

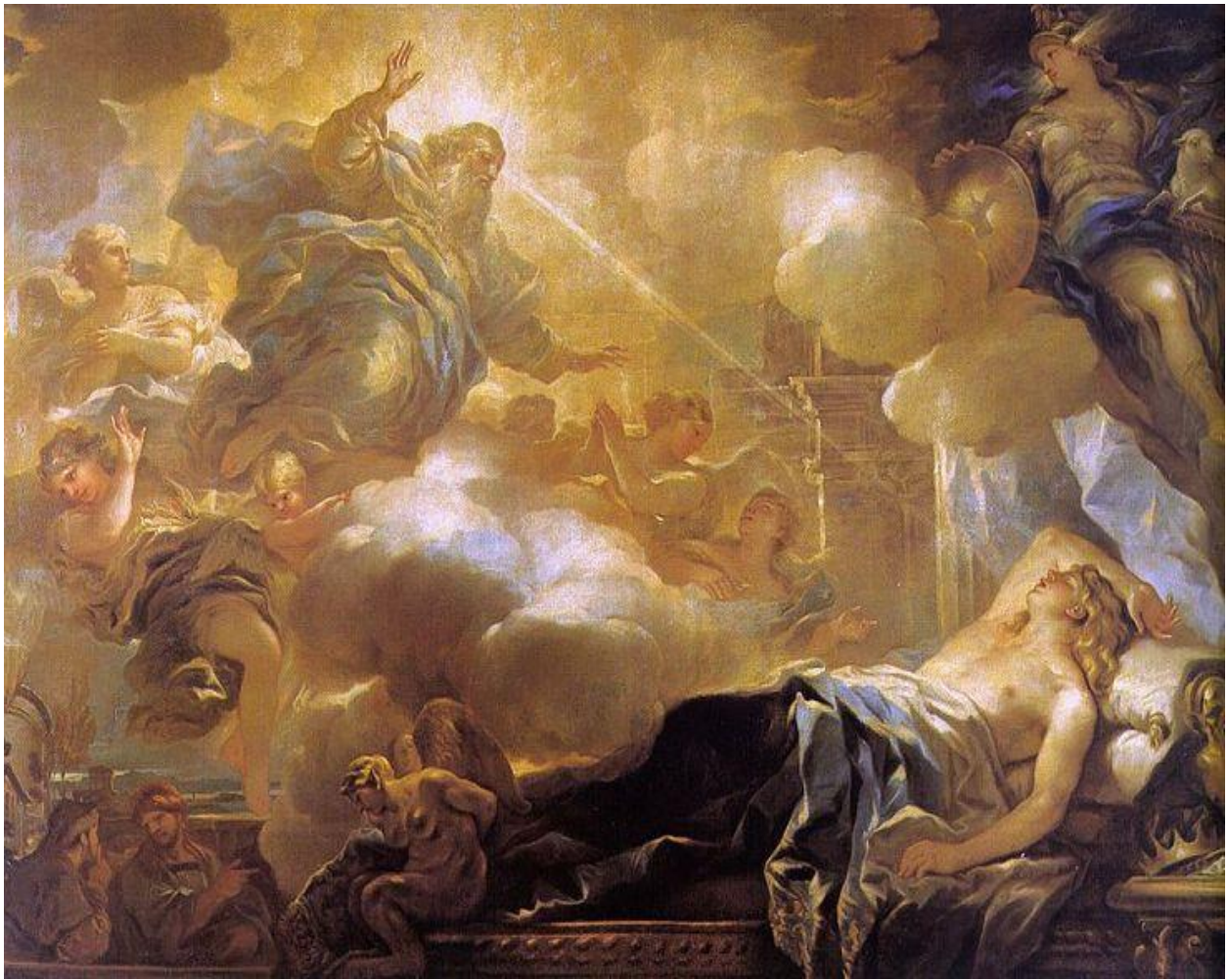
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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 11

1 KINGS



The Dream of Solomon by Luca Giordano

SUMMARY

David grows old and is given Abishag for warmth. David does not know her. Adonijah, the son of David by Haggith, proclaims himself king. Adonijah invites his allies to a banquet. Key figures from David's government (Zadok, Nathan and others) do not support Adonijah, however.

Nathan tells Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, to complain to David that Adonijah has made himself king. She does so, and Nathan confirms her words, saying that Adonijah has performed sacrifices and is being feted by the people.

David arranges for Solomon to be anointed at Gihon, riding on a mule and accompanied by Zadok, Nathan and other prominent figures. Adonijah fears the news, and his guests are afraid. Adonijah submits to Solomon, and his life is spared.

David advises Solomon to maintain a Deuteronomic obedience to the Lord. The covenant is mentioned, though here it is much more conditional than before. David warns Solomon to kill Joab and Shimei, but spare Barzillai.

David dies: he had reigned seven years at Hebron, and thirty three at Jerusalem. Adonijah asks Bathsheba to petition Solomon for Abishag. Solomon sees this as a challenge to the throne and has Adonijah executed. Abiathar the priest, who had supported Adonijah, is exiled: his life is spared on account of having helped David carry the ark.

Zadok replaces Abiathar. Joab is killed because he had shed the innocent blood of Abner and Amasa. Solomon spares the life of Shimei but tells him never to cross the Brook Kidron; many years later he does and is killed.

Solomon makes an alliance with Egypt and marries the Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon sacrifices extravagantly at the high places. In a dream, Solomon asks for understanding to judge his people and discern good from evil. God blesses Solomon.

Two women claim the same son as theirs (the accusation is that one mother had stolen the baby after her one had died). Solomon proposes to cut the child in two, whereupon the real mother gives way, and is thus identified as the real mother.

Solomon's officials and governors are listed. Judah and Israel have peace and prosperity under Solomon's rule. Solomon provides extravagantly for his own household. Political stability and peace, and a vast cavalry. Solomon is famed for his wisdom, wrote proverbs and songs, and was an expert on science and nature.

Solomon plans to build the temple to God. He asks Hiram king of Tyre for cedar wood from Lebanon. A huge labor force is amassed. Solomon and Hiram work together. Solomon builds temple. Temple dimensions, design and method of construction are described. David covenant (with telling conditional clauses) reaffirmed.

