



Success Failure

Yahweh

**1 Kings 2:3** “and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn,”



# 1 and 2 Kings: A Crisis in Leadership

**Author:** Uncertain

**Date:** Ca. 550 B.C.: Last events mentioned: 1) a forth deportation (582-581) 2 Kgs. 25:22-26;  
2) Jehoiachin released from prison (562/561 B.C.) 2 Kgs. 27:30.

**Key Verse:** 1 Kings 12:16

**Purpose:** To show Israel and Judah's unfaithfulness, but God's faithfulness.

## King Solomon (1-11)

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*Zechariah* (15:8-12)

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## VI. Kings of Judah (18-24)

728 - 586 B.C.

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# I. King Solomon (1-11)

## Solomon Becomes King (1)

As David grew very old and feeble, he had a beautiful young woman, Abishag, given to him to keep him warm and to attend to him. David's son, Adonijah, laid a claim to the throne, but David's closest men were not with him. Nathan and Bathsheba bring word regarding Adonijah to David and to ask David to honor a previous oath he had given that Bathsheba's son Solomon would be king after him. David agrees and Solomon is anointed king.

**Question:** Solomon's life was a gift from God to replace what that God took away as punishment for what sin that David had committed?

**Answer:** Bathsheba and David's first son who was killed by God as punishment for David's sin when he laid with Bathsheba when she was married to another. David then had her husband murdered so he could take Bathsheba as wife and cover up the sin.

**Question:** If God restored to David by blessing him with a son like Solomon, does this tell us anything about God holding grudges for our failures?

**Question:** Can you think of times in your life where you suffered loss from God because of your sin?

**Question:** Do you believe that God desires to restore you to a place beyond where you were before your failure?

## David's Final Commands (2)

David gives last admonitions to his newly anointed king son, to follow Yahweh, their God all the days of his life so he might prosper. David gives final specifics about political allies and foes, then sleeps with his fathers. Adonijah fears for his life and initially there is no hostility between Adonijah and Solomon. Then Adonijah asks Bathsheba to petition Solomon for David's young woman, Abishag. Solomon is offended and executes Adonijah. Solomon appoints his new officers, replacing-- often executing-- those who stood with Adonijah. Solomon takes care of the final business David, his father commissioned him to perform.

## Solomon Builds His Kingdom (3-5)

Solomon makes political alliances with Egypt, marrying Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon loves Yahweh and seeks to follow Him. Yahweh offers to grant a desire for Solomon, and Solomon asks to receive wisdom to know how to govern God's people. God is pleased and grants him his wish and also wealth and power. Solomon demonstrates his newly granted wisdom by judging a case between 2 prostitutes arguing over a child. Solomon commands the child to be cut in two and half given to each woman, and learns the identity of the true mother, as she begs to let the child live and gives up her case against the other woman.

**Question:** When you wake up in the morning, what thing/person drives you to start your day? What/Who are you excited about seeing during the day? If God granted you a desire, would it have

something to do with this thing/person?

**Question:** Solomon asked for something to help him further God's Kingdom and this pleased God. Is your answer to the question above something to help further the Kingdom of God?

**Question:** In what New Testament passage does Jesus teach a similar principle?

**Answer:** Matthew 6:19-34 "...Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you..."

King Solomon appoints more officers and reigns over his grateful people-- from the Euphrates, to the land of the Philistines, to the border of Egypt. Solomon has great possessions and great wisdom. In his wisdom, he writes 3,000 proverbs, 1,005 songs, and researches botany and animal.

Hiram of Tyre seeks to continue alliance with Israel and her new king, and finds King Solomon willing to carry on a friendly relationship which began with David, his father. Solomon solicits help from Tyre to build Yahweh's house. In return Solomon sends great amounts of food, in exchange, to Tyre. Stone, wood, and gold, along with expert craftsmen and great numbers of manual laborers are involved in the building process.

### **Solomon Builds the Temple (6-9)**

The dimensions of the temple are outlined, demonstrating the glory of the building. Cherubim are carved and plated with gold and placed in the most holy place to stand over the Ark of the Covenant. The house of Yahweh is completed in 7 years.

Solomon builds his palace, with his house, and a house for his wife from Egypt. Hiram from Tyre is also tasked to make the furnishings and utensils for the temple. Building of Solomon's house and the house of the Lord are finished.

