down before the king ²⁴and said, "My lord and king, did you announce that Adonijah will be the new king after you? Have you decided that he will rule the people now? ²⁵Today he went down into the valley to offer many cattle and the best sheep as fellowship offerings. He invited all your other sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. They are now eating and drinking with him. And they are saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!' ²⁶But he did not invite me, or Zadok the priest, or Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your son Solomon. ²⁷My lord and king, did you do this without telling us? Please tell us, who will be the next king after you?"

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

²⁹Then the king made a promise: "The LORD God has saved me from every danger. As

surely as he lives, I make this promise to you.
³⁰Today I will do what I promised you in the past. I made that promise by the power of the LORD, the God of Israel. I promised that your son Solomon would be the next king after me. I promised that he would take my place on my throne, and I will keep my promise!”

³¹Then Bathsheba bowed down before the king and said, “Long live King David!”

Solomon Is Anointed King

³²Then King David said, “Tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to come in here.” So the three men came in to meet with the king.
³³Then the king said to them, “Take my officers with you. Put my son Solomon on my mule and take him to Gihon Spring.”
³⁴There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet will anoint* him to be the new king of Israel. Blow the trumpet and announce, ‘This is the new king, Solomon!’
³⁵Then come back here with him. Solomon will sit on my throne and be the new king in my place. I have chosen him to be the ruler of Israel and Judah.”

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

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

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

⁴²While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said, “Come here! You are a good man,^b so you must be bringing good news.”

⁴³But Jonathan answered, “No, it is not good news for you! King David has made Solomon the new king.
⁴⁴King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and all the king’s officers with Solomon out to Gihon Spring. They put Solomon on the king’s mule.
⁴⁵Zadok the

priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon at Gihon Spring and then went back into the city. The people followed them, and now everyone in the city is celebrating. That is the noise you hear.
⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷Solomon is sitting on the king’s throne and the king’s officers are congratulating King David, saying, ‘King David, you are a great king!’ And now we pray that your God will make Solomon a great king too. We pray your God will make him even more famous than you. And we pray that his kingdom will be even greater than yours! Even King David was there. From his bed, the king bowed before Solomon
⁴⁸and said, ‘Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. The LORD put one of my own sons on my throne, and he let me live to see it.’”

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

⁵²So Solomon answered, “If Adonijah shows that he is a good man, I promise that not a hair on his head will be hurt. But if he does anything wrong, he will die.”
⁵³Then King Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah and brought him in. He approached the king and bowed before him. Then Solomon said, “Go home.”

King David Dies

2¹The time came for David to die, so he gave these commands to Solomon,
²“I am about to die, like all men must. But you are growing stronger and becoming a man.
³Now, carefully obey all the commands of the LORD your God. Carefully obey all his laws, commands, decisions, and agreements. Obey everything that is written in the Law of Moses. If you do this, you will be successful at whatever you do and wherever you go.
⁴And if you obey the LORD, he will keep his promise about me. He said, ‘If your sons carefully live the way I tell them, sincerely, with all their heart, the king of Israel will always be a man from your family.’”

⁵David also said, “You remember what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me. He killed two of the commanders of Israel’s army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. Remember, it was during a time of peace when he spilled the blood that splattered onto his sword belt and army boots. I should have punished him then.
⁶Use your wisdom, but don’t let him die peacefully of old age.”

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

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

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

⁸“And remember, Shimei son of Gera is still around. He is the Benjamite from Bahurim who cursed me when I ran away to Mahanaim. But when he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I made a promise to him before the LORD that I would not kill him. ⁹Now, don’t leave him unpunished. You are a wise man. You will know what you must do, but don’t let him die peacefully of old age.”

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

Solomon and Adonijah

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

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

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

Bathsheba said, “Then speak.”

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

Bathsheba answered, “What do you want?”

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

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

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

²⁰Bathsheba said to him, “I have one small thing to ask you. Please don’t refuse me.”

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

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

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

²³Then Solomon said, “By the LORD, I swear I’ll make Adonijah pay for this with his life!

²⁴The Lord made me the king of Israel. He gave me the throne of my father David. The Lord kept his promise and gave the kingdom to me and my family. Now, as surely as the LORD lives, I swear Adonijah will die today!”

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

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

²⁸Joab had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom. But when Joab heard what happened to Abiathar, he was frightened and ran to the tent of the LORD to hold onto the horns of the altar.* ²⁹Someone told King Solomon that Joab was at the altar in the LORD’s Tent. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

³⁰Benaiah went into the LORD’s Tent and said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come out!’”

But Joab answered, “No, I will die here.”

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

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

³⁸Shimei answered, “Yes, my king. I will obey you.” So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time. ³⁹But three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran away. They went to King Achish of Gath, who was the son of Maacah. Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath, ⁴⁰so he saddled his donkey and went to King Achish at Gath to find them. He found them there and brought them back home.

⁴¹But someone told Solomon that Shimei had left Jerusalem and gone to Gath and back.

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

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

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

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

4King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice because that was the most important high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings* on that altar. 5While Solomon was at Gibeon, the LORD came to him at night in a dream. God said, "Solomon, ask me what you want me to give you."

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

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

follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did."

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

Proof of Solomon's Wisdom

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

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

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

23Then King Solomon said, "Each of you says that the living baby is your own and that the dead baby belongs to the other woman."

24Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword. 25He told the servant, "Cut the living baby in two and give one half of the baby to each woman."

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

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

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

Solomon's Kingdom

4 1King Solomon ruled over all Israel. 2These are the names of his leading officials:

Azariah son of Zadok was the priest;

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

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

^a3:28 *the wisdom of God* Or "very great wisdom."

- ⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the commander of the army;
Zadok and Abiathar were priests;
⁵ Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors;
Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and an advisor to King Solomon;
⁶ Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king's palace;
Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the slaves.

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

- Ben Hur was governor of the hill country of Ephraim.
⁹ Ben Deker was governor of Makaz, Shaalvim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan.
¹⁰ Ben Heseb was governor of Arubboth, Socoh, and Hephher.
¹¹ Ben Abinadab was governor of Naphtali Dor. He was married to Taphath, daughter of Solomon.
¹² Baana son of Ahilud was governor of Taanach and Megiddo and all of Beth Shean next to Zarethan. This was below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah across from Jokmeam.
¹³ Ben Geber was governor of Ramoth Gilead. He was governor of all the towns and villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead. He was also governor of the district of Argob in Bashan. In this area there were 60 cities with big walls around them. These cities also had bronze bars on the gates.
¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor of Mahanaim.
¹⁵ Ahimaaz was governor of Naphtali. He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.
¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai was governor of Asher and Aloth.
¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor of Issachar.
¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela was governor of Benjamin.
¹⁹ Geber son of Uri was governor of Gilead. There had been two kings in this area, King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan, but Solomon appointed only one governor for that district.

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

²¹Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines. His kingdom went as far as the border of Egypt. These countries sent gifts to Solomon, and they obeyed him all of his life.^a

²²⁻²³This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day for himself and for everyone who ate at his table: 150 bushels^b of fine flour, 300 bushels^c of flour, 10 cattle that were fed grain, 20 cattle that were raised in the fields, 100 sheep, wild animals such as deer, gazelles, roebucks,^d and game birds.

²⁴Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphshah to Gaza. And Solomon had peace along all the borders of his kingdom. ²⁵During Solomon's life everyone in Judah and Israel, all the way from Dan to Beersheba, lived in peace and security. The people were at peace sitting under their own fig trees and grapevines.

²⁶Solomon had places to keep 4000^e horses for his chariots* and he had 12,000 horse soldiers. ²⁷And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon everything he needed for all the people who ate at the king's table. ²⁸The district governors also gave the king enough straw and barley for the chariot horses and the riding horses. Everyone brought this grain to the necessary places.

Solomon's Wisdom

²⁹God made Solomon very wise. Solomon could understand more than you can imagine. ³⁰He was wiser than anyone in the East^f or in Egypt. ³¹He was wiser than anyone on earth, even Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of Mahol—Heman, Calcol, and Darda. King Solomon became famous in all the surrounding countries. ³²By the end of his life, he had written^g 3000 proverbs* and 1005 songs.

³³Solomon also knew very much about nature. He taught about many different kinds of plants—everything from the great cedar trees of Lebanon to the little vines that grow out of the walls. He also taught about animals, birds, and snakes.^h ³⁴People from every nation came to listen to Solomon's wisdom. Kings all over the world sent their people to listen to him.

^{a4:21} *sent gifts ... life* This showed that these countries had made peace agreements with Solomon because of his great power.

^{b4:22-23} *150 bushels* Literally, "30 cors" (6600 l).

^{c4:22-23} *300 bushels* Literally, "60 cors" (13,200 l).

^{d4:22-23} *deer, gazelles, roebucks* Different kinds of wild deer.

^{e4:26} *4000* This is found in some copies of the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has 40,000, but see 2 Chron. 9:25.