Solomon builds his and his wife's house, taking thirteen years to do so. It included pillars, beveled windows, a hall of judgment, and much splendor. Hiram – half Israelite, half from Tyre – makes the furnishings for the temple. Solomon calls Israel to Jerusalem, where the ark of covenant is brought into the Holy of Holies in the new temple.

SUMMARY Continued

The cloud of the Lord's presence (shekinah) enters the temple, so that the priests cannot continue ministering. The temple dedicated, and the Davidic covenant is reaffirmed (with conditional clauses). Solomon expresses the hope that the Lord shall say of the temple, 'My name shall be there'.

God begged to hear supplications when Israelites are making oaths, have been defeated, are suffering from famine or plague, or have been taken captive in a foreign land. Solomon ends by enjoining loyalty and walking in the way of the Lord's statutes. There is a huge feast with thousands of offerings made.

God answers Solomon's prayer, reaffirming the David covenant conditionally. Solomon gives twenty cities in Galilee to Hiram, king of Tyre, in return for a supply of gold and cedar. The remnant Canaanite peoples are used as slave labor. Financing from joint naval expeditions with Hiram brings in gold.

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon. She comes in great splendor, and tests him with hard questions, but he displays his wisdom, until there is no more spirit in her. The queen remarks on how blessed the Israelites are, and there is a royal exchange of gifts before she departs.

The kingdom of Israel expands, becoming very rich and powerful. Examples of Solomon's wealth are given: two hundred golden shields, golden drinking cups, and an ivory throne. He also has many horses – in direct disobedience of Deuteronomy 17:16.

Solomon has many foreign wives and concubines from the nations God had warned about. He also worships false gods, building altars and high places for them. As punishment, God says that he will tear the kingdom from the hands, not of Solomon (on account of his father), but of Solomon's son.

One tribe will be given to Solomon's progeny, on account of David. Hadad the Edomite seeks revenge against Israel for Joab's slaughter of Edomite men; Rezon of Zobah also becomes an enemy, mindful of David's slaughter of the Zobahites.

An internal enemy also emerges: Jeroboam, an Ephraimite in charge of some of Solomon's construction projects, is encouraged by the prophet Ahijah, who tears his garment into twelve pieces, to symbolize the impending division of the kingdom. Jeroboam rebels against Solomon and flees to Egypt. Solomon dies after forty years of rule.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, is made king at Shechem. Jeroboam comes from Egypt and petitions Rehoboam to ease the heavy yoke of his father. Rehoboam's elder servants urge a conciliatory approach, his younger servants an aggressive one. Israel splits from Judah and makes Jeroboam king.

Rehoboam's revenue collector, Adoram, is stoned to death. Shemiah the prophet warns against a planned battle between Judah and David and the rest of Israel, and so the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel is formed.

Shechem is the new capital of the northern kingdom. Jeroboam sets up golden calves for worship at Bethel and Dan. He also makes high places and creates non-Levitic priests.

SUMMARY Continued

A nameless 'man of God' prophesies the destruction of the altar at Bethel by Josiah. As a sign to man that God's words are true, the altar splits in two and spews ash. When Jeroboam stretches out his hand to say, 'Arrest him!' his hand withers. The man of God prays for Jeroboam, and his hand is restored.

An invitation to eat with Jeroboam is declined, because God had commanded to return without eating anything. An old prophet persuades the man of God to eat with him, then prophesies that he shall not come to the tomb of his fathers on account of his disobedience. A lion kills the man of God on his way back. The man of God is buried in Bethel, and the old prophet asks to be buried alongside him. High places proliferate.

Jeroboam's son, Abijah, becomes sick, so Jeroboam's wife disguises herself and visits Ahijah the prophet, who, with God's help, is not fooled by her disguise, and speaks against Jeroboam. In the short term, his son would die, and in the long term, his whole house would be destroyed, and the northern kingdom would be scattered.

Jeroboam dies and is replaced as king by his son Nadab. Judah sins with high places and false worship. Egypt takes Judah's wealth, including Solomon's golden shields, which are replaced by bronze ones. Rehoboam dies and is replaced as king by Abijam.

Abijam reigns for three years in Judah and walks in the sins of his father. The Lord tolerates him on account of David. Abijam goes to war against Jeroboam. Asa is the next king of Judah; he does what is right in the eyes of the Lord, and reigns 41 years. He destroys idols, although the high places are left.

Asa buys the favor of king Ben-Hadad of Syria to prevent Baasha king of Israel blocking the main route from Israel into Judah at Ramah. Nadab rules over Israel for two years and does evil. Baasha rises up against Nadab, and kills all the house of Jeroboam, as Ahijah prophesied. Baasha reigns twenty years and does evil.

Baasha dies, and God says his house will be destroyed. Elah, his son, rules over Israel. Jehu prophesies against Elah. After he has reigned for two years, Zimri kills Elah and the entire house of Baasha, rules for seven days, and is overthrown by Omri, the commander of the army.

Omri wins a civil war against Tibni, rules for twelve years during the reign of Asa, does evil, dies. Ahab his son rules Israel afterwards, and does evil, marrying Jezebel the Sidonian, and building a temple to Baal at Samaria. Hiel of Bethel rebuilds Jericho, challenging the curse in Joshua 6:26.

Elijah declares a three years drought to Ahab. God advises Elijah to flee to Brook Cherith, drink from the brook and be fed by ravens. The brook eventually dries up, so God tells Elijah to find a widow in Zarephath, who will provide for him.

Elijah does so, but the widow says she is too poor to provide for Elijah. Miraculously, the widow makes bread, and her flour and oil does not run out. The widow's son dies, so Elijah brings him back from the dead. The drought comes to an end in Israel, followed by a famine. Obadiah is a God-fearing man in charge of Ahab's house. Obadiah had protected fifty prophets when Jezebel had sought to kill them.

SUMMARY Continued

When searching for water for livestock, Obadiah meets Elijah, and Elijah then meets the king. Elijah and the prophets of Baal and Asherah sacrifice on Mount Carmel. Fire consumes Elijah's sacrifice, despite not being lit.

The sacrifice of the other prophets does not catch fire, despite their prayers, for which Elijah mocks them. Elijah executes the false prophets. Rain falls in Israel. Ahab rides to Jezreel. Elijah does not ride, but the Lord girds his loins and brings him to Jezreel first.

