

# 1 Kings

## Adonijah Wants to be King

**1** King David was very old. He could not keep warm. His servants covered him with blankets, but he was still cold. **2**So his servants said to him, “We will find a young woman to care for you. She will lie close to you and keep you warm.” **3**So 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 girl named Abishag. She was from the city of Shunem. They brought the young woman to the king. **4**The girl was very beautiful. She cared for the king and served him. But King David did not have sexual relations with her.

**5-6**Adonijah was the son of King David and his wife Haggith. Adonijah was a very handsome man. King David never corrected his son Adonijah. David never asked him, “Why are you doing these things?” Adonijah was born after his brother Absalom, but Adonijah became very proud and decided that he would be the next king. Adonijah wanted very much to be the king, so he got himself a chariot, horses, and 50 men to run ahead of him.

**7**Adonijah talked with Joab son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest. They decided to help make him the new king. **8**But several men did not agree with what Adonijah was doing. These men remained loyal to David. They were Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and King David’s special guard.\* So these men did not join with Adonijah.

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

## Nathan and Bathsheba Speak for Solomon

**11**But Nathan heard about this and went to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba. Nathan asked her, “Have you heard what Haggith’s son, Adonijah, is doing? He is making himself king. And our master, King David, knows nothing about it. **12**Your life and the life of your son Solomon may be in danger. But I will tell you what you should do to save yourself. **13**Go to King David and say to him, ‘My lord and king, you made a promise to me. You promised that my son Solomon would be the next king after you. So why is Adonijah becoming the new king?’ **14**Then while you are still talking with him, I will come in. After you leave, I will tell the king what has happened. And that will show that what you said is true.”

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

**17**Bathsheba answered, “Sir, you used the name of the Lord your God and made a promise to me. You said, ‘Your son Solomon

**Shimei, Rei ... guard** Or, “Shimei and his friends, the Heroes.”

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

will be the next king after me. Solomon will sit on my throne.’<sup>18</sup>Now, you don’t know this, but Adonijah is making himself the king.<sup>19</sup>Adonijah is giving a big fellowship meal. He has killed many cows and the best sheep for a fellowship offering. Adonijah invited all of your sons. And he invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of your army. But he did not invite your faithful son Solomon.<sup>20</sup>Now, my lord and king, all the people of Israel are watching you. They are waiting for you to decide who will be the next king after you.<sup>21</sup>You must do something before you die. If you don’t, then after you are buried with your fathers, those men will say that Solomon and I are criminals.”

<sup>22</sup>While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him.<sup>23</sup>The servants told the king, “Nathan the prophet is here.” Nathan went in to speak to the king. Nathan bowed down before the king<sup>24</sup>and said, “My lord and king, did you announce that Adonijah will be the new king after you? Have you decided that Adonijah will rule the people now?<sup>25</sup>Because today he went down into the valley to offer many cows and the best sheep as fellowship offerings. And 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!’<sup>26</sup>But he did not invite me, or Zadok the priest, or Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your son Solomon.<sup>27</sup>My lord and king, did you do this without telling us? Please tell us, who will be the next king after you?”

<sup>28</sup>Then King David said, “Tell Bathsheba to come in!” So Bathsheba came in before the king.

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

<sup>31</sup>Then Bathsheba bowed down on the ground before the king. She said, “Long live King David!”

### Solomon Chosen as the New King

<sup>32</sup>Then King David said, “Tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to come in here.” So the three men came in to meet with the king.<sup>33</sup>Then the king said to them, “Take my officers with you. Put my son Solomon on my own mule. Take him to Gihon Spring.\*<sup>34</sup>At that place, 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!’<sup>35</sup>Then come back here with him. Solomon will sit on my throne and be the new king in my place. I have chosen Solomon to be the ruler of Israel and Judah.”

<sup>36</sup>Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! The Lord God himself said it, my lord and king!<sup>37</sup>My lord and king, the Lord has been with you. And now I hope the Lord will be with Solomon! And I hope King Solomon’s kingdom will grow and become even more powerful than yours, my lord and king.”

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

<sup>41</sup>Meanwhile, Adonijah and his guests with him were just finishing their meal. They heard the sound from the trumpet. Joab asked, “What is that noise? What is happening in the city?”

<sup>42</sup>While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah

**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.

**anoint(ed)** To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

said, “Come here! You are a good man.\* You must be bringing good news to me.”

<sup>43</sup>But Jonathan answered, “No, it is not good news for you! King David has made Solomon the new king. <sup>44</sup>King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and all the king’s officers with him. They put Solomon on the king’s own mule. <sup>45</sup>Then Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed\* Solomon at Gihon Spring. And then they went into the city. People followed them and now the people in the city are very happy. That is the noise that you hear. <sup>46–47</sup>Solomon is even sitting on the king’s throne! Even the king’s officers are congratulating King David. They are saying, ‘King David, you are a great king! And now we pray that your God will make Solomon a great king too. We hope your God will make Solomon even more famous than you. And we hope that Solomon’s kingdom will be an even greater kingdom than yours is!’

Even King David was there! From his bed, King David bowed before Solomon <sup>48</sup>and said, ‘Praise the Lord God of Israel. The Lord put one of my own sons on my throne. And he let me live to see it.’

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

<sup>52</sup>So Solomon answered, “If Adonijah shows that he is a good man, then I promise that not even a hair on his head will be hurt. But if he does anything wrong, then he will die.” <sup>53</sup>Then King Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah. The men brought Adonijah to King Solomon. Adonijah came to King

**good man** Or “important man.” This Hebrew word means a person from an important family.

**anointed** To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

**held the horns of the altar** This showed he was asking for mercy. The law said that if a person ran into the holy place and held onto the corners of the altar he should not be punished.

Solomon and bowed down. Then Solomon said, “Go home.”

### King David Dies

**2** The time came when David was about to die. So David talked to Solomon and told him, <sup>2</sup>“I am about to die, like all men must. But you are growing stronger and becoming a man. <sup>3</sup>Now, carefully obey all the commands of the Lord your God. Carefully obey all his laws and commands and decisions and agreements. Obey everything that is written in the Law of Moses. If you do this, then you will be successful in everything you do and every place you go. <sup>4</sup>And if you obey the Lord, then the Lord will keep his promise about me. The Lord said, ‘If your sons carefully live the way I tell them, sincerely, with all their heart, then the king of Israel will always be a man from your family.’”

<sup>5</sup>David also said, “You remember what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me. He killed two of the commanders of Israel’s army. He killed Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. Remember, he killed them during a time of peace! The blood from these men splashed on the sword belt and army boots he was wearing. I should have punished him. <sup>6</sup>But you are the king now. So you should punish him in the way you think is the most wise. But you must be sure that he is killed. Don’t let him die peacefully of old age!

<sup>7</sup>“Be kind to the children of Barzillai of Gilead. Let them be your friends and eat at your table. They helped me when I ran away from your brother Absalom.

<sup>8</sup>“And remember, Shimei son of Gera, is still around here. He is from the family group of Benjamin in Bahurim. Remember that he said very bad things against me on the day that I ran away to Mahanaim. Then he came down to meet me at the Jordan River. I made a promise to him. I promised before the Lord that I would not kill Shimei. <sup>9</sup>Now, don’t leave him unpunished. You are a wise man. You will know what you must do to him. But don’t let him die peacefully of old age.”

<sup>10</sup>Then David died. He was buried in the City of David. <sup>11</sup>David ruled Israel 40 years.

He ruled seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem.

### Solomon Takes Control of His Kingdom

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

<sup>13</sup>Then Adonijah son of Haggith went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. Bathsheba asked him, "Do you come in peace?"

Adonijah answered, "Yes. This is a peaceful visit. <sup>14</sup>I have something to say to you."

Bathsheba said, "Then speak."

<sup>15</sup>Adonijah said, "You remember that at one time the kingdom was mine. All the people of Israel thought I was their king. But things changed. Now my brother is the king. The Lord chose him to be king. <sup>16</sup>So now I have one thing to ask you. Please do not refuse me."

Bathsheba answered, "What do you want?"

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

<sup>18</sup>Then Bathsheba said, "Fine. I will speak to the king for you."

<sup>19</sup>So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to talk with him. King Solomon saw her and he stood to meet her. Then he bowed down to her and sat on the throne. He told some servants to bring another throne for his mother. Then she sat down at his right side.

<sup>20</sup>Bathsheba said to him, "I have one small thing to ask you. Please do not refuse me."

The king answered, "You can ask anything you want, mother. I will not refuse you."

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

<sup>22</sup>King Solomon answered his mother, "Why are you asking me to give Abishag to Adonijah? Why don't you just ask me to let him be king too! After all, he is my older brother. Abiathar the priest and Joab will support him!"

<sup>23</sup>Then Solomon made a promise with the Lord. He said, "I swear (*promise*) that I will make Adonijah pay for this. And it will cost him his life! <sup>24</sup>The Lord made me the king of Israel. He has given me the throne that

belonged to my father David. The Lord kept his promise and gave the kingdom to me and my family. Now, as sure as the Lord is alive, I swear (*promise*) that Adonijah will die today!"

<sup>25</sup>King Solomon gave the command to Benaiah. And Benaiah went out and killed Adonijah.

<sup>26</sup>Then 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 to carry the Holy Box\* of the Lord while marching with my father David. And I know that you shared in the hard times, just like my father."

<sup>27</sup>Solomon told Abiathar that he could not continue to serve as a priest of the Lord. This happened the way the Lord said it would. God said this about Eli the priest and his family at Shiloh. <sup>1</sup>And Abiathar was from Eli's family.

<sup>28</sup>Joab heard about this and became afraid. He had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom. Joab ran to the tent of the Lord and held the horns of the altar.\* <sup>29</sup>Someone told King Solomon that Joab was at the altar in the Lord's Tent. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

<sup>30</sup>Benaiah went into the Lord's Tent and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'"

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

So Benaiah went back to the king and told him what Joab had said. <sup>31</sup>Then the king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says! Kill him there. Then bury him. Then my family and I will be free of the guilt of Joab. This guilt was caused because Joab killed innocent people. <sup>32</sup>Joab killed two men who were much better than himself. They were Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. Abner was the commander of Israel's army and Amasa was the commander of Judah's army. My father David did not know at that time

**Holy Box** The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

**held the horns of the altar** This showed he was asking for mercy. The law said that if a person ran into the holy place and held onto the corners of the altar he should not be punished.

that Joab had killed them. So the Lord will punish Joab for those men he killed. <sup>33</sup>He will be guilty for their deaths. And his family will also be guilty forever. But God will bring peace for David, his descendants,\* his family of kings, and his kingdom forever.”

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

<sup>38</sup>So Shimei answered, “That is fine, my king. I will obey you.” So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time. <sup>39</sup>But three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran away. They went to Achish son of Maacah, the king of Gath. Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath. <sup>40</sup>So Shimei put his saddle on his donkey and went to King Achish at Gath. He went to find his slaves. He found them there and brought them back home.

<sup>41</sup>But someone told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned. <sup>42</sup>So Solomon sent for him. Solomon said, “I used the Lord’s name and swore (*promised*) that you would die if you left Jerusalem. I warned you that if you went anywhere, your death would be your own fault. And you agreed to what I said. You said that you would obey me. <sup>43</sup>Why did you break your promise? Why did you not obey my command? <sup>44</sup>You know the many wrong things you did against my father David. Now the Lord will punish you for those wrong things. <sup>45</sup>But the Lord will bless me. He will make David’s kingdom safe forever.”

<sup>46</sup>Then the king ordered Benaiah to kill Shimei, and he did. Now Solomon had full control of his kingdom.

### Solomon Asks for Wisdom

**3** Solomon made an agreement with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter. Solomon brought her to the City of David.\* At this time, Solomon was still building his palace and the temple of the Lord. Solomon was also building a wall around Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>The temple had not yet been finished. So people were still making animal sacrifices\* on altars at the high places.\* <sup>3</sup>Solomon showed that he loved the Lord. He did this by obeying all the things his father David had told him to do. <sup>1</sup>But Solomon did something David did not tell him to do.<sup>1</sup> Solomon still used the high places to offer sacrifices and to burn incense.\*

<sup>4</sup>King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice. He went there because that was the most important high place.\* Solomon offered 1,000 offerings on that altar. <sup>5</sup>While Solomon was at Gibeon, the Lord came to him during the night in a dream. God said, “Ask for anything you want. I will give it to you.”

<sup>6</sup>Solomon answered, “You were very kind to your servant, my father David. He followed you. He was good and lived right. And you showed the greatest kindness to him when you allowed his son to rule on his throne <sup>1</sup>after him.<sup>1</sup> <sup>7</sup>Lord my God, you have allowed me to be the king in my father’s place. But I am like a little child. I do not have the wisdom I need to do the things I must do. <sup>8</sup>I, your servant, am here among your chosen people. There are many, many people. There are too many to count. <sup>1</sup>So a ruler must make many decisions among them.<sup>1</sup> <sup>9</sup>So I ask that you give me wisdom so that I can rule and judge the people in the right way. This will allow me to know the difference between right and wrong. Without this great wisdom, it is impossible to rule these great people.”

**City of David** The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**high place(s)** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

**incense** Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

**descendants** A person’s children and all of their future families.

<sup>10</sup>The Lord was happy that Solomon asked him for this. <sup>11</sup>So God said to him, “You did not ask for long life for yourself. And you did not ask for 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. <sup>12</sup>So, I will give you the thing you asked. I will make you wise and intelligent. I will make your wisdom so great, that there has never in the past been anyone like you. And in the future, there will never be anyone like you. <sup>13</sup>Also, to reward you, I will give you those things that you did not ask for. All your life, you will have riches and honor. There will be no other king in the world as great as you. <sup>14</sup>I ask you to follow me and obey my laws and commands. Do this the way your father David did. If you do this, then I will also give you a long life.”