^{f4:30} *East* The area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

^{g4:32} *written* Literally, "spoken."

^{h4:33} *snakes* Literally, "creeping things." These can be anything: insects, lizards, snakes, or fish.

Solomon and Hiram

5 ¹Hiram was the king of Tyre. He had always been David's friend. So when Hiram heard that Solomon had become the new king after David, he sent his servants to Solomon. ²This is what Solomon said to King Hiram: ³"You remember that my father, King David, had to fight many wars all around him. So he was never able to build a temple to honor the LORD his God. King David was waiting until the LORD allowed him to defeat all his enemies. ⁴But now the LORD my God has given me peace along all the borders of my country. I have no enemies, and my people are in no danger.

⁵"The LORD made a promise to my father David. He said, 'I will make your son king after you, and he will build a temple to honor me.' Now, I plan to build that temple to honor the LORD my God. ⁶And so I ask you to help me. Send your men to Lebanon to cut down cedar trees for me. My servants will work with yours. I will pay you any price that you decide as your servants' wages, but I need your help. Our carpenters^a are not as good as the carpenters of Sidon."

⁷Hiram was very happy when he heard what Solomon asked. He said, "I praise the LORD today for giving David a wise son to rule this great nation!" ⁸Then Hiram sent this message to Solomon, "I heard what you asked for. I will give you all the cedar trees and the fir trees you want. ⁹My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. Then I will tie them together and float them down the shore to the place you choose. There I will separate the logs, and you can take them from there. As payment for this, you will give food to all those who live in my palace." ¹⁰So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and fir logs that he wanted.

¹¹Solomon gave Hiram about 120,000 bushels^b of wheat and about 120,000 gallons^c of pure olive oil every year for his family.

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

¹³King Solomon forced 30,000 men of Israel to help in this work. ¹⁴He chose a man named Adoniram to be in charge of them. Solomon divided the men into three groups with 10,000 men in each group. Each group worked one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months. ¹⁵Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country cutting stone. There were also 70,000 men to carry the stones. ¹⁶There were 3300 men to

supervise the workers. ¹⁷King Solomon commanded them to cut large, expensive stones for the foundation of the Temple. ¹⁸Then Solomon and Hiram's builders and the men from Byblos^d carved the stones and prepared them and the logs for use in building the Temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 ¹So in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year, during Solomon's fourth year as king, he began work on the Temple. This was 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt.^e ²The Temple was 60 cubits^f long, 20 cubits^g wide, and 30 cubits^h high. ³The porch of the Temple was 20 cubits long and 10 cubitsⁱ wide. The porch ran along the front of the main part of the Temple itself. Its length was equal to the width of the Temple. ⁴There were narrow windows in the Temple. These windows were smaller on the inside of the wall than on the outside.^j ⁵Then Solomon built a row of rooms around the main part of the Temple. This row of rooms was three stories tall with the rooms built one above the other. ⁶The rooms touched the Temple wall, but their beams were not built into that wall. The Temple wall became thinner at the top, so the rooms on the upper floors were larger than the ones below them. The rooms on the bottom floor were 5 cubits^k wide. The rooms on the middle floor were 6 cubits^l wide. The rooms above that were 7 cubits^m wide. ⁷The stones were completely finished before they were brought into the Temple area, so there was no noise of hammers, axes, or any other iron tools in the Temple.

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

⁹Solomon finished building the main part of the Temple and then covered it inside with cedar boards. ¹⁰Then he finished building the rooms around the Temple. Each story was 5 cubits tall. The cedar beams in these rooms rested on a ledge of the Temple wall.

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

d5:18 Byblos Literally, "Gebel."

e6:1 480 years ... Egypt This was about 960 B.C.

f6:2 60 cubits 102' 3/8" (31.1 m).

g6:2 20 cubits 34' 1/8" (10.37 m). Also in verses 16, 20.

h6:2 30 cubits 51' 3/16" (15.55 m). The ancient Greek version has "25 cubits."

i6:3 10 cubits 17' 1/16" (5.18 m). Also in verses 23, 24–26.

j6:4 These windows ... outside Or "These windows had lattice work over them."

k6:6 5 cubits 8' 6" (2.6 m). Also in verses 10, 24–26.

l6:6 6 cubits 10' 2 7/16" (3.11 m).

m6:6 7 cubits 11' 10 13/16" (3.63 m).

a5:6 carpenters People who work with wood. In ancient times, this also meant that they cut the trees.

b5:11 120,000 bushels Literally, "20,000 cors" (4,400,000 l).

c5:11 120,000 gallons Literally, "20,000 baths" (440,000 l).

¹⁴When Solomon finished the stonework on the Temple, ¹⁵the stone walls inside the Temple were covered with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. Then the stone floor was covered with pine boards. ¹⁶They built an inner room 20 cubits long in the back part of the Temple. This room was called the Most Holy Place. They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards, from floor to ceiling. ¹⁷In front of the Most Holy Place was the main part of the Temple. This room was 40 cubits^d long. ¹⁸They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards—none of the stones in the walls could be seen. They carved pictures of flowers and gourds into the cedar.

¹⁹Solomon finished the inner room in the back part of the Temple. This room was for the LORD's Box of the Agreement.* ²⁰This room was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high. Solomon covered this room with pure gold. He also covered the cedar altar with gold. ²¹He covered the inside of the Temple with pure gold and wrapped gold chains around it. ²²The inside of the Temple was covered with gold, and the altar in front of the Most Holy Place was covered with gold.

²³The workers made two statues of Cherub angels* with wings. They made the statues from olive wood and put them in the Most Holy Place. Each angel was 10 cubits tall. ^{24–26}Both Cherub angels were the same size and built the same way. Each one had two wings. Each wing was 5 cubits long. From the end of one wing to the end of the other wing was 10 cubits. And each Cherub angel was 10 cubits tall. ²⁷They put the Cherub angels beside one another in the Most Holy Place. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each side wall. ²⁸The two Cherub angels were covered with gold.

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

³¹The workers made two doors from olive wood. They put these doors at the entrance of the Most Holy Place. The frame around the doors was made with five sides.^b ³²They made the two doors from olive wood. The workers carved pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered the doors with gold.

³³They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square doorframe. ³⁴There were two doors made from pine. Each door had two parts that folded together. ³⁵They carved pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

^a6:17 40 cubits 68' 1/4" (20.73 m).

^b6:31 The frame ... sides This probably means there were three sections that formed an arch at the top of the door.

³⁶Then they built a wall around the inner yard. Each wall was made from three rows of cut stones and one row of cedar timbers.

³⁷They started working on the Temple in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. This was during Solomon's fourth year as king of Israel. ³⁸The Temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year, in Solomon's eleventh year as king. It took seven years to build the Temple. It was built exactly as planned.

Solomon's Palace

7 ¹King Solomon also built a palace for himself. It took 13 years to build Solomon's palace. ²He also built the building called the "Forest of Lebanon." It was 100 cubits^c long, 50 cubits^d wide, and 30 cubits^e high. It had four rows of cedar columns. On top of each column was a cedar capital.* ³There were cedar beams going across the rows of columns. There were 15 beams for each section of columns. There was a total of 45 beams. On top of these beams there were cedar boards for the ceiling. ⁴There were three rows of windows across from each other on the side walls. ⁵There were three doors at each end. All the door openings and frames were square.

⁶Solomon also built the Porch of Columns. It was 50 cubits long and 30 cubits wide. Along the front of the porch, there was a covering supported by columns.

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

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

⁹All these buildings were made with expensive blocks of stone. The stones were cut to the right size with a saw and then smoothed on front and back. These expensive stones went from the foundation all the way up to the top layer of the wall. Even the wall around the yard was made with expensive blocks of stone. ¹⁰The foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 10 cubits^f long and the others were 8 cubits^g long. ¹¹On top of these stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams. ¹²There were walls around the palace yard, the Temple yard, and the porch of the Temple. The walls were built with three rows of stone and one row of cedar timbers.

¹³King Solomon sent for a man named

^c7:2 100 cubits 170' 5/8" (51.83 m).

^d7:2 50 cubits 85' 5/16" (25.92 m). Also in verse 6.

^e7:2 30 cubits 51' 3/16" (15.55 m). Also in verses 6, 23.

^f7:10 10 cubits 17' 1/16" (5.18 m). Also in verse 23.

^g7:10 8 cubits 13' 7 1/4" (4.2 m).

Huram^a who lived in Tyre and brought him to Jerusalem. ¹⁴Huram's mother was an Israelite from the tribe of Naphtali. His dead father was from Tyre. Huram made things from bronze.* He was a very skilled and experienced builder. So King Solomon asked him to come, and Huram accepted. King Solomon put him in charge of all the bronze work, and Huram did all the work he was given to do.

