

# THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

## The death of David and accession of Solomon

**1**<sup>1</sup>KING DAVID WAS NOW A VERY OLD MAN and, though they wrapped clothes round him, he could not keep warm. <sup>2</sup>So his household said to him, 'Let us find a young virgin for your majesty, to attend you and take care of you; and let her lie in your bosom, sir, and make you warm.' <sup>3</sup>So they searched all over Israel for a beautiful maiden and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. <sup>4</sup>She was a very beautiful girl, and she took care of the king and waited on him, but he had no intercourse with her.

<sup>5</sup>Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, was boasting that he was to be king; and he had already provided himself with chariots and horsemen [*Or a chariot and horses*] and fifty outrunners. <sup>6</sup>Never in his life had his father corrected him or asked why he behaved as he did. He was a very handsome man, too, and was next in age to Absalom. <sup>7</sup>He talked with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their strong support; <sup>8</sup>but Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and David's bodyguard of heroes, did not take his side. <sup>9</sup>Adonijah then held a sacrifice of sheep, oxen, and buffaloes at the stone Zohemoth beside Enrogel, and he invited all his royal brothers and all those officers of the household who were of the tribe of Judah. <sup>10</sup>But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah and the bodyguard, or Solomon his brother.

<sup>11</sup>Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, 'Have you not heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has become king, all unknown to our lord David? <sup>12</sup>Now come, let me advise you what to do for your own safety and for the safety of your son Solomon. <sup>13</sup>Go in and see King David and say to him, "Did not your majesty swear to me, your servant, that my son Solomon should succeed you as king; that it was he who should sit on your throne? Why then has Adonijah become king?" <sup>14</sup>Then while you are still speaking there with the king, I will follow you in and tell the whole story.'

<sup>15</sup>So Bathsheba went to the king in his private chamber; he was now very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was waiting on him. <sup>16</sup>Bathsheba bowed before the king and prostrated herself. 'What do you want?' said the king. <sup>17</sup>She answered, 'My lord, you swore to me your servant, by the LORD your God, that my son Solomon should succeed you as king, and that he should sit on your throne. <sup>18</sup>But now, here is Adonijah become king, all unknown to your majesty. <sup>19</sup>He has sacrificed great numbers of oxen, buffaloes, and sheep, and has invited to the feast all the king's sons, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander-in-chief, but he has not invited your servant Solomon. <sup>20</sup>And now, your majesty, all Israel is looking to you to announce who is to succeed you on the throne. <sup>21</sup>Otherwise, when you, sir, rest with your forefathers, my son Solomon and I shall be treated as criminals.' <sup>22</sup>She was still speaking to the king when Nathan the prophet arrived. <sup>23</sup>The king was told that Nathan was there; he came into the king's presence and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. <sup>24</sup>'My lord,' he said, 'your

majesty must, I suppose, have declared that Adonijah should succeed you and that he should sit on your throne. <sup>25</sup>He has today gone down and sacrificed great numbers of oxen, buffaloes, and sheep, and has invited to the feast all the king's sons, Joab the commander-in-chief, and Abiathar the priest; and at this very moment they are eating and drinking in his presence and shouting, "Long live King Adonijah!" <sup>26</sup>But he has not invited me your servant, Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your servant Solomon. <sup>27</sup>Has this been done by your majesty's authority, while we [Has this ... while we: or If this has been done by your majesty's authority, then we] your servants have not been told who should succeed you on the throne?' <sup>28</sup>Thereupon King David said, 'Call Bathsheba', and she came into the king's presence and stood before him. <sup>29</sup>Then the king swore an oath to her: 'As the LORD lives, who has delivered me from all my troubles: <sup>30</sup>I swore by the LORD the God of Israel that Solomon your son should succeed me and that he should sit on my throne, and this day I give effect to my oath.' <sup>31</sup>Bathsheba bowed low to the king and prostrated herself; and she said, 'May my lord King David live for ever!'

<sup>32</sup>Then King David said, 'Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.' They came into the king's presence <sup>33</sup>and he gave them these orders: 'Take the officers of the household with you; mount my son Solomon on the king's mule and escort him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup>There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet shall anoint him king over Israel. Sound the trumpet and shout, "Long live King Solomon!" <sup>35</sup>Then escort him home again, and he shall come and sit on my throne and reign in my place; for he is the man that I have appointed prince over Israel and Judah.' <sup>36</sup>Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, 'It shall be done. And may the LORD, the God of my lord the king, confirm it! <sup>37</sup>As the LORD has been with your majesty, so may he be with Solomon; may he make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David.' <sup>38</sup>So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, together with the Kerethite and Pelethite guards, went down and mounted Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him to Gihon. <sup>39</sup>Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the Tent of the LORD and anointed Solomon; they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, 'Long live King Solomon!' <sup>40</sup>Then all the people escorted him home in procession, with great rejoicing and playing of pipes, so that the very earth split with the noise.

<sup>41</sup>Adonijah and his guests had finished their banquet when the noise reached their ears. Joab, hearing the sound of the trumpet, exclaimed, 'What is all this uproar in the city? What has happened?' <sup>42</sup>While he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. 'Come in', said Adonijah. 'You are an honourable man and bring good news.' <sup>43</sup>'Far otherwise,' Jonathan replied; 'our lord King David has made Solomon king <sup>44</sup>and has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, together with the Kerethite and Pelethite guards; they have mounted him on the king's mule, <sup>45</sup>and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon, and they have now escorted him home rejoicing, and the city is in an uproar. That was the noise you heard. <sup>46</sup>More than that, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. <sup>47</sup>Yes, and the officers of the household have been to greet our lord King David with these words: "May your God make the name of Solomon your son more famous than your own and his throne even greater than yours", and the king bowed upon his couch. <sup>48</sup>What is more, he said this: "Blessed be the LORD the God of Israel who has set a

successor on my throne this day while I am still alive to see it." ' 49Then Adonijah's guests all rose in panic and scattered. 50Adonijah himself, in fear of Solomon, sprang up and went to the altar and caught hold of its horns. 51Then a message was sent to Solomon: 'Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; he has taken hold of the horns of the altar and has said, "Let King Solomon first swear to me that he will not put his servant to the sword." ' 52Solomon said, 'If he proves himself a man of worth, not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground; but if he is found to be troublesome, he shall die.' 53Then King Solomon sent and had him brought down from the altar; he came in and prostrated himself before the king, and Solomon ordered him home.

2<sup>1</sup>When the time of David's death drew near, he gave this last charge to his son Solomon: 2<sup>1</sup>I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong and show yourself a man. 3Fulfil your duty to the LORD your God; conform to his ways, observe his statutes and his commandments, his judgements and his solemn precepts, as they are written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in whatever you do and whichever way you turn, 4and that the LORD may fulfil this promise that he made about me: "If your descendants take care to walk faithfully in my sight with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall never lack a successor on the throne of Israel." 5You know how Joab son of Zeruah treated me and what he did to two commanders-in-chief in Israel, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them both, breaking the peace by bloody acts of war; and with that blood he stained the belt about my waist and the sandals on my feet. 6Do as your wisdom prompts you, and do not let his grey hairs go down to the grave in peace. 7Show constant friendship to the family of Barzillai of Gilead; let them have their place at your table; they befriended me when I was a fugitive from your brother Absalom. 8Do not forget Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me bitterly the day I went to Mahanaim. True, he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore by the LORD that I would not put him to death. 9But you do not need to let him go unpunished now; you are a wise man and will know how to deal with him; bring down his grey hairs in blood to the grave.'

10So David rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David, 11having reigned over Israel for forty years, seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem; 12and Solomon succeeded his father David as king and was firmly established on the throne.