<sup>15</sup>Solomon woke up. He knew that God had talked to him in the dream. Then Solomon went to Jerusalem and stood before the Box of the Lord’s Agreement.\* Solomon offered a burnt offering for the Lord. And he made fellowship offerings to the Lord. After that, he gave a party for all of the leaders and officials that helped him rule.

<sup>16</sup>One day two women that were prostitutes\* came to Solomon. They stood before the king. <sup>17</sup>One of the women said, “Sir, this woman and I live in the same house. We were both pregnant and almost ready to give birth to our babies. I gave birth to my baby while she was there with me. <sup>18</sup>Three days later, this woman also gave birth to her baby. There was no other person in the house with us. There were only the two of us. <sup>19</sup>One night, while this woman was asleep with her baby, the baby died. <sup>20</sup>So, during the night, she took my son from my bed while I was asleep. She carried him to her bed. Then she put the dead baby in my bed. <sup>21</sup>The next morning, I woke up and was ready to feed

my baby. But I saw that the baby was dead. Then I looked at it more closely. I saw that it was not my baby.”

<sup>22</sup>But the other woman said, “No! The living baby is mine. The dead baby is yours!”

But the first woman said, “No! You are wrong! The dead baby is yours and the living baby is mine!” So the two women argued in front of the king.

<sup>23</sup>Then King Solomon said, “Each of you says that the living baby is your own. And each of you says that the dead baby belongs to the other woman.”

<sup>24</sup>Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword. <sup>25</sup>And King Solomon said, “This is what we will do. Cut the living baby in two pieces. Give each woman half of the baby.”

<sup>26</sup>The second woman said, “That is fine. Cut the baby into two pieces. Then neither of us will have him.”

But the first woman, the real mother, was full of love for her son. She said to the king, “Please, Sir, don’t kill the baby! Give it to her.”

<sup>27</sup>Then King Solomon said, “Don’t kill the baby! Give it to the first woman. She is the real mother.”

<sup>28</sup>The people of Israel heard about King Solomon’s decision. They respected and honored him very much because he was wise. They saw that he had the wisdom of God\* in making the right decisions.

### Solomon’s Kingdom

**4** King Solomon ruled all the people of Israel. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of his leading officials that helped him rule:

Azariah son of Zadok. Azariah was the priest.

<sup>3</sup>Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha. Elihoreph and Ahijah had the jobs of writing notes about the things that happened in the courts.

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

<sup>4</sup>Benaiah son of Jehoiada. Benaiah was the commander of the army.

**Box of the Lord’s Agreement** Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

**prostitute(s)** A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

**the wisdom of God** Or, “very great wisdom.”

Zadok and Abiathar. Zadok and Abiathar were priests.

<sup>5</sup>Azariah son of Nathan. Azariah was in charge of the district governors.

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

<sup>6</sup>Ahishar. Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king's home.

Adoniram son of Abda. Adoniram was in charge of the slaves.

<sup>7</sup>Israel was divided into twelve areas called districts. Solomon chose governors to rule over each district. These governors were ordered to gather food from their districts and give the food to the king and his family. Each of the twelve governors was responsible for giving food to the king one month of each year.

<sup>8</sup>These are the names of the twelve governors:

Ben Hur was governor of the hill country of Ephraim.

<sup>9</sup>Ben Deker was governor of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan.

<sup>10</sup>Ben Hesus was governor of Arubboth, Socoh, and Hopher.

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

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

<sup>13</sup>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.

<sup>14</sup>Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor of Mahanaim.

<sup>15</sup>Ahimaaz was governor of Naphtali. He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.

<sup>16</sup>Baana son of Hushai was governor of Asher and Aloth.

<sup>17</sup>Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor of Issachar.

<sup>18</sup>Shimei son of Ela was governor of Benjamin.

<sup>19</sup>Geber son of Uri was governor of Gilead. Gilead was the country where Sihon the king of the Amorite people lived and the country where Og the king of Bashan lived. But Geber was the only governor of that district.

<sup>20</sup>There were many, many people in Judah and Israel. The number of people was like sands on the seashore. The people lived happy lives: They ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves.

<sup>21</sup>Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistine people. His kingdom went as far as the border of Egypt. These countries sent gifts to Solomon and they obeyed him all of his life.\*

<sup>22–23</sup>This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day [for himself and for all of the people that ate at his table]:

150 bushels\* of fine flour,  
300 bushels\* of flour,  
10 cows that were fed good grain,  
20 cows that were raised in the fields,  
100 sheep,  
wild animals such as deer, gazelles,  
roebucks,\* and game birds.

<sup>24</sup>Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River. This was the land from Tiphseh to Gaza. And Solomon had peace on all sides of his kingdom. <sup>25</sup>During Solomon's life all of the people 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 grape vines.

<sup>26</sup>Solomon had places to keep 4,000\* horses for his chariots and he had 12,000 horse soldiers. <sup>27</sup>And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon

**sent gifts ... life** This showed that these countries had made peace agreements with Solomon because of his great power.

**150 bushels** Or, "6,600 l." Literally, "30 kors."

**300 bushels** Or, "13,200 l." Literally, "60 kors."

**deer, gazelles, roebucks** Different kinds of wild deer.

**4,000** Hebrew and Latin have 40,000. But see 2 Chron. 9:25.

all those things that he needed. This was enough for every person that ate at the king's table. <sup>28</sup>The district governors also gave the king enough straw and barley for the chariot horses and the riding horses. Each person brought this grain to required places.

### Solomon's Wisdom

<sup>29</sup>God made Solomon very wise. Solomon could understand many, many things. His wisdom was too great to imagine. <sup>30</sup>Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men in the East. And his wisdom was greater than all the men in Egypt. <sup>31</sup>He was wiser than any of the men on earth. He was even wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite. He was wiser than Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. King Solomon became famous in all of the countries around Israel and Judah. <sup>32</sup>During his life, King Solomon wrote\* 3,000 wise teachings and 1,005 songs.

<sup>33</sup>Solomon also knew very much about nature. Solomon taught about many different kinds of plants—everything from the great cedar trees of Lebanon to the little vines that grow out of the walls. King Solomon also taught about animals, birds, and snakes.\* <sup>34</sup>People from all nations came to listen to King Solomon's wisdom. The kings of all nations sent their wise men to listen to King Solomon.

### Solomon Builds the Temple

**5** Hiram was the king of Tyre. Hiram 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. <sup>2</sup>This is what Solomon said to king Hiram: <sup>3</sup>"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. <sup>4</sup>But now the Lord my God has given me peace on all sides of my country. Now I have no enemies. My people are in no danger.

**wrote** Literally, "spoke."

**snakes** Literally, "creeping things." These can be anything from insects, to lizards or snakes, and fish.

<sup>5</sup>"The Lord made a promise to my father David. The Lord said, 'I will make your son king after you. And your son will build a temple to honor me.' Now, I plan to build that temple to honor the Lord my God. <sup>6</sup>And so I ask you to help me. Send your men to Lebanon. There, they should 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\* are not as good as the carpenters of Sidon."

<sup>7</sup>When Hiram heard what Solomon asked, he was very happy. King Hiram said, "I thank the Lord today for giving David a wise son to rule this great nation!" <sup>8</sup>Then Hiram sent a message to Solomon. The message said, "I heard the thing that you asked. I will give you all the cedar trees and the fir trees you want. <sup>9</sup>My 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 the trees. As payment, I would be satisfied if every year you gave me enough food for everyone in my house." <sup>10</sup>So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and fir logs that he wanted.

<sup>11</sup>Solomon gave Hiram about 120,000 bushels\* of wheat and about 120,000 gallons\* of pure olive oil every year for his family.

<sup>12</sup>The Lord gave wisdom to Solomon as he had promised. And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon. These two kings made a treaty between themselves.

<sup>13</sup>King Solomon forced 30,000 men of Israel to help in this work. <sup>14</sup>King Solomon chose a man named Adoniram to be the boss. Solomon divided the men into three groups. There were 10,000 men in each group. Each group worked one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months. <sup>15</sup>Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country. These men had the job of cutting rocks. And there were 70,000 men to carry the rocks. <sup>16</sup>There were also 3,300 men who were the bosses over the people who did the work.

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

**120,000 bushels** Literally, "20,000 kors" (4,400,000 l).

**120,000 gallons** Literally, "20,000 baths" (440,000 l).



<sup>17</sup>King Solomon commanded them to cut out big, expensive stones to be the foundation for the temple. These stones were carefully cut. <sup>18</sup>Then Solomon's and Hiram's builders and the men from Byblos\* carved the stones. They prepared the stones and the logs for building the temple.

### Solomon Builds the Temple

**6** So Solomon began to build the temple. This was 480 years\* after the people of Israel left Egypt. This was during Solomon's fourth year as king of Israel. It was in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. <sup>2</sup>The temple was 60 cubits\* long, 20 cubits\* wide, and 30 cubits\* high. <sup>3</sup>The porch of the temple was 20 cubits long and 10 cubits\* 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. <sup>4</sup>There were narrow windows in the temple. These windows were narrow on the outside and larger on the inside.\* <sup>5</sup>Then Solomon built a row of rooms around the main part of the temple. These rooms were built on top of each other. [This row of rooms was three stories tall.] <sup>6</sup>The rooms touched the temple wall, but their beams were not built into that wall. [That temple wall became thinner at the top.] So the wall which made one side of those rooms was thinner than the wall below it. The rooms on the bottom floor were 5 cubits\* wide. The rooms on the middle floor were 6 cubits\* wide. The rooms above that were 7 cubits\* wide. <sup>7</sup>The workers used large stones to build the walls. The workers cut the stones at the place where they got them out of the ground. So there was no noise of

hammers, axes, or any other iron tools in the temple.

<sup>8</sup>The entrance to the bottom rooms was on the south side of the temple. Inside, there were stairs that went up to the second floor rooms and from there to the third floor rooms.

<sup>9</sup>So, Solomon finished building the temple. Every part in the temple was covered with cedar boards. <sup>10</sup>Solomon also finished building the rooms around the temple. Each story was 5 cubits\* tall. The cedar beams in those rooms touched the temple.

<sup>11</sup>The Lord said to Solomon, <sup>12</sup>“If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do the thing for you that I promised your father David. <sup>13</sup>And I will live among the children of Israel in this temple that you are building. I will never leave the people of Israel.”

### Details About the Temple

<sup>14</sup>So Solomon finished building the temple.

<sup>15</sup>The stone walls inside the temple were covered with cedar boards. The cedar boards went from the floor to the ceiling. The stone floor was covered with pine boards. <sup>16</sup>They built a room 20 cubits\* long deep inside the back part of the temple. They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards. The cedar boards went from the floor to the ceiling. This room was called the Most Holy Place. <sup>17</sup>In front of the Most Holy Place, was the main part of the temple. This room was 40 cubits\* long. <sup>18</sup>They 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.

<sup>19</sup>Solomon prepared the room deep inside the back part of the temple. This room was for the Lord's Box of the Agreement.\* <sup>20</sup>This room was 20 cubits\* long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high. Solomon covered this

**Byblos** Or, “Gebal.”

**480 years** This was about 960 B.C.

**60 cubits** 103' 4 3/16" (31.5m).

**20 cubits** 29' 3 3/8" (10.5m).

**30 cubits** 51' 8 1/16" (15.75m). The ancient Greek translation has “25 cubits.”

**10 cubits** 17' 2 11/16" (5.25m).

**These windows ... inside** This might also mean, “These were windows with lattice work over them.”

**5 cubits** 8' 7 5/16" (2.625m).

**6 cubits** 10' 4" (3.15m).

**7 cubits** 12' 11/16" (3.675m).

**40 cubits** 68' 10 3/4" (21m).

**gourds** A plant with long vines. Its fruit grows in the shape of a jar and becomes hard like wood.

**Box of the Agreement** Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

room with pure gold. He built an [incense] altar in front of this room. He covered the altar with gold, <sup>21</sup>and wrapped gold chains around it. There were two statues of Cherub angels\* in that room. Those statues were covered with gold. <sup>22</sup>All of the temple was covered with gold. Also, the altar in front of the Most Holy Place was covered with gold.

<sup>23</sup>The workers made two statues of Cherub angels\* with wings. The workers made the statues from olive wood. These Cherub angels were put in the Most Holy Place. Each angel was 10 cubits\* tall. <sup>24–26</sup>Both Cherub angels were the same size and built the same way. Each Cherub angel 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. <sup>27</sup>These Cherub angels were put in the Most Holy Place. They stood beside each other. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each side wall. <sup>28</sup>The two Cherub angels were covered with gold.

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

<sup>31</sup>The workers made two doors from olive wood. They put those doors at the entrance of the Most Holy Place. The frame around the doors was made with five sides.\* <sup>32</sup>They 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.

<sup>33</sup>They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square doorframe. <sup>34</sup>Then they used fir\* to make the doors. There were two doors. Each door had two parts, so the two doors folded. <sup>35</sup>They carved pictures of Cherub

angels,\* [palm] trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

<sup>36</sup>Then they built the inner yard. They built walls around this yard. Each wall was made from three rows of cut stones and one row of cedar timbers.