¹⁵Huram made two bronze columns for the porch. Each column was 18 cubits^b tall and 12 cubits^c around. The columns were hollow and their metal walls were 3 inches^d thick.^e ¹⁶He also made two bronze capitals that were 5 cubits^f tall. He put these capitals on top of the columns. ¹⁷He made two nets of chain to cover the capitals on top of the two columns. ¹⁸Then he made two rows of bronze pomegranates.* He put the bronze pomegranates on the nets of each column to cover the capitals at the top of the columns. ¹⁹The capitals on top of the columns were shaped like flowers. ²⁰The capitals were on top of the columns, above the bowl-shaped net. There were 200 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals. ²¹Huram put these two bronze columns at the porch of the Temple. One column was put on the south side of the entrance and one was put on the north side of it. The column on the south was named Jakin. The column on the north was named Boaz. ²²They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the columns, and the work on the two columns was finished.

²³Then Huram melted bronze and poured it into a huge mold to make a tank,^g which was called "The Sea." The tank was about 30 cubits around. It was 10 cubits across and 5 cubits deep. ²⁴There was a rim around the outer edge of the tank. Under this rim there were two rows of bronze gourds all around the tank. The bronze gourds were made in one piece as part of the tank. ²⁵The tank rested on the backs of 12 bronze bulls. All 12 of the bulls were looking out, away from the tank. Three were looking north, three east, three south, and three west. ²⁶The sides of the tank were 3 inches thick. The rim around the tank was like the rim of a cup or like the petals on a flower. The tank held about 11,000 gallons^h of water

²⁷Then Huram made ten bronze carts. Each cart was 4 cubitsⁱ long, 4 cubits wide,

and 3 cubits^j high. ²⁸The carts were made with square panels set in frames. ²⁹On the panels and frames were bronze bulls, lions, and Cherub angels.* There were designs of flowers hammered into the bronze above and below the bulls and lions. ³⁰Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the corners there were bronze supports for a large bowl. The supports had designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. ³¹There was a frame around the top with an opening for the bowl. The frame was 1 cubit^k tall, and the opening was 1½ cubits^l in diameter. There were designs carved into the bronze on the frame. The frame was square, not round. ³²There were four wheels under the frame. The wheels were 1½ cubits in diameter. The axles between the wheels were made as one piece with the cart. ³³The wheels were like the wheels on a chariot.* Everything on the wheels—the axles, the rims, the spokes, and the hubs were made from bronze.

³⁴There were supports at each of the four corners of the carts. They were made as one piece with the cart. ³⁵There was a strip of bronze around the top of each cart. It was made as one piece with the cart. ³⁶The sides of the cart and the frames had pictures of Cherub angels, lions, and palm trees carved into the bronze. These pictures were carved all over the carts—wherever there was room. And there were flowers carved on the frame around the cart. ³⁷Huram made ten carts, and they were all the same. Each cart was made from bronze. The bronze was melted and poured into a mold. So all the carts were the same size and shape.

³⁸Huram also made ten bowls. There was one bowl for each of the ten carts. Each bowl was 4 cubits across and could hold about 230 gallons.^m ³⁹He put five carts on the south side of the Temple and five carts on the north side. He put the large tank in the southeast corner of the Temple. ⁴⁰⁻⁴⁵Huram also made pots, small shovels, and small bowls. He finished making all the things King Solomon wanted him to make. This is a list of the things that Huram made for the Temple of the LORD:

- 2 columns;
- 2 capitals shaped like bowls for the top of the columns;
- 2 nets to go around the capitals;
- 400 pomegranates for the two nets (two rows of pomegranates for each net to cover the two bowls for the capitals on top of the columns);
- 10 carts with a bowl on each cart;
- the large tank with 12 bulls under it;
- the pots, small shovels, small bowls, and all the dishes for the LORD's Temple.

^a7:13 *Huram* Or "Hiram." Also in verses 15, 23, 27, 37, 38, 40-45.

^b7:15 *18 cubits* 30' 7 5/16" (9.33 m).

^c7:15 *12 cubits* 20' 4 7/8" (6.22 m).

^d7:15 *3 inches* Literally, "1 handbreadth" (7.4 cm). Also in verse 26.

^e7:15 *The columns ... 3 inches thick* This is from the ancient Greek version.

^f7:16 *5 cubits* 8' 6" (2.6 m). Also in verses 19, 23.

^g7:23 *tank* A very large container for water.

^h7:26 *11,000 gallons* Literally, "2000 baths" (44,000 l).

ⁱ7:27 *4 cubits* 6' 9 5/8" (2.1 m). Also in verse 38.

^j7:27 *3 cubits* 5' 1 3/16" (1.55 m).

^k7:31 *1 cubit* 20 3/8" (51.83 cm).

^l7:31 *1 1/2 cubits* 30 5/8" (77.75 cm).

^m7:38 *230 gallons* Literally, "40 baths" (880 l).

Huram made everything King Solomon wanted. They were all made from polished bronze. ⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷Solomon never weighed the bronze that was used to make these things. There was too much to weigh. So the total weight of all the bronze was never known. The king ordered these things to be made near the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan. They made them by melting the bronze and pouring it into molds in the ground.

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

- the golden altar;
- the golden table which held the special bread that was offered to God;
- the lampstands of pure gold (five on the south side and five on the north side in front of the Most Holy Place);
- the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs;
- the pure gold bowls, lamp snuffers,* small bowls, pans, and dishes for carrying coals;
- the gold hinges for the doors to the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors to the main room of the Temple.

⁵¹So King Solomon finished all the work he wanted to do for the LORD's Temple. Then he took everything his father David had saved for this special purpose and put them in the Temple. He put the silver and gold in the special storage rooms in the LORD's Temple.

The Box of the Agreement in the Temple

8¹Then King Solomon told all the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, and the leaders of the families of Israel to come together in Jerusalem. Solomon wanted them to join in moving the Box of the Agreement* from the City of David* up to the Temple. ²So during the special festival^g in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month of the year, all the men of Israel came to the meeting with King Solomon.

³⁻⁴When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests and Levites* carried the Holy Box* of the LORD up to the Temple. They also carried the Meeting Tent* and all the holy things that were in it up to the Temple. ⁵King Solomon and all Israel met together before the Box of the Agreement and sacrificed so many sheep and cattle that no one was able to count them all. ⁶The priests carried the Box of the Agreement of the LORD to its proper place inside the Most Holy Place in the Temple, under the wings of the Cherub angels.* ⁷The wings of the Cherub angels spread out over the Holy Box, and they covered the Holy Box and its carrying poles. ⁸The poles are still there today. They are too long for the Most Holy Place, so anyone standing in the Holy Place

can see the ends of the poles, although no one outside can see them. ⁹The only things inside the Holy Box are the two tablets that Moses put there at Mt. Horeb. This is where the LORD made his agreement* with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

¹⁰When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud^b filled the LORD's Temple. ¹¹The priests could not continue their work because the Temple was filled with the Glory of the LORD.* ¹²Then Solomon said,

“The LORD caused the sun to shine in the sky,
but he chose to live in a dark cloud.^c

¹³ Now, LORD, I have built a beautiful Temple for you,
where you may live forever.”

¹⁴Then King Solomon turned toward all the Israelites who were standing there and asked God to bless them. ¹⁵He prayed this long prayer to the Lord:

“The LORD, the God of Israel, is great.
He has done what he promised my father David.

He told my father,
¹⁶ ‘I brought my people, Israel, out of Egypt,
but I had not yet chosen a city from
among the tribes of Israel for a temple
to honor me.
And I had not chosen a man
to be leader over my people, Israel.
But now I have chosen Jerusalem
to be the city where I will be honored.^d
And I have chosen David
to rule over my people, Israel.’

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

²⁰“So the LORD has kept his promises. I am the king now in place of my father David. I rule the people of Israel as the LORD promised. And I have built the Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹I have made a place in the Temple for the Holy Box. Inside that Holy Box is the agreement that the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt.”

b8:10 cloud The special sign that showed God was with his people.

c8:12 The LORD ... dark cloud This is from the ancient Greek version, which places verses 12-13 after verse 53. In verse 12 the standard Hebrew text has only “The LORD said he would live in darkness.”

d8:16 And I ... honored This is from the ancient Greek version. It is found in the standard Hebrew text of 2 Chron. 6:5-6, but not here.

a8:2 the special festival That is, the Festival of Shelters. See “Festival of Shelters” in the Word List.

²²Then Solomon stood in front of whole assembly of Israel and faced the LORD's altar.* Solomon spread his hands and looked toward heaven ²³and said,

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

²⁷"But, God, will you really live here with us on the earth? The whole sky and the highest heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this Temple that I built cannot contain you either. ²⁸But please listen to my prayer and my request. I am your servant, and you are the LORD my God. Hear this prayer that I am praying to you today. ²⁹In the past you said, 'I will be honored there.' So please watch over this Temple, night and day. And please listen to my prayer as I turn toward this Temple and pray to you. ³⁰And LORD, please listen to our prayers in the future when I and your people Israel turn to this place and pray to you. We know that you live in heaven. We ask you to hear our prayer there and forgive us.

