



## OT Survey 6

### 6. Divided Kingdom.

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Material covers 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 10-28.

Characters: Solomon. Rehoboam. Jeroboam leads a succession.

Time period 931-722 (for the North). The Divided Kingdom to the beginning of the fall of Samaria (931-722 B.C.).

Memory:

**1 Kings 9:4-5**, “As for you, **if** you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, <sup>5</sup> I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’”

**Jonah 4:1-2**, “But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the Lord, “O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. **I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.**”

## 1 & 2 Kings

### 1. Title:

The Hebrew title is מְלָכִים (*m<sup>o</sup>lākîm*, kings). The Greek title is Βασιλείων, (*Basileiōn*, kings). In the Greek Bible, it is Third and Fourth Kings (First and Second Kings was 1 & 2 Samuel).

Originally this was one book. The Hebrew Bible did not divide the book into two books until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Greek versions (Septuagint) probably divided

it because one scroll would not hold the entire book. It is better to consider the books together as one work.

## 2. Author:

Unknown. Jewish tradition ascribes authorship to **Jeremiah**.

Since the material covers the history of Israel from the time of Solomon (970) to the destruction of the temple (586), the writer must have written the material after 586 (even after 561 when Jehoiachin was released). **Thus, the writer probably wrote the material around 550. Martin Noth** was the first to propose that the Deuteronomistic historian composed this material.

(A). Martin Noth proposed that Kings was composed or redacted by the Deuteronomistic historian during the exile. His theme for the book was negative: Israel rebelled against God, therefore, God disciplined them.

(B). Fohrer and Cross posit that the redaction occurred earlier, perhaps during the reign of Josiah with reworking during the exile.

(C). Gerhard Von Rad sees the theme as more positive—the continuation of God's promise to David.

(D). Hans Walter Wolff believes the theme stresses repentance and forgiveness.

## 3. Date:

Covers Material from the reign of Solomon 970 to the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of the temple in 586. So the story ends around 550 and the book would have been written after that.

## 4. Major Themes:

1. Rivalry between kings. Lack of unity between the North and South. Display of human nature—hunger for power, greed, corruption, murder, mayhem. At times the Northern Kingdom looked a bit like Gotham.
2. God will punish his people through foreign nations/powers. Assyria/Babylonia.
3. While all the kings of the north are evil, there are individuals who still hold to God's teachings and call the people to keep covenant with Yahweh. Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets.
4. How could God destroy the temple? Remember the book is written after the destruction of the temple in 586. People would want to know why God would destroy the temple.

**1 Kings 9:6-8** answers that question. God destroyed the temple as a sign of judgment against Judah and Jerusalem. The text reads:

But **if** you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, <sup>7</sup> then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. <sup>8</sup> **And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’**

## 5. Genre/Literary Style.

Didactic history, meaning, history that teaches a lesson. Theological history. Dale Manor writes:

As with the other books of history (Joshua through Esther) Kings is often considered a historical book, but its emphasis is not on standard social, political, and economic issues but upon God’s activities among his people and how they respond to his expectations. ...

Contrary to these kinds of modern historical concerns, the book of Kings, along with the remainder of the historical books of the Bible, are really about religion. ...

**The narrative is history, but with a spiritual and prophetic emphasis.<sup>1</sup>**

## 6. Outline/Structure:

I. 1 Kings 1-11. Solomon.

II. **1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17.** History of the Kings of Israel and Judah until the Fall of Israel.

III. 2 Kings 18-25. History of the Kings of Judah.

## 7. Teaching/Commentary:

(a) A Critical Problem: Chronology. How do you make the years fit? Because of the diversity of calendars used in the ancient world, it is difficult to calculate the regal years. When did the king’s reign begin? Also, there were co-regencies. How are these to be counted? It is difficult to match the years of the reign of the kings in 1 & 2 Kings with 1 & 2 Chronicles.

Thiele has an elaborate answer to the problem by inserting co-regencies where none are found in the text. Perhaps it’s best to let the narrative speak louder than the historical chronology.

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<sup>1</sup> Dale Manor, “Books of History,” in *Old Testament Introduction*, ed. Terry Briley, Paul Kissling, and Mark Mangano, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2005), 268.