Elijah is threatened by Jezebel. Elijah flees into the wilderness and wants to die. He is given food by an angel, wanders for forty days, then reaches Mount Horeb. Elijah witnesses strong winds, an earthquake and a fire, but the Lord is in none of them.

The Lord actually speaks to Elijah in a quiet voice, asking what he is doing there. The Lord tells him to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael as king of Syria, and Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as the prophet to replace him. Those who worship Baal will be killed by one of the three. Elijah finds Elisha and throws the mantle of the prophet on him.

Ben-Hadad of Syria threatens Ahab's Samaria. Ahab is counselled by his elders to resist. A nameless prophet promises Ahab victory, which comes to pass. Israel wins a further battle against Syria the next spring – this time not on the hills, but on the plains.

Ahab makes a covenant with the humbled Ben-Hadad. A prophet needs an injury to display to Ahab. He asks his neighbor to strike, and when he refuses, he is killed by a lion.

Another man does strike the prophet, whereupon the prophet goes to Ahab disguised with a bandage and tells the king he has lost a man he was supposed to be guarding. Ahab says he must pay with his life – the prophet uses this situation as an analogy to Ahab's, predicting his death for the mercy he showed Ben-Hadad.

Ahab asks Naboth the Jezreelite for a vineyard, and Naboth refuses, because it is his inheritance. Jezebel has Naboth stoned to death through a false accusation of blasphemy. Ahab then takes possession of Naboth's land.

Elijah tells Ahab that in the place where dogs lick Naboth's blood, they shall lick his also. The dogs shall also eat Jezebel, and the house of Ahab will be cut off like that of Jeroboam and Baasha. Ahab humbles himself, and so God defers calamity to the days of his son.

Ahab joins forces with Jehoshapat king of Judah to win Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. Jehoshapat seeks the advice of God via prophets. A group of four hundred unfaithful prophets say the combined forces of the northern and southern kingdoms will be victorious.

Micaiah says the combined forces will be defeated – much as Ahab expected, given Micaiah's negative words about him in the past. Micaiah says the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of the four hundred prophets. Micaiah is imprisoned.

SUMMARY Continued

Jehoshapat and Ahab go into battle, the latter in disguise. Jehoshapat is rescued from attack, but Ahab is killed, and dogs lick his blood. Ahaziah the son of Ahab then rules the northern kingdom.

Jehoshapat becomes king in the fourth year of Ahab's reign, and reigns twenty five years. He was a good king but did not remove the high places. Jehoram reigns after Jehoshapat.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 3:5** At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "**Ask! What shall I give you?**"
- 4:29** And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.
- 10:24** Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.
- 11: 9** So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,
- 11:10** and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.
- 11:11** Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.
- 17:20** Then he cried out to the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"
- 17:21** And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."
- 17:22** Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

CHARACTER Definitions

SOLOMON - King Solomon was known for his wisdom, his wealth and his writings. He became ruler in approximately 967 B.C.E. and his kingdom extended from the Euphrates River in the north to Egypt in the south. His crowning achievement was the building of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Almost all knowledge of him is derived from the biblical books of Kings I and Chronicles II.

Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba. Solomon was not the oldest son of David, but David promised Bathsheba that Solomon would be the next king. When David's elder son Adonijah declared himself king, David ordered his servants to bring Solomon to the Gihon spring where the priest anointed him while David was still alive. Solomon inherited a considerable empire from his father.

At first Solomon was faced with opposition. Two of David's closest advisors, Joab son of Zeruiah and the priest Abiathar, sided with Adonijah. When Adonijah came to Solomon and requested the king's servant as a wife, Solomon saw that this was a veiled threat to take over his kingdom and sent a messenger to kill Adonijah.

CHARACTERS Continued

He banished Abiathar to the city of Anathoth. Solomon then followed his father's last instructions in which David had ordered him to kill both Joab and one of his father's enemies, Shimei son of Gera. Solomon thus overcame the last potential threats to his kingdom. He then appointed his friends to key military, governmental and religious posts.

Solomon accumulated enormous wealth. He controlled the entire region west of the Euphrates and had peace on his borders. Kings I states that he owned 12,000 horses with horsemen and 1,400 chariots. Remains of stalls for 450 horses have in fact been found in Megiddo.

Solomon strengthened his kingdom through marital alliances. 1 Kings records that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He had a large share in the trade between northern and southern countries.

He established Israelite colonies around his province to look after military, administrative and commercial matters. The empire was divided into twelve districts, with Judah constituting its own political unit and enjoying certain privileges.

Although Solomon was young, he soon became known for his wisdom. The first and most famous incident of his cleverness as a judge was when two women came to his court with a baby whom both women claimed as their own. Solomon threatened to split the baby in half. One woman was prepared to accept the decision, but the other begged the King to give the live baby to the other woman. Solomon then knew the second woman was the mother.

People from surrounding nations also came to hear Solomon's wisdom. He composed 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. He wrote the Song of Songs, the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

One of the most celebrated visits to Solomon was that of the Queen of Sheba, who came from southern Arabia. Historically, Arabia was a country rich in gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Solomon needed Sheba's products and trade routes; the queen of Sheba needed Solomon's cooperation in marketing her country's goods. The queen came to Solomon with camels carrying spices, gold and precious stones. She asked him questions and riddles and was amazed at his wisdom.

Once Solomon's empire was tranquil, he began to build the Holy Temple. He received wood from King Hiram of Tyre and imposed a compulsory labor service on both the Israelites and the foreign nations that were under his control.

His workers built the structure of the Temple, its decorations and its vessels. The Temple took seven years to complete. It was built of stone and cedar, carved within and overlaid with pure gold. When it was done, Solomon dedicated the Temple in a public ceremony of prayers and sacrifices.

Solomon was also renowned for his other building projects in which he used slave labor from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

CHARACTERS Continued

He spent 13 years building his own palace, and also built a city wall, a citadel called the Millo, a palace for the daughter of Pharaoh (who was one of his wives) and facilities for foreign traders.

He erected cities for chariots and horsemen and created storage cities. He extended Jerusalem to the north and fortified cities near the mountains of Judah and Jerusalem.