Solomon summons the people together and brings the Ark of the Covenant up to the new temple. Innumerable sacrifices are offered to God. The Ark, which contained only the two stone tablets of the Mosaic covenant, is placed in the most holy place in the temple and then a cloud filled the house of the Lord. Solomon pleads to the Lord in dedication of the temple, thanking God for fulfilling His promise to Solomon's father, David. Solomon acknowledges that the house he has built cannot possibly contain God, but instead that God would honor the temple as *if* He lived there.

*"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Yahweh my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive." - I Kings 8:27-30*

Solomon acknowledges that God will chastise sin-- and that there is no one who does not sin-- and pleads God will always grant grace in repentance. Solomon pleads for the foreigner who comes to worship Yahweh, that God will hear and answer "in order that all the peoples of the earth may know [Yahweh's] name and fear..." (I Kings 8:43) Solomon concludes by praising Yahweh for always faithfully fulfilling His word and then the king pledges his devotion and faithfulness to Yahweh.

**Question:** Where did God dwell in the Old Testament?

**Answer:** In Heaven; but the temple was a symbolic place toward which humans could pray, *as if* God dwelt there.

**Question:** If Israel of 1000BC believed that Yahweh is Almighty God, and also believed in the existence of other spiritual beings that other regions worshiped-- calling them the abomination of other nations (I Kings 11:7)-- in what way is that different from what Christians believe today?

**Question:** Does this make Israel polytheistic?

**Question:** Did God only care about Israel in the Old Testament

**Answer:** No. God's purpose was that "all the peoples of the earth may know [Yahweh's] name and fear..." (I Kings 8:43)

Yahweh responds to Solomon and agrees to consecrate the temple which Solomon built as the proxy for His Name. Yahweh renews with Solomon His covenant with David-- that God will establish his kingdom and keep a descendant on the throne, if Solomon and his seed will walk in God's ways. If they do not walk in God's ways, they will be cut off from the land God gave to them, and the temple which Solomon built will become a heap of ruins, because they abandoned the Lord their God. After the completion of all the buildings, Solomon gives Hiram of Tyre twenty cities in the land of Galilee, with which Hiram is not pleased. Forced laborers for all the building were pulled from the people Israel failed to drive from the land, but not from Israel. Solomon builds a navy.

### **Solomon's Wisdom (10)**

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon seeking to know if the fame of his wisdom is warranted. Solomon answers all of her hard questions and she sees the excellence of his kingdom. Gifts are exchanged and she returns convinced. Solomon amasses unsurpassed wealth, builds armies, and opens trade.

**Question:** When God equips us, gifting with a skill, and a royal challenge approaches, can we have confidence He has provided what is needed for the task? Can you think of a time you were afraid to face a challenge? How do you think that makes God feel?

*"All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon." --I Kings 10:21*

*"Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom." -- I Kings 10:23*

### **Solomon's Downfall (11)**

Solomon loved and married many foreign women, against God's command. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart after false gods. Solomon does what is evil in the sight of Yahweh and builds high places of worship for the "abominations" of other nations. Yahweh God speaks to Solomon and announces that, because of Solomon's evil, the kingdom will be ripped from his

hands and given to another, but because of the faithfulness of his father David, it will happen after Solomon dies, and one tribe will remain with Solomon's son. Also, because of Solomon's evil, the Lord raised up adversaries, taking the peace away from the his kingdom. God speaks through the prophet Ahijah, telling Jeroboam that he will receive the kingdom from Solomon, promising to make his kingdom as great as David's if he will walk in the ways of the Lord. Solomon's 40 year reign ends with his death and his son Rehoboam is king in his place.

## **II. Kings of Israel and Judah (12-16)**

### ***Nation Splits (12:1-19)***

God's chosen recipient of the kingdom, Jeroboam, gathers the people together and pleads with young Rehoboam to lighten the yoke of work which his father Solomon placed on the people. After consulting the elders, who suggest granting the request, and also Rehoboam's young friends, who suggest denying the request with stern rebuke, Rehoboam decides to listen to his friends. All the people, except for Judah, rebel and make Jeroboam their new ruler, as God had planned.

**Question:** Does God use even the disobedience of people to accomplish His will?

**Answer:** Yes, as we do, God uses all his knowledge when making His plans. God just has much more knowledge, including perfect knowledge of everything that has past and everything that will come to pass. God had already foretold that He would give the kingdom to Jeroboam. Rehoboam's sin was the divine instrument the omniscient God knew would happen and planned to use to accomplish His purpose.