There are some dates that are fixed. Dale Manor writes,

Some of the dates that are widely recognized are the following (all dates B.C.):

853—Shalmaneser III engages a coalition of kings including Ahab at Qarqar.

841—Jehu pays tribute to Shalmaneser III portrayed on the Black Obelisk.

738/37—Menahem pays tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III.

701—Sennacherib invades Judah.

598/97—Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem.

587/86—Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem and destroys the Temple (calculated from 2 Kgs 25:8).<sup>2</sup>

### **Solomon—The Last King of the United Monarchy.**

Solomon was the 8<sup>th</sup> child of David. Bathsheba was David's tenth wife, and he favored her. First Kings begins with the story of Adonijah, the 4<sup>th</sup> child of David. Adonijah wanted the throne, however David gave the throne to Solomon. But he also tells Solomon to make the throne his own. **1 Kings 2:1-6** reads,

When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

<sup>2</sup> "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, <sup>3</sup> and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, <sup>4</sup> and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

<sup>5</sup> "Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me—what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. <sup>6</sup> Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace.

Solomon takes throne. **1 Kings 2:25**, "So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died."

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<sup>2</sup> Dale Manor, "Books of History," in *Old Testament Introduction*, ed. Terry Briley, Paul Kissling, and Mark Mangano, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2005), 273.

Solomon begins his reign in 970. God tells Solomon to ask him for whatever his wishes. His first act as king is to choose wisdom from God. That's a good start, right?

**1 Kings 3:7-9** reads,

"Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. <sup>8</sup>Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. <sup>9</sup>So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

Solomon chooses wisdom. That was a gift God gave him. But he didn't always use this gift in the right way.

Look at the contrast in the verses:

**1 Kings 6:12-13**, "Concerning this house that you are building, **if** you will walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel."

**1 Kings 11:11-13**, "So **the Lord** said to Solomon, 'Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.'"

It is possible to have a gift from God, but not use it for God. We all need to be careful here. Heart is just as important as gifts. Do you have a heart for God? I've seen super-talented people, very gifted, skilled people who don't have a heart for God and they can do more damage than good. However, I've rarely seen someone with a great heart and less than lofty skill set do damage. Now, when a person has both, that's fantastic. But to have skills without heart is scary. Just because a person has a gift, it doesn't mean that person is going to use that gift for God.

What about the temple? Solomon built the temple. Yes, he did. He began it in the fourth year of his reign. Solomon started out strong.

Solomon builds the temple between 966 and 959 BC (1 Kings 6:1; Acts 7:47). **1Kings 6:1**, "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord."

This is a great gift that Solomon gave Israel. The temple would be the central feature of the Israelite religion. It was seen as the house of God, but with the understanding that God could not be confined to a house. The presence of God,

which could go anywhere in the world, chose to reside in the Holy of Holies of the temple of God.

Yet, even as Solomon completes the temple, the text tells us something about Solomon's heart.

He spent 7 years on the temple, but 14 years on his palace. **1 Kings 6:38-7:1**, "In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it. <sup>1</sup>It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace."

What a contrast. 7 years on the temple and 14 years on the palace. You get a sense that the formulation of the physical kingdom became more important to Solomon than God's spiritual kingdom.

Eventually, we see that Solomon's heart leaves God.

**1 Kings 11:1-5** reads,

"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. <sup>2</sup>They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. <sup>3</sup>He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. <sup>4</sup>As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been."

The Kingdom really began to divide while Solomon was king. In fact, in 1 Kings 11 Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh tears up a cloak and give Jeroboam 10 pieces of the cloak. Jeroboam flees to Egypt. This happens while Solomon is alive. Upon Solomon's death, Jeroboam comes back to Shechem and fulfills the prophecy. The prophecy happens while Solomon is alive. I believe it is a symbol that demonstrates that while Solomon did many things to advance the material and military prosperity of Judah and while he did build the temple in Jerusalem, he also did many things that hurt Judah spiritually.

Just because a person is gifted by God with a particular gift, it doesn't mean that person will use that gift for God. We always need to guard our hearts.

## **The Kingdom Divides**

After Solomon, the kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel, led by Jeroboam, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, led by Rehoboam. The Northern

Kingdom lasted for two hundred years. This kingdom never had a righteous king. It was more powerful than the Southern Kingdom, with three to four times more territory than the south. During the first sixty years there was war between the two kingdoms, followed by sixty years of alliance. The last seventy-five years were a mixture of alliance and war. Syria was the dominant force against Israel.