<sup>37</sup>They 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 the Israel. <sup>38</sup>The temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year. This was during the eleventh year that Solomon ruled over the people. It took seven years to build the temple. The temple was built exactly the way it was planned.

### Solomon's Palace

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

<sup>6</sup>Solomon 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.

<sup>7</sup>Solomon also built a throne room where he judged people. He called this the "Hall of Judging." The room was covered with cedar from the floor to the ceiling.

<sup>8</sup>The house where Solomon lived was inside of the Hall of Judging. This house was built the same as the Hall of Judging. He also

**Cherub angels** Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

**10 cubits** 17' 2 11/16" (5.25m).

**5 cubits** 8' 7 5/16" (2.625m).

**The frame ... sides** We are not sure of the meaning here.

**fir** A type of tree, like a pine tree.

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

**100 cubits** 172' 3" (52.5m).

**50 cubits** 86' 1 1/2" (26.25m).

**30 cubits** 51' 8 1/16" (15.75m).

**capital(s)** Decorated caps of stone or wood on top of columns.

built the same kind of house for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

<sup>9</sup>All of these buildings were made with expensive blocks of stone. These stones were cut to the right size with a saw. They were cut in the front and in the back. These expensive stones went from the foundation up to the top layer of the wall. Even the wall around the yard was made with expensive blocks of stone. <sup>10</sup>The foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 10 cubits\* long and others were 8 cubits\* long. <sup>11</sup>On top of those stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams. <sup>12</sup>There were walls around the palace yard, the temple yard, and the porch of the temple. Those walls were built with three rows of stone and one row of cedar timbers.

<sup>13</sup>King Solomon sent a message to a man named Hiram\* in Tyre. Solomon brought Hiram [to Jerusalem]. <sup>14</sup>Hiram's mother was an Israelite from the family group of Naphtali. His dead father was from Tyre. Hiram made things from bronze.\* He was a very skilled and experienced worker. So King Solomon asked him to come, and Hiram accepted. So King Solomon put Hiram in charge of all the bronze work. Hiram built all the things made from bronze.

<sup>15</sup>Hiram\* made two bronze\* columns. Each column was 18 cubits\* tall and 12 cubits\* around. The columns were hollow and the metal was 3 inches\* thick. <sup>16</sup>Hiram also made two bronze capitals\* that were 5 cubits\* tall. Hiram put these capitals on top of the columns. <sup>17</sup>Then he made two nets of chains to cover the capitals on top of the two columns. <sup>18</sup>Then he made two rows of bronze\* that looked like pomegranates.\* They put these

bronze pomegranates on the nets of each column in order to cover the capitals at the top of the columns. <sup>19</sup>The capitals on top of the 5 cubits\* tall columns were shaped like flowers. <sup>20</sup>The capitals were on top of the columns. They were above the bowl-shaped net. At that place, there were 200 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals. <sup>21</sup>Hiram put these two bronze columns at the porch of the temple. One column was put on the south side and one was put on the north side [of the entrance]. The column on the south was named Jakin. The column on the north was named Boaz. <sup>22</sup>They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the columns. So the work on the two columns was finished.

<sup>23</sup>Then Hiram\* made a round tank from bronze.\* [They called this tank "The Sea."] The tank was about 30 cubits\* around. It was 10 cubits\* across and 5 cubits\* deep. <sup>24</sup>There was a rim around the outer edge of the tank. Under this rim there were two rows of bronze gourds\* surrounding the tank. The bronze gourds were made in one piece as part of the tank. <sup>25</sup>The tank rested on the backs of 12 bronze bulls. All 12 of these bulls were looking out, away from the tank. Three were looking north, three east, three south, and three west. <sup>26</sup>The 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.\*

<sup>27</sup>Then Hiram\* made ten bronze\* carts. Each one was 4 cubits\* long, 4 cubits wide, and 3 cubits\* high. <sup>28</sup>The carts were made from square panels set in frames. <sup>29</sup>On the panels and frames were bronze lions, bulls, and Cherub angels.\* Above and below the lions and bulls there were designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. <sup>30</sup>Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the corners there were bronze supports for a large

**10 cubits** 17' 2 11/16" (5.25m).

**8 cubits** 13' 9 5/16" (4.2m).

**Hiram** Or, "Hiram."

**bronze** A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

**18 cubits** 31' (9.45m).

**12 cubits** 20' 8" (6.3m).

**3 inches** Literally, "1 handbreadth" (8cm).

**capital(s)** Decorated caps of stone or wood on top of columns.

**5 cubits** 8' 7 5/16" (2.625m).

**pomegranates** A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

**30 cubits** 51' 8 1/16" (15.75m).

**gourds** A plant with long vines. Its fruit grows in the shape of a jar and becomes hard like wood.

**11,000 gallons** Literally, "2,000 baths" (44,000 l).

**4 cubits** 6' 10 5/8" (2.1m).

**3 cubits** 5' 2" (1.575m).

**Cherub angels** Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

bowl. The supports had designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. <sup>31</sup>There was a frame on top for the bowl. It was 1 cubit\* tall above the bowls. The opening for the bowl was round, 1 1/2 cubits\* in diameter. There were designs carved into the bronze on the frame. The frame was square, not round. <sup>32</sup>There were four wheels under the frame. The wheels were 1 1/2 cubits in diameter. The axles between the wheels were made as one piece with the cart. <sup>33</sup>The wheels were like the wheels on a chariot.\* Everything on the wheels—the axles, the rims, the spokes, and the hubs were made from bronze.

<sup>34</sup>The four supports were on the four corners of each cart. They were made as one piece with the cart. <sup>35</sup>There was a strip of bronze around the top of each cart. It was made as one piece with the cart. <sup>36</sup>The 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. <sup>37</sup>Huram\* 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 of the carts were the same size and shape.

<sup>38</sup>Huram\* also made ten bowls. There was one bowl for each of the ten carts. Each bowl was 4 cubits\* across. And each bowl could hold about 230 gallons.\* <sup>39</sup>Huram put five of the carts on the south side of the temple and the other five carts on the north side. He put the large tank in the southeast corner of the temple. <sup>40–45</sup>Huram also made pots, small shovels, and small bowls. Hiram finished making all of the things King Solomon wanted him to make. This is a list of the things that Hiram made for the Temple of the Lord:

**1 cubit** 1' 8 5/8" (52.5cm).

**1 1/2 cubits** 2' 7" (78.75cm).

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**Cherub angels** Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

**Huram** Or, "Hiram."

**4 cubits** 6' 10 5/8" (2.1m).

**230 gallons** Literally, "40 baths" (880 l).

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. There were 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.

Huram\* made all the things that King Solomon wanted. They were all made from polished bronze. <sup>46–47</sup>Solomon 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 these things by melting the bronze and pouring it into molds in the ground.

<sup>48–50</sup>Solomon also commanded that many things be made from gold for the temple. These are the things that Solomon made from gold for the temple:

the golden altar;

the golden table (The special bread offered to God was on this table.);

the lampstands of pure gold (There were 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, wick trimmers, 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.

<sup>51</sup>So King Solomon finished the work he wanted to do for the Lord's temple. Then King Solomon got all the things that his father David had saved for this special purpose. He brought these things into the temple. He put

**capital(s)** Decorated caps of stone or wood on top of columns.

the silver and gold in the treasuries in the Lord's Temple.

### The Box of the Agreement in the Temple

**8** Then King Solomon called together all the elders of Israel, the heads of the family groups, and the leaders of the families of Israel. He asked them to come to him in Jerusalem. Solomon wanted them to join in bringing the Box of the Agreement\* from the City of David\* into the temple. <sup>2</sup>So all the men of Israel came together with King Solomon. This was during the time of the special holiday (*the Festival of Shelters*) during the month of Ethanim (*the seventh month of the year*).

<sup>3</sup>All of the elders of Israel arrived at that place. Then the priests took the Holy Box.\* <sup>4</sup>They carried the Holy Box of the Lord along with the Meeting Tent\* and the holy things that were in the tent. The Levites\* helped the priests carry these things. <sup>5</sup>King Solomon and all the people of Israel met together before the Box of the Agreement.\* [They offered many sacrifices.] They killed so many sheep and cattle that no person was able to count them all. <sup>6</sup>Then the priests put the Box of the Agreement of the Lord in its right place. This was inside the Most Holy Place in the temple. The Box of the Agreement was put under the wings of the Cherub angels.\* <sup>7</sup>The wings of the Cherub angels were spread out over the Holy Box. They covered the Holy Box and its

**Box of the Agreement** Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

**City of David** The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

**Holy Box** The Box of the Agreement. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

**Meeting Tent** The Holy Tent (*Tabernacle*) where the people of Israel met to worship God.

**Levites** People from the family group of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

**Cherub angels** Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

carrying poles. <sup>8</sup>These carrying poles were very long. Any person that stood in the Holy Place in front of the Most Holy Place could see the ends of the poles. But no one outside could see them. The poles are still in there today. <sup>9</sup>The only thing inside the Holy Box were the two tablets. These were the two tablets that Moses put in the Holy Box at the place called Horeb. Horeb was the place that the Lord made his Agreement with the people of Israel after they came out of Egypt.

<sup>10</sup>[The priests put the Holy Box in the Most Holy Place.] When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the Cloud\* filled the Lord's Temple. <sup>11</sup>The priests could not continue their work because the temple was filled with the Glory of the Lord.\* <sup>12</sup>Then Solomon said:

“The Lord made the sun to shine in the sky,  
but he chose to live in the dark cloud.\*

<sup>13</sup> I have built a wonderful temple for you,  
a place for you to live forever.”

<sup>14</sup>All of the people of Israel were standing there. So King Solomon turned to them and asked God to bless them.

<sup>15</sup>Then King Solomon prayed a long prayer to the Lord. This is what he said:

“The Lord, the God of Israel, is great.  
The Lord himself has done the things  
that he promised to my father David.

The Lord told my father,  
<sup>16</sup> ‘I brought my people, Israel,  
out of Egypt.

But I had not yet chosen a city from  
among the family groups 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.

And I have chosen David  
to rule over my people, Israel.’

**Cloud** The special sign that showed that God was with the people of Israel.

**Glory of the Lord** One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

**The Lord ... dark cloud** This is from an ancient version. The Hebrew has only, “The Lord said to dwell in darkness.”

<sup>17</sup>“My father David wanted very much to build a temple to honor the Lord, the God of Israel. <sup>18</sup>But the Lord said to my father David, ‘I know that you want very much to build a temple to honor me. And this is good that you want to build my temple. <sup>19</sup>But you are not the one that I have chosen to build the temple. Your son will build my temple!’

<sup>20</sup>“So the Lord has kept the promise that he gave. I am the king now in place of David my father. Now I rule the people of Israel like the Lord promised. And I built the temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. <sup>21</sup>I 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. The Lord made that Agreement when he brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood in front of the Lord’s altar.\* All of the people were standing in front of him. King Solomon spread his hands and looked toward the sky. <sup>23</sup>He said:

“Lord, God of Israel, there is no other god like you in the skies or on the earth. You made the Agreements with your people because you love them. And you keep your Agreement. You are kind and loyal to people that follow you. <sup>24</sup>You made a promise to your servant David, my father. And you have kept that promise. You made that promise with your own mouth. And with your great power you have made that promise come true today. <sup>25</sup>Now, Lord, God of Israel, keep the other promises you made to your servant David, my father. You said, ‘David, your sons must carefully obey me, just like you did. If they do this, then you will always have someone from your family ruling the people of Israel.’ <sup>26</sup>And again, Lord, God of Israel, I ask you to please continue to keep that promise to my father.

<sup>27</sup>“But, God, will you really live here with us on the earth? All the sky and the highest

place in heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this house which I have built cannot contain you either. <sup>28</sup>But 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. <sup>29</sup>In the past you said, ‘I will be honored there.’ So please watch this temple night and day. Please listen to the prayer that I pray to you at this temple. <sup>30</sup>Lord, I and your people Israel will turn to this place and pray to you. Please hear those prayers! We know that you live in heaven. We ask you to hear our prayer there and forgive us.

<sup>31</sup>“If a person does something wrong against another person, he will be brought here to the altar. If that person is not guilty, then he will make an oath. He will promise that he is innocent. <sup>32</sup>Then listen in heaven and judge the man. If the person is guilty, then please show us that he is guilty. And if the person is innocent, then please show us that he is not guilty.

<sup>33</sup>“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. The people will pray to you in this temple. <sup>34</sup>Please hear them in heaven. Then forgive the sins of your people Israel, and allow them to have their land again. You gave this land to their ancestors.

<sup>35</sup>“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. <sup>36</sup>So 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.

<sup>37</sup>“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 of 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 become sick. <sup>38</sup>When any of these things happen, if even one man is sorry [for his sins] and spreads his hands in prayer toward this

**Holy Box** The Box of the Agreement. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

**altar(s)** A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

temple, <sup>39</sup>please listen to his prayer. Listen to it while you are in your home in heaven. Then forgive the people and help them. Only you know the things that people are really thinking. So judge each person and be fair to him. <sup>40</sup>Do 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.

<sup>41–42</sup>“People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this temple. <sup>43</sup>From your home in heaven please listen to their prayers. Please do all that those people from other places ask you. Then those people 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.

<sup>44</sup>“Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn toward this city which you have chosen and the temple that I have built for your honor. And they will pray to you. <sup>45</sup>At that time, listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them.