Solomon's downfall came in his old age. He had taken many foreign wives, whom he allowed to worship other gods. He even built shrines for the sacrifices of his foreign wives.

Within Solomon's kingdom, he placed heavy taxation on the people, who became bitter. He also had the people work as soldiers, chief officers and commanders of his chariots and cavalry.

He granted special privileges to the tribes of Judah and this alienated the northern tribes. The prophet Ahijah of Shiloh prophesied that Jeroboam son of Nebat would become king over ten of the 12 tribes, instead of one of Solomon's sons.

Outside Solomon's kingdom, Hadad, of the royal family of Edom, rose up as an adversary of Israel. Rezon son of Eliada, ruler of Aram also fought Solomon, and created tension between the two kingdoms that was to last even after Solomon's reign ended.

Solomon died in Jerusalem after 40 years as ruler of Israel. He was buried in the City of David. His son, Rehoboam succeeded him as king. Under Rehoboam's rule, Solomon's empire was lost and his kingdom was divided into two parts.

ADONIJAH – After the death of his elder brothers Amnon and Absalom, Adonijah considered himself the heir-apparent to the throne. He acquired chariots and a large entourage. Although the king was aware of this, he neither rebuked his son nor made any inquiry into his actions.

David's silence may have been interpreted by Adonijah and others as consent. Adonijah consulted and obtained the support of both the commander of the army Joab and the influential priest Abiathar. However, the priest Zadok; Benaiah, head of the king's bodyguard; Nathan, the court prophet; and others did not side with Adonijah.

In anticipation of his father's imminent death, Adonijah invited his brother princes and the court officials to a solemn sacrifice in order to announce his claim to the throne. He did not invite Solomon or any of his supporters.

Assuming that Adonijah will soon move to eliminate any rivals or opposition, Nathan warns Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and counsels her to remind the king of a previous promise to make Solomon his successor.

However, Adonijah was supplanted by Solomon through the influence of Bathsheba, and through the diplomacy of the prophet Nathan. They induced David to give orders that Solomon should immediately be proclaimed and admitted to the throne.

CHARACTERS Continued

Adonijah fled and took refuge at the altar, receiving pardon for his conduct from Solomon on the condition that he showed himself a worthy man. He afterwards made a second attempt to gain the throne, by trying to marry David's last woman, Abishag from Shunem, but Solomon denied authorization for such an engagement, even though Bathsheba now pleaded on Adonijah's behalf. He was then put to death.

BENAIAH – Benaiah was inspired by a noble ambition. He came of a noble ancestry, whose forefathers had left their impress upon the history of the nation. Born well, Benaiah sought to live well.

Absalom became a traitor to his godly father and broke his heart. The sons of priestly Eli lived in sin and died in disgrace. Benaiah, privileged with the example of godly parentage, looked upon life as a challenge to personal and individual responsibility.

He was fearless in his destruction of Israel's foes. Born in an age of warfare, when youths were valiant in fight and middle-aged men were veterans, Benaiah had been valiant in many a campaign against hostile nations.

This grandson of a valiant man of Kabzeel had many mighty deeds to his credit. Three glimpses are given of Benaiah's bravery. He confronted two lionhearted men of Moab—giants among their fellows—either of whom would have been more than a match for any ordinary soldier; but Benaiah took them both on and was the victor.

Then he attacked the Egyptian of "great stature" but although this dark-skinned giant carried a spear "like a weaver's beam" Benaiah met him with an ordinary staff and left the field victorious.

Benaiah's next exploit finds him attacking not "lionhearted men" but an actual lion that had alarmed the people. A pit was dug to trap the marauding lion, and snow fell and hid the trap in a most effective way. The lion fell into the pit and vainly tried to extricate itself.

Benaiah, the hero who had vanquished a giant and conquered two lionhearted Moabites, descended the pit on a snowy day and single-handed slew the lion. No wonder David, who also had slain a lion, gave Benaiah the chief place among the favored three.

REHOBOAM – Rehoboam was 41 years old when he ascended the throne. The United Kingdom of Solomon breaks up, with Jeroboam ruling over the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

The assembly for the coronation of Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, was called at Shechem, the one sacredly historic city within the territory of the Ten Tribes. Before the coronation took place, the assembly requested certain reforms in the policy followed by Rehoboam's father, Solomon.

The reforms requested would materially reduce the royal exchequer and hence its power to continue the magnificence of Solomon's court. The older men counseled Rehoboam at least to speak to the people in a civil manner (it is not clear whether they counseled him to accept the demands).

CHARACTERS Continued

However, the new king sought the advice from the people he had grown up with, who advised the king to show no weakness to the people, and to tax them even more, which Rehoboam did.

He proclaimed to the people, "Whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, so shall I add tenfold thereto. Whereas my father chastised (tortured) you with whips, so shall I chastise you with scorpions. For my littlest finger is thicker than my father's loins; and your backs, which bent like reeds at my father's touch, shall break like straws at my own touch."

Although the ostensible reason was the heavy burden laid upon Israel because of Solomon's great outlay for buildings and for luxury of all kinds, the other reasons include the historical opposition between the north and the south.

The two sections had acted independently until David, by his victories, succeeded in uniting all the tribes, though the Ephraimitic jealousy was ever ready to develop into open revolt. Religious considerations were also operative.

The building of the Temple was a severe blow for the various sanctuaries scattered through the land, and the priests of the high places probably supported the revolt. Josephus makes the rebels exclaim: " We leave to Rehoboam the Temple his father built."

Jeroboam and the people rebelled, with the ten northern tribes breaking away and forming a separate kingdom. The new breakaway kingdom continued to be called Kingdom of Israel, and was also known as Samaria, or Ephraim or the northern Kingdom. The realm Rehoboam was left with was called Kingdom of Judah.

Rehoboam went to war against the new Kingdom of Israel with a force of 180,000 soldiers. However, he was advised against fighting his brethren, and so returned to Jerusalem. The text reports that Israel and Judah were in a state of war throughout his 17-year reign.

In the 5th year of Rehoboam's reign Shishaq, king of Egypt, brought a huge army and took many cities. According to Joshua, son of Nadav, that Rehoboam built fifteen fortified cities, indicates that the attack was not unexpected.