The dynasties of the Northern Kingdom can be divided into five periods:

1. *Heresy*. Jeroboam I to Omri, 931-874.  
Omri built Samaria, the capital of Israel.
2. *Apostasy*. Ahab to Jehoram, 874-841.  
Elijah and Elisha prophesy during this period.
3. *Dependence*. Jehu to Jehoahaz, 841-798.  
Israel was dependent on Syria.
4. *Material Prosperity*. Jehoash-Jeroboam II, 798-753.  
Johaz has been looked upon as the greatest king of the Northern Kingdom. He ruled for forty-one years. Amos, Jonah and Hosea all prophesied during this time.
5. *Disintegration*. Zechariah-Hoshea, 753-732.  
Assyria conquers Israel and disperses the tribes into Assyria.

The history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah can be divided into four periods:

1. A decline which was arrested by the first revival. Rehoboam to Asa/Jehoshaphat, 931-848.
2. A decline which was arrested by the second revival. Jehoram-Hezekiah, 848-698.
3. A decline arrested by the third revival. Manassah-Josiah, 698-608.
4. A decline without a revival. Jehoahaz-Zedekiah, 608-586.  
The Babylonians conquer Judah and destroy Jerusalem. Many Jews are taken to Babylon to live in exile there.

The Kings of the North and South:

North. Ruled from 931-722. 20 kings. All evil.

South. Ruled from 931-586. 20 kings. Mix between good and evil. Reigned on average 7 ½ years longer than the kings of the north.

Of the 40 kings:

32 are said to be evil. 20 out of 20 in the North.

Of the 20 in the south, 8 did "good in the eyes of the Lord."

6 did “good in the eyes of the Lord, *but.*” They failed to do something. Failed to rid the land of the high places. Or, failed to way in all the ways of the Lord.

2 good kings, without qualification. Hezekiah and Josiah.

**THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL/SAMARIA.** All of the kings of the North were evil. Samaria became the capital and the kingdom was known as Israel or Samaria.

(From Jeroboam I up to Jeroboam II)

**Jeroboam I.** (931-910 BC). I Kings 11-14. 2 Chronicles 10.

I Kings 11:29-33,

About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country,<sup>30</sup> and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.<sup>31</sup> Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes.’<sup>32</sup> But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe.<sup>33</sup> I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon’s father, did.

This tells the story of the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh tearing his mantle into twelve pieces and giving ten of these to Jeroboam. This was a symbol of the division of the united monarchy of David/Solomon coming to an end. This action brought the wrath of Solomon upon Jeroboam. Jeroboam fled to Egypt and sought safety from Shishak king of Egypt.

Jeroboam chose as his political capital Shechem. Shechem, was a wise choice because of its historical significance in Israelite history. Abraham had built an altar at Shechem (Gen. 12:6), Jacob's first foothold in Canaan was at Shechem (Gen. 33:18-20), and the tribal confederacy occurred at Shechem (Josh. 24).

Jeroboam didn’t want people going to Jerusalem, the capital of Juday. So, Jeroboam set up an opposing cultus for the north. He chose as his sites of cultic worship the cities of Dan in the north and Bethel in the south. Both of these cities were traditional places of pilgrimage for the Israelites. He placed a shrine of a golden calf in both and established feasts and festivals at these shrines. He did what Aaron did at the base of Mt. Sinai. He set up idols. He gave the people a syncretistic religion. It was also for their comfort. These actions gave the Northern Kingdom a religious foundation, which could compete with the dominant influence of the temple in Jerusalem.



Once the altars were in place, Jeroboam called the nation to worship by saying, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough, Behold your gods, O Israel who brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). One of Jeroboam's first acts as king was to lead his country into apostasy.

Dale Manor writes:

He initiated four major changes to Israel's identity—he changed their gods (two golden calves), changed their places of worship from Jerusalem to Dan and Bethel (as well as other high places throughout the country), changed their priests, and established a special festival (1 Kgs 12:25–33). In doing so, Jeroboam shifted the ideological identity from a focus on Yahweh to, at best, a syncretism with the idolatrous worship that otherwise was latent in the land from the time of the Judges. Ultimately the kingdom of Israel became pluralistic in philosophy and materialistic in pursuit (as implied in Amos and Hosea).<sup>3</sup>

Nadab. (910-909 BC). 1 Kings 15:25-32.

