



My Drift

Title: Bible – The Book of 1 Kings

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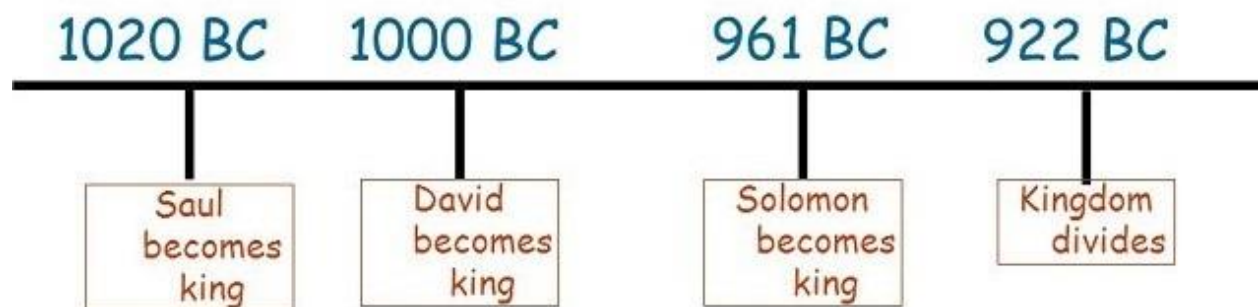
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The book of 1 Kings provides an account of the death of David, the reign of his son Solomon, and the decline and division of the Kingdom of Israel after Solomon and many of his successors turned to idol worship. It also recounts the ministry of the prophet Elijah among the northern ten tribes of Israel.

THE TIMELINE



The Kingdom Years of Israel

Outline

1 Kings 1–11 Before his death, King David has his son Solomon anointed king. Solomon rules his kingdom with great wisdom. Solomon builds a temple and his palace at Jerusalem, beginning the period known as the “golden age of Israel.”



The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon. The purpose of the African Queen’s visit was to test Solomon’s wisdom by asking him to solve a number of riddles.

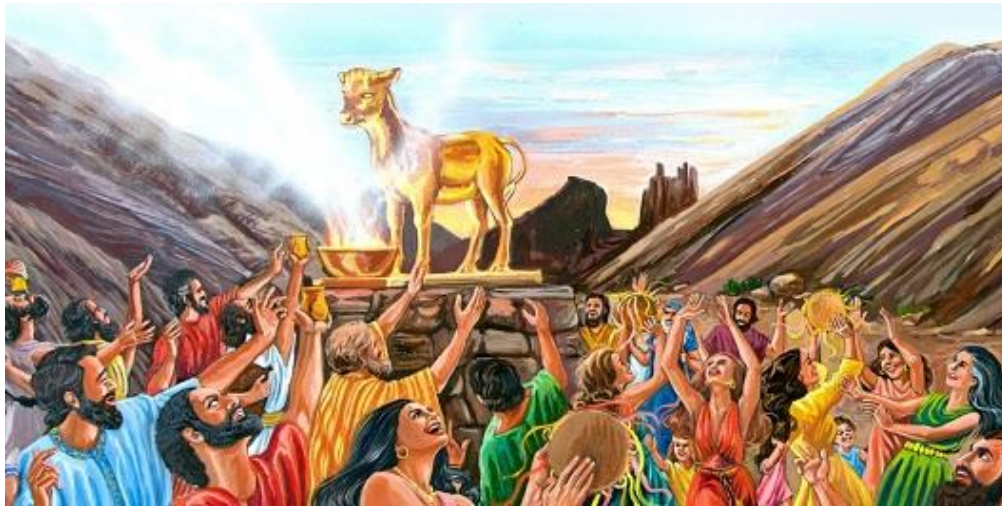
Solomon’s wives lure him away from worshipping the Lord and encourage him to worship false gods. According to the biblical account, Solomon had 700 wives. The wives were described as foreign princesses, including Pharaoh’s daughter and women of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon and of the Hittites.

Solomon’s kingdom is threatened by Jeroboam.



1 Kings 12–16 All the tribes of Israel except Judah and Benjamin rebel against Solomon's son Rehoboam.

The kingdom is divided, and Jeroboam becomes the ruler of the Northern Kingdom (also known as Israel), leaving Rehoboam to rule the Southern Kingdom (also known as Judah). (See map above)



Jeroboam and Rehoboam both establish idol worship in their kingdoms, and many rulers of both kingdoms follow this pattern of idol worship.



Who is Baal in the Bible?

Baal is the name given to several different deities who are designated as false gods or idols. Additionally, Baal is associated with Beezlebub, demons, and the devil.