The account in Chronicles states that Shishaq marched with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen and troops who came with him from Egypt: Libyans, Sukkites, and Kushites. Shishaq's armies captured all of the fortified towns leading to Jerusalem between Gezer and Gibeon.

When they laid siege to Jerusalem, Rehoboam gave Shishaq all of the treasures out of the temple as a tribute. The Egyptian campaign cut off trade with south Arabia via Elath and the Negev that had been established during Solomon's reign. Judah became a vassal state of Egypt.

Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 concubines. They bore him 28 sons and 60 daughters. His wives included Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and Abihail, the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse.

CHARACTERS Continued

His sons with Mahalath were Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. After Mahalath he married his cousin Maacah, daughter of Absalom, David's son. His sons with Maacah were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

The names of his other wives, sons and all his daughters are not given. Rehoboam reigned for 17 years. When he died he was buried beside his ancestors in Jerusalem. He was succeeded by his son Abijah.

JEROBOAM – Jeroboam was the son of Nebat, a member of the Tribe of Ephraim of Zereda. His mother, named Zeruah was a widow. He had at least two sons, Abijah and Nadab, who succeeded him on the throne.

While still a young man, King Solomon made him superintendent over his tribesmen in the building of the fortress Millo in Jerusalem and of other public works, and he naturally became conversant with the widespread discontent caused by the extravagances which marked the reign of Solomon.

Influenced by the words of the prophet Ahijah, he began to form conspiracies with the view of becoming king of the ten northern tribes; but these were discovered, and he fled to Egypt, where he remained under the protection of pharaoh Shishak until the death of Solomon.

After this event he returned and participated in a delegation sent to ask the new king Rehoboam to reduce taxes. After Rehoboam rejected their petition ten of the tribes withdrew their allegiance to the house of David and proclaimed Jeroboam their king, forming the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria). Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remaining with the new kingdom of Judah, and Rehoboam.

He rebuilt and fortified Shechem as the capital of the northern kingdom, and fearing that pilgrimages to the temple in Jerusalem prescribed by the Law might be an occasion for his people to go back to their old allegiance, he built two state temples, with golden calves, one in Bethel and the other in Dan.

Although criticized for his cultic activities, calf worship was not new in Israelite ritual, but a reintroduction of earlier ritual. Bethel and Dan were already established cultic sites.

According to 1 Kings 13:1–6, while Jeroboam was engaged in offering incense at Bethel, a "man of God" warned him that "a son named Josiah will be born to the house of David" who would destroy the altar (referring to King Josiah of Judah who would rule approximately three hundred years later).

Attempting to arrest the prophet for his bold words of defiance, Jeroboam's hand was "dried up", and the altar before which he stood was rent asunder. At his urgent entreaty his hand was restored him again; but the miracle made no abiding impression on him. This "man of God" who warned Jeroboam has been equated with a seer named Iddo.

Jeroboam's son Abijah gets sick, and he sends his wife to the prophet Ahijah. Ahijah's message, however, is that Abijah will die, which he does.

CHARACTERS Continued

Jeroboam was in constant "war with the house of Judah". While the southern kingdom made no serious effort to militarily regain power over the north, there was a long-lasting boundary dispute, fighting over which lasted during the reigns of several kings on both sides before being finally settled.

In the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign, Abijah, Rehoboam's son, became king of Judah. During his short reign of three years, Abijah went to considerable lengths to bring the Kingdom of Israel back under his control. He waged a major battle against Jeroboam in the mountains of Ephraim.

Abijah had a force of 400,000 and Jeroboam 800,000. The Biblical sources mention that Abijah addressed the armies of Israel, urging them to submit and to let the Kingdom of Israel be whole again, but his plea fell on deaf ears.

Abijah then rallied his own troops with a phrase which has since become famous: "God is with us as our leader." The biblical account states that his elite warriors fended off a pincer movement to rout Jeroboam's troops—killing 500,000 of them.

Jeroboam was crippled by this severe defeat to Abijah and posed little threat to the Kingdom of Judah for the rest of his reign. He also lost the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron, with their surrounding villages.

Bethel was an important center for Jeroboam's Golden Calf cult (which used non-Levites as priests), located on Israel's southern border, which had been allocated to the Tribe of Benjamin by Joshua, as was Ephron, which is believed to be the Ophrah that was allocated to the Tribe of Benjamin by Joshua. Jeroboam died soon after Abijah.

ELIJAH – By the 9th century BC, the Kingdom of Israel, once united under Solomon, was divided into the northern Kingdom of Israel and southern Kingdom of Judah, which retained the historical capital of Jerusalem along with its Temple.

Omri, King of Israel, continued policies dating from the reign of Jeroboam, contrary to religious law, that were intended to reorient religious focus away from Jerusalem: encouraging the building of local temple altars for sacrifices, appointing priests from outside the family of the Levites, and allowing or encouraging temples dedicated to Baal, an important deity in ancient Canaanite religion.

Omri achieved domestic security with a marriage alliance between his son Ahab and princess Jezebel, a priestess of Baal and the daughter of the king of Sidon in Phoenicia. These solutions brought security and economic prosperity to Israel for a time, but did not bring peace with the Israelite prophets, who were interested in a strict deuteronomic interpretation of the religious law.

Under Ahab's kingship, these tensions were exacerbated. Ahab built a temple for Baal, and his wife Jezebel brought a large entourage of priests and prophets of Baal and Asherah into the country.

It is in this context that Elijah is introduced in 1 Kings 17:1 as Elijah "the Tishbite". He warns Ahab that there will be years of catastrophic drought so severe that not

CHARACTERS Continued

even dew will form, because Ahab and his queen stand at the end of a line of kings of Israel who are said to have "done evil in the sight of the Lord."

No background for the person of Elijah is given except for his brief description as being a "Tishbite." His name in Hebrew means "My God is Yahweh", and may be a title applied to him because of his challenge to worship of Baal. Elijah's challenge is bold and direct. Baal was the Canaanite god responsible for rain, thunder, lightning, and dew. Elijah not only challenges Baal on behalf of God himself, he challenges Jezebel, her priests, Ahab and the people of Israel.

After Elijah's confrontation with Ahab, God tells him to flee out of Israel, to a hiding place by the brook Chorath, east of the Jordan, where he will be fed by ravens. When the brook dries up, God sends him to a widow living in the town of Zarephath in Phoenicia.