<sup>46</sup>“Your people will sin against you. I know this because every person 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. <sup>47</sup>In 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.’ <sup>48</sup>They will be in that faraway land. But if they turn toward this land that you gave to their ancestors,\* and toward this city you chose, and toward this temple I built to honor you, <sup>49</sup>then please listen from your home in heaven. <sup>50</sup>Forgive your people of all their sins. And forgive them for turning against you. Make their enemies be kind to them. <sup>51</sup>Remember that they are your people. Remember that you brought them out of Egypt. It was like you saved them by pulling them out of a hot oven!

<sup>52</sup>“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. <sup>53</sup>You 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 at the time you brought our ancestors\* out of Egypt.”

<sup>54</sup>Solomon prayed that prayer to God. He was on his knees in front of the altar.\* Solomon prayed with his arms raised toward heaven. Then Solomon finished praying and stood. <sup>55</sup>Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said:

<sup>56</sup>“Praise the Lord! He promised to give rest to his people, Israel. And he has given us rest! The Lord used his servant Moses and made many good promises to the people of Israel. And the Lord has kept every one of those promises! <sup>57</sup>I pray that the Lord our God will be with us, just like he was with our ancestors.\* I pray that the Lord will never leave us. <sup>58</sup>I 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. <sup>59</sup>I hope that the Lord our God will always remember this prayer and the things I have asked. I pray that the Lord will do these things for his servant, the king, and for his people, Israel. I pray that he will do this every day. <sup>60</sup>[If the Lord will do these things,] then all the people of the world will know that the Lord is the only true God. <sup>61</sup>You 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 like you do now.”

<sup>62</sup>Then King Solomon and all the people of Israel with him offered sacrifices to the Lord. <sup>63</sup>Solomon killed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. These were for the fellowship offerings. In this way, the king and the people of Israel showed that they had given the temple to the Lord.

<sup>64</sup>Also, that day King Solomon dedicated the yard in front of the temple. He offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat

**ancestors** Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

**altar(s)** A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

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.

<sup>65</sup>So there at the temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the holiday.\* All Israel was there, from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north, to the border of Egypt in the south. Many, many people were there. They 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!\* <sup>66</sup>The 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

**9** So Solomon finished building the Lord's temple and his own palace. Solomon built all the things that he wanted to build. <sup>2</sup>Then the Lord appeared to Solomon again, just as he had done before in the town of Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>The Lord said to him: "I heard your prayer. I heard the things that 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. <sup>4</sup>You must serve me the same way your father David did. He was fair and sincere. And you must obey my laws and do all the things that I commanded you.

<sup>5</sup>"If you do all these things, then I will make sure that the king of Israel is always someone from your family. This is the promise I made to your father David. I told him that Israel would always be ruled by one of his descendants.\*

<sup>6-7</sup>"But if you or your children stop following me, and don't obey the laws and commands I have given you, and if you serve

and worship other gods, then I will force Israel to leave the land 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 [if you don't obey me,] then I will tear it down. <sup>8</sup>This temple will be destroyed. Every person who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, 'Why did the Lord do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?' <sup>9</sup>Other people will answer, 'This happened because they left the Lord their God. He brought their ancestors out of Egypt. But they decided to follow other gods. They began to worship and serve those gods. That is why the Lord caused all these bad things to happen to them.'"

<sup>10</sup>It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the Lord's temple and the king's palace.\* <sup>11</sup>And after 20 years King Solomon gave 20 towns in Galilee to Hiram the king of Tyre. Solomon gave King Hiram these towns because Hiram helped Solomon build the temple and the palace. Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and pine and gold that Solomon wanted. <sup>12</sup>So Hiram traveled from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon gave him. When Hiram saw those towns, he was not pleased. <sup>13</sup>King Hiram said, "What are these towns that you have given me, my brother?" King Hiram named that land the Land of Cabul.\* And that area is still called Cabul today. <sup>14</sup>Hiram had sent to King Solomon about 9,000 pounds\* of gold to use in building the temple.

<sup>15</sup>King Solomon forced slaves to work for him to build the temple and the palace. Then King Solomon used these slaves to build many other things. He built the Millo.\* He also built the city wall around Jerusalem. Then he built again the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

<sup>16</sup>In the past, the king of Egypt fought against the city of Gezer and burned it. He killed the Canaanite people who lived there. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter. So

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

**Cabul** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "worthless."

**9,000 pounds** Or "4080kg. Literally, "120 talents."

**Millo** The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

**holiday** This was probably Passover.

**Then they stayed ... 14 days** This is not in the ancient Greek translation.

**descendants** A person's children and all of their future families.



Pharaoh gave that city to Solomon as a wedding present. <sup>17</sup>Solomon built that city again. Solomon also built the city of Lower Beth Horon. <sup>18</sup>King Solomon also built the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the Judean desert. <sup>19</sup>King Solomon also built cities where he could store grain and things. And he built places for his chariots and his horses. King Solomon also built many things that he wanted in Jerusalem and in Lebanon and in all the places he ruled.

<sup>20</sup>There were people in the land that were not Israelites. Those people were the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>21</sup>The Israelites had not been able to destroy those people. But Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. <sup>22</sup>Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The people of Israel were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers.

<sup>23</sup>There were 550 supervisors over Solomon's projects. They were bosses over the men who did the work. <sup>24</sup>Pharaoh's daughter moved from the City of David to the big house that Solomon built for her. Then Solomon built the Millo.\*

<sup>25</sup>Three times each year Solomon offered burned sacrifices and fellowship offerings on the altar. This is the altar that Solomon built for the Lord. King Solomon also burned incense before the Lord. So he supplied the things needed for the temple.

<sup>26</sup>King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. <sup>27</sup>King Hiram had some men who knew much about the sea. Those men often traveled in ships. King Hiram sent those men to serve in Solomon's navy and work with Solomon's men. <sup>28</sup>Solomon's ships went to Ophir. The ships brought about 31,500 pounds\* of gold back from Ophir to King Solomon.

**Millo** The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

**31,500 pounds** Or, "14,280kg." Literally, "420 talents."

### The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

**10** The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon. So she came to test him with hard questions. <sup>2</sup>She traveled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels, and much gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. <sup>3</sup>Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions were too hard for him to explain. <sup>4</sup>The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace\* he had built. <sup>5</sup>The queen 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 that they wore. She saw his parties and the sacrifices that he offered in the temple. All these things really amazed her—they just 'took her breath away'!

<sup>6</sup>So the queen said to the king, "I heard many things in my own country about your wisdom and all the things you have done. And everything is true! <sup>7</sup>I 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 is much greater than people told me. <sup>8</sup>Your wives\* and officers are very fortunate! They can serve you and hear your wisdom every day! <sup>9</sup>Praise the Lord your God! He was pleased to make you king of Israel. The Lord God loves Israel. So he made you the king. You follow the law and treat people fairly."

<sup>10</sup>Then the queen of Sheba gave the king about 9,000 pounds\* of gold. She also gave him many spices and jewels. The queen of Sheba gave to Solomon more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel.

<sup>11</sup>Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir. Those ships also brought very much wood\* and jewels. <sup>12</sup>Solomon used the wood to build supports in the temple and the palace. He also

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

**wives** This comes from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has "men."

**9,000 pounds** Or, "4,080kg" Literally, "120 talents."

**wood** This is a special kind of wood called "Almug." No one knows exactly what type of wood this was.

used the wood to make harps\* and lyres\* for the singers. No other person has ever brought that kind of wood [to Israel] and no person has seen that kind of wood since that time.

<sup>13</sup>Then King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba gifts that a king usually gives to a ruler from another country. Then he gave her anything else she asked for. After this, the queen and her servants went back to her own country.

<sup>14</sup>Every year King Solomon got about 79,920 pounds\* of gold. <sup>15</sup>Besides the gold from the cargo ships,\* he also got gold from the traders and merchants,\* and from the kings of Arabia and governors of the land.

<sup>16</sup>King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 15 pounds\* of gold. <sup>17</sup>He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 4 pounds\* of gold. The king put them in the building called the “Forest of Lebanon.”

<sup>18</sup>King Solomon also built a large ivory throne. He covered it with pure gold. <sup>19</sup>There 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 chair. And in the sides of the chair under the two armrests there were pictures of lions. <sup>20</sup>There were also two lions on each of the six steps. There was one lion at each end. There was nothing like this in any other kingdom. <sup>21</sup>All of Solomon’s cups and glasses were made of gold. And all of the dishes\* 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 that] in Solomon’s time people did not think silver was important!

**harps** Musical instruments with several strings.

**lyres** Musical instruments that are like small harps.

**79,920 pounds** Literally, “666 talents” (22,644kg).

**cargo ships** Literally, “ships of Tarshish.”

**traders and merchants** Businessmen who make their living buying and selling things.

**15 pounds** Literally, “600 shekels” (6.9kg).

**4 pounds** Literally, “3 minas” (1.8kg).

**dishes** The Hebrew word can mean, “dishes, tools, or weapons.”

<sup>22</sup>The king also had many cargo ships\* 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 animals.

<sup>23</sup>Solomon was the greatest king on earth. He had the most riches and wisdom of all kings. <sup>24</sup>People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon. They wanted to hear the great wisdom that God had given him. <sup>25</sup>Every year people came to see the king. And every person brought a gift. They brought things made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

<sup>26</sup>So Solomon had many, many chariots and horses. He had 1,400 chariots\* and 12,000 horses. Solomon built special cities for these chariots. So the chariots were kept in those cities. King Solomon also kept some of the chariots with him in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>The 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, many fig trees growing on the hills. <sup>28</sup>Solomon brought horses from Egypt and Kue. His traders bought them in Kue and brought them to Israel. <sup>29</sup>A chariot from Egypt cost about 15 pounds\* of silver, and a horse cost about 3 3/4 pounds\* of silver. Solomon sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

### Solomon and His Many Wives

**1** King Solomon loved women! He loved many women that were not from the nation of Israel. These included the daughter of Pharaoh, Hittite women and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Sidon. <sup>2</sup>In the past, the Lord had said to the people of Israel, “You must not marry people from other nations. If you do, then those people will cause you to follow their gods.” But Solomon fell in love with these women. <sup>3</sup>Solomon had 700 wives. (These women were all daughters of leaders from other nations.) He also had 300 slave women that were like wives to him. His wives caused him to turn away from God. <sup>4</sup>When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to

**chariot(s)** Small wagons used in war.

**3 3/4 pounds** Literally, “150 shekels” (1.725kg).

follow other gods. Solomon did not follow the Lord completely the way that his father David had done. <sup>5</sup>Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth.\* This was the god of the people of Sidon. And Solomon worshiped Milcom.\* This was that horrible idol of the Ammonite people. <sup>6</sup>So Solomon did wrong before the Lord. Solomon did not follow the Lord completely the way his father David had done.

<sup>7</sup>Solomon built a place for worshipping Chemosh. Chemosh was that horrible idol of the Moabite people. Solomon built that worship place on a hill next to Jerusalem. On that same hill, Solomon built a worship place for Molech. Molech was that horrible idol of the Ammonite people. <sup>8</sup>Then Solomon did the same thing for all of his wives from other countries. His wives burned incense\* and gave sacrifices to their gods.

<sup>9</sup>Solomon turned away from following the Lord, the God of Israel. So the Lord became angry at Solomon. The Lord had come to Solomon twice. <sup>10</sup>The Lord told Solomon that he must not follow other gods. But Solomon did not obey the Lord's command. <sup>11</sup>So 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. I will give it to one of your servants. <sup>12</sup>But I loved your father David. So I will not take your kingdom away from you while you are living. I will wait until your son becomes king. Then I will take it from him. <sup>13</sup>Still, I will not tear away all of the kingdom from your son. I will leave him one family group to rule. I will do this for David—He was a good servant. And I will do this for Jerusalem—That is the city I chose."

### Solomon's Enemies

<sup>14</sup>At that time, the Lord caused Hadad the Edomite to become Solomon's enemy. Hadad was from the family of the king of Edom.

**Ashtoreth** The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love and war.

**Milcom** The god of the Ammonite people.

**incense** Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

<sup>15</sup>This is how it happened: Earlier David defeated Edom. Joab was the commander of David's army. Joab went into Edom to bury dead people. Joab killed all the men still living there. <sup>16</sup>Joab and all Israel stayed in Edom for six months. During that time they killed all of the men of Edom. <sup>17</sup>But at that time Hadad was only a young boy. So Hadad ran away to Egypt. Some of his father's servants went with him. <sup>18</sup>They left Midian and went to Paran. In Paran some other people joined them. Then the whole group went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and asked for help. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house and some land. Pharaoh also supported him and gave him food to eat.

<sup>19</sup>Pharaoh liked Hadad very much. Pharaoh gave Hadad a wife. The woman was Pharaoh's sister-in-law. (Pharaoh's wife was Queen Tahpenes.) <sup>20</sup>So the sister of Tahpenes married Hadad. They had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes allowed Genubath to grow up in Pharaoh's house with his children.

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

<sup>22</sup>But 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."

<sup>23</sup>God also caused another man to be an enemy against Solomon. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master. His master was Hadadezer, king of Zobah. <sup>24</sup>After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and became the leader of a small army. Rezon went to Damascus and stayed there. Rezon became king of Damascus. <sup>25</sup>Rezon ruled Aram. Rezon hated Israel, so he continued to be an enemy of Israel all of the time that Solomon lived. Rezon and Hadad caused much trouble for Israel.

<sup>26</sup>Jeroboam son of Nebat was one of Solomon's servants. Jeroboam was from the family group of Ephraim. He was from the town of Zeredah. Jeroboam's mother was

named Zeruah. His father was dead. He turned against the king.