³¹"Those who wrong others will be brought to this altar. If they are not guilty, they will make an oath* and promise that they are innocent. ³²Please listen from heaven and judge them. If they are guilty, please show us that they are guilty. And if they are innocent, please show us that they are not guilty.

³³"Sometimes your people Israel will sin against you, and their enemies will defeat them. Then the people will come back to you and praise you. They will pray to you in this Temple. ³⁴Please listen in heaven, please listen to the prayers of your people Israel. Forgive them for their sins and let them have their land again. You gave this land to their ancestors.

³⁵"Sometimes they will sin against you, and you will stop the rain from falling on their land. Then they will pray toward this place and praise your name. You make them suffer, and they will be sorry for their sins. ³⁶So please listen in heaven to their prayer. Then forgive us for our sins. Teach the people to live right. Then, LORD, please send rain to the land you gave them.

³⁷"The land might become very dry and no food will grow on it. Or maybe a great sickness will spread among the people. Maybe

all the food that is growing will be destroyed by insects. Or your people might be attacked in some of their cities by their enemies. Or many of your people might get sick. ³⁸When any of these things happen, and people feel compelled in their hearts to spread their hands in prayer toward this Temple, ³⁹please listen to their prayer. Listen while you are in your home in heaven and forgive them and help them. Only you know what people are really thinking, so only you can judge them fairly. ⁴⁰Do this so that your people will fear and respect you all the time that they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors.

⁴¹⁻⁴²"People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this Temple. ⁴³From your home in heaven please listen to their prayers. Please do everything the people from other places ask you. Then they will fear and respect you the same as your people in Israel. Then all people everywhere will know that I built this Temple to honor you.

⁴⁴"Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn toward the city that you have chosen and the Temple that I built in your honor, and they will pray to you. ⁴⁵Listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them.

⁴⁶"Your people will sin against you. I know this because everyone sins. And you will be angry with your people. You will let their enemies defeat them. Their enemies will make them prisoners and carry them to some faraway land. ⁴⁷In that faraway land, your people will think about what happened. They will be sorry for their sins, and they will pray to you. They will say, 'We have sinned and done wrong.' ⁴⁸They will be in that faraway land of their enemies, but they will turn back to you. They will feel sorry for their sins with their whole heart and soul. They will turn toward the land you gave their ancestors.* They will look toward the city you chose and toward the Temple I built, and they will pray to you. ⁴⁹Please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and do what is right. ⁵⁰Forgive your sinful people for all the things they have done against you. Make their enemies be kind to them. ⁵¹Remember that they are your people and that you brought them out of Egypt. It was as if you saved them by pulling them out of a hot oven!

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

⁵⁴Solomon prayed that prayer to God. He was on his knees in front of the altar. He

prayed with his arms raised toward heaven. When he finished praying, he stood up. ⁵⁵Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said,

⁵⁶“Praise the LORD! He promised to give rest to his people, Israel. And he has given us rest! He used his servant Moses and made many good promises to the people of Israel. And he has kept every one of them! ⁵⁷I pray that the LORD our God will be with us, as he was with our ancestors. I pray that he will never leave us. ⁵⁸I pray that we will turn to him and follow him. Then we will obey all the laws, decisions, and commands that he gave our ancestors. ⁵⁹I pray that the LORD our God will always remember this prayer and what I have asked. I pray that he will do these things for his servant, the king, and for his people, Israel. I pray that he will do this every day. ⁶⁰If he will do these things, all the people of the world will know that the LORD is the only true God. ⁶¹You people must be loyal and true to the LORD our God. You must always follow and obey all of his laws and commands. You must continue to obey in the future as you do now.”

⁶²Then King Solomon and all the Israelites with him offered sacrifices to the LORD. ⁶³Solomon killed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep for fellowship offerings.* In this way the king and the people showed that they had dedicated* the Temple to the LORD.

⁶⁴King Solomon also dedicated the yard in front of the Temple. He offered burnt offerings,* grain offerings, and the fat from the animals that were used as fellowship offerings. King Solomon made these offerings there in the yard. He did this because the bronze altar in front of the LORD was too small to hold them all.

⁶⁵So there at the Temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the festival.^a People came from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the border of Egypt in the south. This huge crowd of people ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves together with the LORD for seven days. Then they stayed for another seven days. They celebrated for a total of 14 days.^b ⁶⁶The next day Solomon told the people to go home. All the people thanked the king, said goodbye, and went home. They were happy because of all the good things that the LORD had done for David his servant and for his people Israel.

God Comes to Solomon Again

9¹So Solomon finished building the LORD’s Temple and his own palace. Solomon built everything that he wanted to build. ²Then the LORD appeared to Solomon again, just as he did at Gibeon. ³The LORD said to him, “I

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

⁶⁻⁷“But if you or your children stop following me, and don’t obey the laws and commands that I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, I will force Israel to leave the land that I have given to them. Israel will be an example to other people. Other people will make jokes about Israel. I made the Temple holy. It is the place where people honor me. But I will tear it down. ⁸This Temple will be destroyed. Everyone who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, ‘Why did the LORD do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?’ ⁹People will say, ‘This happened because they left the LORD their God. He brought their ancestors out of Egypt, but they decided to follow other gods. They began to worship and serve those gods. That is why the LORD caused all these bad things to happen to them.’”

¹⁰It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the LORD’s Temple and the king’s palace. ¹¹Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar, pine and gold that he wanted, so Solomon gave him 20 cities in Galilee. ¹²So Hiram traveled from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him. But Hiram was not pleased when he saw them. ¹³King Hiram said, “What are these towns that you have given me, my brother?” King Hiram named that land the Land of Cabul.^c And that area is still called Cabul today. ¹⁴Hiram had sent King Solomon about 9000 pounds^d of gold to use in building the Temple.

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

¹⁶In the past the king of Egypt had fought against the city of Gezer and burned it. He killed the Canaanites who lived there. When Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Pharaoh gave him that city as a wedding present. ¹⁷Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the city of Lower Beth Horon. ¹⁸He also built the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the Judean desert. ¹⁹He also built cities where he could store grain, and he built places for his chariots* and his horses.

^a8:65 *festival* The Festival of Shelters. See verse 2.

^b8:65 *Then ... 14 days* This is not in the ancient Greek version.

^c9:13 *Cabul* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “worthless.”

^d9:14 *9000 pounds* Literally, “120 talents” (4140 kg).

King Solomon also built whatever he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and all the places he ruled.

²⁰There were people left in the land who were not Israelites. There were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. ²¹The Israelites had not been able to destroy them, but Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. ²²Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The Israelites were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers. ²³There were 550 supervisors over Solomon's projects. They supervised the men who did the work.

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

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

²⁶King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷King Hiram had some skilled sailors who knew the sea well. He sent them to serve in Solomon's navy and work with Solomon's men. ²⁸Solomon's ships went to Ophir and brought back about 16 tons^a of gold for him.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10¹The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, so she came to test him with hard questions. ²She traveled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels, and a lot of gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. ³Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain. ⁴The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built. ⁵She saw the food at the king's table. She saw his officials meeting together. She saw the servants in the palace and the good clothes they wore. She saw his parties and the sacrifices that he offered in the Temple. She was so amazed that it took her breath away.

⁶Then she said to King Solomon, "The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. ⁷I did not believe it until I came and saw it with my own eyes. Now I see that it is even greater than what I heard. Your wealth and wisdom are much greater than people told me. ⁸Your wives^b and officers are very fortunate, because they serve you and hear your wisdom every day. ⁹Praise the LORD your God! He was

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

¹⁰Then the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon 4½ tons^c of gold, a great many spices, and valuable stones. She gave him more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel.

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

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

Solomon's Great Wealth

¹⁴Every year King Solomon received almost 25 tons^f of gold. ¹⁵In addition to the gold brought in by the traveling merchants* and traders, all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

¹⁶King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 15 pounds^g of gold. ¹⁷He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 4 pounds^h of gold. The king put them in the building called the "Forest of Lebanon."

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

²¹All of Solomon's cups and glasses were made of gold, and all the dishesⁱ in the building called the Forest of Lebanon were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. There was so much gold

^c10:10 4 1/2 tons Literally, "120 talents" (4140 kg).

^d10:11 special... wood Literally, "almug." No one knows exactly what type of wood this was, but it might have been sandalwood.

^e10:12 since then Literally, "to this day," that is, when the book of Kings was written.

^f10:14 almost 25 tons Literally, "666 talents" (22,977 kg).

^g10:16 15 pounds Hebrew, "600 [shekels]" (6.9 kg). Also in verse 29.

^h10:17 4 pounds Literally, "3 minas" (1.7 kg).

ⁱ10:21 dishes The Hebrew word can mean "dishes," "tools," or "weapons."

^a9:28 16 tons Literally, "420 talents" (14,490 kg).

^b10:8 wives This is from the ancient Greek version. The Hebrew text has "men."

that in Solomon's time people did not think silver was important.