When Elijah finds her and asks to be fed, she says that she does not have sufficient food to keep her and her own son alive. Elijah tells her that God will not allow her supply of flour or oil to run out, saying, "Do not be afraid . . . For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth."

She feeds him the last of their food, and Elijah's promise miraculously comes true. God gave her "manna" from heaven even while he was withholding food from his unfaithful people in the promised land. Sometime later the widow's son dies and the widow cries, "You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!"

Elijah prays that God might restore her son so that the trustworthiness of God's word might be demonstrated. 1 Kings 17:22 relates how God "listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived."

This is the first instance of raising the dead recorded in Scripture. This non-Israelite widow was granted the life of her son, the only hope for a widow in ancient society. The widow cried, "...the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." She made a confession that the Israelites had failed to make.

After more than three years of drought and famine, God tells Elijah to return to Ahab and announce the end of the drought: not occasioned by repentance in Israel but by the command of the Lord, who had determined to reveal himself again to his people.

While on his way, Elijah meets Obadiah, the head of Ahab's household, who had hidden a hundred Jewish prophets when Ahab and Jezebel had been killing them. Elijah sends Obadiah back to Ahab to announce his return to Israel.

When Ahab confronts Elijah, he refers to him as the "troubler of Israel." Elijah responds by throwing the charge back at Ahab, saying that it is Ahab who has troubled Israel by allowing the worship of false gods.

CHARACTERS Continued

Elijah then berates both the people of Israel and Ahab for their acquiescence in Baal worship. "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people were silent.

The Hebrew for this word, "go limping" or "waver", is the same as that used for "danced" in verse 26, where the prophets of Baal frantically dance. Elijah speaks with sharp irony: in the religious ambivalence of Israel, he is portraying here as engaging in a wild and futile religious "dance".

At this point Elijah proposes a direct test of the powers of Baal and the Jewish God. The people of Israel, 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Asherah are summoned to Mount Carmel. Two altars are built, one for Baal and one for God. Wood is laid on the altars. Two oxen are slaughtered and cut into pieces; the pieces are laid on the wood.

Elijah then invites the priests of Baal to pray for fire to light the sacrifice. They pray from morning to noon without success. Elijah ridicules their efforts. "At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

They respond by cutting themselves and adding their own blood to the sacrifice (such mutilation of the body was strictly forbidden in the Mosaic law). They continue praying until evening without success.

Elijah now orders that the altar of his god be drenched with water from "four large jars" poured three times. He asks God to accept the sacrifice. Fire falls from the sky, consuming the water, the sacrifice and the stones of the altar itself as well. Elijah then orders the deaths of the prophets of Baal. Elijah prays earnestly for rain to fall again on the land. Then the rains begin, signaling the end of the famine.

Jezebel, enraged that Elijah had ordered the deaths of her priests, threatens to kill Elijah. Later Elijah would prophesy about Jezebel's death, because of her sin. Later, Elijah flees to Beersheba in Judah, continues alone into the wilderness, and finally sits down under a Retamaine shrub, praying for death.

He falls asleep under the tree; the angel of the Lord touches him and tells him to wake up and eat. When he awakens he finds bread and a jar of water. He eats, drinks, and goes back to sleep. The angel comes a second time and tells him to eat and drink because he has a long journey ahead of him.

Elijah travels for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb, where Moses had received the Ten Commandments. Elijah is the only person described in the Bible as returning to Horeb, after Moses and his generation had left Horeb several centuries before. He seeks shelter in a cave.

God again speaks to Elijah: "What doest thou here, Elijah?". Elijah did not give a direct answer to the Lord's question but evades and equivocates, implying that the work the Lord had begun centuries earlier had now come to nothing, and that his own work was fruitless.

CHARACTERS Continued

Unlike Moses, who tried to defend Israel when they sinned with the golden calf, Elijah bitterly complains over the Israelites' unfaithfulness and says he is the "only one left". Up until this time Elijah has only the word of God to guide him, but now he is told to go outside the cave and "stand before the Lord."

A terrible wind passes, but God is not in the wind. A great earthquake shakes the mountain, but God is not in the earthquake. Then a fire passes the mountain, but God is not in the fire. Then a "still small voice" comes to Elijah and asks again, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Elijah again evades the question and his lament is unrevised, showing that he did not understand the importance of the divine revelation he had just witnessed. God then sends him out again, this time to Damascus to anoint Hazael as king of Aram, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as his replacement.

Elijah encounters Ahab again in 1 Kings 21, after Ahab has acquired possession of a vineyard by murder. Ahab desires to have the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel. He offers a better vineyard or a fair price for the land. But Naboth tells Ahab that God has told him not to part with the land. Ahab accepts this answer with sullen bad grace.

Jezebel, however, plots a method for acquiring the land. She sends letters, in Ahab's name, to the elders and nobles who lived near Naboth. They are to arrange a feast and invite Naboth. At the feast, false charges of cursing God and Ahab are to be made against him. The plot is carried out and Naboth is stoned to death. When word comes that Naboth is dead, Jezebel tells Ahab to take possession of the vineyard.

God again speaks to Elijah and sends him to confront Ahab with a question and a prophecy: "Have you killed, and also taken possession?" and, "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood." Ahab begins the confrontation by calling Elijah his enemy. Elijah responds by throwing the charge back at him, telling him that he has made himself the enemy of God by his own actions.

Elijah then goes beyond the prophecy he was given and tells Ahab that his entire kingdom will reject his authority; that Jezebel will be eaten by dogs within Jezreel; and that his family will be consumed by dogs as well (if they die in a city) or by birds (if they die in the country). When Ahab hears this he repents to such a degree that God relents in punishing Ahab but will punish Jezebel and their son: Ahaziah.

Elijah continues now from Ahab to an encounter with Ahaziah. The scene opens with Ahaziah seriously injured in a fall. He sends to the priests of Baalzebub in Ekron, outside the kingdom of Israel, to know if he will recover.

Elijah intercepts his messengers and sends them back to Ahaziah with a message "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?"

Ahaziah asks the messengers to describe the person who gave them this message. They tell him he was a hairy man with a leather belt around his waist and he instantly recognizes the description as Elijah the Tishbite.