### ***Jeroboam I (12:20-14:20)***

Jeroboam does not trust God, but instead worries that if Israel continues to go up to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh, they will return to Rehoboam and the house of David. He makes his own plans and builds 2 golden calves, placing them at locations away from Jerusalem, declaring them the gods that brought the people up from Egypt. He builds high places for worship, and institutes replacement feast celebrations.

God sends a man of God from Judah to rebuke king Jeroboam while he sacrificed incense at an altar. The man of God prophesies and shows signs that a son from the line of David will be born named Josiah who will sacrifice the priests of the high places on the very altar where Jeroboam was offering incense. In Jeroboam's anger, he points to the man of God and orders him to be seized, but while doing so, his hand dries up so that he can't draw it back. The king begs the man of God to petition Yahweh to heal his hand, which God does. After refusing food and drink from the king, per God's instructions not to eat or drink anything in the land, and to return a different way, the man of God departed for home on a different route than he had come.

On the way home, a prophet from Bethel met the man of God and told him that God had sent him to bring the man of God back to his home for food. After the man of God had eaten-- against the commission he had received personally from God-- he departed and was killed by a lion for his offense. The lion stayed by the body and did not harm the donkey of the man of God, as a sign God had done this. The deceiving prophet from Bethel retrieved the body, saw the sign affirming the true commission

of the dead prophet, mourned, and buried his body in his own tomb, where he, himself would be buried when he died. After this event, Jeroboam did not return from his evil way, but instead appointed more priest for the high places.

Jeroboam's son becomes sick and Jeroboam sends out his wife, in disguise, to Ahijah, the prophet, to find out about the boy's future. Ahijah's message from the Lord to Jeroboam's wife is that, because God had rip the nation in two and made Jeroboam king over Israel, and still Jeroboam did not honor God, to walk in all His ways, as David did, because of this, God will wipe out all descendants from Jeroboam's line, and they would be eaten be animals. The only one who would come to his grave would be his sick son, because his son had pleased the Lord; yet he would die as soon as Jeroboam's wife set foot into the city on her return. Jeroboam reigned 22 years and Nadab, his son, reigned after him.

### **Rehoboam (14:21-33)**

In Judah, Solomon's son, Rehoboam reigned 17 years in Jerusalem. During his reign, the people did evil in the sight of the Lord, building high places of worship and Asherim on every high hill-- as the people did who where in the land before Israel, whom God drove out. Shishak, king of Egypt, came against Jerusalem and took away all the riches of the house of God and the house of the king. Rehoboam replaced some of the gold treasures with bronze. There was war continually between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. After Rehoboam's death, Abijam, his son, reigned in his place.

**Question:** Because of Rehoboam evil life, God allowed the wealth of his kingdom to be captured by the king of Egypt. How do you think the surrounding countries viewed Yahweh after this event?

How does this affect the reasons we desire to be holy?

**Answer:** Often the surrounding countries ignorantly blasphemed the name of God when they saw God's discipline of Israel's sin. "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." -Rom 2:24, Is. 52:5, Ezekiel 36:20. One reason we should desire to be holy and blessed is for the name of God to be lifted up among unbelievers so that they might come to a saving relationship with Him.

### **Abijah (15:1-8)**

Abijam reigned in Judah 3 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Even so, God did not remove the kingdom from him because his father David did what was right in the sight of God, except concerning Uriah, the Hittite. After his death, Asa, his son reigned in his place.

### **Asa (15:9-24)**

Asa reigned in Judah 41 years and did what was right in the sight of the Lord. He removed the sinful establishments of his father and mother and removed his mother from being queen mother. He brought again dedicated treasures into the house of the Lord. There was war continually between Asa and Israel's king Baasha. Baasha blockaded the entrance to Judah. Asa then sent the treasures of the house of God and the kings house to ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, asking him to break his treaty with Baasha to force him to withdraw from blockading Judah. Ben-Hadad agreed and attacked and conquered part of the land of Israel, which forced Asa to withdraw from Judah. After the death of Asa, Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his place.