<sup>27</sup>This is the story of why Jeroboam turned against the king. Solomon was building the Millo\* and fixing the wall of the city of David his father. <sup>28</sup>Jeroboam was a strong man. Solomon saw that this young man was a good worker. So Solomon made him the boss over all of the workers from the family group of Joseph.\* <sup>29</sup>One day Jeroboam was traveling out of Jerusalem. Ahijah the prophet from Shiloh met him on the road. Ahijah was wearing a new coat. These two men were alone in the country. <sup>30</sup>Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces.

<sup>31</sup>Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces of this coat for yourself. The Lord the God of Israel says: ‘I will tear the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten of the family groups. <sup>32</sup>And I will allow David’s family to control only one family group. I will let them keep this group. I will do this for my servant David and for Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city which I chose from all the family groups of Israel. <sup>33</sup>I will take the kingdom from Solomon because he stopped following me. He worships Ashtoreth, the false goddess of Sidon. He worships Chemosh, the false god of Moab. And he worships Milcom, the false god of the Ammonites. Solomon stopped doing the things that are right and good. He does not obey my laws and my commands. He is not living the way that his father David lived. <sup>34</sup>So I will take the kingdom away from Solomon’s family. But I will let Solomon be their ruler for the rest of his life. I will do this for my servant David. I chose David because he obeyed all my commands and laws. <sup>35</sup>But I will take the kingdom away from his son. And Jeroboam, I will allow you to rule over the ten family groups. <sup>36</sup>I will allow Solomon’s son to continue to rule over one family group. I will do this so that my servant David will always have a descendant to rule before me in Jerusalem, the city that I chose to be my own.

<sup>37</sup>But I will make you rule over everything you want. You will rule over all of Israel. <sup>38</sup>I will do these things for you if you will live right and obey all my commands. If you obey the laws and commands like David, then I will be with you. I will make your family a family of kings, like I did for David. I will give Israel to you. <sup>39</sup>I will punish David’s children because of [the things Solomon did]. But I will not punish them forever.”

### Solomon’s Death

<sup>40</sup>Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to Shishak the king of Egypt. Jeroboam stayed there until Solomon died.

<sup>41</sup>Solomon did many great and wise things while he ruled. All of these things are written in the book *The History of Solomon*. <sup>42</sup>Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. <sup>43</sup>Then Solomon died and was buried with his ancestors.\* He was buried in the city of David, his father. Then Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, became the next king after him.

### Civil War

**12**<sup>1–3</sup>Jeroboam 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.

Rehoboam and all of the people of Israel went to Shechem. They went to make Rehoboam the king. The people said to Rehoboam, <sup>4</sup>“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. Then we will serve you.”

<sup>5</sup>Rehoboam answered, “Come back to me in three days and I will answer you.” So the people left.

<sup>6</sup>There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men

**Millo** The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

**family group of Joseph** The people from the family groups of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph’s sons.

**died and was buried with his ancestors** Literally, “slept with his ancestors.”

what he should do. He said, "How do you think I should answer these people?"

<sup>7</sup>The elders answered, "If you are like a servant to them today, then they will truly serve you. If you speak kindly to them, then they will work for you always."

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

<sup>10</sup>The king's young friends said, "Those people came to you and said, 'Your father forced us to work very hard. Now make our work easier.' So you should [brag and] tell them, 'My little finger is stronger than my father's whole body. <sup>11</sup>My father forced you to work hard. But I will make you work much harder! My father used whips to force you to work. I will beat you with whips that have sharp pieces of metal in them\* to cut you!'"

<sup>12</sup>Rehoboam had told the people, "Come back to me in three days." So after three days all the people of Israel came back to Rehoboam. <sup>13</sup>At that time, King Rehoboam spoke hard words to them. He did not listen to the advice from the elders. <sup>14</sup>He did what his friends told him to do. Rehoboam said, "My father forced you to work hard. So I will give you even more work. My father used whips to force you to work. I will beat you with whips that have sharp pieces of metal in them\* to cut you!" <sup>15</sup>So the king did not do what the people wanted. The Lord caused this to happen. The Lord did this in order to keep the promise he made to Jeroboam son of Nebat. The Lord used Ahijah the prophet to make this promise. Ahijah was from Shiloh.

<sup>16</sup>All the people of Israel saw that the new king refused to listen to them. So the people said to the king: "Are we part of David's family? No! Do we get any of Jesse's land? No! So Israel, let's go to our own homes. Let David's son rule his own people!" So the people of Israel went home. <sup>17</sup>But Rehoboam

still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

<sup>18</sup>A man named Adoniram was the boss over all the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram [to talk to the people]. But the people of Israel threw stones at him until he died. Then King Rehoboam ran to his chariot\* and escaped to Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>So Israel rebelled (*turned against*) the family of David. And they are still against David's family today.

<sup>20</sup>All the people of Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back. So they called him to a meeting and made him king over all of Israel. The family group of Judah was the only family group that continued to follow the family of David.

<sup>21</sup>Rehoboam went back to Jerusalem. He gathered together the families of Judah and the family group of Benjamin. This was an army of 180,000 men. Rehoboam wanted to fight against the people of Israel. He wanted to take his kingdom back.

<sup>22</sup>But the Lord spoke to a man of God.\* His name was Shemaiah. The Lord said, <sup>23</sup>"Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and also to all the people of Judah and Benjamin. <sup>24</sup>Say to them, 'The Lord says that you must not go to war against your brothers. Every one of you should go home. I made all these things happen!'" So the men in Rehoboam's army obeyed the Lord's command. They all went home.

<sup>25</sup>Shechem was a city in the hill country of Ephraim. Jeroboam made Shechem a very strong city and lived there. Later he went to the city of Penuel\* and made it stronger.

<sup>26-27</sup>Jeroboam said to himself, "If the people continue going to the Lord's temple in Jerusalem, then they will want to be ruled by David's family. The people will follow Rehoboam, king of Judah again. Then they will kill me. <sup>28</sup>So the king asked his advisers what he should do. [They gave him their advice.] So Jeroboam made two golden calves. King Jeroboam said to the people, "You should not go to Jerusalem to worship.

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

**Penuel** Or "Peniel."

**whips ... metal in them** Or, "scorpions."

Israel, these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt.”\* <sup>29</sup>King Jeroboam put one golden calf in Bethel.\* He put the other golden calf in the city of Dan.\* <sup>30</sup>But this was a very great sin. The people of Israel traveled to the cities of Bethel and Dan to worship the calves. But this was a very great sin.

<sup>31</sup>Jeroboam also built temples at the high places.\* He also chose priests from among the different family groups of Israel. (He did not choose priests only from the family group of Levi.) <sup>32</sup>And King Jeroboam started a new holiday. This holiday was like the [Passover] Festival in Judah. But this holiday was on the 15th day of the eighth month [not the 15th day of the first month]. During that time the king offered sacrifices on the altar in the city of Bethel. And he made the sacrifices to the calves that he had made. King Jeroboam also chose priests in Bethel to serve at the high places that he made. <sup>33</sup>So King Jeroboam chose his own time for a holiday for the Israelites. It was the 15th day of the eighth month. During that time he offered sacrifices and burned incense\* on the altar that he built. This was in the city of Bethel.

### God Speaks Against Bethel

**13** The Lord commanded a man of God\* from Judah to go to the city of Bethel. King Jeroboam was standing at the altar offering incense when the man of God arrived. <sup>2</sup>The 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 named Josiah. These priests are now worshiping at the high places.\* But altar, Josiah will put those priests on you and he will kill them. Now those priests burn incense upon you. But Josiah will

burn human bones on you. [Then you can’t be used again!]”

<sup>3</sup>The man of God gave proof to the people that these things would happen. He said, “This is proof that the Lord told me about. The Lord said, ‘This altar will break apart. And the ashes on it will fall onto the ground.’”

<sup>4</sup>King Jeroboam heard the message from the man of God\* about the altar in Bethel. He took his hand off of 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. <sup>5</sup>Also, the altar broke into pieces. All its ashes fell onto the ground. This was the proof that the things the man of God said were from God. <sup>6</sup>Then King Jeroboam said to the man of God, “Please pray to the Lord your God for me. Ask the Lord to heal my arm.”

So the man of God\* prayed to the Lord. And the king’s arm was healed. It became like it was before. <sup>7</sup>Then the king said to the man of God, “Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift.”

<sup>8</sup>But 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. <sup>9</sup>The Lord commanded me not to eat or drink anything. The Lord also commanded me not to travel on the same road that I used when I came here.” <sup>10</sup>So he traveled on a different road. He did not travel on the same road that he used when he came to Bethel.

<sup>11</sup>There was an old prophet\* living in the city of Bethel. His sons came and told him about what the man of God\* did in Bethel. They told their father what the man of God had said to King Jeroboam. <sup>12</sup>The old prophet said, “Which road did he use when he left?” So the sons showed their father which way the man of God from Judah had taken. <sup>13</sup>The old prophet told his sons to put a saddle on his donkey. So they put the saddle on the donkey. Then the prophet left on his donkey.

**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.

**Bethel, Dan** Bethel was a city in the south part of Israel, near Judah. Dan was in the north part of Israel.

**high places** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

**incense** Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

**prophet** A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

<sup>14</sup>The old prophet went after the man of God.\* The old prophet found the man of God sitting under an oak tree. The old prophet asked, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?”

The man of God answered, “Yes, I am.”

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

<sup>16</sup>But the man of God\* answered, “I can’t go home with you. I can’t eat or drink with you in this place. <sup>17</sup>The Lord said to me, ‘You must not eat or drink anything in that place. And you must not go back on the same road you came on.’”

<sup>18</sup>Then the old prophet said, “But I am also a prophet like you.” Then the old prophet told a lie. He said, “An angel from the Lord came to me. The angel told me to bring you to my home and allow you to eat and drink with me.”

<sup>19</sup>So the man of God\* went to the old prophet’s house and ate and drank with him. <sup>20</sup>While they were sitting at the table, the Lord spoke to the old prophet. <sup>21</sup>And the old prophet spoke to the man of God from Judah. He said, “The Lord said that you did not obey him! You did not do the thing the Lord commanded. <sup>22</sup>The Lord commanded you not to eat or drink anything in this place. But you came back and ate and drank. So your body will not be buried in your family grave.”

<sup>23</sup>The man of God\* finished eating and drinking. Then the old prophet put the saddle on the donkey for him and the man left. <sup>24</sup>On the road traveling home, a lion attacked and killed the man of God. The prophet’s body was lying on the road. The donkey and the lion stood near the body. <sup>25</sup>Some other men were traveling on that road. They saw the body and the lion standing near the body. The men came to the city where the old prophet lived and told about what they had seen on the road.

<sup>26</sup>The old prophet had [tricked the man and] brought him back. He heard about what happened and he said, “That is the man of God\* who did not obey the Lord’s command. So the Lord sent a lion to kill him. The Lord said that he would do this.” <sup>27</sup>Then the prophet

said to his sons, “Put a saddle on my donkey.” So his sons put a saddle on his donkey. <sup>28</sup>The old prophet went and found the body lying on the road. The donkey and the lion were still standing near it. The lion had not eaten the body, and it did not hurt the donkey.

<sup>29</sup>The old prophet put the body on his donkey. He carried the body back to the city to cry for him and bury him. <sup>30</sup>The old prophet buried the man in his own family grave. The old prophet cried for him. The old prophet said, “Oh, my brother, I am sorry for you.” <sup>31</sup>So 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. <sup>32</sup>The things which 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.”

<sup>33</sup>King Jeroboam did not change. He continued doing evil things. He continued to choose people from different family groups to become priests.\* Those priests served at the high places.\* Any person who wanted to be a priest was allowed to become a priest. <sup>34</sup>That was the sin that caused the destruction and ruin of his kingdom.

### Jeroboam’s Son Dies

**14** At that time, Jeroboam’s son, Abijah, became very sick. <sup>2</sup>Jeroboam said to his wife, “Go to Shiloh. Go see the prophet Ahijah. Ahijah is the man that said that I would become king of Israel. Dress yourself so people won’t know that you are my wife. <sup>3</sup>Give the prophet ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey. Then ask him what will happen to our son. The prophet Ahijah will tell you.”

<sup>4</sup>So the king’s wife did what he said. She went to Shiloh. She went to the home of Ahijah the prophet. Ahijah was very old and had become blind. <sup>5</sup>But the Lord said to him,

**high places** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

**people from different family groups to become priests** The Law taught that only people from the family group of Levi could become priests.

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

“Jeroboam’s wife is coming to ask you about her son. He is sick.” The Lord told Ahijah what he should say.

Jeroboam’s wife came to Ahijah’s house. She was trying to not let people know who she was. <sup>6</sup>Ahijah heard her coming to the door. So Ahijah 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. <sup>7</sup>Go back and tell Jeroboam that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. The Lord says, ‘Jeroboam, I chose you from among all the people of Israel. I made you the ruler of my people. <sup>8</sup>David’s family was ruling the kingdom of Israel. But I took the kingdom away from them and I gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David. He always obeyed my commands. He followed me with his whole heart. He did only the things that I accepted. <sup>9</sup>But you have done many great sins. Your sins are much worse than the sins of any person that ruled before you. You have quit following me. You made idols and other gods. This has made me very angry. <sup>10</sup>So, Jeroboam, I will bring troubles to your family. I will kill all of the men in your family. I will destroy your family completely, like fire completely destroys dung. <sup>11</sup>Any person from your family that dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And any person from your family that dies in the fields will be eaten by birds. The Lord has spoken.”