## **The reign of Solomon**

13THEN ADONIJAH SON OF HAGGITH came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. 'Do you come as a friend?' she asked. 'As a friend,' he answered; 14'I have something to say to you.' 'Tell me', she said. 15'You know', he went on, 'that the throne was mine and that all Israel was looking to me to be king; but I was passed over and the throne has gone to my brother; it was his by the LORD's will. 16And now I have one request to make of you; do not refuse me.' 'What is it?' she said. 17He answered, 'Will you ask King Solomon (he will never refuse you) to give me Abishag the Shunammite in marriage?' 18'Very well,' said Bathsheba, 'I will speak for you to the king.' 19So Bathsheba went in to King Solomon to speak for Adonijah. The king rose to meet her and kissed her, and seated himself on his throne. A throne was set for the king's mother and she sat at his

right hand. <sup>20</sup>Then she said, 'I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me.' 'What is it, mother?' he replied; 'I will not refuse you.' <sup>21</sup>'It is this, that Abishag the Shunammite should be given to your brother Adonijah in marriage.' <sup>22</sup>At that Solomon answered his mother, 'Why do you ask for Abishag the Shunammite as wife for Adonijah? you might as well ask for the throne, for he is my elder brother and has both Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah on his side.' <sup>23</sup>Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: 'So help me God, Adonijah shall pay for this with his life. <sup>24</sup>As the LORD lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father and has founded a house for me as he promised, this very day Adonijah shall be put to death!' <sup>25</sup>Thereupon King Solomon gave Benaiah son of Jehoiada his orders, and he struck him down and he died.

<sup>26</sup>Abiathar the priest was told by the king to go off to Anathoth to his own estate. 'You deserve to die,' he said, 'but in spite of this day's work I shall not put you to death, for you carried the Ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and you shared in all the hardships that he endured.' <sup>27</sup>So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from his office as priest of the LORD, and so fulfilled the sentence that the LORD had pronounced against the house of Eli in Shiloh.

<sup>28</sup>News of all this reached Joab, and he fled to the Tent of the LORD and caught hold of the horns of the altar; for he had sided with Adonijah, though not with Absalom. <sup>29</sup>When King Solomon learnt that Joab had fled to the Tent of the LORD and that he was by the altar, he sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada with orders to strike him down. <sup>30</sup>Benaiah came to the Tent of the LORD and ordered Joab in the king's name to come away; but he said, 'No; I will die here.' Benaiah reported Joab's answer to the king, <sup>31</sup>and the king said, 'Let him have his way; strike him down and bury him, and so rid me and my father's house of the guilt for the blood that he wantonly shed. <sup>32</sup>The LORD will hold him responsible for his own death, because he struck down two innocent men who were better men than he, Abner son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah, and ran them through with the sword, without my father David's knowledge. <sup>33</sup>The guilt of their blood shall recoil on Joab and his descendants for all time; but David and his descendants, his house and his throne, will enjoy perpetual prosperity from the LORD.' <sup>34</sup>So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up to the altar and struck Joab down and killed him, and he was buried in his house on the edge of the wilderness. <sup>35</sup>Thereafter the king appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada to command the army in his place, and installed Zadok the priest in place of Abiathar.

<sup>36</sup>Next the king sent for Shimei and said to him, 'Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and stay there; you are not to leave the city for any other place. <sup>37</sup>If ever you leave it and cross the gorge of the Kidron, you shall die; make no mistake about that. Your blood will be on your own head.' <sup>38</sup>And Shimei said to the king, 'I accept your sentence; I will do as your majesty commands.' So for a long time Shimei remained in Jerusalem; <sup>39</sup>but three years later two of his slaves ran away to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath. When Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath, <sup>40</sup>he immediately saddled his ass and went there to Achish in search of his slaves; he came to Gath and returned with them. <sup>41</sup>When King Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and back, <sup>42</sup>he sent for him and said, 'Did I not require you to swear by the LORD? Did I not

give you this solemn warning: "If ever you leave this city for any other place, you shall die; make no mistake about it"? And you said, "I accept your sentence; I obey." <sup>43</sup>Why then have you not kept the oath which you swore by the LORD, and the order which I gave you? <sup>44</sup>Shimei, you know in your own heart all the mischief you did to my father David; the LORD is now making that mischief recoil on your own head. <sup>45</sup>But King Solomon is blessed and the throne of David will be secure before the LORD for all time.' <sup>46</sup>The king then gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down; and he died. Thus Solomon's royal power was securely established.

**3**<sup>1</sup>Solomon allied himself to Pharaoh king of Egypt by marrying his daughter. He brought her to the City of David, until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall round Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>The people however continued to sacrifice at the hill-shrines, for till then no house had been built in honour of the name of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Solomon himself loved the LORD, conforming to the precepts laid down by his father David; but he too slaughtered and burnt sacrifices at the hill-shrines.

<sup>4</sup>Now King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice, for that was the chief hill-shrine, and he used to offer a thousand whole-offerings on its altar. <sup>5</sup> [vv5-14: cp 2Chr. 1.7-12] There that night the LORD God appeared to him in a dream and said, 'What shall I give you? Tell me.' <sup>6</sup>And Solomon answered, 'Thou didst show great and constant love to thy servant David my father, because he walked before thee in loyalty, righteousness, and integrity of heart; and thou hast maintained this great and constant love towards him and hast now given him a son to succeed him on the throne. <sup>7</sup>Now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of my father David, though I am in mere child, unskilled in leadership. <sup>8</sup>And I am here in the midst of thy people, the people of thy choice, too many to be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give thy servant, therefore, a heart with skill to listen, so that he may govern thy people justly and distinguish good from evil. For who is equal to the task of governing this great people of thine?' <sup>10</sup>The Lord was well pleased that Solomon had asked for this, <sup>11</sup>and he said to him, 'Because you have asked for this, and not for long life for yourself, or for wealth, or for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for discernment in administering justice, <sup>12</sup>I grant your request; I give you a heart so wise and so understanding that there has been none like you before your time nor will be after you. <sup>13</sup>I give you furthermore those things for which you did not ask, such wealth and honour [Or riches] as no king of your time can match. <sup>14</sup>And if you conform to my ways and observe my ordinances and commandments, as your father David did, I will give you long life.' <sup>15</sup>Then he awoke, and knew it was a dream.

Solomon came to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; there he sacrificed whole-offerings and brought shared-offerings, and gave a feast to all his household.

<sup>16</sup>Then there came into the king's presence two women who were prostitutes and stood before him. <sup>17</sup>The first said, 'My lord, this woman and I share the same house, and I gave birth to a child when she was there with me. <sup>18</sup>On the third day after my baby was born she too gave birth to a child. We were quite alone; no one else was with us in the house; only the two of us were there. <sup>19</sup>During the night this woman's child died

because she overlaid it, <sup>20</sup>and she got up in the middle of the night, took my baby from my side while I, your servant, was asleep, and laid it in her bosom, putting her dead child in mine. <sup>21</sup>When I got up in the morning to feed my baby, I found him dead; but when I looked at him closely, I found that it was not the child that I had borne.' <sup>22</sup>The other woman broke in, 'No; the living child is mine; yours is the dead one', while the first retorted, 'No; the dead child is yours; mine is the living one.' So they went on arguing in the king's presence. <sup>23</sup>The king thought to himself, 'One of them says, "This is my child, the living one; yours is the dead one." The other says, "No; it is your child that is dead and mine that is alive."' <sup>24</sup>Then he said, 'Fetch me a sword.' They brought in a sword <sup>25</sup>and the king gave the order: 'Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.' <sup>26</sup>At this the woman who was the mother of the living child, moved with love for her child, said to the king, 'Oh! sir, let her have the baby; whatever you do, do not kill it.' The other said, 'Let neither of us have it; cut it in two.' <sup>27</sup>Thereupon the king gave judgement: 'Give the living baby to the first woman; do not kill it. She is its mother.' <sup>28</sup>When Israel heard the judgement which the king had given, they all stood in awe of him; for they saw that he had the wisdom of God within him to administer justice.

**4<sup>1</sup>KING SOLOMON REIGNED OVER ISRAEL.** <sup>2</sup> [vv2-6: cp 2Sam. 8.16-18; 20.23-26; 1Chr. 18.15-17] His officers were as follows:

In charge of the calendar [In ... calendar: *prob. rdg, Heb Elihoreph*]: Azariah son of Zadok the priest.

<sup>3</sup>Adjutant-general [*prob. rdg, cp 1Chr. 18.16; Heb Adjutants-general*]: Ahijah son [*prob. rdg, Heb sons*] of Shisha.

Secretary of state: Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud.

<sup>4</sup>Commander of the army: Benaiah son of Jehoiada.