²²The king also had many cargo ships^a that he sent out to trade things with other countries. These were Hiram's ships. Every three years the ships would come back with a new load of gold, silver, ivory, and apes and baboons.

²³King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth. ²⁴People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon and listen to the great wisdom that God had given him. ²⁵Every year people came to see the king and brought gifts made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

²⁶Solomon had a great number of chariots^a and horses. He had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horse soldiers. He built special cities for these chariots. So the chariots were kept in these cities. King Solomon also kept some of the chariots with him in Jerusalem. ²⁷The king made Israel very rich. In the city of Jerusalem, silver was as common as rocks and cedar wood was as common as the many fig trees growing on the hills. ²⁸Solomon brought horses from Egypt and Kue. His traders bought them in Kue and brought them to Israel. ²⁹A chariot from Egypt cost about 15 pounds of silver, and a horse cost almost 4 pounds^b of silver. Solomon sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

Solomon and His Many Wives

11 ¹King Solomon loved many foreign women, including the daughter of Pharaoh and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and the Hittites. ²In the past the LORD had said to the Israelites, "You must not marry people from other nations. If you do, they will cause you to follow their gods." But Solomon fell in love with these women. ³He had 700 wives who were the daughters of leaders from other nations. He also had 300 slave women who were like wives to him. His wives caused him to turn away from God. ⁴When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to follow other gods, so he did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did. ⁵Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth,* the goddess of Sidon, and Milcom,* the horrible god of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did.

⁷On the mountain next to Jerusalem, Solomon built a place for worshiping Chemosh, that horrible idol* of the Moabites. On the same mountain, Solomon built a place for worshiping Molech, that horrible idol of the Ammonites. ⁸Solomon did the same thing for all of his other foreign wives who burned

incense* and gave sacrifices to their gods.

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

Solomon's Enemies

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite to become Solomon's enemy. Hadad was from the royal family of Edom. ¹⁵This is how it happened. In the past David fought against Edom. Joab was the commander of David's army. Joab went to Edom to bury his dead soldiers. While there Joab killed all the Edomite men who were still alive. ¹⁶Joab and the men of Israel stayed in Edom for six months until they killed all the men of Edom. ¹⁷At the time Hadad was only a young boy. He and some of his father's servants ran away to Egypt. ¹⁸They left Midian and went to Paran. In Paran some other people joined them and the whole group went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and asked for help. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house, some land, and food to eat.

¹⁹Pharaoh liked Hadad so much that he gave Hadad a wife. She was Pharaoh's sister-in-law. (Pharaoh's wife was Queen Tahpenes.)

²⁰Hadad and the sister of Tahpenes had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes let Genubath grow up in Pharaoh's house with his children.

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

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

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

²³God also raised up another man to become one of Solomon's enemies. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah.

²⁴After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and became the leader of a small army. He went to Damascus and stayed there to rule from Damascus.

²⁵Rezon became the king of Aram. He was an enemy of Israel throughout Solomon's life and

^a10:22 *cargo ships* Literally, "ships of Tarshish."

^b10:29 *almost 4 pounds* Literally, "150 shekels" (1.725 kg).

added to the trouble that Hadad created for Israel.

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

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

³⁰Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces of this coat for yourself because the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I will tear the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten of the tribes. ³²I will let David's family keep only one tribe. I will do this because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem, the city that I chose from among all the tribes of Israel. ³³I will take the kingdom from Solomon because he stopped following me and began worshiping Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon; Chemosh, the god of Moab; and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. Solomon stopped following my ways and doing what I say is right. He does not obey my laws and commands as his father David did. ³⁴So I will take the kingdom away from Solomon's family. I chose David because he obeyed all my laws and commands. So for my servant David, I will let Solomon be the king for the rest of his life. ³⁵But Jeroboam, I will take the ten tribes away from his son and give them to you. ³⁶I will let Solomon's son keep one tribe to rule over. I will do this for my servant David, so he will always have someone to rule near me in Jerusalem, the city that I chose to be my own. ³⁷But I will make you king of Israel.^b You will rule over everything you want. ³⁸If you live right and obey all my commands as David did, I will be with you and make your family a family of kings, just as I did for David. And you will have Israel as your kingdom. ³⁹I will punish David's descendants because of what Solomon did, but not forever.'"

Solomon's Death

⁴⁰Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to King

Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

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

Civil War

12¹⁻³Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt where he had run away from Solomon. When he heard about Solomon's death, he returned to his city, Zeredah, in the hills of Ephraim.^d

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

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

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

⁷They answered, "If you are like a servant to them today, they will sincerely serve you. If you speak kindly to them, they will always work for you."

⁸But Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men. He asked the young men who were his friends. ⁹Rehoboam asked them, "The people said, 'Give us easier work than your father gave us.' How do you think I should answer them? What should I tell them?"

¹⁰Then the young men who grew up with him answered, "Those people came to you and said, 'Your father forced us to work very hard. Now make our work easier.' So you should tell them, 'My little finger is stronger than my father's whole body. ¹¹My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.'"

¹²Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came back as Rehoboam had said. ¹³King Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men, and he was rude to the people. ¹⁴He did what his friends told him to do and said, "My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips." ¹⁵So the king did not do what the

^a11:28 *free man* Or "a nobleman," someone who could be called to war to protect his people.

^b11:37 *Israel* That is, the northern ten tribes.

^c11:43 *died* Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

^d12:1-3 *to his city ... Ephraim* This is from the ancient Greek version.

people wanted. The LORD caused this to happen. He did this in order to keep the promise he made to Jeroboam son of Nebat when he sent the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh to speak to him.

¹⁶The Israelites saw that the new king refused to listen to them, so they said to him, "We are not part of David's family are we? We don't get any of Jesse's land, do we? So, people of Israel, let's go home and let David's son rule his own people!" So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸A man named Adoniram was one of the men who directed the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram to talk to the people, but the Israelites threw stones at him until he died. King Rehoboam ran to his chariot* and escaped to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and this is how things are even today.

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

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

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

²⁶⁻²⁷Jeroboam said to himself, "If the people keep going to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the LORD's Temple, someday they will want to be ruled by their old masters. They will want to be ruled by King Rehoboam of Judah. And then they will kill me." ²⁸So the king asked his advisors what to do. They gave him their advice, and King Jeroboam made two golden calves. He said to the people, "You don't have to go to Jerusalem to worship anymore. Israel, these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt."^b ²⁹King Jeroboam put one golden calf in Bethel and the other one in the city of Dan.^c ³⁰What a terrible sin this was, because

the Israelites started going to the cities of Dan and Bethel^d to worship the calves.

³¹Jeroboam also built temples at the high places* and chose priests from among the different tribes of Israel. (He did not choose priests only from the tribe of Levi.) ³²Then King Jeroboam started a new festival that was like the festival^e in Judah, but it was on the 15th day of the eighth month. At this time the king offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. He and the priests he chose offered the sacrifices to the calves that he had set up at the high places he had made. ³³So King Jeroboam chose his own time for a festival for the Israelites, the 15th day of the eighth month. And during that time he offered sacrifices and burned incense* on the altar he had built at Bethel.

God Speaks Against Bethel

13 ¹The LORD commanded a man of God* from Judah to go to the city of Bethel. King Jeroboam was standing at the altar offering incense when the man of God arrived. ²The LORD had commanded the man of God to speak against the altar. He said,

"Altar, the LORD says to you: 'David's family will have a son. His name will be Josiah. The priests of the high places are now burning incense on you, but Josiah will offer the priests on you and burn human bones on you, so you can never be used again!'"

³The man of God gave proof to the people that this would happen. He said, "This is the proof that the LORD told me about. He said, 'This altar will break apart, and the ashes on it will fall onto the ground.'"

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

So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king's arm was healed, as it was before. ⁷Then the king said to the man of God, "Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift."

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

^a12:25 *Penuel* Or "Peniel."

^b12:28 *Israel ... out of Egypt* This is exactly the same thing that Aaron said at the time he made the golden calf in the desert. See Ex. 32:4.

^c12:29 *Bethel, Dan* Bethel was a city in the southern part of Israel, near Judah. Dan was in the northern part of Israel.

^d12:30 *and Bethel* This is from the ancient Greek version.

^e12:32 *the festival* Probably the Festival of Shelters. See "Festival of Shelters" in the Word List.

road home. He did not go back the same way he came to Bethel.

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

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

The man of God answered, "Yes, I am."

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁹The old prophet put the body on his donkey and carried it back to the city to cry for him and bury him. ³⁰The old prophet buried the man in his own family grave. The old prophet cried for him and said, "Oh, my brother, I am

sorry for you." ³¹So the old prophet buried the body. Then he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in this same grave. Put my bones next to his. ³²What the LORD spoke through him will certainly come true. The LORD used him to speak against the altar at Bethel and against the high places* in the other towns in Samaria."

³³King Jeroboam did not change. He continued doing evil. He continued to choose people from different tribes to serve as priests^a at the high places. Whoever wanted to be a priest was allowed to be one. ³⁴This is the sin that caused the ruin and destruction of his kingdom.