<sup>12</sup>Then the prophet Ahijah continued talking to Jeroboam’s wife. He said, “Now go home. As soon as you enter your city, your son will die. <sup>13</sup>All Israel will cry for him and bury him. Your son will be the only person in Jeroboam’s family that will be buried. This is because he is the only one in Jeroboam’s family that pleased the Lord God of Israel. <sup>14</sup>The Lord will put a new king over Israel. That new king will destroy Jeroboam’s family. This will happen very soon. <sup>15</sup>Then the Lord will hit Israel. The people of Israel will be very scared—they will shake like tall grass in the water. The Lord will pull up Israel from this good land. This is the land that he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them on the other side of the Euphrates River. This will happen because the Lord is angry with the

people. The people made him angry when they made special poles to worship Asherah.\* <sup>16</sup>Jeroboam sinned. And then Jeroboam made the people of Israel sin. So the Lord will let the people of Israel be defeated.”

<sup>17</sup>Jeroboam’s wife went back to Tirzah. As soon as she walked into the house, the boy died. <sup>18</sup>All Israel buried him and cried for him. This happened exactly the way the Lord said it would. The Lord used his servant, the prophet Ahijah, to say these things.

<sup>19</sup>King Jeroboam did many other things. He fought wars and continued to rule the people. All the things he did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. <sup>20</sup>Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. Then he died and was buried with his ancestors.\* His son Nadab became the new king after him.

<sup>21</sup>At the time that Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, became king of Judah, he was 41 years old. Rehoboam ruled in the city of Jerusalem for 17 years. This is the city in which the Lord chose to be honored. He chose this city from all the other cities of Israel. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.

<sup>22</sup>The people of Judah also sinned [and did] things that the Lord said were wrong. The people did more things to make the Lord angry at them. These people were worse than their fathers that lived before them. <sup>23</sup>The people built high places, stone memorials, and sacred poles.\* They built them on every high hill and under every green tree. <sup>24</sup>There were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex.\* So the people of Judah did many bad things. The people that had lived in the land before them did those same evil things. And God took the land away from those people and gave it to the people of Israel.

<sup>25</sup>During the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt fought against

**Asherah** An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

**died ... ancestors** Literally, “slept with his ancestors.”

**high places, stone memorials, sacred poles** People used these things to worship false gods.

**men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex** Sexual sins like this were a part of the way people worshiped the Canaanite gods.



Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup>Shishak took the treasures from the Lord's temple and from the king's palace. He even took the gold shields that David had taken from the officers of Hadadezer, king of Aram. David had taken these shields to Jerusalem. But Shishak took all the gold shields. <sup>27</sup>So king Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places. But these shields were made from bronze, [not gold]. He gave the shields to the men who were guarding the palace gates. <sup>28</sup>Every time the king went to the Lord's temple, the guards went with him. They carried the shields. After they were finished, they put the shields back on the wall in the guardroom.

<sup>29</sup>All the things that king Rehoboam did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. <sup>30</sup>Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting a war against each other.

<sup>31</sup>Rehoboam died and was buried with his ancestors.\* He 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** Abijah became the new king of Judah. This was during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel. <sup>2</sup>Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother's name was Maacah. She was Absalom's daughter.

<sup>3</sup>He 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. <sup>4</sup>[The Lord loved David.] So for him, the Lord gave Abijah a kingdom in Jerusalem. And the Lord allowed him to have a son. The Lord also allowed Jerusalem to be safe. He did this for David. <sup>5</sup>David had always done the right things that the Lord wanted. He had always obeyed the Lord's commands. The only time David did not obey the Lord was the time David sinned against Uriah the Hittite.

**died ... ancestors** Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

**City of David** The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup>Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting a war against each other.\* <sup>7</sup>Everything else that Abijah did are 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. <sup>8</sup>When Abijah died he was buried in the City of David.\* Abijah's son Asa became the new king after him.

#### Asa, King of Judah

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

<sup>11</sup>Asa did the good things that the Lord said are right, like his ancestor\* David did. <sup>12</sup>During that time there were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. Asa forced those men to leave the country. Asa also took away the idols that his ancestors had made. <sup>13</sup>Asa also removed his grandmother, Maacah, from being queen. Maacah had made one of those terrible images of the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down this terrible image. He burned it in Kidron Valley. <sup>14</sup>Asa did not destroy the high places,\* but he was faithful to the Lord all his life. <sup>15</sup>Asa and his father had given some things to God. They gave gifts of gold, silver, and other things. Asa put all those things in the temple.

<sup>16</sup>During the time that King Asa was king of Judah, he was always fighting against Baasha, the king of Israel. <sup>17</sup>Baasha fought against Judah. Baasha wanted to stop people from going into or coming out of Asa's country of Judah. So he made the city of Ramah very strong. <sup>18</sup>So Asa took silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord's temple and the king's palace. He gave the silver and gold to his servants and sent them to Ben Hadad, the king of Aram. Ben Hadad was the

**Verse 6** This verse is not in the ancient Greek translation.

**ancestor** Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

**high places** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion. Damascus was Ben Hadad's capital city. <sup>19</sup>Asa sent this message, "My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement with you. I am sending you this gift of gold and silver. Please break your treaty with Baasha the king of Israel so he will get out of my country and leave us alone."

<sup>20</sup>King Ben Hadad made that 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. <sup>21</sup>Baasha heard about these attacks. So he stopped building Ramah stronger. He left that town and moved back to Tirzah. <sup>22</sup>Then king Asa gave an order to all of the people of Judah. Every person had to help. They went to Ramah and took all the stones and wood that Baasha was using to make that city strong. They carried those things to Geba in the land of Benjamin and to Mizpah. Then King Asa built those two towns much stronger.

<sup>23</sup>All 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, he had a disease on his feet. <sup>24</sup>Asa died and he was buried in the City of David,\* his ancestor. Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the new king after him.

#### Nadab, King of Israel

<sup>25</sup>During Asa's second year as king of Judah, Nadab, son of Jeroboam, became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years. <sup>26</sup>Nadab did bad things against the Lord. He sinned the same way his father Jeroboam had sinned. And Jeroboam also caused the people of Israel to sin.

<sup>27</sup>Baasha was the son of Ahijah. They were from the family group of Issachar. Baasha made a plan to kill King Nadab. This was during the time that Nadab and all Israel were fighting against the town of Gibbethon. This was a Philistine town. At that place Baasha

killed Nadab. <sup>28</sup>This happened during the third year that Asa was the king of Judah. And Baasha became the next king of Israel.

#### Baasha, King of Israel

<sup>29</sup>At the time Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboam's family. Baasha left no person in Jeroboam's family alive. This happened the way the Lord said it would. The Lord spoke through his servant Ahijah from Shiloh. <sup>30</sup>This happened because King Jeroboam had done many sins. And Jeroboam had caused the people of Israel to do many sins. Jeroboam made the Lord, the God of Israel, very angry.

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

<sup>33</sup>Baasha, son of Ahijah, became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years. <sup>34</sup>But Baasha did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He did the same sins that his father Jeroboam had done. Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin.

**16** Then the Lord spoke to Jehu son of Hanani. The Lord was speaking against King Baasha. <sup>2</sup>"I made you an important person. I made you a prince over my people Israel. But you have followed the ways of Jeroboam. You have caused my people Israel to sin. They have made me angry with their sins. <sup>3</sup>So I will destroy you, Baasha, and your family. I will do the same to you that I did to the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat. <sup>4</sup>The people in your family will die in the streets of the city. And dogs will eat their bodies. Some of the people in your family will die in the fields. And the birds will eat their bodies."

<sup>5</sup>All the other things about Baasha and the great things he did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. <sup>6</sup>Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the new king after him.

<sup>7</sup>So the Lord gave a message to Jehu the prophet. This message was against Baasha and his family. Baasha had done much evil against the Lord. This made the Lord very

**City of David** The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

angry. Baasha did the same things that Jeroboam's family had done before him. The Lord was also angry because Baasha killed all of Jeroboam's family.

#### Elah, King of Israel

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

<sup>9</sup>Zimri was one of King Elah's officers. Zimri commanded half of Elah's chariots.\* But Zimri made plans against Elah.

King Elah was in Tirzah. He was drinking and getting drunk at Arza's home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace\* at Tirzah. <sup>10</sup>Zimri went into that house and killed King Elah. This was during the 27th year that Asa was king in Judah. Then Zimri became the new king of Israel after Elah.

#### Zimri, King of Israel

<sup>11</sup>After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baasha's family. He did not let any of the men in Baasha's family live. Zimri also killed Baasha's friends. <sup>12</sup>So Zimri destroyed Baasha's family. This happened the way the Lord said it would when the Lord used the prophet Jehu to speak against Baasha. <sup>13</sup>This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and his son, Elah. They sinned and caused the people of Israel to sin. The Lord was angry because they had many idols.

<sup>14</sup>The other things that Elah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

<sup>15</sup>Zimri became king of Israel during the 27th year that Asa was king of Judah. Zimri ruled in Tirzah seven days. This is what happened: The army of Israel was camped near the Philistines from Gibbethon. [They were prepared for war.] <sup>16</sup>The men in the camp heard that Zimri had made secret plans against the king. They heard that he killed the king. So all Israel made Omri king over Israel that day in the camp. Omri was the commander of the army. <sup>17</sup>So Omri and all Israel left Gibbethon and attacked Tirzah. <sup>18</sup>Zimri saw that the city

had been captured. So he went into the palace\* and started a fire. He burned the palace and himself. <sup>19</sup>So Zimri died because he had sinned. Zimri did the things the Lord said were wrong. He sinned in the same way that Jeroboam had sinned. And Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin.

<sup>20</sup>The story about Zimri's secret plans and the other things that Zimri did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. And the things that happened when Zimri turned against King Elah are also written in that book.

#### Omri, King of Israel

<sup>21</sup>The people of Israel were divided into two groups. Half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath and wanted to make him king. The other half of the people followed Omri. <sup>22</sup>But Omri's followers were stronger than the followers of Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni was killed and Omri became king.

<sup>23</sup>During the 31st year that Asa was the king of Judah, Omri became king of Israel. Omri ruled over Israel for 12 years. Six of those years he ruled in the town of Tirzah. <sup>24</sup>But Omri bought the hill of Samaria. He bought it from Shemer for about 150 pounds\* of silver. Omri built a city on that hill. He called the city Samaria after the name of its owner, Shemer.

<sup>25</sup>Omri did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Omri was worse than all the kings that were before him. <sup>26</sup>He did all the same sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat did. Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin. So they made the Lord, the God of Israel, very angry. The Lord was angry because they worshiped worthless idols.

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

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

**150 pounds** Or, "68kg." Literally, "2 talents."

**Ahab, King of Israel**

<sup>29</sup>Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel during the 38th year that Asa was king of Judah. Ahab ruled Israel in the town of Samaria for 22 years. <sup>30</sup>Ahab did the things that the Lord said were wrong. And Ahab was worse than all the kings that were before him. <sup>31</sup>It was not enough for Ahab to do the same sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had done. So Ahab also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal. Ethbaal was the king of the people of Sidon. Then Ahab began to serve and worship Baal.\* <sup>32</sup>Ahab built a temple in Samaria for worshipping Baal. He put an altar in that temple. <sup>33</sup>Ahab also set up a special pole for worshipping Asherah.\* Ahab did more things to make the Lord the God of Israel angry than all the other kings who were before him.

<sup>34</sup>During the time of Ahab, Hiel from Bethel built the town of Jericho again. At the time 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 the way that the Lord said it would happen when he spoke through Joshua son of Nun.\*

**Elijah and The Time Without Rain**

**17** Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. Elijah said to King Ahab, “I serve the Lord God of Israel. By his power, I promise that no dew or rain will fall during the next few years. The rain will fall only if I command it to fall.”

<sup>2</sup>Then the Lord said to Elijah, <sup>3</sup>“Leave this place and go east. Hide near Kerith Ravine. This ravine is east of the Jordan River. <sup>4</sup>You can drink from that stream. I have commanded ravens\* to bring food to you in that place.” <sup>5</sup>So Elijah did what the Lord told him to do. He went to live near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup>Ravens brought Elijah food

every morning and every evening. Elijah drank water from that stream.

<sup>7</sup>There was no rain, so after a time the stream became dry. <sup>8</sup>Then the Lord said to Elijah, <sup>9</sup>“Go to Zarephath in Sidon. Live there. There is a woman whose husband is dead that lives in that place. I have commanded her to give you food.”

<sup>10</sup>So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there. Her husband was dead. The woman was gathering wood for a fire. Elijah said to her, “Will you bring me a little water in a cup so I can drink?” <sup>11</sup>The woman was going to get his water, and Elijah said, “Bring me a piece of bread too, please.”

<sup>12</sup>The woman answered, “I promise you before the Lord your God that I have no bread. I have only a little flour in a jar. And I have only a little olive oil in a jug. I came to this place to gather a couple of pieces of wood for a fire. I will take it back home and cook our last meal. My son and I will eat it and then die from hunger.”

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

<sup>15</sup>So the woman went to her home. She did what Elijah told her to do. Elijah, the woman, and her son had enough food for many days. <sup>16</sup>The jar of flour and the jug of oil were never empty. This happened just like the Lord said it would. The Lord spoke through Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>Some time later the woman’s son became sick. He became more and more sick. Finally the boy stopped breathing. <sup>18</sup>And the woman said to Elijah, “You are a man of God.\* Can you help me? Or did you come here only to cause me to remember all of my sins? Did you come here only to cause my son to die?”