CHARACTERS Continued

Ahaziah sends out three groups of soldiers to arrest Elijah. The first two are destroyed by fire which Elijah calls down from heaven. The leader of the third group asks for mercy for himself and his men. Elijah agrees to accompany this third group to Ahaziah, where he gives his prophecy in person.

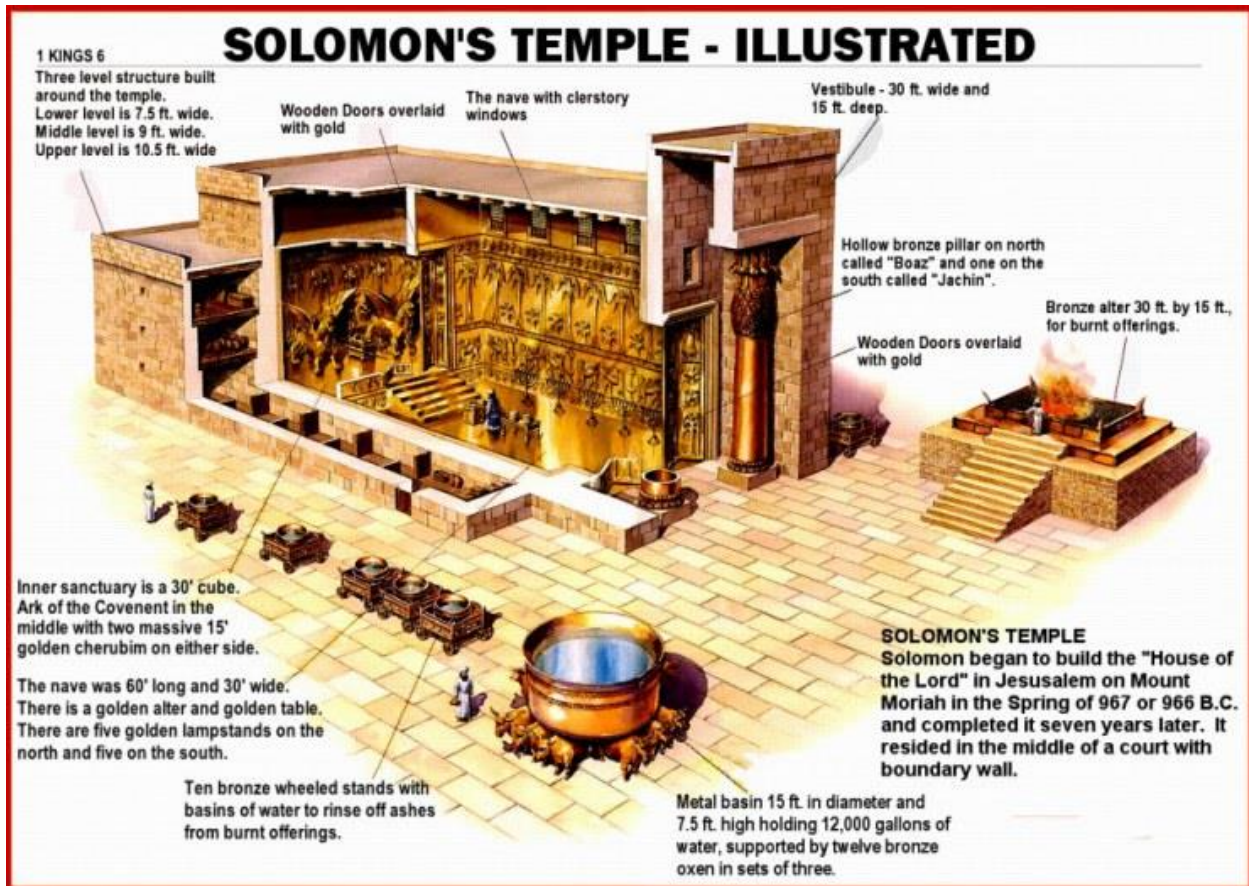
According to 2 Kings 2:3-9, Eliseus and "the sons of the prophets" knew beforehand about the Elijah's future ascension to heaven. Eliseus asked Elijah to "let a double portion" of Elijah's "spirit" be upon him. Elijah agreed with the condition, that Eliseus would see him be "taken".

Elijah, in company with Elisha (Eliseus), approaches the Jordan. He rolls up his mantle and strikes the water. The water immediately divides and Elijah and Elisha cross on dry land. Suddenly, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appear and Elijah is lifted up in a whirlwind. As Elijah is lifted up, his mantle falls to the ground and Elisha picks it up.