1 Kings 17–22 The prophet Elijah.

Elijah was a mighty prophet during a turbulent time in Israel's history. The nation had turned away from the Lord to worship Baal, and King Ahab had formed an alliance with Sidon by marrying their princess, Jezebel. Elijah was sent to show Israel the evil of their ways and encourage them to return to the Lord.

Elijah and the Widow

Elijah is first mentioned in 1 Kings 17, where he proclaimed a drought as penalty for the evil deeds of the kings of Israel. During this time, ravens brought him food, and he lived by a seasonal river until it dried up. The Lord then told him to visit a widow in Zarephath for food and water. Once he arrived, her jar of flour and jug of water did not run dry. While he was staying there, her son fell ill and died. Elijah pleaded with the Lord and stretched himself on top of the child three times, restoring him to life.



The prophet Elijah

The True God

Elijah then presented himself to King Ahab, telling him to summon the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel, along with all the people of Israel. He confronted the people and told them that if they prepared a sacrifice and called on Baal, he would prepare a sacrifice and call on the Lord. Whichever caught fire would then demonstrate who was the true God. The worshippers of Baal prepared their sacrifice and called upon him from morning until noon, with no answer.

Then Elijah rebuilt the altar of the Lord, prepared the sacrifice, and poured four jugs of water on it. He called upon the Lord, and the Lord answered him:

The Lord's fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and lapped up the water in the trench. Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

— 1 Kings 18:38-39

Elijah Fears for His Life

After this, the prophets of Baal were seized and killed. When King Ahab told his wife Jezebel what Elijah had done, she vowed to kill him. Elijah was terrified and fled into the desert, where he prayed for the Lord to take his life, then fell asleep under a broom tree. A messenger from the Lord came to him twice, urging him to eat and drink. After doing so, he journeyed 40 days in the wilderness to Mt. Horeb, where he hid in a cave. The voice of the Lord came to him and commanded him to stand out on the mountain.

A violent wind came by, followed by an earthquake, then a fire. But the Lord was not in any of them; instead, He spoke to Elijah in a quiet voice:

When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, Why are you here, Elijah? He replied, "I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. They have destroyed your altars and murdered your prophets by the sword. I alone remain, and they seek to take my life." The Lord said to him: Go back! Take the desert road to Damascus. When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king of Aram. You shall also anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king of Israel, and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, as prophet to succeed you. Anyone who escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill. Anyone who escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. But I will spare seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bent to Baal, every mouth that has not kissed him. — 1 Kings 19:13-18

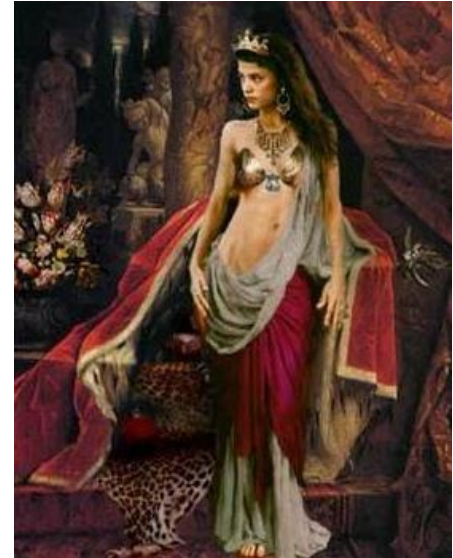
After receiving these instructions, Elijah returned to civilization and recruited Elisha to minister with him.

Judas and Jezebel

No two biblical figures are more synonymous with evil than Judas and Jezebel. For more than 2,000 years, they have evolved as such enduring symbols of male treachery and female depravity that it's highly unlikely any Christian children have ever been baptized in their names. The story of Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, is well known.

Not so much Jezebel's. Across the centuries, in prose, poetry, movies, sermons, and song, this ninth-century B.C. pagan queen of Israel has come to epitomize the wicked woman. Yet the events of her life, as told in 1 and 2 Kings, are probably unfamiliar to all but devoted readers of the Bible.

With its intrigue, sex, cruelty, and murder, Jezebel's story is a rich stew of the historical events, allegorical interpretation, and metaphorical license that make many of the Old Testament's biographical dramas such fascinating reading. At the climax of her long struggle to bring pagan worship to the kingdom of Israel, where the Hebrew God, Yahweh, is the only deity, Queen Jezebel pays a terrible price. Thrown from a high window, her unattended body is devoured by dogs, fulfilling the prediction of Elijah, Yahweh's prophet and Jezebel's nemesis.