**Question:** Is it always right to obey and honor one's parents?

**Answer:** Most of the time. Some of us do not have parents that honor the Lord. And though we still need to honor them with our support and pray for them in love, we see from Asa's example that when our parents do not honor God, it is our obligation to be strong and try to right their wrongs.

### ***Nadab (15:25-32)***

In Israel, Jeroboam's son, Nadab reigned for 2 years and did what evil in the sight of the Lord. Then Baasha, son of Ahijah, struck him down and killed him, to take over as king.

### ***Baasha (15:33-16:7)***

After killing Nadab, Baasha then proceeded to destroy all the descendants of Jeroboam, per the prophecy God had spoken against Jeroboam because of the evil he led the people to commit. Baasha reigned over Israel 24 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord.

## **Chapter 16**

The Lord sent Jehu to prophesy to Baasha, condemning his wickedness and proclaiming the same fate for his house as that of Jeroboam because he both struck down the house of Jeroboam and also walked in the same evil. After Baasha died, his son, Elah reigned in his place.

### ***Elah (16:8-14)***

Elah reigned in Israel two years when Zimri, commander of half his chariots, struck and killed Elah when he was vulnerable in a drunken binge. Zimri took the throne and killed all the household of Baasha and Elah for both their sins against Yahweh.

### ***Zimri (16:15-20)***

Zimri reigned over Israel seven days. When the people learned that he had conspired and took the throne by killing Elah, the people made Omri, commander of the army king instead. When Zimri saw that Omri was coming to take the throne, he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house over him with fire, and died because he did evil in the sight of the Lord. After a short dispute between making Omri king or Tibni, son of Ginath king, Omri won and Tibni died.

### ***Omri (16:21-28)***

Omri reigned over Israel 12 years. He built the city of Samaria. Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, and acted more wickedly than all who were before him. After Omri died, his son Ahab reigned in his place.

### ***Ahab (16:29-34)***

Ahab reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him. He married Jezebel the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, and went to worship Baal, and build a house and altar for Baal in Samaria. He also made the Asherah. In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Yahweh, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

### **III. Elijah and Elisha**

#### **Elijah and Ahab (17:1-22:40)**

Elijah the prophet was sent by God to king Ahab to declare that there would be neither dew nor rain except by the word of Elijah. God then sent Elijah first to the brook Cherith where the ravens brought him 2 meals a day. After the brook Cherith dried up, God then sent Elijah to Zarephath where God would use a widow and her son to provide for him. Although there was very little flour for all three, the widow was faithful to use what she had to take care of the prophet, and God blessed the food so that it lasted until there was rain in the land. At one point the widow's son became sick to the point of death. Elijah took the son to his upper room, stretched himself on the child 3 times and prayed for his life to return. God answered Elijah's request and further strengthened the widow's faith.

After the famine was severe in the land, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, God sent Elijah to Ahab to declare that God would send rain. During the famine, Ahab called Obadiah to help him visit all the springs and valleys to find grass for the livestock. Obadiah feared Yahweh greatly and saved 100 prophets by hiding them in a cave when Jezebel sought to destroy the prophets of Yahweh. As Obadiah was searching for grass, Elijah met him and sent him back to Ahab to declare Elijah was coming. Obadiah was afraid Yahweh would take Elijah before they returned and Ahab would kill Obadiah, accusing him of speaking falsely. Elijah assured him that he would show himself to Ahab that same day. Obadiah went and told Ahab and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When they met, Ahab accused Elijah of causing trouble for Israel, but the prophet Elijah declared that the cause for trouble had come from the evil rule Ahab and his fathers, by their forsaking of the commandments of the Yahweh and their following the Baals. Elijah charges Ahab to gather all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with Jezebel's 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah. Ahab did so and all were gathered at Mount Carmel. Elijah addressed the people and called them to stop wavering between Yahweh and Baal. Whoever is the true God, follow Him. The people did not respond. Elijah then single-handedly challenges all the 450 prophets of Baal. He calls for 2 oxen to be brought for sacrificed. The prophets of Baal would prepare one oxen, and Elijah would prepare the other, but neither were to light the wood to burn the sacrificed, but instead the prophets of Baal would call on Baal to ignite the fire, and Elijah would call on Yahweh. Whichever sacrifice miraculously ignited would prove the true God. And all the people said, "That is a good idea." The prophets of Baal went first, sacrificing their ox and petitioning their god, and there was nothing but silence. Elijah mocked both them and Baal all day long and there was still no divine answer to their raving petitions. Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of Yahweh which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of Yahweh had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." So with the stones he built an altar in the name of Yahweh. He dug a large trench around the altar. He then prepared the ox and laid the pieces on the wood. Then he commanded the people to pour 12 pitchers of water on the sacrifice and wood such that the water flowed around the altar and fill the trench. At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant

and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Yahweh, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again." Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "Yahweh, He is God; Yahweh, He is God!" Then Elijah commanded them to bring the prophets of Baal down to the brook Kishon and to slay them there. Now Elijah declared to Ahab that rain would soon come. Elijah then went to the top of Mount Carmel and asked his servant to look for rain clouds. He sent him back 7 times and finally a small cloud started to form. Elijah then commanded his servant to send Ahab down from the mountain before the heavy rain would prohibit. As Ahab left for Jezreel, Yahweh caused Elijah to outrun Ahab and arrive in Jezreel before him.

When Jezebel heard from Ahab what Elijah had done to her Baal prophets, she swore to her gods, under penalty of death, to kill Elijah like he killed her prophets. Elijah was afraid when he heard, and ran for his life to Beersheba, in Judah, left his servant there, and went a days journey into the wilderness. As Elijah was sorrowful, Yahweh sent an angel as a sign to give him food and drink before sending him on a 40 day journey to Horeb, the mountain of God. There he lodged in a cave and God asked him why he had run. Elijah recounted how he had been zealous for the Lord in the face of Israel's rebellion, but now even still his life was in jeopardy. God then commanded him to stand on the mountain before the Lord. God brought a great wind rending the mountain, and then an earthquake, and then a fire, and the Lord was not in any of these. Then the Lord brought a gentle blowing, and in this he heard the voice of God again ask him why he had run. Then God commanded him to return to the wilderness of Damascus, and to anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu king over Israel; and Elisha as prophet in his place. God assured him that He would bring death to all those of Israel who served false idols, and assured him that there were 7,000 in Israel who did not turn away. So Elijah found Elisha and threw his mantle on him and Elisha followed Elijah.

Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, with thirty-two other kings besieged Samaria and sent word to Ahab, king of Israel, that his treasures and most beautiful women and children were Ben-Hadad's. Ahab agreed, but after consulting with the elders, they counseled him to resist. After both sides exchanged threats and readied for battle, the Lord sent a prophet to Ahab to assure him of victory by the hand of the young men of the princes of the provinces led by Ahab, himself. After mustering 232 princes and also 7,000 sons of Israel, Ahab sent out his army and defeated the Arameans. Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse. God's prophet then told king Ahab to prepare because the king of Aram would return to attack again at the end of the year. Now the servants of the king of Aram said to him, "Their gods are gods of the mountains, therefore they were stronger than we; but rather let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we will be stronger than they." So they replenished the forces they had lost and went to fight against Israel in the plains, at Aphek. Just as God had declared, at the turn of the year, this massive army from Aram went up against the small force of Israel. God then spoke through His prophet to Ahab declaring victory because of the word spoken that Israel's God was only one of the mountains and not of the plains. The battle, indeed, was Israel's, as they killed 100,000 foot soldiers in one day and forced the Aramians to retreat to the city of Aphek, where the wall fell on 27,000 of the men who remained. Ben-Hadad's servant had heard that the kings of Israel were merciful kings, so they pleaded with their king that they all might put on sackcloth and beg king Ahab to spare Ben-Hadad and his servants. This they did and Ahab spared their lives, making a covenant with them. God was displeased with this and sent a sign. A man of the sons of the

prophets said to another by the word of Yahweh, "Please strike me." But the man refused to strike him. Then because he had not listened to the voice of Yahweh, a lion killed him. Then the prophet found another man and said, "Please strike me." And the man struck him, wounding him. So the prophet waited for the king by the way, in disguise. As the king passed by, he cried to the king saying, "Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold, a man turned aside and brought a man to me and said, 'Guard this man; if for any reason he is missing, then your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.' "While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone." And the king of Israel said to him, "So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it." Then, removing the bandage, the king recognized him as a prophet and the prophet said, "Thus says Yahweh, 'Because you have let go out of your hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.'" So the king of Israel went to his house in Samaria sullen and vexed