Jeroboam's Son Dies

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

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

Jeroboam's wife came to Ahijah's house. She was trying not to let people know who she was. ⁶Ahijah heard her coming to the door. So he said, "Come in, Jeroboam's wife. Why are you trying to make people think you are someone else? I have some bad news for you. ⁷Go back and tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Jeroboam, I chose you from among all the Israelites. I made you the ruler of my people. ⁸David's family was ruling the kingdom of Israel, but I took the kingdom away from them and gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David. He always obeyed my commands and followed me with his whole heart. He did only what I accepted. ⁹But you have sinned worse than anyone who ruled before you. You stopped following me and made other gods for yourself. You made those statues to make me angry. ¹⁰So Jeroboam, I will bring troubles to your family. I will kill all the men in your family. I will destroy your family completely, like fire burning up dung. ¹¹Anyone from your family who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And anyone from your family who dies in the fields will be eaten by birds. The LORD has spoken.'"

¹²Then Ahijah said, "Now, go home. Your son will die as soon as you enter the city.

^a13:33 *people ... priests* The Law taught that only people from the tribe of Levi could become priests.

¹³All Israel will cry for him. They will bury him, but he is the only one from Jeroboam's family who will be buried. This is because he is the only one in Jeroboam's family who pleased the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴Soon, the LORD will put a new king over Israel who will destroy Jeroboam's family. ¹⁵Then the LORD will punish Israel. The Israelites will be so full of fear that they will shake like tall grass in the water. He will pull Israel up from this good land that he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them to the other side of the Euphrates River. The LORD will do this because the people made him angry when they built sacred poles.^a ¹⁶Jeroboam sinned, and then he made the Israelites sin. So the LORD will let the Israelites be defeated."

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

¹⁹The rest of what King Jeroboam did is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. It includes the wars he fought and the way he ruled. ²⁰Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. Then he died and was buried with his ancestors.^b His son Nadab became the new king after him.

Rehoboam, King of Judah

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

²²The people of Judah also sinned and did what that the LORD said was wrong. They made the LORD angry. They were worse than their fathers who lived before them. ²³They built high places, memorial stones, and sacred poles.^c They built them on every high hill and under every green tree. ²⁴There were also men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex.^d So the people of Judah were worse than the people who had lived in the land before them. And the LORD took the land away from those people to give it to the Israelites.

²⁵In the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt came to attack Jerusalem. ²⁶He took the treasures from the LORD's Temple and from the king's palace. He even

^a14:15 *sacred poles* People used these things to worship false gods.

^b14:20 *died ... ancestors* Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

^c14:23 *high places, memorial stones, and sacred poles* People used these things to worship false gods.

^d14:24 *men ... for sex* Sexual sins like this were a part of the way people worshiped the Canaanite gods.

took the gold shields that David had taken from the officers of King Hadadezer of Aram and put on the walls of Jerusalem.^e ²⁷King Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places, but they were made from bronze. He gave them to the guards on duty at the palace gates. ²⁸Every time the king went to the LORD's Temple, the guards took out the shields and went with him. After they were finished, they put the shields back on the wall in the guardroom.

²⁹The rest of what King Rehoboam did is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ³⁰Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other.

³¹Rehoboam died^f and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.* (His mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.) Rehoboam's son Abijah became the next king after him.

Abijah, King of Judah

15 ¹Abijah became the new king of Judah during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel. ²Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother's name was Maacah. She was Absalom's daughter.

³He did all the same sins that his father before him had done. Abijah was not faithful to the LORD his God. In this way he was not like his grandfather, David. ⁴But for David's sake, the LORD gave Abijah a kingdom in Jerusalem and allowed him to have a son. He also kept Jerusalem safe. ⁵David had always done what the LORD said was right. He had always obeyed his commands. The only time David did not obey him was when he sinned against Uriaah the Hittite.

⁶Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other.^g ⁷The rest of what Abijah did is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam during the whole time that Abijah was king. ⁸When Abijah died, he was buried in the City of David.* Abijah's son Asa became the new king after him.

Asa, King of Judah

⁹During Jeroboam's 20th year as king over Israel, Asa became king of Judah. ¹⁰He ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years. His grandmother's name was Maacah, and she was the daughter of Absalom.

¹¹Asa did what the LORD said is right, as his ancestor^h David did. ¹²During Asa's time there were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. Asa forced them to leave the country. He took away the idols* that his ancestors had made. ¹³King Asa also

^e14:26 *He even took ... Jerusalem* This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has "He even took the gold shields that Solomon had made."

^f14:31 *died* Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

^g15:6 This is not in the ancient Greek version.

took away the right of his mother Maacah to be queen mother. He did this because she had set up one of those awful poles to honor the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down that Asherah pole* and smashed it into small pieces and burned the pieces in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁴Asa did not destroy the high places,* even though he was faithful to the LORD all his life. ¹⁵Asa and his father had given some special gifts to God. Asa put these gifts of gold, silver, and other things into the Temple.

¹⁶The whole time that King Asa was king of Judah, he fought a war against King Baasha of Israel. ¹⁷Once Baasha attacked Judah and then built up the city of Ramah to keep Asa from leaving Judah on any kind of military campaign. ¹⁸So Asa took gold and silver from the treasures of the LORD's Temple and the king's palace. He gave it to his officials and sent them to King Ben-Hadad of Aram. Ben-Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion. Damascus was Ben-Hadad's capital city. ¹⁹Asa sent this message: "My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement with you. I am sending you this gift of gold and silver. Please break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel and make him leave us alone."

²⁰King Ben-Hadad made the agreement with King Asa and sent his army to fight against the Israelite towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, the towns near Lake Galilee, and the area of Naphtali. ²¹When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped building up Ramah and went back to Tirzah. ²²Then King Asa gave an order to all the men in Judah. Everyone had to help. They had to go to Ramah and carry out all the stone and wood that Baasha was using to build up the city. They carried the material to Geba in Benjamin and to Mizpah and used it to strengthen those two cities.

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

Nadab, King of Israel

²⁵During Asa's second year as king of Judah, Jeroboam's son Nadab became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years. ²⁶He did what the LORD said was wrong. He sinned just as his father Jeroboam did when he caused the Israelites to sin.

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

Baasha, King of Israel

²⁹When Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboam's family. He left no one in Jeroboam's family alive. This happened just as the LORD said it would when he spoke through his servant Ahijah at Shiloh. ³⁰This happened because King Jeroboam had committed many sins and had caused the Israelites to sin. This made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

³¹The other things that Nadab did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ³²All during the time that Baasha ruled over Israel, he was fighting wars against King Asa of Judah.

³³Ahijah's son Baasha became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years, ³⁴but he did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the same sins that Jeroboam had done that caused the Israelites to sin.

16 ¹Then the LORD spoke against King Baasha through the prophet, Jehu son of Hanani. He said, ²"I made you an important prince over my people Israel. But you have done the same things Jeroboam did. You have caused my people Israel to sin. Their sins have made me angry. ³So Baasha, I will destroy you and your family, just as I did Jeroboam son of Nebat and his family. ⁴Dogs will eat the bodies of those in your family who die in the city. And wild birds will eat the bodies of those who die out in the fields."

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

⁷That book also has the story of the time the LORD gave the message to Jehu the prophet about Baasha and his family. Baasha did many things the LORD said were wrong, just as Jeroboam and his family had done. This and the fact that Baasha had killed everyone in Jeroboam's family made the LORD very angry.

Elah, King of Israel

⁸Elah son of Baasha became king during the 26th year that Asa was the king of Judah. He ruled in Tirzah for two years.

⁹Zimri was one of King Elah's officers. Zimri commanded half of Elah's chariots,* but Zimri plotted against Elah. King Elah was in Tirzah, drinking and getting drunk at Arza's home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace at Tirzah. ¹⁰Zimri went into the house and killed King Elah. Then Zimri became the new king of Israel after Elah. This was during the 27th year that Asa was king in Judah.

Zimri, King of Israel

¹¹After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baasha's family and friends. He did not let any male in Baasha's family live. ¹²So Zimri destroyed Baasha's family just as the

LORD said he would when he spoke against Baasha through the prophet Jehu. ¹³This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and his son, Elah. They sinned and they caused the Israelites to sin. They worshiped worthless idols,* and this made the LORD angry.

¹⁴The rest of what that Elah did is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

¹⁵Zimri became king of Israel during the 27th year that Asa was king of Judah. Zimri ruled in Tirzah only seven days. This is what happened: The army of Israel was at Gibbethon, which was under Philistine control. ¹⁶Omri was the commander of the army of Israel. The men in the camp heard that Zimri had made secret plans against the king and killed him. So in the camp all the soldiers made Omri the new king. ¹⁷Then Omri and all the soldiers of Israel left Gibbethon and went to Tirzah. They surrounded the city and attacked it. ¹⁸When Zimri saw the city had been captured, he ran to the palace fortress, but the soldiers burned it down with him still in it. ¹⁹So Zimri died because he sinned and did what the LORD said was wrong, just as Jeroboam did when he caused the Israelites to sin.