Jezebel

Elijah and Ahaziah

Soon after, King Ahab died and was succeeded by his son, Ahaziah. After Ahaziah suffered an injury, he sought the assistance of the god of Ekron to see whether he would recover. Elijah confronted him for rejecting the Lord, which made him angry. In his rage, Ahaziah then sent a captain with fifty men to kill Elijah:

The prophet was seated on a hilltop when he found him. He said, “Man of God, the king commands you, ‘Come down.’” Elijah answered the captain, “Well, if I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.
— 2 Kings 1:9-10

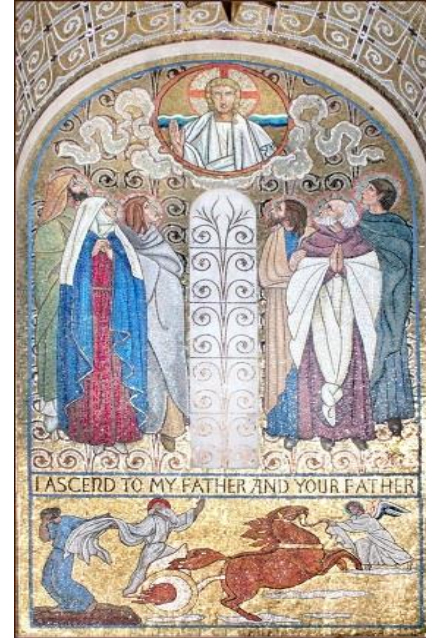
This happened a second time; the king sent fifty men, and they were again struck down with fire. A third commander came, and he begged Elijah to spare the lives of him and his men. The Lord told Elijah not to be afraid of them, so he went down with them to the king. He told the king that because he turned away from the Lord, he would die. True to Elijah's warning, the king was struck down by the Lord.

His recorded words are few but forceful, and his deeds are explicit evidences of his strength of will, force of character, and personal courage. He was an example of solid faith in the Lord. With his ministry are associated such colorful events as his pronouncements upon the life and death of Ahab and Jezebel (and their subsequent fulfillment); calling down fire from heaven; sealing the

heavens with no rain for 3½ years; blessing the widow's meal and water; and raising a boy from the dead.

Elijah is Taken Up

When Elijah and Elisha traveled from Bethel to Jericho, Elijah tried to leave Elisha, but Elisha would not let him. The other prophets of the cities asked him repeatedly whether he knew that Elijah would leave him, and Elisha responded that he did. After they crossed the Jordan, Elijah asked Elisha if there was anything that he could do before he was taken up into heaven. Elisha asked to be given a double portion of his spirit, and Elijah said that was a difficult request, but that it would come to pass if he was able to see him taken up. Then a fiery chariot and horses came between them, and Elisha saw a whirlwind take Elijah to heaven.



Lessons Learned

Solomon

The lesson we learn from Solomon is that no one is immune to the allures of the world. If even one of the wisest men to walk the earth can fall away from the LORD, then so can we. We must be vigilant to guard our hearts and minds. We must be steadfast to abide in Jesus, lest we fall away.



Solomon is said to have had a harem that included 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). As Solomon got older, his wives lured him away from worshipping the Lord. Maybe Solomon was not so wise after all!

Rehoboam and Jeroboam - The Kingdom of Israel is Divided

The Kings of Israel teaches us that while sin separates us from God's best for us, His promises still stand despite our sin.

The leader of a nation influences the spiritual growth of the people under him. The leader can be for God, or against Him. We need to pray for our leaders.

All the tribes of Israel except Judah and Benjamin rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam. The kingdom of Israel was divided, and Jeroboam becomes the ruler of the Northern Kingdom (also known as Israel), leaving Rehoboam to rule the Southern Kingdom (also known as Judah).

Both kings turned against God and worshiped false idols.

David was the best and most faithful king.



Elijah

God sent the prophet Elijah to show Israel the evil of their ways and encourage them to return to the Lord. With the help of the Lord, Elijah performed several miracles:

- Brought on a 3 and a half-year drought as penalty for the evil deeds of the kings of Israel.
- The Lord told Elijah to visit a widow in Zarephath for food and water during the drought. The Lord provided a never-ending supply.
- The widow's son died - Elijah with the Lord's help brought him back to life.

Elijah proves to the people of Israel who is the real God. He prepared two sacrifices – One for the Lord and one for Baal the Pagan God. Whichever one caught fire would then demonstrate who was the true God. No matter how hard Baal tried, the sacrifice remained cold. Then a fire ball from the sky turned the Lord's sacrifice to fire immediately.



Lesson learned. Miracles can only happen with the help of God.

All this leads us to the Book of 2 Kings coming next.

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