A man named Naboth had a vineyard beside king Ahab's palace. Ahab petitioned Naboth to sell him the vineyard so he might use it as a vegetable garden, but Naboth was unwilling, saying, "Yahweh forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." When the king's wife, Jezebel, saw her husband discouraged and heard it was due to Naboth's unwillingness to sell his land, she used Ahab's signature and commanded that Naboth be framed and killed and gave the vineyard to her husband who gladly took possession of it. Because of this and all the rest of Ahab's sins-- how he led Israel astray-- God sent Elijah to Ahab rebuking him for what he had done and proclaiming that Ahab would be eaten by animals just like Naboth, and all the descendants of Ahab would be killed, including his wife Jezebel, who incited the evil deeds of the king. Upon hearing this news, Ahab tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted. Because of this, God said to Elijah, "Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days."

There were 3 years without war between Aram and Israel.

In the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel, the king of Israel petitioned the king of Judah to join with him in war to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the king of Aram. Jehoshaphat agreed but ask that the king of Israel inquire first for the word of Yahweh. The king of Israel assembled 400 of his prophets and asked them if they should go to battle against Ramoth-Gilead or refrain. The prophets all said that the Lord would make them victorious. But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of Yahweh here that we may inquire of him?" The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Yahweh, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." So, while all the other prophets continued to declare victory by the hand of Yahweh, a messenger went out to summon Micaiah and said to him, "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." But Micaiah said, "As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me, that I shall speak." When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go up and succeed, and Yahweh will give it into the hand of the king." Then the king adjured him to speak nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh. So Micaiah prophesied defeat and explained how God's plan was to put a deceiving spirit in all the king's prophets so the battle would happen and Ahab would fall. So despite the word from Micaiah, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went up against Ramoth-Gilead, but the king sought to thwart the word of the Lord and wore a disguise.

Ahab commanded his men to seek out and destroy the king of Israel, but when they could not find him, a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So the king bled to death in his chariot and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there. They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves there), according to the word of Yahweh. After Ahab died, Ahaziah, his son, reigned in his place.

### **Jehoshaphat (22:41-50)**

Now Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah and reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the sight of Yahweh. However, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places. Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber. When Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his father David, Jehoram his son became king in his place.

### **Ahaziah (1 Kgs. 22:51-**

Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of Yahweh and caused Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked Yahweh, God of Israel, to anger, according to all that his father had done.

**Question:** After reviewing all the King's lives, is there one factor that seems to correspond to their successes and failures?

**Answer:** It is a common theme to see that the kings that "did good in the sight of the Lord" were very successful and blessed by God.

**Question:** Can we expect to be successful and blessed by God if we do what is good in the sight of the Lord?

**Answer:** Yes, but not always in the ways we desire. If we trust in the Lord and His priority to mature our life, we can have peace and enter into His rest as a confident child.

## *QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS*

1. Solomon was a wise man and performed so many noble acts. What led him to his downfall?

**Answer:** His pagan wives, who led him into idolatry and the downfall of Israel, influenced King Solomon.

2. If Joab deserved to die, why leave the job to Solomon? (Chapter 2)

**Answer:** Joab had been David's right-hand military man for many years; perhaps the king just couldn't bring himself to execute a once-loyal servant. Or perhaps David may have been reluctant to punish Joab since he was the son of his sister Zeruiah.

3. What was Bathsheba's link to the history of kings in Israel?

**Answer:** Through an adulterous relationship with David, she then became his wife. Later, her son Solomon became king.

4. David's son Adonijah conspired against his father. Who joined him in this conspiracy?

**Answer:** Joab, Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son.

5. Why did God wait so long to remove the house of Eli from the priesthood? (Chapter 2)

**Answer:** Perhaps the Lord allowed another generation of Eli's descendants to serve as priests to show how contempt for God can be passed from generation to generation. God had told Eli that his house would be cut off from the priesthood because of his sons' evil behavior. The same disrespect shown by Eli's sons later became evident in Abiathar's contempt for Solomon. (1 Samuel 2:30-35)

6. One way Solomon kept the peace was swiftly handling internal rebellion. What three main figures did he have executed by Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada during his early reign?