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

Omri, King of Israel

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

²³Omri became king of Israel during Asa's 31st year as the king of Judah. Omri ruled over Israel for 12 years. Six of those years he ruled from Tirzah. ²⁴Then Omri bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for about 150 pounds^d of silver. Omri built a city on that hill. He named the city Samaria after the name of its owner, Shemer.

²⁵Omri did what the LORD said was wrong. He was worse than all the kings who were before him. ²⁶He committed all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had committed when he caused the Israelites to sin. They worshiped worthless idols, and this made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

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

Ahab, King of Israel

²⁹Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel during the 38th year that Asa was king of

Judah. Ahab ruled Israel from the town of Samaria for 22 years. ³⁰He did what the LORD said was wrong. Ahab was worse than all the kings who were before him. ³¹It was not enough for Ahab to commit the same sins that Jeroboam, son of Nebat, had done. Ahab also married Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon. Then Ahab began to serve and worship Baal.* ³²He built a temple and an altar in Samaria for worshiping Baal. ³³He also set up a sacred pole.^b Ahab did more to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry than all the other kings who were before him.

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

Elijah and the Time Without Rain

17 ¹Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. He said to King Ahab, "I serve the LORD, the God of Israel. By his power, I promise that no dew or rain will fall for the next few years. The rain will fall only when I command it to fall."

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

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

¹⁰So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there gathering wood for a fire. She was a widow. Elijah said to her, "Would you bring me a small cup of water to drink?" ¹¹As she was going to get the water, Elijah said, "Bring me a piece of bread too, please."

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

¹³Elijah said to the woman, "Don't worry. Go home and cook your food as you said. But first make a small piece of bread from the flour that you have and bring it to me. Then

^b**16:33 sacred pole** People used these to worship false gods.

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

^d**16:24 150 pounds** Literally, "2 talents" (69 kg).

cook some for yourself and your son. ¹⁴The LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘That jar of flour will never be empty and the jug will always have oil in it. This will continue until the day the LORD sends rain to the land.’”

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

¹⁷Some time later the woman’s son became sick. He became worse and worse until he stopped breathing. ¹⁸Then the woman said to Elijah, “You are a man of God.* Can you help me? Or did you come here only to remind me of my sins and to make my son die?”

¹⁹Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” He took the boy from her and carried him upstairs. He laid him on the bed in the room where he was staying. ²⁰Then Elijah prayed, “LORD my God, this widow is letting me stay in her house. Will you do this bad thing to her? Will you cause her son to die?” ²¹Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. He prayed, “LORD my God, let this boy live again!”

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

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

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

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

The famine was very bad in Samaria. ³So King Ahab told Obadiah to come to him. Obadiah was the man in charge of the king’s palace. (Obadiah was a true follower of the LORD. ⁴One time when Jezebel was killing all the LORD’s prophets, Obadiah hid 100 prophets in two caves. He put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. Then he brought them food and water.) ⁵King Ahab said to Obadiah, “Come with me. We will look at every spring and every stream in the land. We will see if we can find enough grass to keep our horses and mules alive. Then we will not have to kill our animals.” ⁶They decided where each of them would go to look for water. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself. ⁷As Obadiah was walking along the road by himself, he looked up, and there was Elijah. Obadiah recognized him and bowed down to show his respect. He said, “Elijah? Is it really you, master?”

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

⁹Obadiah said, “If I tell Ahab that I know where you are, he will kill me! I have done nothing wrong to you. Why do you want me to die? ¹⁰As surely as the LORD your God lives, the king has been looking for you everywhere. He has sent people to every country to find you. He even made the rulers of those countries swear that you were not there. ¹¹Now you want me to go and tell him that you are here! ¹²If I go tell King Ahab that you are here, the LORD might carry you away. Then when King Ahab comes here and cannot find you, he will kill me! I have followed the LORD since I was a boy. ¹³You heard what I did. When Jezebel was killing the LORD’s prophets, I hid 100 of them in caves. I put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. I brought them food and water. ¹⁴Now you want me to go and tell the king that you are here. The king will kill me!”

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

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

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

¹⁸Elijah answered, “I have not made trouble for Israel. You and your father’s family caused all the problems when you stopped obeying the LORD’s commands and began following the false gods. ¹⁹Now tell all the people of Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Also bring the 450 prophets of Baal* and the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah* that Queen Jezebel supports.”^a

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

The people said nothing. ²²So Elijah said, “I am the only prophet of the LORD here, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. ²³So bring us two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal have one bull. Let them kill it and cut it into pieces and then put the meat on the wood. But don’t start the fire. I will do the same with the other bull, and I will not start the fire either. ²⁴Prophets of Baal, pray to your god, and I will pray to the LORD. Whichever god answers the prayer and starts the fire is the true God.”

All the people agreed that this was a good idea.

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

^a18:19 *Queen Jezebel ... supports* Literally, “Those prophets eat at Jezebel’s table.”

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

²⁷At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. He said, "If Baal really is a god, maybe you should pray louder! Maybe he is busy. Maybe he is thinking about something, or maybe he stepped out for a moment! He could be sleeping! Maybe you should pray louder and wake him up!" ²⁸So the prophets prayed louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears. (This was the way they worshiped.) They cut themselves until they were bleeding all over. ²⁹The afternoon passed but the fire still had not started. The prophets were out of control and continued to act this way until the time came for the evening sacrifice. But nothing happened—there was no answer from Baal. There was no sound. There was no one listening.

³⁰Then Elijah said to all the people, "Now come here." So they gathered around Elijah. The LORD's altar^a had been torn down, so Elijah repaired it. ³¹Elijah found twelve stones. There was one stone for each of the twelve tribes. These twelve tribes were named for the twelve sons of Jacob, the man who the LORD had named Israel. ³²Elijah used these stones to repair the altar to honor the LORD. He dug a small ditch around the altar. It was wide enough and deep enough to hold about 4 gallons^d of water. ³³Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces and laid the pieces on the wood. ³⁴Then he said, "Fill four jars with water. Pour the water on the pieces of meat and on the wood." Then Elijah said, "Do it again." Then he said, "Do it a third time." ³⁵The water ran down off the altar and filled the ditch.

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

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

⁴⁰Then Elijah said, "Get the prophets of Baal! Don't let any of them escape!" So the people captured all the prophets. Then Elijah

led them down to Kishon Creek and killed them all.

The Rain Comes Again

⁴¹Then Elijah said to King Ahab, "Now go eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming." ⁴²So King Ahab went to eat. At the same time Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. At the top of the mountain Elijah bent down. He put his head between his knees. ⁴³Then Elijah said to his servant, "Go up higher and look toward the sea."

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

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

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

Elijah at Mount Horeb (Sinai)

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

³When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him, and they went to Beersheba in Judah. Then Elijah left his servant in Beersheba[‡] and walked for a whole day into the desert. Then he sat down under a bush and asked to die. He said, "I have had enough, LORD! Take my life. I am no better than my ancestors."[¶]

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

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

^a18:32 about 4 gallons Literally, "2 seahs of seed" (14.6 l).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elisha Becomes a Prophet

¹⁹So Elijah left that place and went to find Elisha son of Shaphat. Elisha was plowing 12 acres of land and was working on the last acre when Elijah came.^c Elijah went to Elisha and put his coat^d on Elisha. ²⁰Elisha immediately left his oxen and ran after Elijah. Elisha said, “Let me kiss my mother and father goodbye. Then I will follow you.”

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

^a19:11 *Go, stand ... you* This is like the time God appeared to Moses. See Ex. 33:12–23.

^b19:12 *voice* Or “sound.”

^c19:19 *Elisha was plowing ... came* Or “Elijah was plowing. There were 11 pair of oxen before him, and he was on the twelfth.”

^d19:19 *coat* A special robe that prophets wore. Elijah put his coat on Elisha to show that Elisha would take his place as a prophet.

^e19:20 *I will not stop you* Literally, “What have I done to you?” or “What will I do to you?”

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

Ben-Hadad and Ahab Go to War

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

^f20:10 *souvenirs* Things that help people remember places they have been. Literally, the Hebrew text has “handfuls of dust.”

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

The prophet answered, “The LORD says, ‘The young men who carry the weapons for the government officials.’”

Then the king asked, “Who should command the main army?”

The prophet answered, “You will.”

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

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

¹⁹The young men of King Ahab were the first to come out, but the rest of the army of Israel was following them. ²⁰Each of the men of Israel killed the man who had come against him. So the men from Aram began to run away and the army of Israel chased them. King Ben-Hadad escaped on a horse with the chariots. ²¹King Ahab led the army and attacked all the horses and chariots. So King Ahab made the Arameans suffer a great defeat.

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

Ben-Hadad Attacks Again

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

²⁶So in the spring, Ben-Hadad gathered the men of Aram and went to Aphek to fight against Israel.