**Baal** Baal was the main god of Sidon. People thought he could make people have many children and good crops.

**Asherah** An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

**This happened ... Joshua son of Nun** See Joshua 6:26.

**ravens** Black birds.

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

<sup>19</sup>Elijah said to her, “Give your son to me.” Elijah took the boy from her and carried him upstairs. He laid him on the bed in the room where he was staying. <sup>20</sup>Then 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? <sup>21</sup>Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. Elijah prayed, “Lord my God. Allow this boy to live again!”

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

<sup>24</sup>The woman answered, “Now I know that you really are a man from God. I know that the Lord truly speaks through you!”

#### Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

**18** During the third year that no rain fell, the Lord said to Elijah, “Go and meet with King Ahab. I will soon send rain.” <sup>2</sup>So Elijah went to meet Ahab.

At that time, there was no food in Samaria. <sup>3</sup>So 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. <sup>4</sup>One time Jezebel was killing all the Lord’s prophets. So Obadiah took 100 prophets and hid them in two caves. Obadiah put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. Then Obadiah brought them food and water.) <sup>5</sup>King 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.” <sup>6</sup>Each person chose the part of the country where they would go look for water. Then the two men went through the whole country. Ahab went in one direction by himself. Obadiah went in another direction by himself. <sup>7</sup>While Obadiah was traveling, he met Elijah. Obadiah knew Elijah when he saw him. Obadiah bowed down before Elijah. He said, “Elijah? Is it really you, master?”

**widow** A woman whose husband has died.

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

<sup>8</sup>Elijah answered, “Yes, it is me. Go and tell your master the king that I am here.”

<sup>9</sup>Then Obadiah 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? <sup>10</sup>As sure as the Lord your God lives, the king has been looking for you everywhere! He has sent people to every country to find you. If the ruler of a country said that you were not in his country, then Ahab forced the ruler to promise that you were not in his country. <sup>11</sup>Now you want me to go and tell him that you are here? <sup>12</sup>If I go tell King Ahab that you are here, then the Lord might carry you to some other place. King Ahab will come here, and he will not be able to find you. Then he will kill me! I have followed the Lord since I was a boy. <sup>13</sup>You heard what I did! Jezebel was killing the Lord’s prophets, and I hid 100 prophets in caves. I put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. I brought them food and water. <sup>14</sup>Now you want me to go and tell the king that you are here. The king will kill me!”

<sup>15</sup>Elijah answered, “As sure as the Lord All-Powerful lives, I promise that I will stand before the king today.”

<sup>16</sup>So Obadiah went to King Ahab. He told him where Elijah was. King Ahab went to meet Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>When Ahab saw Elijah he said, “Is it you? You are the man that causes trouble in Israel!”

<sup>18</sup>Elijah answered, “I have not caused Israel trouble. You and your father’s family caused all this trouble. You caused the trouble when you stopped obeying the Lord’s commands and began following the false gods. <sup>19</sup>Now, tell all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Also bring to that place the 450 prophets of Baal.\* And bring the 400 prophets of the false goddess Asherah.\* Queen Jezebel supports those prophets.”\*

**Baal** The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

**Asherah** An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

**Queen Jezebel supports those prophets** Literally, “Those prophets eat at Jezebel’s table.”

<sup>20</sup>So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>Elijah came to all the people. He said, “When will you people decide who to follow? If the Lord is the true God, then you should follow him. But if Baal\* is the true God, then you should follow him!”

The people said nothing. <sup>22</sup>So Elijah said, “I am the only prophet of the Lord here. I am alone. But there are 450 prophets of Baal.\* <sup>23</sup>So bring two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal take one bull. Let them kill it and cut it into pieces. Then let them put the meat on the wood. But don’t start the fire burning. Then I will do the same with the other bull. And I will not start the fire burning. <sup>24</sup>You prophets of Baal will pray to your god. And I will pray to the Lord. The god that answers the prayer and starts his wood burning is the true God.”

All the people agreed that this was a good idea.

<sup>25</sup>Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal,\* “There are many of you. So you go first. Choose a bull and prepare it. But don’t start your fire.”

<sup>26</sup>So the prophets took the bull that was given to them. They prepared it. They prayed to Baal\* until noon. They prayed, “Baal, please answer us!” But there was no sound. No one answered. The prophets danced around the altar that they had built. [But the fire never started.]

<sup>27</sup>At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. Elijah said, “If Baal\* is really a god, then maybe you should pray louder! Maybe he is thinking! Or maybe he is busy! Or maybe he is traveling! He could be sleeping! Maybe you should pray louder and wake him!” <sup>28</sup>So the prophets prayed louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears. (This was the way they worshiped.) They cut themselves until the blood flowed over them. <sup>29</sup>The afternoon passed but the fire still had not started. The prophets continued to act wild\* 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!

<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, “Now, come to me.” So all the people gathered around Elijah. The Lord’s altar had been torn down. So Elijah fixed it. <sup>31</sup>Elijah found twelve stones. There was one stone for each of the twelve family groups. These twelve family groups were named for the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob was the man that the Lord had called Israel. <sup>32</sup>Elijah used these stones to fix the altar to honor the Lord. Elijah dug a small ditch around the altar. It was wide enough and deep enough to hold about 7 gallons\* of water. <sup>33</sup>Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces. He laid the pieces on the wood. <sup>34</sup>Then Elijah 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.” <sup>35</sup>The water flowed off of the altar and filled the ditch.

<sup>36</sup>It was time for the afternoon sacrifice. So the prophet Elijah went near 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 prove that I am your servant. Show these people that you commanded me to do all these things. <sup>37</sup>Lord, answer my prayer. Show these people that you, Lord, are God. Then the people will know that you are bringing them back to you.”

<sup>38</sup>So the Lord sent down fire. The fire burned the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the ground around the altar. The fire also dried up all the water in the ditch. <sup>39</sup>All the people saw this happen. The people bowed down on the ground and began saying, “The Lord is God! The Lord is God!”

<sup>40</sup>Then Elijah said, “Get the prophets of Baal!\* Don’t let any of them escape!” So the people captured all the prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Creek. At that place he killed all the prophets.

**Baal** The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

**act wild** Or, “prophesy.” This form of the Hebrew word sometimes mean to “act wild,” or “to lose control of yourself.”

**7 gallons** Or, “14.6 l.” Literally, “2 seahs of seed.”

**The Rain Comes Again**

<sup>41</sup>Then Elijah said to King Ahab, “Now, go eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming. <sup>42</sup>So 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. <sup>43</sup>Then Elijah said to his servant, “Look toward the sea.”

The servant went to the place where he could see the sea. Then the servant came back and said, “I saw nothing.” Elijah told him to go and look again. This happened seven times. <sup>44</sup>The seventh time, the servant came back and said, “I saw a small cloud the size of a man’s fist.\* The cloud was coming from the sea.”

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

<sup>45</sup>After a short time, the sky was covered with dark clouds. The wind began to blow, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab got in his chariot and started traveling back to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup>The power of the Lord came to Elijah. Elijah tightened his clothes around him so he could run. Then Elijah ran ahead of King Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

**Elijah at Mount Sinai**

**19** King Ahab told Jezebel all the things that Elijah did. Ahab told her how Elijah had killed all the prophets with a sword. <sup>2</sup>So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah. Jezebel said, “I promise that before this same time tomorrow, I will kill you like you killed those prophets. If I don’t succeed, then may the gods kill me.”

<sup>3</sup>When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him. They went to Beersheba, Judah. Elijah left his servant in Beersheba. <sup>4</sup>Then Elijah walked for a whole day into the desert. Elijah sat down under a bush. He asked to die. Elijah said, “I have had enough, Lord! Let me die. I am no better than my ancestors.\*”

<sup>5</sup>Then Elijah lay down under the tree and slept. An angel came to Elijah and touched him. The angel said, “Get up! Eat!” <sup>6</sup>Elijah saw very near him a cake baked over coals and a jar of water. Elijah ate and drank. Then he went back to sleep.

<sup>7</sup>Later the Lord’s angel came to him again. The angel said, “Get up! Eat! If you don’t, you will not be strong enough to make the long trip.” <sup>8</sup>So Elijah got up. He ate and drank. The food made Elijah strong enough to walk for 40 days and nights. He walked to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup>There Elijah went into a cave and stayed all night.

Then the Lord spoke to Elijah. The Lord said, “Elijah, why are you here?”

<sup>10</sup>Elijah answered, “Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best I can. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars. They killed your prophets. I am the only prophet that is still living. And now they are trying to kill me!”

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

<sup>13</sup>When Elijah heard the voice\* he used his coat to cover his face. Then he went and stood at the entrance to the cave. Then a voice said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”

<sup>14</sup>Elijah said, “Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best that I can. But the people of Israel broke their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars. They killed your prophets. I am the only prophet that is still living. And now they are trying to kill me.”

**fist** A closed hand.

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**ancestors** Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

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

**voice** Or, “sound.”

<sup>15</sup>The Lord said, “Go back on the road that leads to the desert around Damascus. Go into Damascus, and anoint\* Hazeal as king over Aram. <sup>16</sup>Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel. Next, anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah. He will be the prophet that takes your place. <sup>17</sup>Hazeal will kill many bad people. Jehu will kill anyone that escapes from Hazeal’s sword. And Elisha will kill anyone that escapes from Jehu’s sword. <sup>18</sup>Elijah, you are not the only faithful person in Israel. Those men will kill many people. But, even after that, there will still be 7,000 people living in Israel that never bowed down to Baal! I will let those 7,000 people live—and none of those people ever kissed a Baal idol.

### Elisha Becomes a Prophet

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

Elijah answered, “That is fine. Go. I won’t stop you.\*”

<sup>21</sup>Then Elisha had a special meal with his family. Elisha went and killed his cows. He used the yoke\* for firewood and boiled the meat. Then he gave it to the people and they ate the meat. Then Elisha began following Elijah. Elisha became Elijah’s helper.

### Ben Hadad and Ahab Go To War

**20** Ben Hadad was king of Aram. He gathered together all of his army. There were 32 kings with him. They had horses and

**anoint** To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

**Elisha was plowing ... came** Or, “Elijah was plowing. There were 11 pair before him and he was on the twelfth.”

**coat** This was a special robe that showed that Elijah was a prophet. Giving this coat to Elisha showed that Elisha was taking Elijah’s place as a prophet.

**I won’t stop you** Literally, “What have I done to you?” or “What will I do to you?”

**yoke** A piece of wood that was put over an animal’s neck so it could pull a plow or wagon.

chariots.\* They attacked Samaria and fought against it. <sup>2</sup>The king sent messengers into the city to King Ahab of Israel. <sup>3</sup>This was the message, “Ben Hadad says, ‘You must give me your silver and gold. You must also give me your wives and children.’”

<sup>4</sup>The king of Israel answered, “King, my master. I agree that I belong to you now. And everything I have belongs to you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the messengers came back to Ahab. They said, “Ben Hadad says, ‘I told you before that you must give me all of your silver and gold and your wives and children. <sup>6</sup>Tomorrow I am sending my men to search through your house and through the houses of your officials. You should give my men all of your valuables, and they will bring those things back to me.’”

<sup>7</sup>So King Ahab called a meeting of all the elders (*leaders*) of his country. Ahab said, “Look, Ben Hadad is looking for trouble. First he told me that I must give him my wives, my children, my silver and my gold. I agreed to give those things to him. And now he wants to take everything.”

<sup>8</sup>But the elders (*leaders*) and all the people said, “Don’t obey him. Don’t do what he says.”

<sup>9</sup>So Ahab sent a message to Ben Hadad. Ahab 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. <sup>10</sup>Then they came back with another message from Ben Hadad. The message said, “I will completely destroy Samaria. I promise that there will be nothing left of that city! There won’t be enough of that city left for my men to find any souvenirs\* to take home. May God destroy me if I don’t do this!”

<sup>11</sup>King 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.”

<sup>12</sup>King Ben Hadad was drinking in his tent with the other rulers. At that time the messengers came and gave him the message

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

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



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.

<sup>13</sup>At the same time, a prophet went to King Ahab. The prophet said, “King Ahab, the Lord says to you, ‘Do you see that big army? I, the Lord, will allow you to defeat that army today. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

<sup>14</sup>Ahab said, “Who will you use to defeat them?”

The prophet answered, “The Lord says, ‘The young helpers of the government officials.’”

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

The prophet answered, “You will.”

<sup>15</sup>So 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 7,000.

<sup>16</sup>At noon, King Ben Hadad and the 32 kings helping him were drinking and becoming drunk in their tents. At this time, King Ahab’s attack began. <sup>17</sup>The young helpers attacked first. King Ben Hadad’s men told him that soldiers had come out of Samaria. <sup>18</sup>So Ben Hadad said, “They might be coming to fight. Or they might be coming to ask for peace. Capture them alive.”

<sup>19</sup>The young men of King Ahab were leading the attack. The army of Israel was following them. <sup>20</sup>But each man of Israel killed the man that came against him. So the men from Aram began to run away. The army of Israel chased them. King Ben Hadad escaped on a horse from one of the chariots.\* <sup>21</sup>King Ahab led the army and took all horses and chariots from the army of Aram. So King Ahab caused a great defeat of the Aramean army.

<sup>22</sup>Then the prophet went to King Ahab and said, “The king of Aram, Ben Hadad, will come to fight against you again next spring. So you should go home now and make your army stronger. And make careful plans to defend against him.”