Baasha. (909-886 BC). 1 Kings 15:33-16:7; 2 Chron. 16:1-6.

Elah. (886-885 BC). 1 Kings 16:8-14.

Zimri. (885 BC). 1 Kings 16:15-20.

Omri. (885-874 BC) 1 Kings 16:21-28. The House of Omri.

Omri was another commander of the army of Israel. He gained the throne of Israel in the twenty seventh year of King Asa of Judah. Omri kept the capital of Israel in Tirzah for six years, and then he officially moved the capital **to the city of Samaria** where it remained throughout the rest of the history of Israel. This proved a brilliant move as Samaria was on a sloping hill, which made it easy to defend. Omri restored a measure of stability to Israel. John Bright, author of *A History of Israel*, notes of him:

Omri was obviously a man of great ability. The Assyrians referred to Israel as "the House of Omri" long after his dynasty had been overthrown? Omri's policy for Israel's recovery was patterned in its major features on that of David and Solomon; it called for internal peace, friendly relations with Judah, close ties with the Phoenicians, and a strong hand east of the Jordan, particularly against the Arameans.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Dale Manor, "Books of History," in *Old Testament Introduction*, ed. Terry Briley, Paul Kissling, and Mark Mangano, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2005), 259.

<sup>4</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel*, Third Edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), p. 240.

Omri formed a marriage alliance with Phoenicia by giving his son Ahab to the Phoenician king's daughter, Jezebel. Because Syria was a natural enemy of both nations, Phoenicia and Israel both gained from this marriage.

He also faced Ashur-nasirpal II who was reviving the power of the Assyrian state. The Moabite stone, discovered at Diban in 1868, tells how "Omri, king of Israel, humbled Moab many years." This record goes on to state that Israel controlled Moab for forty years," during his (Omri's) time, and half the time of his son (Ahab)." This extra-Biblical evidence substantiates the existence of Omri and Ahab.

Although Omri gave Israel a sense of political stability, 1 Kings 16:25 notes his evil legacy, "Omri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did more evil than all who were before him."

Ahab. (874-853 BC). 1 Kings 16:29-22:40. 2 Chron. 18:1-34.

Ahab inherited Omri's throne in the thirty-eighth year of King Asa's reign, and he ruled over Israel for 22 years. He forged alliances with many of the foreign nations around him in order to stabilize the tension in Palestine. Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of Ittobaal king of Tyre, and he then proceeded to adopt the worship of Baal. Ahab ordered **the construction of a temple to Baal in Samaria, and he offered sacrifices to Baal on the altar of Yahweh.**

Ahab also arranged the marriage of his daughter Athaliah to Jehoram the son of Jehosaphat of Judah. This brought security into the country, but it also allowed the contaminating influence of Jezebel's religion to reach down into Judah.

Ahab had much to fear. Ben-Hadad I of Damascus was busy attempting to overtake the land of Israel. When Ben-Hadad and Ahab met in battle, the leader of Damascus was taken captive by Ahab. Instead of executing Ben-Hadad for his aggression, Ahab pardoned him and sent him back to Damascus with a treaty from Israel. An unknown prophet severely rebuked Ahab for his light treatment of an enemy of Israel (1 Kings 20:35-43).

Ahab had bigger fish on his mind than Ben-Hadad. The Assyrians under Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC) were attempting to bring all of Western Asia under their control. In 853 Ahab and Ben-Hadad I met Shalmaneser III in a battle at Qarqar on the Orontes River. On the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III in the British Museum, Shalmaneser boasts that he "made the blood of his enemies flow down the valleys and their bodies were scattered far and wide." If this statement is true, it remains a mystery why after this victory Shalmaneser III withdrew back to Assyria without changing the lives of the citizens of Israel or Damascus.

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Later in his reign, Ahab joined forces with Jehosaphat of Judah to take back Ramoth-gilead from the Aramenans. The prophet, Micaiah ben Imlah, prophesied disaster for Ahab. Ahab experienced the truth of the prophecy when he fell dead from the wound delivered by a Syrian arrow.