²⁷The Israelites also prepared for war and went to fight the army of Aram. They made their camp opposite the camp of Aram. The Aramean soldiers filled the land, but Israel’s army looked like two small flocks of goats.

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

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

³²They dressed in rough cloth with ropes on their heads. They came to the king of Israel. They said, “Your servant, Ben-Hadad, says, ‘Please let me live.’”

Ahab said, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.^b”

³³Ben-Hadad’s men wanted King Ahab to say something to show that he would not kill King Ben-Hadad. When Ahab called Ben-Hadad his brother, the advisors quickly said, “Yes! Ben-Hadad is your brother.”

Ahab said, “Bring him to me.” So Ben-Hadad came to King Ahab. King Ahab asked him to get in the chariot with him.

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

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

A Prophet Speaks Against Ahab

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

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

This man hit him and hurt the prophet. ³⁸So the prophet wrapped his face with a cloth. This way no one could see who he was. The prophet went and waited for the king by the road. ³⁹The king came by and the prophet said to him, “I went to fight in the battle. One of our men brought an enemy soldier to me. The man said, ‘Guard this man. If he runs away, you will have to give your life in his place or you will have to pay a fine of 75 pounds^c of silver.’ ⁴⁰While I was busy doing other things, the man ran away.”

The king of Israel answered, “You admitted

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

^b**20:32 brother** People who signed peace agreements often called each other “brother.” It was as if they were one family.

^c**20:39 75 pounds** Literally, “1 talent” (34.5 kg).

that you are guilty, so you know the answer. You must do what the man said.”

⁴¹Then the prophet quickly took the cloth from his face, and the king of Israel saw that he was one of the prophets. ⁴²Then the prophet said to the king, “The LORD says to you, ‘You set free the man I said should die. So you will take his place—you and your people will die!’”

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

Naboth's Vineyard

21 ¹There was a vineyard* near King Ahab's palace in Samaria. A man from Jezreel named Naboth owned it. ²One day Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard that is near my palace. I want to make it a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in its place. Or, if you prefer, I will pay you for it.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Announce that there will be a day of fasting when the people will eat nothing. Then call all the people of the town together for a meeting. At the meeting we will talk about Naboth. ¹⁰Find some men who will tell lies about Naboth. They should say that they heard Naboth speak against the king and against God. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him with stones.”

¹¹So the elders and important men of Jezreel obeyed the command. ¹²The leaders announced that there would be a day when all the people would eat nothing. On that day they called all the people together for a meeting. They put Naboth in a special place before the people. ¹³Then two men told the people

that they heard Naboth speak against God and the king. So the people carried Naboth out of the city and killed him with stones. ¹⁴Then the leaders sent a message to Jezebel that said: “Naboth has been killed.”

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

¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe. The LORD said, ¹⁸“Go to King Ahab in Samaria. He will be at Naboth's vineyard. He is there to take the vineyard as his own. ¹⁹Tell Ahab that I, the LORD, say to him, ‘Ahab! You killed the man Naboth and now you are taking his land. I tell you this: Where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, they will lick up your blood as well.’”

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

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

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

²⁷When Ahab heard what Elijah said, he tore his clothes to show how sad he was. Then he put on sackcloth* and refused to eat. He even slept in these clothes. He was very sad and upset.

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

Micaiah Warns King Ahab

22 ¹For the next two years there was peace between Israel and Aram. ²Then during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.

³Ahab asked his officials, “Remember when the king of Aram took Ramoth Gilead from us? That city is ours, so why have we

done nothing to get it back?”⁴ So Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat, “Will you join with us to go fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead?”

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

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

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

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

⁸ King Ahab answered, “Yes, there is another prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him because he will not say anything good about me when he speaks for the LORD. He always says things that I don’t like.”

Jehoshaphat said, “The king should not say that!”

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

¹⁰ At that time the two kings were sitting on their thrones, with their royal robes on, at the judgment place near the gates of Samaria. All the prophets were standing before them, prophesying.* ¹¹ One of the prophets was named Zedekiah son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some iron horns^a and said to Ahab, “The LORD says, ‘You will use these iron horns to fight against the army of Aram. You will defeat them and destroy them.’” ¹² All the other prophets agreed with Zedekiah and said, “Your army should march now to go fight against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. You will win the battle. The LORD will let you defeat them.”

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁷ So Micaiah answered, “I can see the army of Israel scattered all over the hills, like sheep

with no one to lead them. This is what the LORD says, ‘These men have no leaders. Let them go home in peace.’”

¹⁸ Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “See, I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says something bad.”

¹⁹ But Micaiah said, “Listen to this message from the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side. ²⁰ The LORD said, ‘Which of you will go fool Ahab into attacking the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead so that he will be killed?’ The angels discussed many different plans. ²¹ Then a spirit^b went and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will fool him!’ The LORD asked, ‘How will you do it?’ ²² The angel answered, ‘I will go out and become a spirit of lies in the mouths of Ahab’s prophets—they will all speak lies.’ So the LORD said, ‘Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that.’”

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

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

²⁵ Micaiah answered, “Look, what I said will happen! And you will see it one day when you are in a secret room somewhere hiding.”

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

²⁸ Micaiah said, “Listen to me, everyone! Ahab, if you come back alive from the battle, the LORD has not spoken through me.”

The Battle at Ramoth Gilead

²⁹ King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. ³⁰ Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Disguise yourself when you go into battle, but wear your own clothes. And I will disguise myself.” The king of Israel went into battle dressed like an ordinary soldier.

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

³⁴ Then a soldier in the distance pulled back as far as he could on his bow and shot

^a22:11 *iron horns* These were a symbol of great strength.

^b22:21 *a spirit* Or “the Spirit.”

an arrow into the air. The arrow happened to hit the king of Israel in a small hole where his armor was fastened together. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, "I've been hit! Turn the chariot" around and take me off the battlefield!"

³⁵The armies continued to fight while King Ahab was propped up in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot, looking out toward the Arameans. His blood ran down onto the floor of the chariot. Later in the evening, he died. ³⁶At sunset all the Israelites cheered when they were told to go home. So they all went back to their hometowns.

³⁷And that is how King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria and buried him there. ³⁸They took his chariot to the large pool in Samaria to clean it. The dogs licked up Ahab's blood while the prostitutes washed the chariot. This happened just as the LORD said it would.

³⁹The rest of what King Ahab did during the time he ruled is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. That book tells about all the cities he built and about all the ivory that he used to decorate his palace. ⁴⁰Ahab died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

Summary of Jehoshaphat's Rule

⁴¹Jehoshaphat son of Asa became the king of Judah in Ahab's fourth year as king of Israel. ⁴²Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was good and did everything that the LORD wanted, but he did not destroy the high places.* The people continued offering sacrifices* and burning incense* there.

⁴⁴Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement

with the king of Israel. ⁴⁵Jehoshaphat was very brave and fought many wars. The rest of what he did is written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

⁴⁶Jehoshaphat forced all the men and women who sold their bodies for sex to leave the places of worship. They had served in these places of worship while his father Asa was king.

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

⁴⁸King Jehoshaphat built some cargo ships. He wanted the ships to sail to Ophir for gold, but they never went there—they were destroyed in their home port at Ezion Geber. ⁴⁹Then King Ahaziah of Israel offered to put some of his own sailors with Jehoshaphat's men on the ships,^a but Jehoshaphat refused to accept his help.

⁵⁰Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.* Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

Ahaziah, King of Israel

⁵¹Ahaziah was the son of Ahab. He became king of Israel during the 17th year that King Jehoshaphat ruled Judah. Ahaziah ruled in Samaria for two years. ⁵²He sinned against the LORD just as his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, did. He caused Israel to sin just as Jeroboam son of Nabat did. ⁵³Ahaziah served the false god Baal* and worshiped him, just as his father did before him. He did all the things that his father did to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry.

^a22:49 King Ahaziah ... ships Jehoshaphat controlled the port of Ezion Geber which was Israel's only way to the Red Sea and the coasts of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the coasts leading to the Persian Gulf and India. Ahaziah thought he could get control of that area by "helping" Jehoshaphat.

2 Kings

A Message for Ahaziah

1 After King Ahab died, Moab broke away from Israel's rule.

²One day Ahaziah was on the roof of his house in Samaria. He fell down through the wooden bars on top of his house and was badly hurt. He called messengers and told them, "Go to the priests of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron, and ask them if I will get well from my injuries."

³But the LORD's angel said to Elijah the Tishbite, "King Ahaziah has sent some

messengers from Samaria. Go meet those men and ask them, 'There is a God in Israel, so why are you men going to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron?' ⁴Since you did this, the LORD says, You will not get up from your bed. You will die!" Then Elijah left.

⁵When messengers came back to Ahaziah, he asked them, "Why did you come back so soon?"

⁶The messengers said to Ahaziah, "A man came up to meet us and told us to go back to the king who sent us and tell him what the

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