Priests: Zadok and Abiathar.

<sup>5</sup>Superintendent of the regional governors: Azariah son of Nathan.

King's Friend: Zabud son of Nathan.

<sup>6</sup>Comptroller of the household: Ahishar.

Superintendent of the forced levy: Adoniram son of Abda.

<sup>7</sup>Solomon had twelve regional governors over Israel and they supplied the food for the king and the royal household, each being responsible for one month's provision in the year. <sup>8</sup>These were their names:

Ben-hur in the hill-country of Ephraim.

<sup>9</sup>Ben-dekar in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, Elon, and Beth-hanan.

<sup>10</sup>Ben-hesed in Aruboth; he had charge also of Socoh and all the land of Hephher.

<sup>11</sup>Ben-abinadab, who had married Solomon's daughter Taphath, in all the district of Dor.

<sup>12</sup>Baana son of Ahilud in Taanach and Megiddo, all Beth-shean as far as Abel-meholah beside Zartanah, and from Beth-shean below Jezreel as far as Jokmeam.

<sup>13</sup>Ben-geber in Ramoth-gilead, including the tent-villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead and the region of Argob in Bashan, sixty large walled cities with gate-bars of bronze.

<sup>14</sup>Ahinadab son of Iddo in Mahanaim.

<sup>15</sup>Ahimaaz in Naphtali; he also had married a daughter of Solomon, Basmath.

<sup>16</sup>Baanah son of Hushai in Asher and Aloth.

<sup>17</sup>Jehoshaphat son of Paruah in Issachar.

<sup>18</sup>Shimei son of Elah in Benjamin.

<sup>19</sup>Geber son of Uri in Gilead, the land of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan.

In addition, one governor over all the governors [over ... governors: *prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] in the land.

<sup>20</sup>The people of Judah and Israel were countless as the sands of the sea; they ate and they drank, and enjoyed life. <sup>21</sup>Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the river Euphrates to Philistia and as far as the frontier of Egypt; they paid tribute and were subject to him all his life.

<sup>22</sup>Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kor of flour and sixty kor of meal, <sup>23</sup>ten fat oxen and twenty oxen from the pastures and a hundred sheep, as well as stags, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl. <sup>24</sup>For he was paramount over all the land west of the Euphrates from Tiphseh to Gaza, ruling all the kings west of the river; and he enjoyed peace on all sides. <sup>25</sup>All through his reign Judah and Israel continued at peace, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba.

<sup>26</sup>Solomon had forty thousand chariot-horses in his stables and twelve thousand cavalry horses.

<sup>27</sup>The regional governors, each for a month in turn, supplied provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to his table, they never fell short in their deliveries.

<sup>28</sup>They provided also barley and straw, each according to his duty, for the horses and chariot-horses where it was required.

<sup>29</sup>And God gave Solomon depth of wisdom and insight, and understanding as wide as the sand on the sea-shore, <sup>30</sup>so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed that of all the men of the east and of all Egypt. <sup>31</sup>For he was wiser than any man, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Kalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; his fame spread among all the surrounding nations. <sup>32</sup>He uttered three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five. <sup>33</sup>He discoursed of trees, from the cedar of Lebanon down in the marjoram that grows out of the wall, of beasts and birds, of reptiles and fishes. <sup>34</sup>Men of all races came to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom he received gifts.

**5**<sup>1</sup>WHEN HIRAM KING OF TYRE heard that Solomon had been anointed king in his father's place, he sent envoys to him, because he had always been a friend of David. <sup>2</sup>[vv2-11: cp 2Chr. 2.3-16] Solomon sent this answer to Hiram: <sup>3</sup>You know that my father David could not build a house in honour of the name of the LORD his God, because he was surrounded by armed nations until the LORD made them subject to him. <sup>4</sup>But now on every side the LORD my God has given me peace; there is no one to oppose me, I

fear no attack. <sup>5</sup>So I propose to build a house in honour of the name of the LORD my God, following the promise given by the LORD to my father David: "Your son whom I shall set on the throne in your place will build the house in honour of my name." <sup>6</sup>If therefore you will now give orders that cedars be felled and brought from Lebanon, my men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever sum you fix; for, as you know, we have none so skilled at felling timber as your Sidonians.'

<sup>7</sup>When Hiram received Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, 'Blessed be the LORD today who has given David a wise son to rule over this great people.' <sup>8</sup>And he sent this reply to Solomon: 'I have received your message. In this matter of timber, both cedar and pine, I will do all you wish. <sup>9</sup>My men shall bring down the logs from Lebanon to the sea and I will make them up into rafts to be floated to the place you appoint; I will have them broken up there and you can remove them. You, on your part, will meet my wishes if you provide the food for my household.' <sup>10</sup>So Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine that he wanted, <sup>11</sup>and Solomon supplied Hiram with twenty thousand kor of wheat as food for his household and twenty kor of oil of pounded olives; Solomon gave this yearly to Hiram. <sup>12</sup>(The LORD had given Solomon wisdom as he had promised him; there was peace between Hiram and Solomon and they concluded an alliance.) <sup>13</sup>King Solomon raised a forced levy from the whole of Israel amounting to thirty thousand men. <sup>14</sup>He sent them to Lebanon in monthly relays of ten thousand, so that the men spent one month in Lebanon and two at home; Adoniram was superintendent of the whole levy. <sup>15</sup>Solomon had also seventy thousand hauliers and eighty thousand quarrymen, <sup>16</sup>apart from the three thousand three hundred foremen in charge of the work who superintended the labourers. <sup>17</sup>By the king's orders they quarried huge, massive blocks for laying the foundation of the LORD's house in hewn stone. <sup>18</sup>Solomon's and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites shaped the blocks and prepared both timber and stone for the building of the house.

**6**<sup>1</sup> [*vv1-3: cp 2Chr. 3.2-4*] It was 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 second month of that year, the month of Ziv, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>The house which King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long by twenty cubits broad, and its height was thirty cubits. <sup>3</sup>The vestibule in front of the sanctuary was twenty cubits long, spanning the whole breadth of the house, while it projected ten cubits in front of the house; <sup>4</sup>and he furnished the house with embrasures. <sup>5</sup>Then he built a terrace against its wall round both the sanctuary and the inner shrine. He made arcades all round: <sup>6</sup>the lowest arcade was five cubits in depth, the middle six, and the highest seven; for he made rebates all round the outside of the main wall so that the bearer beams might not be set into the walls. <sup>7</sup>In the building of the house, only blocks of undressed stone direct from the quarry were used; no hammer or axe or any iron tool whatever was heard in the house while it was being built.

<sup>8</sup>The entrance to the lowest arcade was in the right-hand corner of the house; there was access by a spiral stairway from that to the middle arcade, and from the middle arcade to the highest. <sup>9-10</sup>So he built the house and finished it, having constructed the terrace five cubits high against the whole building, braced the house with struts of cedar and

roofed it with beams and coffering of cedar.

<sup>11</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, <sup>12</sup>saying, 'As for this house which you are building, if you are obedient to my ordinances and conform to my precepts and loyally observe all my commands, then I will fulfil my promise to you, the promise I gave to your father David, <sup>13</sup>and I will dwell among the Israelites and never forsake my people Israel.'

<sup>14</sup>So Solomon built the LORD's house and finished it. <sup>15</sup>He lined the inner walls of the house with cedar boards, covering the interior from floor to rafters with wood; the floor he laid with boards of pine. <sup>16</sup>In the innermost part of the house he partitioned off a space of twenty cubits with cedar boards from floor to rafters and made of it an inner shrine, to be the Most Holy Place. <sup>17</sup>The sanctuary in front of this was forty cubits long. <sup>18</sup>The cedar inside the house was carved with open flowers and gourds; all was cedar, no stone was left visible.

<sup>19</sup>He prepared an inner shrine in the furthest recesses of the house to receive the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD. <sup>20</sup>This inner shrine was twenty cubits square and it stood twenty cubits high; he overlaid it with red gold and made an altar of cedar. <sup>21</sup>And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with red gold and drew a Veil [*Veil: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] with golden chains across in front of the inner shrine [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and overlaid it with gold*]. <sup>22</sup>The whole house he overlaid with gold until it was all covered; and the whole of the altar by the inner shrine he overlaid with gold.