BIBLE TIMELINE

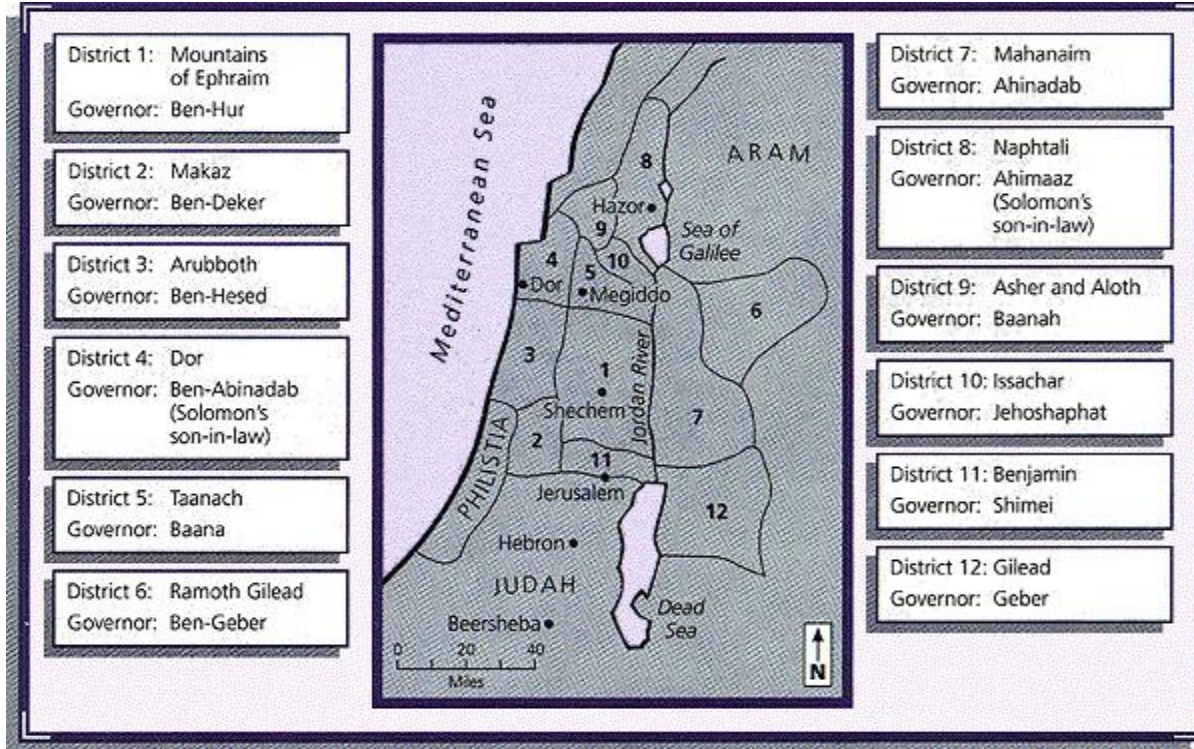
970 BC	David's last days	1 Kings 1, 2
967 BC	Solomon Asks for Wisdom	1 Kings 3
967 BC	Solomon's Preparations for the Temple	1 Kings 5
966 BC	The Building of Solomon's Temple	1 Kings 6
966 BC	The Building of Solomon's Palace	1 Kings 7
946 BC	The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon	1 Kings 10
939 BC	Solomon's Wives and Idolatry	1 Kings 11
931 BC	Solomon's Death	1 Kings 11:40
931 BC	The Kingdom is Divided	1 Kings 12, 13
925 BC	Ahijah's Prophecies against Jeroboam	1 Kings 14
913 BC	Rehoboam's Wicked Reign	1 Kings 14:21
913 BC	Abijah's wicked reign	1 Kings 15
909 BC	Jehu's prophecy against Baasha	1 Kings 16
886 BC	Elah, Zimri, Omri	1 Kings 16:5
874 BC	Ahab's wicked reign	1 Kings 16:27
863 BC	Elijah Prays for Drought	1 Kings 17
863 BC	The Widow at Zarephath	1 Kings 17:7
863 BC	Elijah on Mount Carmel	1 Kings 18
858 BC	Elisha Called	1 Kings 19:19
857 BC	Ben-Hadad Attacks Samaria	1 Kings 20
857 BC	Ahab Defeats Ben-Hadad	1 Kings 20:14
855 BC	Ahab Takes Naboth's Vineyard	1 Kings 21
853 BC	Israel and Judah against Syria	1 Kings 22

MAP REFERENCES

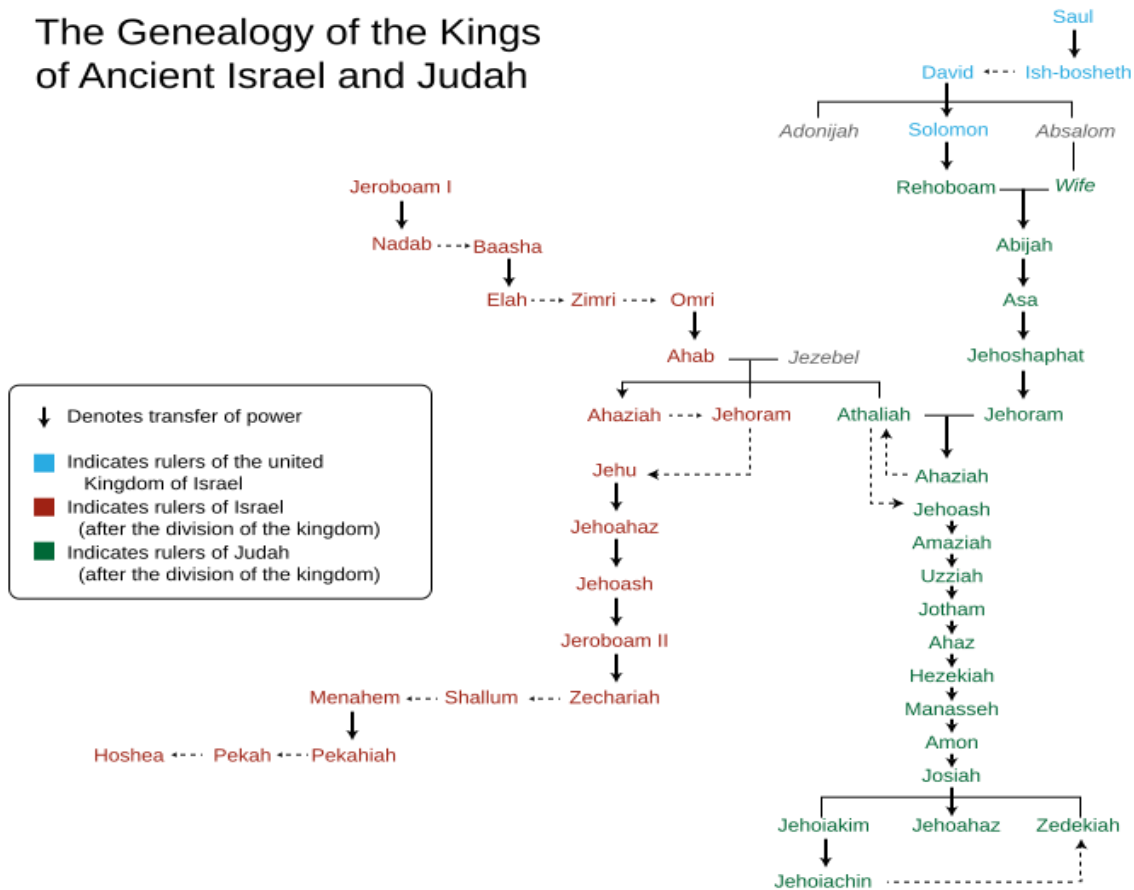


MAP REFERENCES Continued

SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION



The Genealogy of the Kings of Ancient Israel and Judah



MAP REFERENCES Continued