### Ben Hadad Attacks Again

<sup>23</sup>King Ben Hadad’s officers said to him, “The gods of Israel are mountain gods. We fought in a mountain area. So the people of Israel won. So let’s fight them on the flat land. Then we will win. <sup>24</sup>This is what you should do. Don’t allow the 32 kings to command the armies. Let the commanders lead their armies.

<sup>25</sup>“Now you gather an army like the army that was destroyed. Gather horses and chariots like that army. Then let’s fight the Israelites on flat land. Then we will win.” Ben Hadad followed their advice. He did what they said.

<sup>26</sup>So in the spring, Ben Hadad gathered the people of Aram. He went to Aphek to fight against Israel.

<sup>27</sup>The Israelites also prepared for war. The people of Israel went to fight the army of Aram. They made their camp opposite the camp of Aram. Compared to the enemy, Israel looked like two small flocks of goats, but the Aramean soldiers covered the whole area.

<sup>28</sup>A 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 God of the mountains. They think that I am not also the God of the valleys. So I will allow you to defeat this big army. Then you will know that I am the Lord [in every place].’”

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

<sup>32</sup>They 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.’”

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

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

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

Ahab said, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.”\*

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

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

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

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

#### A Prophet Speaks Against Ahab

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

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

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

The king of Israel answered, “<sup>⌋</sup>You have said that you are guilty of letting the soldier escape.<sup>⌋</sup> So you know the answer. You must do what the man said.”

**brother** People that signed peace agreements often called each other “brother.” It was like they became one family.

**75 pounds** Or “34kg.” Literally, “a talent.”

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

<sup>43</sup>Then the king went back home to Samaria. He was worried and upset.

#### Naboth’s Field of Grapes

**21** King Ahab’s palace\* was in the city of Samaria. Near the palace there was a field of grapes. A man named Naboth owned this field. He was from Jezreel. <sup>2</sup>One day Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your field. I want to make it a vegetable garden. Your field is near my palace. I will give you a better grape field in its place. Or, if you prefer, I will pay you its value in money.”

<sup>3</sup>Naboth answered, “I will never give my land to you. This land belongs to my family.”

<sup>4</sup>So Ahab went home. He was angry and upset at Naboth. He did not like the things that man from Jezreel said. (Naboth had said, “I will not give you my family’s land.”) Ahab lay down on his bed. He turned his face away and refused to eat.

<sup>5</sup>Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, went to him. Jezebel said to him, “Why are you upset? Why do you refuse to eat?”

<sup>6</sup>Ahab answered, “I asked Naboth, the man from Jezreel, to give me his field. I told him that I would pay him the full price. Or if he preferred, I would give him another field. But Naboth refused to give his field to me.”

<sup>7</sup>Jezebel answered, “But you are the king over Israel! Get out of your bed. Eat something and you will feel better. I will get Naboth’s field for you.”

<sup>8</sup>Then Jezebel wrote some letters. She signed Ahab’s name to the letters. She used Ahab’s own seal to seal the letters. Then she sent them to the elders (*leaders*) and important men who lived in the same town as Naboth. <sup>9</sup>This is what the letter said:

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

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. <sup>10</sup>Find some men that will tell lies about Naboth. Those people should say that they heard Naboth speak against the king and against God. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him with rocks.

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

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

<sup>17</sup>At this time the Lord spoke to Elijah. (Elijah was the prophet from Tishbe.) [The Lord said,] <sup>18</sup>“Go to King Ahab in Samaria. Ahab will be at Naboth’s field of grapes. He is there to take the field as his own. <sup>19</sup>Tell Ahab that I, the Lord, say to him, ‘Ahab! You killed the man Naboth. Now you are taking his land. So I tell you this! In the same place that Naboth died, you will also die. The dogs that licked Naboth’s blood will lick your blood in the same place!’”

<sup>20</sup>So Elijah went to Ahab. Ahab saw Elijah and said, “You have found me again. You are always against me.”

Elijah answered, “Yes, I found you again. You have always used your life for sinning against the Lord. <sup>21</sup>So the Lord says to you, ‘I will destroy you. I will kill you and every male in your family. <sup>22</sup>Your family will be the same as the family of King Jeroboam son of Nebat. And your family will become like the family of King Baasha. Both of these families

were completely destroyed. I will do this to you because you have made me angry. You have caused the people of Israel to sin.’ <sup>23</sup>And the Lord also says, ‘Dogs will eat the body of your wife Jezebel in the city of Jezreel. <sup>24</sup>Any person in your family that dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. Any person that dies in the fields, will be eaten by birds.’”

<sup>25</sup>There is no other person that has done so many wrong things or sinned so much as Ahab. His wife Jezebel caused him to do those things. <sup>26</sup>Ahab did a very bad sin and worshiped those blocks of wood (*idols*). This was the same thing that the Amorite people did. And the Lord took the land from them and gave it to the people of Israel.

<sup>27</sup>After Elijah finished speaking, Ahab was very sad. He tore his clothes to show that he was sad. Then he put on special clothes of sadness. Ahab refused to eat. He slept in those special clothes. Ahab was very sad and upset.

<sup>28</sup>The Lord said to Elijah the prophet, <sup>29</sup>“I see that Ahab has become humble before me. So, I will not cause the trouble to come to him during his life. I will wait until his son is king. Then I will cause the trouble to come to Ahab’s family.”

#### Micaiah Gives a Warning to Ahab

**22** During the next two years, there was peace between Israel and Aram. <sup>2</sup>Then, during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>At this same time, Ahab asked his officials, “Remember that the king of Aram took Ramoth in Gilead from us? Why have we done nothing to get Ramoth back? It should be our town.” <sup>4</sup>So Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat, “Will you join with us and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth?”

Jehoshaphat answered, “Yes, I will join you. My soldiers and my horses are ready to join with your army. <sup>5</sup>But first we should ask the Lord for advice.”

<sup>6</sup>So Ahab called a meeting of the prophets. There were about 400 prophets at that time. Ahab asked the prophets, “Should I go and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth? Or should I wait for another time?”

The prophets answered, “You should go and fight now. The Lord will allow you to win.”

<sup>7</sup>But Jehoshaphat said, “Are there any other of the Lord’s prophets here? If there are, we should ask them what God says.”

<sup>8</sup>King Ahab answered, “There is one other prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him. When he speaks for the Lord, he never says anything good for me. He always says things that I don’t like.”

Jehoshaphat said, “King Ahab, you should not say those things!”

<sup>9</sup>So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

<sup>10</sup>At that time, the two kings were wearing their royal robes. They were sitting on the thrones. This was at the judging place near the gate of Samaria. All the prophets were standing before them. The prophets were prophesying.\* <sup>11</sup>One of the prophets was named Zedekiah. He was the son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some iron horns.\* Then he 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.’” <sup>12</sup>All the other prophets agreed with what Zedekiah said. The prophet said, “Your army should march now. They should fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. You will win the fight. The Lord will allow you to win.”

<sup>13</sup>While this was happening, the officer went to find Micaiah. The officer found Micaiah and said to him, “All the other prophets have said that the king will succeed. So I tell you that the safest thing that you can do is to say the same thing.”

<sup>14</sup>But Micaiah answered, “No! I promised that by the power of the Lord I will say the things that the Lord tells me to say!”

<sup>15</sup>Then Micaiah stood before King Ahab. The king asked him, “Micaiah, should King Jehoshaphat and I join armies? And should we go now to fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth?”

Micaiah answered, “Yes! You should go and fight them now. The Lord will let you win.”

<sup>16</sup>But Ahab answered, “You are not speaking by the power of the Lord. You are saying your own words. So tell me the truth! How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me what the Lord says!”

<sup>17</sup>So Micaiah answered, “I can see what will happen. The army of Israel will be scattered over the hills. They will be like sheep without anyone to lead them. This is what the Lord says, ‘These men have no leader. They should go home and not fight.’”

<sup>18</sup>Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “See! I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says things that I don’t want to hear.”

<sup>19</sup>But Micaiah continued to speak for the Lord. Micaiah said, “Listen! These are the words that the Lord says! I saw the Lord sitting on his throne in heaven. His angels were standing near him. <sup>20</sup>The Lord said, ‘Will any of you trick King Ahab? I want him to go and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. Then he will be killed.’ The angels did not agree about what they should do. <sup>21</sup>Then one angel went to the Lord and said, ‘I will trick him!’ <sup>22</sup>The Lord answered, ‘How will you trick King Ahab?’ The angel answered, ‘I will confuse all of Ahab’s prophets. I will tell the prophets to speak lies to King Ahab. The messages from the prophets will be lies.’ So the Lord said, ‘Good! Go and trick King Ahab. You will succeed.’”

<sup>23</sup>Micaiah finished his story. Then he said, “So this is what has happened here. The Lord has caused your prophets to lie to you. The Lord himself has decided that great trouble should come to you.”

<sup>24</sup>Then the prophet Zedekiah went to Micaiah. Zedekiah hit Micaiah on the face. Zedekiah said, “Do you really believe that the Lord’s power has left me and is now speaking through you?”

<sup>25</sup>Micaiah answered, “Soon trouble will come. At that time, you will go and hide in a small room. And you will know that I am speaking the truth!”

<sup>26</sup>Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers to arrest Micaiah. King Ahab said, “Arrest him and take him to Amon the

**prophesying** Speaking for God.

**iron horns** These were a symbol of great strength.

governor of the city and prince Joash. <sup>27</sup>Tell them to put Micaiah in prison. Give him only bread and water to eat. Keep him there until I come home from the fight.”

<sup>28</sup>Micaiah said loudly, “All you people listen to what I say! King Ahab, if you come home alive from that fight, then the Lord has not spoken through me.”

<sup>29</sup>Then King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat went to fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. This was in the area called Gilead. <sup>30</sup>Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “We will prepare for the fight. I will wear clothes that make me look like I am not the king. But you wear your special clothes that show you are a king.” So the king of Israel began the battle dressed like a person that was not a king.

<sup>31</sup>The king of Aram had 32 chariot commanders. That king ordered these 32 chariot commanders to find the king of Israel. The king of Aram told the commanders that they must kill the king. <sup>32</sup>So during the battle, these commanders saw King Jehoshaphat. The commanders thought that he was the king of Israel. So they went to kill him. Jehoshaphat began shouting. <sup>33</sup>The commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, so they did not kill him. <sup>34</sup>But a soldier shot an arrow into the air—he was not aiming at any special person. But his arrow hit [Ahab,] the king of Israel. The arrow hit the king in a small place where his armor did not cover his body. So King Ahab said to his chariot driver, “An arrow has hit me! Drive the chariot out of this area. We must go away from the fighting.”

<sup>35</sup>The armies continued to fight. King Ahab stayed in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot. He was looking at the army of Aram. His blood flowed down and covered the bottom of the chariot. Later in the evening, the king died. <sup>36</sup>Near sunset, all men in the army of Israel were commanded to go back to their own city and land.

<sup>37</sup>So that is the way King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria. They buried him there. <sup>38</sup>The men cleaned Ahab’s chariot at the pool of water in Samaria. The dogs licked King Ahab’s blood from the chariot. And the prostitutes\* used the water to wash

themselves. These things happened the way the Lord said they would happen.

<sup>39</sup>All the things that King Ahab did during the time he ruled are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. And that book also tells about the ivory that the king used to make his palace\* more beautiful. And the book tells about the city that the king built. <sup>40</sup>Ahab died and was buried with his ancestors. His son, Ahaziah, became the next king after him.

### Jehoshaphat, King of Judah

<sup>41</sup>During the fourth year that Ahab was king of Israel, Jehoshaphat became king of Judah. Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa. <sup>42</sup>Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king. Jehoshaphat ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. Jehoshaphat’s mother was named Azubah. Azubah was the daughter of Shilhi. <sup>43</sup>Jehoshaphat was good. He did like his father before him. He obeyed all the things that the Lord wanted. But Jehoshaphat did not destroy the high places.\* The people continued offering sacrifices\* and burning incense\* at those places.

<sup>44</sup>Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement with the king of Israel. <sup>45</sup>Jehoshaphat was very brave and fought many wars. All the things he did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. <sup>46</sup>Jehoshaphat forced all the men and women that sold their bodies for sex to leave the places of worship. Those people had served in those places of worship during the time his father Asa was king.

<sup>47</sup>During this time, the land of Edom had no king. The land was ruled by a governor. The governor was chosen by the king of Judah.

**prostitute(s)** A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

**palace** A large house for the king and his family.

**high places** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**incense** Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

**Jehoshaphat's Navy**

<sup>48</sup>King Jehoshaphat built some cargo ships. He wanted the ships to sail to Ophir to get gold from that place. But the ships never went there—they were destroyed in their home port at Ezion Geber. <sup>49</sup>King Ahaziah of Israel offered to help Jehoshaphat. Ahaziah offered to put some of his own sailors with Jehoshaphat's men on those ships.\* But Jehoshaphat refused to accept Ahaziah's men.

<sup>50</sup>Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors. He was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.\* Then his son, Jehoram became king.

**Ahaziah, King of Israel**

<sup>51</sup>Ahaziah 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. <sup>52</sup>Ahaziah sinned against the Lord. He did the same things as his father, Ahab, his mother Jezebel, and Jeroboam, son of Nebat had done. All these rulers led the people of Israel into more sin. <sup>53</sup>Ahaziah worshiped and served the false god Baal, like his father did before him. So Ahaziah caused the Lord God of Israel to be very angry. The Lord was angry at Ahaziah like he had been angry at his father before him.

**King Ahaziah ... ships** Jehoshaphat controlled the port of Ezion Geber which was Israel's only access 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.

**City of David** The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

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