<sup>23</sup> [*vv23-28. cp 2Chr. 3.10-13*] In the inner shrine he made two cherubim of wild olive, each ten cubits high. <sup>24</sup>Each wing of the cherubim was five cubits long, and from wing-tip to wing-tip was ten cubits. <sup>25</sup>Similarly the second cherub measured ten cubits; the two cherubim were alike in size and shape, <sup>26</sup>and each ten cubits high. <sup>27</sup>He put the cherubim within the shrine at the furthest recesses and their wings were outspread, so that a wing of the one cherub touched the wall on one side and a wing of the other touched the wall on the other side, and their other wings met in the middle; <sup>28</sup>and he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

<sup>29</sup>Round all the walls of the house he carved figures of cherubim, palm-trees, and open flowers, both in the inner chamber and in the outer. <sup>30</sup>The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, both in the inner chamber and in the outer. <sup>31</sup>At the entrance to the inner shrine he made a double door of wild olive; the pilasters and the [*and the: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] door-posts were pentagonal. <sup>32</sup>The doors were of wild olive, and he carved cherubim, palms, and open flowers on them, overlaying them with gold and hammering the gold upon the cherubim and the palms. <sup>33</sup>Similarly for the doorway of the sanctuary he made a square frame of wild olive <sup>34</sup>and a double door of pine, each leaf having two swivel-pins. <sup>35</sup>On them he carved cherubim, palms, and open flowers, overlaying them evenly with gold over the carving.

<sup>36</sup>He built the inner court with three courses of dressed stone and one course of lengths of cedar.

<sup>37</sup>In the fourth year of Solomon's reign the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv; <sup>38</sup>and in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details according to the specification. It had taken seven years to build.

<sup>7</sup><sup>1</sup>Solomon had been engaged on his building for thirteen years by the time he had finished it. <sup>2</sup>He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon, a hundred cubits long, fifty broad, and thirty high, constructed of four rows of cedar columns, over which were laid lengths of cedar. <sup>3</sup>It had a cedar roof, extending over the beams, which rested on the columns, fifteen in each row; and the number of the beams was forty-five. <sup>4</sup>There were three rows of window-frames, and the windows corresponded to each other at three levels. <sup>5</sup>All the doorways and the windows had square frames, and window corresponded to window at three levels.

<sup>6</sup>He made also the colonnade, fifty cubits long and thirty broad [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and a colonnade and pillars in front of them*] with a cornice above.

<sup>7</sup>He built the Hall of Judgement, the hall containing the throne where he was to give judgement; this was panelled in cedar from floor to rafters.

<sup>8</sup>His own house where he was to reside, in a court set back from the colonnade, and the house he made for Pharaoh's daughter whom he had married, were constructed like the hall.

<sup>9</sup>All these were made of heavy blocks of stone, hewn to measure and trimmed with the saw on the inner and outer sides, from foundation to coping and from the court of the house [*prob. rdg, cp v12; Heb from outside*] as far as the great court. <sup>10</sup>At the base were heavy stones, massive blocks, some ten and some eight cubits in size, <sup>11</sup>and above were heavy stones dressed to measure, and cedar. <sup>12</sup>The great court had three courses of dressed stone all around and a course of lengths of cedar; so had the inner court of the house of the LORD, and so had the vestibule of the house.

<sup>13</sup>King Solomon fetched from Tyre Hiram, <sup>14</sup>the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali. His father, a native of Tyre, had been a worker in bronze, and he himself was a man of great skill and ingenuity, versed in every kind of craftsmanship in bronze. Hiram came to King Solomon and executed all his works.

<sup>15</sup> [*vv15-21: cp 2Chr. 3.15-17*] He cast in a mould the two bronze pillars. One stood eighteen cubits high and it took a cord twelve cubits long to go round it; it was hollow, and the metal was four fingers thick [*it was ... thick: prob. rdg, cp Jer. 52.21; Heb omitted*]. The second pillar was the same. <sup>16</sup>He made two capitals of solid copper to set on the tops of the pillars, each capital five cubits high. <sup>17</sup>He made two bands of ornamental network, in festoons of chain-work, for the capitals on the tops of the pillars, a band of network for each capital. <sup>18</sup>Then he made pomegranates in two rows all round on top of the ornamental network of the one pillar; he did the same with the other capital. <sup>19</sup>(The capitals at the tops of the pillars in the vestibule were shaped like lilies and were four cubits high.) <sup>20</sup>Upon the capitals at the tops of the two pillars, immediately above the

cushion, which was beyond the network upwards, were two hundred pomegranates in rows all round on the two capitals [the two capitals: *prob. rdg, Heb the second capital*].<sup>21</sup> Then he erected the pillars at the vestibule of the sanctuary. When he had erected the pillar on the right side, he named it Jachin [*Or Jachun, meaning It shall stand*]; and when he had erected the one on the left side, he named it Boaz [*Or Booz, meaning In strength*].<sup>22</sup> On the tops of the pillars was lily-work. Thus the work of the pillars was finished.

<sup>23</sup> [vv23-26: *cp 2Chr. 4.2-5*] He then made the Sea of cast metal; it was round in shape, the diameter from rim to rim being ten cubits; it stood five cubits high, and it took a line thirty cubits long to go round it.<sup>24</sup> All round the Sea on the outside under its rim, completely surrounding the thirty [*prob. rdg, Heb ten*] cubits of its circumference, were two rows of gourds, cast in one piece with the Sea itself.<sup>25</sup> It was mounted on twelve oxen, three facing north, three west, three south, and three east, their hind quarters turned inwards; the Sea rested on top of them.<sup>26</sup> Its thickness was a hand-breadth; its rim was made like that of a cup, shaped like the calyx of a lily; it held two thousand bath of water.

<sup>27</sup> He also made the ten trolleys of bronze; each trolley was four cubits long, four wide, and three high.<sup>28</sup> This was the construction of the trolleys. They had panels set in frames; <sup>29</sup> on these panels were portrayed lions, oxen, and cherubim, and similarly on the frames. Above and below the lions, oxen, and cherubim [*and cherubim: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] were fillets of hammered work of spiral design.<sup>30</sup> Each trolley had four bronze wheels with axles of bronze; it also had four flanges and handles beneath the laver, and these handles were of cast metal with a spiral design on their sides.<sup>31</sup> The opening for the basin was set within a crown which projected one cubit; the opening was round with a level edge [*prob. rdg, Heb adds a cubit and a half (cp. v32)*], and it had decorations in relief. (The panels of the trolleys were square, not round.)<sup>32</sup> The four wheels were beneath the panels, and the wheel-forks were made in one piece with the trolleys; the height of each wheel was a cubit and a half.<sup>33</sup> The wheels were constructed like those of a chariot, their axles, hubs, spokes, and felloes being all of cast metal.<sup>34</sup> The four handles were at the four corners of each trolley, of one piece with the trolley.<sup>35</sup> At the top of the trolley there was a circular band half a cubit high; the struts and panels on [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the head of*] the trolley were of one piece with it.<sup>36</sup> On the plates, that is on the panels [*prob. rdg, Heb adds its struts*], he carved cherubim, lions, and palm-trees, wherever there was a blank space, with spiral work all round it.<sup>37</sup> This is how the ten trolleys were made; all of them were cast alike, having the same size and the same shape.

<sup>38</sup> He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty bath and measuring four cubits; there was a basin for each of the ten trolleys.<sup>39</sup> He put five trolleys on the right side of the house and five on the left side; and he put the Sea in the south-east corner of it.

<sup>40</sup> [vv40-51: *cp. 2Chr. 4.11-5.1*] Hiram made also the pots, the shovels, and the tossing-bowls. So he finished all the work which he had undertaken for King Solomon on the house of the LORD: <sup>41</sup> the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on the tops of the pillars; the two ornamental networks to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals on the tops

of the pillars; <sup>42</sup>the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the bowl-shaped capitals on the two pillars; <sup>43</sup>the ten trolleys and the ten basins on the trolleys; <sup>44</sup>the one Sea and the twelve oxen which supported it; <sup>45</sup>the pots, the shovels, and the tossing-bowls – all these objects in the house of the LORD which Hiram made for King Solomon being of bronze, burnished work. <sup>46</sup>In the Plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the foundry between Succoth and Zarethan.