**Answer:** Adonijah the son of Haggith. Joab and Shimei.

7. If Shimei deserved to die, why simply confine him to the city? (Chapter 2)

**Answer:** Though Shimei had been disloyal to David, even cursing him publicly (2 Samuel 16:5-8), David showed mercy to Shimei. But David may have doubted the wisdom of doing so because when Solomon became king, David warned him to beware of Shimei (2:8-9). Solomon apparently allowed David's mercy to stand, but he wanted to prevent Shimei from stirring up trouble with other Benjamites outside of Jerusalem who may still have held a grudge against David for replacing Saul, their fellow tribesman, as king.

8. Why did Solomon spend more time building his own house than God's house? (Chapter 6 and 7)

**Answer:** The contrast between the times taken to build the temple and the king's place may be a subtle criticism of Solomon's priorities. As Solomon's power grew, he began to distance

himself from the Lord.

9. Why did the Queen of Sheba want to test Solomon? (Chapter 10)

**Answer:** The queen of Sheba knew there was some connection between Solomon's success and the God of Israel. Perhaps she wanted to see what this powerful God was all about. When she saw for herself all that God had accomplished through Solomon, she praised the Lord and acknowledged his eternal love for Israel. The genuineness of her query was supported by Jesus (Matt. 12:42)

10. Who was the anonymous prophet? (Chapter 13)

**Answer:** The term man of God is a common title for a prophet (cf. 12:22). Though his name is unknown, his ministry was significant. He appeared to be anti-social (vs.8), but only because he was determined to obey God and not be flattered or rewarded-and thus bought off-by Jeroboam, for whom the prophet had an unsettling message from God.

11. In the divided kingdom, who was the first king of Israel?

**Answer:** Jeroboam, who was very popular and king of the northern ten tribes. His downfall was constructing idols, trying to lead his people away from God.

12. Discuss a possible explanation of the disobedient prophet in 1Kgs. 13:11-34.

**Answer:** The deceiving father told the prophet he too, was a prophet. And an angel of the Lord told him he would find the prophet, and he was to take him to his house to eat and drink (which was contrary to what God told the prophet.) The prophet went with the man, drank and ate, and returned and died as he disobeyed God. This proved to the man the prophet was real, and the words he said about the future would come true.

13. Who was the person the prophet Elijah feared most?

**Answer:** Queen Jezebel threatened his life and he fled out of fear, after killing Baal's prophets.

14. Why did Elijah need to hide? (Chapter 17)

**Answer:** Primarily, because God told him to. Prophets were to obey the Lord first and ask questions later. In this case, hiding was a means of showing the Israelites the cost of selling out to Baal. While the nation was starving and thirsty, God's prophet had enough food and water. Could a lesson be clearer? God was not the cause of the people's hardship; they were the cause when they broke their covenant with God.

15. For what possible reasons would Elijah be afraid, after his great victory (Chapter 19)?

**Answer:** Even individuals of great courage and conviction have moments when they feel

discouraged. After the euphoric victory on Mount Carmel, it seems that Elijah's emotions fell. He was not indestructible. He had human weaknesses. Elijah was man just like us. (cf. James 5:17). We might think that in the rush of victory, Elijah would have felt invincible. Instead, it seems, he felt exhausted. We might think Elijah would have welcomed Jezebel's challenge as an opportunity to attack his enemy at its source. Instead, he retreated. It may be that Elijah was facing a personal crisis of faith, identity and vision. Now that he had won his lifelong battle against the prophets of Baal, why was his life in danger? Didn't he deserve a little rest? Hadn't he earned the right to retire in peace? Sometimes the thought of another battle, after just finishing one, is overwhelming. One can only speculate about what actually fueled Elijah's fears. But we can readily see that he was human.

16. Who was possibly the most evil woman in the bible and why?

**Answer:** Probably Jezebel, the pagan wife of King Ahab. She totally rejected God and encouraged all Israel to worship false idols. Some believe she was a major contributor to the fall of the northern kingdom.

17. Who was possibly the most evil king of Israel and why?

**Answer:** Probably King Ahab who was very strong militarily. His pagan wife Jezebel was allowed to worship Baal, and followed her advice to listen to false prophets. "Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him." 1Kgs. 16:30

18. Why did God punish Baasha, even though God used him for His Purposes (Chapter 16)?

**Answer:** Baasha's violence accomplished God's purpose but that one act did not make him a servant of God. God held him accountable for his evil intentions, not for inadvertently fulfilling God's will. Baasha had wiped out Jeroboam's clan to increase his power base, not to honor God.