During Ahab's reign there was considerable material prosperity in Israel. Ahab began many building campaigns and kept a powerful, effective army in the land. In spite of these positive signs, signs of death were also evident. Bright writes:

But there are signs of a progressive disintegration of the structure of Israelite society, and of a harsh system that tended to place the poor at the mercy of the rich. The former, forced in hard times to borrow from the latter at usurious rates of interest, mortgaging their land, if not their own person or those of their children, in security, Faced and , one gathers, not infrequently (II Kings 4:1) the prospect of eviction, if not slavery.<sup>5</sup>

Spiritually Ahab followed in the steps of his father, Omri. He was even more evil than his father. I Kings 16:33 says, "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." It is no wonder that during the reign of this evil king God decided to send the greatest of his prophets, Elijah.

Enter Elijah. The Elijah/Elisha Cycle.

Ahaziah. (853-852 BC). I Kings 22:51-II Kings 2:25.

Jehoram (Joram). (852-941 BC). 2 Kings 3:1-8:15.

Jehu. (841-814 BC). 2 Kings 9:1-10:36.

Jehu, initiated a bloody purge upon the land. He had two objectives: the house of Omri and the idols of Baal. From Jezreel he ordered the execution of the 80 sons of Ahab in Samaria. His followers sent back to Jezreel the eighty heads of Ahab's sons. He had 42 relatives of Ahaziah slaughtered. This action fulfilled Elijah's prophecy against the house of Omri. Jehu himself was not interested in fulfilling prophecy, but in getting rid of his competition for the throne.

Jehu desired to cleanse Israel of the Baalism. He lured the worshippers of Baal into the temple and stationed 80 soldiers at the exits. He had the assembly slaughtered in cold blood. This event rid the land of the foreign god, the Tyrian Baal, and further wiped the land free of the influence of the royal House of Omri.

In 841 BC Shalmaneser III came marching west from Assyria to control Syria. He also controlled Israel receiving tribute from the Israelites. On **the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III**, Jehu of Israel is depicted as kneeling before the Assyrian monarch paying him homage. Shalmaneser describes himself as "the mighty king,

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

king of the universe, king without rival, the autocrat, the powerful one of the four regions of the world, who shatters the might of the princes of the whole world, who has smashed all of his foes like pots."<sup>6</sup>

The Assyrian kingdom did not stay in Palestine. Shalmaneser III took his troops back to Assyria leaving Hazael of Damascus an opportunity to control the territory in the Transjordan. Hazael seized Samaria making Jehu's son, Jehoahaz, a vassal king. Hazael allowed Jehoahaz to employ only 10 chariots, 50 horsemen, and 10,000 infantry in his military.

Jehoahaz. (814-798 BC). 2 Kings 13:1-9.

Joash or Jehoash. (798-782 BC). 2 Kings 13:10-14:22.

**SOUTH—THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH.** From Rehoboam through Athaliah:

**Rehoboam.** (922-913 BC). 1 Kings 11-14. 2 Chron. 10:1-12:16.

Rehoboam was not the wisest administrator to ever take office. When he received the crown from his father Solomon, he was faced with the greatest crisis in the national history of the united confederation--civil war. He traveled from Jerusalem to Shechem in the North in an attempt to hold together the fragile bond of unity between the tribal states.

Rehoboam's one chance for unity quickly slipped through his fingers when he decided to follow the counsel of his junior advisors instead of his senior advisors. His junior advisors suggested that Rehoboam punish the Northern states. Rehoboam announced that the hardship the Northern states faced under Solomon would seem light compared to his heavy hand.

**1 Kings 12:10-11** records Rehoboam's words, "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins, And now, whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. Rehoboam was saying, "They thought my father was tough? Wait till they get a load of me!"

Rehoboam had not learned the fine art of winning friends and influencing people. The Northern states decided to try their luck with their old slave master, Jereboam, who was back from exile in Egypt. Rehoboam was lucky to return to Jerusalem alive. He had to flee from Shechem on a chariot to Jerusalem, where he gathered forces to wage war against the Northern states. A prophet Shemaiah counseled him against this action. The kingdom of Israel was now split in two--Israel/Samaria in the North and Judah in the South.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 332.