<sup>47</sup>Solomon put all these objects in their places; so great was the quantity of bronze used in their making that the weight of it was beyond all reckoning. <sup>48</sup>He made also all the furnishings for the house of the LORD: the golden altar and the golden table upon which was set the Bread of the Presence; <sup>49</sup>the lamp-stands of red gold, five on the right side and five on the left side of the inner shrine; the flowers, lamps, and tongs, of gold; <sup>50</sup>the cups, snuffers, tossing-bowls, saucers, and firepans, of red gold; and the panels for the doors of the inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place, and for the doors of the house [*prob. rdg, Heb adds for the temple*], of gold.

<sup>51</sup>When all the work which King Solomon did for the house of the LORD was completed, he brought in the sacred treasures of his father David, the silver, the gold, and the vessels, and deposited them in the storehouses of the house of the LORD.

**8**<sup>1</sup> [*vv1-9: cp 2Chr. 5.2-10*] THEN SOLOMON SUMMONED THE ELDERS of Israel, all the heads of the tribes who were chiefs of families in Israel, to assemble in Jerusalem, in order to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is called Zion. <sup>2</sup>All the men of Israel assembled in King Solomon's presence at the pilgrim-feast in the month Ethanim, the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>When the elders of Israel had all come, the priests took the Ark of the LORD <sup>4</sup>and carried it up with the Tent of the Presence and all the sacred furnishings of the Tent: it was the priests and the Levites together who carried them up. <sup>5</sup>King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel, assembled with him before the Ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen in numbers past counting or reckoning. <sup>6</sup>Then the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to its place, the inner shrine of the house, the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim. <sup>7</sup>The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the Ark; they formed a screen above the Ark and its poles. <sup>8</sup>The poles projected, and their ends could be seen from the Holy Place immediately in front of the inner shrine, but from nowhere else outside; they are there to this day. <sup>9</sup>There was nothing inside the Ark but the two tablets of stone which Moses had deposited there at Horeb, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with the Israelites when they left Egypt.

<sup>10</sup>Then the priests came out of the Holy Place, since the cloud was filling the house of the LORD, <sup>11</sup>and they could not continue to minister because of it, for the glory of the LORD filled his house. <sup>12</sup> [*vv12-50: cp 2Chr. 6.1-39*] And Solomon said:

O LORD who hast set the sun in heaven,  
but hast chosen to dwell in thick darkness,  
<sup>13</sup>here have I built thee a lofty house,  
a habitation for thee to occupy for ever.

<sup>14</sup>And as they stood waiting, the king turned round and blessed all the assembly of Israel <sup>15</sup>in these words: 'Blessed be the LORD the God of Israel who spoke directly to my father David and has himself fulfilled his promise. For he said, <sup>16</sup>"From the day when I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel where I should build a house for my Name to be there, but I chose David to be over my people Israel." <sup>17</sup>My father David had in mind to build a house in honour of the name of the LORD the God of Israel, <sup>18</sup>but the LORD said to him, "You purposed to build a house in honour of my name; and your purpose was good. <sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, you shall not build it; but the son who is to be born to you, he shall build the house in honour of my name." <sup>20</sup>The LORD has now fulfilled his promise: I have succeeded my father David and taken his place on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the house in honour of the name of the LORD the God of Israel. <sup>21</sup>I have assigned therein a place for the Ark containing the Covenant of the LORD, which he made with our forefathers when he brought them out of Egypt.'

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon, standing in front of the altar of the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands towards heaven <sup>23</sup>and said, 'O LORD God of Israel, there is no god like thee in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant with thy servants and showing them constant love while they continue faithful to thee in heart and soul. <sup>24</sup>Thou hast kept thy promise to thy servant David my father; by thy deeds this day thou hast fulfilled what thou didst say to him in words. <sup>25</sup>Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep this promise of thine to thy servant David my father: "You shall never want for a man appointed by me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons look to their ways and walk before me as you have walked before me." <sup>26</sup>And now, O God of Israel, let the words which thou didst speak to thy servant David my father be confirmed.

<sup>27</sup>But can God indeed dwell on earth? Heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built! <sup>28</sup>Yet attend to the prayer and the supplication of thy servant, O LORD my God, listen to the cry and the prayer which thy servant utters this day, <sup>29</sup>that thine eyes may ever be upon this house night and day, this place of which thou didst say, "My Name shall be there"; so mayest thou hear thy servant when he prays towards this place. <sup>30</sup>Hear the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel when they pray towards this place. Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling and, when thou hearest, forgive.

<sup>31</sup>When a man wrongs his neighbour and he is adjured to take an oath, and the adjuration is made before thy altar in this house, <sup>32</sup>then do thou hear in heaven and act: be thou thy servants' judge, condemning the guilty man and bringing his deeds upon his own head, acquitting the innocent and rewarding him as his innocence may deserve.

<sup>33</sup>When thy people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against thee, and they turn back to thee, confessing thy name and making their prayer and supplication to thee in this house, <sup>34</sup>do thou hear in heaven; forgive the sin of thy people Israel and restore them to the land which thou gavest to their forefathers.

<sup>35</sup>When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because thy servant and thy people Israel have sinned against thee, and when they pray towards this place, confessing thy name and forsaking their sin when they feel thy punishment, <sup>36</sup>do thou hear in heaven and forgive their sin; so mayest thou teach them the good way which they should follow; and grant rain to thy land which thou hast given to thy people as their own possession.

<sup>37</sup>If there is famine in the land, or pestilence, or black blight or red, or locusts new-sloughed or fully grown; or if their enemies besiege them in any of their cities; or if plague or sickness befall them, <sup>38</sup>then hear the prayer or supplication of every man among thy people Israel, as each one, prompted by the remorse of his own heart, spreads out his hands towards this house: <sup>39</sup>hear it in heaven thy dwelling and forgive, and act. And, as thou knowest a man's heart, reward him according to his deeds, for thou alone knowest the hearts of all men; <sup>40</sup>and so they will fear thee all their lives in the land thou gavest to our forefathers.

<sup>41</sup>The foreigner too, the man who does not belong to thy people Israel, but has come from a distant land because of thy fame <sup>42</sup>(for men shall hear of thy great fame and thy strong hand and arm outstretched), when he comes and prays towards this house, <sup>43</sup>hear in heaven thy dwelling and respond to the call which the foreigner makes to thee, so that like thy people Israel all peoples of the earth may know thy fame and fear thee, and learn that this house which I have built bears thy name.

<sup>44</sup>When thy people go to war with an enemy, wherever thou dost send them, when they pray to the LORD, turning towards this city which thou hast chosen and towards this house which I have built in honour of thy name, <sup>45</sup>do thou in heaven hear their prayer and supplication, and grant them justice.

<sup>46</sup>Should they sin against thee (and what man is free from sin?) and shouldst thou in thy anger give them over to an enemy, who carries them captive to his own land, far or near; <sup>47</sup>if in the land of their captivity they learn their lesson and make supplication again to thee in that land and say, "We have sinned and acted perversely and wickedly", <sup>48</sup>if they turn back to thee with heart and soul in the land of their captors, and pray to thee, turning towards their land which thou gavest to their forefathers and towards this city which thou didst choose and this house which I have built in honour of thy name; then in heaven thy dwelling <sup>49</sup>do thou hear their prayer and supplication, and grant them justice. <sup>50</sup>Forgive thy people their sins and transgressions against thee; put pity for them in their captors' hearts. <sup>51</sup>For they are thy possession, thy people whom thou didst bring out of Egypt, from the smelting-furnace, <sup>52</sup>and so thine eyes are ever open to the entreaty of thy servant and of thy people Israel, and thou dost hear whenever they call to thee. <sup>53</sup>Thou thyself hast singled them out from all the peoples of the earth to be thy possession; so thou didst promise through thy servant Moses when thou didst bring our forefathers from Egypt, O Lord GOD.'