19. Was Ben-Hadad trying to pick a fight? (Chapter 20)

**Answer:** Although his first demands were met with ceremonial acceptance by Ahab, Ben-Hadad showed that his intentions were to take every thing he could. Ahab's payoff, the common practice when strong armies intimidated weak cities, would not be enough. When Ahab realized he could never satisfy Ben-Hadad, he decided to resist.

20. What do you believe is the main purpose for the book of 1 Kings?

**Answer:** To show the dichotomy of those people who live to follow and worship God, as compared to those who exhibit their covenant failure with God.

21. Why is Kings split into two books?

**Answer:** This was done in the third century B.C. by those who translated the Old Testament into Greek (a version known as the Septuagint). One scroll had been sufficient for the Hebrew (without vowels). But the Greek (with vowels) required twice the space.

22. Why did Elisha insist on staying with Elijah?

**Answer:** Elisha, Elijah's personal attendant and companion, was heir-apparent to Elijah's role as a leading prophet. Evidently, Elisha realized (either through a personal premonition or a direct revelation from God) that his mentor's time on earth was nearing an end, so he wanted to stay at Elijah's side during these final moments.

23. Why did Joram blame the Lord for his troubles? (Chapter 3)

**Answer:** It is human nature to shift the blame from oneself. Joram, like many (Prov. 19:3) blamed God for problems of his own making. There is no evidence that God had sanctioned this expedition, as Joram claimed. The kings did not pray or consult a prophet for advice until they were in desperate straits (v. 11). Initially motivated by political self-interest, the three kings now saw that they needed God's help.

24. Why do you think Jehu's fellow officers call the prophet a madman? (Chapter 9)

**Answer:** The prophet's behavior seemed odd and bizarre. He arrived unexpectedly, conducted his business secretly and then ran away abruptly. Prophets, who dressed peculiarly and live apart from much of society, were sometimes considered "on the fringe"

25. Is it okay to lie (like Jehu did) to get rid of evil? (Chapter 10)

**Answer:** Jehu's ultimate goal was right: to remove Baal worship from the land. Even killing the Baal worshipers was justified, since idolatry was punishable by death under the Law of Moses (Deut. 17:2-6). However, Jehu's deceitful tactics (pretending to worship Baal and then killing the prophets who came at his invitation were unethical and cannot be justified)

26. Was Jehoahaz evil or good? (Chapter 13)

**Answer:** Jehoahaz called on the Lord when he was in trouble, but he never turned away from his other gods. This was why he was considered evil. Jehoahaz was like many of his subjects: they looked to God for help but never recognized the need to worship only hi. Here we read that Jehoahaz called for help, but we never read that he repented. God answered and helped him in spite of his sin-evidence of God's grace more than of a man's repentance.

27. How did the Israelites sin secretly? (Chapter 17)

**Answer:** This probably was a reference to the pointless deception pursued through their idolatry. They continued to worship God as if He didn't know they were worshipping idols. The Bible describes people who **think**

28. Was Hezekiah right when he said he was wrong? (Chapter 18)

**Answer:** Yes and no. It was right to trust in the Lord instead of the King of Assyria (v. 7). But from Sennacherib's perspective, Hezekiah was wrong to rebel against him. Now, threatened by Assyria, Hezekiah stated that he had been wrong – a last ditch effort to appease Sennacherib and avoid war. In the final analysis, however, Hezekiah escaped Assyria's wrath by relying on God (19:32-36), not by paying the tribute.

29. Why would the king of Assyria claim to have marching orders from the Lord? (Chapter 18)

**Answer:** This was Sennacherib's claim not God's. To intimidate the people, the Assyrian commander first claimed to be ordained by God and then bragged that God couldn't stop him. Neither statement was prophetic but merely part of a propaganda campaign. He knew enough about the Israelites to know what kind of information might demoralize them. Still, God used Assyria's evil intentions to accomplish his own purposes, though Assyria would not have known this. (v. 12)

30. Did Hezekiah's prayer change God's mind? (Chapter 20)

**Answer:** It would appear so, although God would have known, beforehand the final outcome of this incident. After announcing Hezekiah's impending death, Isaiah returned to reverse his proclamation saying that God had heard Hezekiah's prayer. Whatever God's reasons were for acting on Hezekiah's request, it seems Hezekiah would not have been healed unless first he had prayed. God gives power to his people through prayer.