Rehoboam had terrible luck in foreign affairs. In his fifth year, Shishak, king of Egypt and founder of the Twenty-second Egyptian dynasty, broke the three hundred-year silence of aggression between his people and Judah by marching into Judah. Shishak stole all the treasure from the temple and from Solomon's royal palace (1 Kings 14:25-26). Solomon's glory faded quickly because he failed to train his son.

Abijam or Abijah. (913-911 BC). I Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chron. 13:1-22.

**Asa. (911-870 BC).** I Kings 15:9-24. 2 Chron. 14:2-16:14.

The First of Judah's Reformers.

Asa brought memories of David back to the hearts of the Judeans. He became king during the twentieth year of Jereboam's reign in Israel and he ruled over Judah for four decades, forty-one years. Since the dark days of Solomon, Judah had fallen deeply into sin. Asa began a program of reform to revitalize the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem. He drove out men who were sacred prostitutes and cleared out idols. He refitted the temple with silver and gold from his own resources. His zeal for Yahweh led him to renounce his own mother, Maacah, because she had given herself to idolatry.

Asa, like Rehoboam, faced aggression from his southern neighbor, Egypt. Zerah "the Ethiopian" invaded Judah and met the forces of Asa at Marehah. Asa defeated Zerah, chased his troops back to Gerar, and brought to a close Egyptian tampering in Judean affairs in his generation.

Asa also sought to fortify his northern border. Asa went to war against Baasha of Israel. Baasha's army advanced to Ramah only five miles north of Jerusalem putting pressure on the capital city and placing all of Judah in a compromising situation (I Kings 15:16-22). Asa drew up an alliance with Ben-Hadad I, the king of Damascus. Ben-Hadad broke his treaty with Baasha to come to the aid of Asa. His troops were available to the highest bidder. They forced Baasha out of Judah and back to his, home territory. The Biblical text closes the story of Asa by mentioning that in his old age Asa suffered from some type of affliction to his feet. Certainly not the most noble note on which to close one's life story.

**Jehoshaphat. (870-848 BC).** I Kings 22:1-50; 2 Chron. 17:1-20:37.

Jehoshaphat reigned for a quarter of a century in relative peace. The prophet Jehu ben Hanani rebuked the king for cooperating with King Ahab of Israel. His cooperation went to the point of allowing his son, Jehoram, to marry the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah. This would have disastrous effects in the future as the union allowed Jezebel's influence to reach down from Samaria into Jerusalem.

Jehoshaphat wanted to send ships to Ophir in exchange for gold. He was attempting to copy the maritime expeditions of King Solomon. It is possible that he even used Solomon's ships for this adventure. He convinced Ahaziah king of Israel to

join him as a partner. The prophet, Eliezar ben Dodauhu, of Mareshah warned Jehoshaphat against such an attempt (2 Chron. 20:37). The ships were destroyed even before they left port. This king started a revival of his own in Jerusalem. He abolished idolatrous shrines and ordered the priests to go through the land teaching the people of the cities to follow the book of the Lord. He did not, however, go as far as his father Asa had gone. He allowed the high places to continue to exist.

Jehoram. (848-841 BC). 2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chron. 21:1-20.

Jehoram married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, in a move to secure the border between Judah and Israel. It seems he succumbed to Jezebel's influence through her daughter Athaliah because Jehoram killed all his brother's and partisans in an attempt to secure his throne. This violence did not provide security because Jehoram died very early in his reign of a disease of the bowels (2 Chron. 21:18-20).

Ahaziah. (841 BC). 2 Kings 8: 25-29. 2 Chron. 22:1-9.

Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram and Athaliah, the grandson of Ahab and Jezebel. He died within the first year of his reign falling victim to the purge of King Jehu of Israel.

**Athaliah. (841-835 BC).** 2 Kings 11:1-20. 2 Chron. 22:10-23:15.

When her son Ahaziah died, Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel seized the throne of Jerusalem. It is difficult to believe that a granddaughter of King of Tyre could wear the crown of David, but it happened. She continued in the way of her mother infecting Judah with the worship of Baal. She attempted to murder all the surviving members of the Davidic line (a move that God predestined to fail). This slaughter would have included her own children and grandchildren. An infant son of Ahaziah, Joash (Jehoash) was rescued by his aunt, the wife of the priest Jehoiada (2 Chron. 22:11). Joash was the only one left to carry on the line of David.