<sup>54</sup>When Solomon had finished this prayer and supplication to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out to heaven, <sup>55</sup>stood up and in a loud voice blessed the whole assembly of Israel: <sup>56</sup>Blessed

be the LORD who has given his people Israel rest, as he promised: not one of the promises he made through his servant Moses has failed. <sup>57</sup>The LORD our God be with us as he was with our forefathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. <sup>58</sup>May he turn our hearts towards him, that we may conform to all his ways, observing his commandments, statutes, and judgements, as he commanded our forefathers. <sup>59</sup>And may the words of my supplication to the LORD be with the LORD our God day and night, that, as the need arises day by day, he may grant justice to his servant and justice to his people Israel. <sup>60</sup>So all the peoples of the earth will know that the LORD is God, he and no other, <sup>61</sup>and you will be perfect in loyalty to the LORD our God as you are this day, conforming to his statutes and observing his commandments.'

<sup>62</sup>When the king and all Israel came to offer sacrifices before the LORD, <sup>63</sup>Solomon offered as shared-offerings to the LORD twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep; thus it was that the king and the Israelites dedicated the house of the LORD. <sup>64</sup> [vv64-66: cp 2Chr. 7.7-10] On that day also the king consecrated the centre of the court which lay in front [*Or to the east*] of the house of the LORD; there he offered the whole-offering, the grain-offering, and the fat portions of the shared-offerings, because the bronze altar which stood before the LORD was too small to take them all, the whole-offering, the grain-offering, and the fat portions of the shared-offerings.

<sup>65</sup>So Solomon and all Israel with him, a great assembly from Lebo-hamath to the Torrent of Egypt, celebrated the pilgrim-feast at that time before the LORD our God for seven days. <sup>66</sup>On the eighth day he dismissed the people; and they blessed the king, and went home happy and glad at heart for all the prosperity granted by the LORD to his servant David and to his people Israel.

**9**<sup>1</sup> [vv1-9: cp 2Chr. 7.11-22] **WHEN SOLOMON HAD FINISHED** the house of the LORD and the royal palace and all the plans for building on which he had set his heart, <sup>2</sup>the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>The LORD said to him, 'I have heard the prayer and supplication which you have offered me; I have consecrated this house which you have built, to receive my Name for all time, and my eyes and my heart shall be fixed on it for ever. <sup>4</sup>And if you, on your part, live in my sight as your father David lived, in integrity and uprightness, doing all I command you and observing my statutes and my judgements, <sup>5</sup>then I will establish your royal throne over Israel for ever, as I promised your father David when I said, "You shall never want for a man upon the throne of Israel." <sup>6</sup>But if you or your sons turn back from following me and do not observe my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, and if you go and serve other gods and prostrate yourselves before them, <sup>7</sup>then I will cut off Israel from the land which I gave them; I will renounce this house which I have consecrated in honour of my name, and Israel shall become a byword and an object lesson among all peoples. <sup>8</sup>And this house will become a ruin; every passer-by will be appalled and gasp at the sight of it; and they will ask, "Why has the LORD so treated this land and this house?" <sup>9</sup>The answer will be, "Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their forefathers out of Egypt, and clung to other gods, prostrating themselves before them and serving them; that is why the LORD has brought this great evil on them." '

10 [vv10-28: cp 2Chr. 8.1-18] Solomon had taken twenty years to build the two houses, the house of the LORD and the royal palace. <sup>11</sup>Hiram king of Tyre had supplied him with all the timber, both cedar and pine, and all the gold, that he desired, and King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. <sup>12</sup>But when Hiram went from Tyre to inspect the cities which Solomon had given him, they did not satisfy him, <sup>13</sup>and he said, 'What kind of cities are these you have given me, my brother?' And so he called them the Land of Cabul [*That is Sterile Land*], the name they still bear. <sup>14</sup>Hiram sent a hundred and twenty talents of gold to the king.

<sup>15</sup>This is the record of the forced labour which King Solomon conscripted to build the house of the LORD, his own palace, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. <sup>16</sup>Gezer had been attacked and captured by Pharaoh king of Egypt, who had burnt it to the ground, put its Canaanite inhabitants to death, and given it as a marriage gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife; <sup>17</sup>and Solomon rebuilt it. He also built Lower Beth-horon, <sup>18</sup>Baalath, and Tamar in the wilderness, <sup>19</sup>as well as all his store-cities, and the towns where he quartered his chariots and horses; and he carried out all his cherished plans for building in Jerusalem, in the Lebanon, and throughout his whole dominion. <sup>20</sup>All the survivors of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who did not belong to Israel – <sup>21</sup>that is their descendants who survived in the land, wherever the Israelites had been unable to annihilate them – were employed by Solomon on perpetual forced labour, as they still are. <sup>22</sup>But Solomon put none of the Israelites to forced labour; they were his fighting men [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and his servants*], his captains and lieutenants, and the commanders of his chariots and of his cavalry. <sup>23</sup>The number of officers in charge of the foremen over Solomon's work was five hundred and fifty; these superintended the people engaged on the work.

<sup>24</sup>Then Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to her own house which he had built for her; later on he built the Millo.

<sup>25</sup>Three times a year Solomon used to offer whole-offerings and shared-offerings on the altar which he had built to the LORD, making smoke-offerings before the LORD. So he completed the house.

<sup>26</sup>King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, near Eloth [*Or Elath*] on the shore of the Red Sea [*Or the Sea of Reeds*], in Edorn. <sup>27</sup>Hiram sent men of his own to serve with the fleet, experienced seamen, to work with Solomon's men; <sup>28</sup>and they went to Ophir and brought back four hundred and twenty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

**10**<sup>1</sup> [vv1-25: cp 2Chr. 9.1-24] **THE QUEEN OF SHEBA HEARD** of Solomon's fame [*prob. rdg, cp 2Chr. 9.1; Heb adds to the name of the LORD*] and came to test him with hard questions. <sup>2</sup>She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large retinue, camels laden with spices, gold in great quantity, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she told him everything she had in her mind, <sup>3</sup>and Solomon answered all her questions; not one of them was too abstruse for the king to answer. <sup>4</sup>When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, <sup>5</sup>the food on his table, the courtiers sitting round him, and his attendants standing behind in their livery, his cupbearers, and

the whole-offerings which he used to offer in the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit left in her. <sup>6</sup>Then she said to the king, 'The report which I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom was true, <sup>7</sup>but I did not believe it until I came and saw for myself. Indeed I was not told half of it; your wisdom and your prosperity go far beyond the report which I had of them. <sup>8</sup>Happy are your wives, happy these courtiers of yours who wait on you every day and hear your wisdom! <sup>9</sup>Blessed be the LORD your God who has delighted in you and has set you on the throne of Israel; because he loves Israel for ever, he has made you their king to maintain law and justice.' <sup>10</sup>Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones. Never again came such a quantity of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

<sup>11</sup>Besides all this, Hiram's fleet of ships, which had brought gold from Ophir, brought in also from Ophir cargoes of almug wood and precious stones. <sup>12</sup>The king used the wood to make stools for the house of the LORD and for the royal palace, as well as harps and lutes for the singers. No such almug wood has ever been imported or even seen since that time.

<sup>13</sup>And King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, in addition to all that he gave her of his royal bounty. So she departed and returned with her retinue to her own land.

<sup>14</sup>Now the weight of gold which Solomon received yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents, <sup>15</sup>in addition to the tolls levied by the customs officers and profits on foreign trade, and the tribute of [and the tribute of: *prob. rdg, Heb* and all] the kings of Arabia and the regional governors.

<sup>16</sup>King Solomon made two hundred shields of beaten gold, and six hundred shekels of gold went to the making of each one, <sup>17</sup>he also made three hundred bucklers of beaten gold, and three minas of gold went to the making of each buckler. The king put these into the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

<sup>18</sup>The king also made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with fine gold. <sup>19</sup>Six steps led up to the throne; at the back of the throne there was the head of a calf. There were arms on each side of the seat, with a lion standing beside each of them, <sup>20</sup>and twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any monarch. <sup>21</sup>All Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the plate in the House of the Forest of Lebanon was of red gold; no silver was used, for it was reckoned of no value in the days of Solomon. <sup>22</sup>The king had a fleet of merchantmen at sea with Hiram's fleet; once every three years this fleet of merchantmen came home, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and monkeys.

<sup>23</sup>Thus King Solomon outdid all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom, <sup>24</sup>and all the world courted him, to hear the wisdom which God had put in his heart. <sup>25</sup>Each brought his gift with him, vessels of silver and gold, garments, perfumes and spices, horses and mules, so much year by year.

<sup>26</sup> [vv26-29: cp 2Chr. 1.14-17; 9.25-28] And Solomon got together many chariots and horses;

he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, and he stabled some in the chariot-towns and kept others at hand in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycomore-fig in the Shephelah. <sup>28</sup>Horses were imported from Egypt and Coa for Solomon; the royal merchants obtained them from Coa by purchase. <sup>29</sup>Chariots were imported from Egypt for six hundred silver shekels each, and horses for a hundred and fifty; in the same way the merchants obtained them for export from all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

**11**<sup>1</sup>King Solomon was a lover of women, and besides Pharaoh's daughter he married many foreign women, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite, <sup>2</sup>from the nations with whom the LORD had forbidden the Israelites to intermarry, 'because', he said, 'they will entice you to serve their gods.' But Solomon was devoted to them and loved them dearly. <sup>3</sup>He had seven hundred wives, who were princesses, and three hundred concubines, and they turned his heart from the truth. <sup>4</sup>When he grew old, his wives turned his heart to follow other gods, and he did not remain wholly loyal to the LORD his God as his father David had been. <sup>5</sup>He followed Ashtoreth, goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the loathsome god of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup>Thus Solomon did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD, and was not loyal to the LORD like his father David. <sup>7</sup>He built a hill-shrine for Kemosh, the loathsome god of Moab, on the height to the east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the loathsome god of the Ammonites. <sup>8</sup>Thus he did for the gods to which all his foreign wives burnt offerings and made sacrifices. <sup>9</sup>The LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice <sup>10</sup>and had strictly commanded him not to follow other gods; but he disobeyed the LORD's command. <sup>11</sup>The LORD therefore said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this and have not kept my covenant and my statutes as I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. <sup>12</sup>Nevertheless, for the sake of your father David I will not do this in your day; I will tear it out of your son's hand. <sup>13</sup>Even so not the whole kingdom; I will leave him one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, my chosen city.'

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD raised up an adversary for Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, of the royal house of Edom. <sup>15</sup>At the time when David reduced Edom, his commander-in-chief Joab had destroyed every male in the country when he went into it to bury the slain. <sup>16</sup>He and the armies of Israel remained there for six months, until he had destroyed every male in Edom. <sup>17</sup>Then Hadad, who was still a boy, fled the country with some of his father's Edomite servants, intending to enter Egypt. <sup>18</sup>They set out from Midian, made their way to Paran and, taking some men from there, came to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who assigned Hadad a house and maintenance and made him a grant of land. <sup>19</sup>Hadad found great favour with Pharaoh, who gave him in marriage a sister of Queen Tahpenes his wife. <sup>20</sup>She bore him his son Genubath; Tahpenes weaned the child in Pharaoh's house, and he lived there along with Pharaoh's children. <sup>21</sup>When Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his forefathers and that his commander-in-chief Joab was also dead, he said to Pharaoh, 'Let me go so that I may return to my own country.' <sup>22</sup>'What is it that you find wanting in my country', said Pharaoh, 'that you want to go back to your own?' 'Nothing,' said Hadad, 'but do, pray, let me go.' <sup>25</sup>He remained an adversary for Israel all through Solomon's reign. This is the harm that Hadad caused: he

maintained a stranglehold on Israel and became king of Edom.

<sup>23</sup>Then God raised up another adversary against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah. <sup>24</sup>He gathered men about him and became a captain of freebooters, who came to Damascus and occupied it; he became king there.

<sup>26</sup> [*v25 transposed to follow v22*] Jeroboam son of Nebat, one of Solomon's courtiers, an Ephrathite from Zeredah, whose widowed mother was named Zeruah, rebelled against the king. <sup>27</sup>And this is the story of his rebellion. Solomon had built the Millo and closed the breach in the wall of the city of his father David. <sup>28</sup>Now this Jeroboam was a man of great energy; and Solomon, seeing how the young man worked, had put him in charge of all the labour-gangs in the tribal district of Joseph. <sup>29</sup>On one occasion Jeroboam had left Jerusalem, and the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him on the road. The prophet was wrapped in a new cloak, and the two of them were alone in the open country. <sup>30</sup>Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing, tore it into twelve pieces <sup>31</sup>and said to Jeroboam, 'Take ten pieces, for this is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: "I am going to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes. <sup>32</sup>But one tribe will remain his, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. <sup>33</sup>I have done this because Solomon has forsaken me; he has prostrated himself before Ashtoreth goddess of the Sidonians, Kemosh god of Moab, and Milcom god of the Ammonites, and has not conformed to my ways. He has not done what is right in my eyes or observed my statutes and judgements as David his father did. <sup>34</sup>Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom from him, but will maintain his rule as long as he lives, for the sake of my chosen servant David, who did observe my commandments and statutes. <sup>35</sup>But I will take the kingdom, that is the ten tribes, from his son and give it to you. <sup>36</sup>One tribe I will give to his son, that my servant David may always have a flame burning before me in Jerusalem, the city which I chose to receive my Name. <sup>37</sup>But I will appoint you to rule over all that you can desire, and to be king over Israel. If you pay heed to all my commands, <sup>38</sup>if you conform to my ways and do what is right in my eyes, observing my statutes and commandments as my servant David did, then I will be with you. I will establish your family for ever as I did for David; I will give Israel to you, <sup>39</sup>and punish David's descendants as they have deserved, but not for ever." '

<sup>40</sup>After this Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to King Shishak in Egypt and remained there till Solomon's death.

<sup>41</sup> [*vv41-43: cp 2Chr. 9.29-31*] The other acts and events of Solomon's reign, and all his wisdom, are recorded in the annals of Solomon. <sup>42</sup>The reign of King Solomon in Jerusalem over the whole of Israel lasted forty years. <sup>43</sup>Then he rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David his father, and he was succeeded by his son Rehoboam.

## **The divided kingdom**

**12**<sup>1</sup> [vv1-19: cp 2Chr. 10.1-19] REHOBOAM WENT TO SHECHEM, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. <sup>2</sup>When Jeroboam son of Nebat, who was still in Egypt, heard of it, he remained there, having taken refuge there to escape King Solomon. <sup>3</sup>They now recalled him, and he and all the assembly of Israel came to Rehoboam and said, <sup>4</sup>'Your father laid a cruel yoke upon us; but if you will now lighten the cruel slavery he imposed on us and the heavy yoke he laid on us, we will serve you.' <sup>5</sup>'Give me three days,' he said, 'and come back again.' So the people went away. <sup>6</sup>King Rehoboam then consulted the elders who had been in attendance on his father Solomon while he lived: 'What answer do you advise me to give to this people?' <sup>7</sup>And they said, 'If today you are willing to serve this people, show yourself their servant now and speak kindly to them, and they will be your servants ever after.' <sup>8</sup>But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. He next consulted those who had grown up with him, the young men in attendance, <sup>9</sup>and asked them, 'What answer do you advise me to give to this people's request that I should lighten the yoke which my father laid on them?' <sup>10</sup>The young men replied, 'Give this answer to the people who say that your father made their yoke heavy and ask you to lighten it; tell them: "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. <sup>11</sup>My father laid a heavy yoke on you; I will make it heavier. My father used the whip on you; but I will use the lash." ' <sup>12</sup>Jeroboam and the people all came back to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had ordered. <sup>13</sup>And the king gave them a harsh answer. He rejected the advice which the elders had given him <sup>14</sup>and spoke to the people as the young men had advised: 'My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it heavier. My father used the whip on you; but I will use the lash.' <sup>15</sup>So the king would not listen to the people; for the LORD had given this turn to the affair, in order that the word he had spoken by Ahijah of Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat might be fulfilled.

<sup>16</sup>When all Israel saw that the king would not listen to them', they answered:  
What share have we in David?  
We have no lot in the son of Jesse.  
Away to your homes, O Israel;  
now see to your own house, David.

So Israel went to their homes, <sup>17</sup>and Rehoboam ruled over those Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

<sup>18</sup>Then King Rehoboam sent out Adoram, the commander of the forced levies, but the Israelites stoned him to death; thereupon King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste and fled to Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>From that day to this, the whole of Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David.

<sup>20</sup>When the men of Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over the whole of Israel. The tribe of Judah alone followed the house of David.

<sup>21</sup> [vv21-24: cp 2Chr. 11.1-4] When Rehoboam reached Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, the tribe of Benjamin also, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel and recover his kingdom. <sup>22</sup>But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: <sup>23</sup>'Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to the house of Judah and to Benjamin and the rest of the people, <sup>24</sup>"This is

the word of the LORD: You shall not go up to make war on your kinsmen the Israelites. Return to your homes, for this is my will." ' So they listened to the word of the LORD and returned home, as the LORD had told them.

<sup>25</sup>THEN JEROBOAM REBUILT SHECHEM in the hill-country of Ephraim and took up residence there; from there he went out and built Penuel. <sup>26</sup>As things now stand,' he said to himself, 'the kingdom will revert to the house of David. <sup>27</sup>If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, it will revive their allegiance to their lord Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.'<sup>28</sup>After giving thought to the matter he made two calves of gold and said to the people, 'It is too much trouble for you to go up to Jerusalem; here are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from Egypt.'<sup>29</sup>One he set up at Bethel and the other he put at Dan,<sup>30</sup>and this thing became a sin in Israel; the people went to Bethel to worship the one, and all the way to Dan to worship the other. <sup>31</sup>He set up shrines on the hill-tops also and appointed priests from every class of the people, who did not belong to the Levites. <sup>32</sup>He instituted a pilgrim-feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like that in Judah, and he offered sacrifices upon the altar. This he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made and compelling the priests of the hill-shrines, which he had set up, to serve at Bethel. <sup>33</sup>So he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month; there, in a month of his own choosing, he instituted for the Israelites a pilgrim-feast and himself went up to the altar to burn the sacrifice.

**13**<sup>1</sup>As Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn the sacrifice, a man of God from Judah, moved by the word of the LORD, appeared at Bethel. <sup>2</sup>He inveighed against the altar in the LORD's name, crying out, 'O altar, altar! This is the word of the LORD: "Listen! A child shall be born to the house of David, named Josiah. He will sacrifice upon you the priests of the hill-shrines who make offerings upon you, and he will burn human bones upon you." ' <sup>3</sup>He gave a sign the same day: 'This is the sign which the LORD has ordained: This altar will be rent in pieces and the ashes upon it will be spilt.'<sup>4</sup>When King Jeroboam heard the sentence which the man of God pronounced against the altar at Bethel, he pointed to him from the altar and said, 'Seize that man!' Immediately the hand which he had pointed at him became paralysed, so that he could not draw it back. <sup>5</sup>The altar too was rent in pieces and the ashes were spilt, in fulfilment of the sign that the man of God had given at the LORD's command. <sup>6</sup>The king appealed to the man of God to pacify the LORD his God and pray for him that his hand might be restored. The man of God did as he asked; his hand was restored and became as it had been before. <sup>7</sup>Then the king said to the man of God, 'Come home and take refreshment at my table, and let me give you a present.'<sup>8</sup>But the man of God answered, 'If you were to give me half your house, I would not enter it with you: I will eat and drink nothing in this place, <sup>9</sup>for the LORD's command to me was to eat and drink nothing, and not to go back by the way I came.'<sup>10</sup>So he went back another way; he did not return by the road he had taken to Bethel.

<sup>11</sup>At that time there was an aged prophet living in Bethel. His sons came and recounted to him all that the man of God had done in Bethel that day; they also told their father what he had said to the king. <sup>12</sup>Their father said to them, 'Which road did he take?' They pointed out the road taken by the man of God who had come from Judah. <sup>13</sup>He



answer.' When she came in, concealing who she was, <sup>6</sup>and Ahijah heard her footsteps at the door, he said, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why conceal who you are? I have heavy news for you. <sup>7</sup>Go and tell Jeroboam: "This is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: I raised you out of the people and appointed you prince over my people Israel; <sup>8</sup>I tore away the kingdom from the house of David and gave it to you; but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with his whole heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. <sup>9</sup>You have outdone all your predecessors in wickedness; you have provoked me to anger by making for yourself other gods and images of cast metal; and you have turned your back on me. <sup>10</sup>For this I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam and I will destroy them all, every mother's son, whether still under the protection of the family or not, and I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam in Israel, as a man sweeps up dung until none is left. <sup>11</sup>Those of that house who die in the city shall be food for the dogs, and those who die in the country shall be food for the birds. It is the word of the LORD."

<sup>12</sup>You must go home now; the moment you set foot in the city, the child will die. <sup>13</sup>All Israel will mourn for him and bury him; he alone of all Jeroboam's family will have proper burial, because in him alone could the LORD the God of Israel find anything good. <sup>14</sup>Then the LORD will set up a king over Israel who shall put an end to the house of Jeroboam. This first; and what next? <sup>15</sup>The LORD will strike Israel, till it trembles like a reed in the water; he will uproot its people from this good land which he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their sacred poles and provoked the LORD's anger. <sup>16</sup>And he will abandon Israel for the sins that Jeroboam has committed and has led Israel to commit.' <sup>17</sup>Jeroboam's wife went home at once to Tirzah and, as she crossed the threshold of the house, the boy died. <sup>18</sup>They buried him, and all Israel mourned over him; and thus the word of the LORD was fulfilled which he had spoken through his servant Ahijah the prophet.

<sup>19</sup>The other events of Jeroboam's reign, in war and peace, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. <sup>20</sup>He reigned twenty-two years; then he rested with his forefathers and was succeeded by his son Nadab.

<sup>21</sup>IN JUDAH REHOBOAM SON OF SOLOMON had become king. He was forty-one years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to receive his Name. Rehoboam's mother was a woman of Ammon called Naamah. <sup>22</sup>Judah did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD, rousing his jealous indignation by the sins they committed, beyond anything that their forefathers had done. <sup>23</sup>They erected hill-shrines, sacred pillars, and sacred poles, on every high hill and under every spreading tree. <sup>24</sup>Worse still, all over the country there were male prostitutes attached to the shrines, and the people adopted all the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD had dispossessed in favour of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> [*vv25-28: cp 2Chr. 12.9-11*] In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup>He removed the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the royal palace, and seized everything, including all the shields of gold that Solomon had made. <sup>27</sup>King Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields and entrusted them to the

officers of the escort who guarded the entrance of the royal palace. <sup>28</sup>Whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the escort carried them; afterwards they returned them to the guardroom.

<sup>29</sup> [vv29-31: cp 2Chr. 12.13-16] The other acts and events of Rehoboam's reign are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah. <sup>30</sup>There was continual fighting between him and Jeroboam. <sup>31</sup>He rested with his forefathers and was buried with them in the city of David. (His mother was a woman of Ammon, whose name was Naamah.) He was succeeded by his son Abijam.

**15**<sup>1</sup>In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam became king of Judah. <sup>2</sup>He reigned in Jerusalem for three years; his mother was Maacah granddaughter of Abishalom. <sup>3</sup>All the sins that his father had committed before him he committed too, nor was he faithful to the LORD his God as his ancestor David had been. <sup>4</sup>But for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a flame to burn in Jerusalem, by establishing his dynasty and making Jerusalem secure, <sup>5</sup>because David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not disobeyed any of his commandments all his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite [prob. rdg, Heb adds <sup>6</sup>There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all his days (cp 14.30)]. <sup>7</sup>The other acts and events of Abijam's reign are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah. There was fighting between Abijam and Jeroboam. <sup>8</sup>And Abijam rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David; and he was succeeded by his son Asa.

<sup>9</sup>In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king of Judah. <sup>10</sup>He reigned in Jerusalem for forty-one years; his grandmother was Maacah granddaughter of Abishalom. <sup>11</sup>Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, like his ancestor David. <sup>12</sup>He expelled from the land the male prostitutes attached to the shrines and did away with all the idols which his predecessors had made. <sup>13</sup> [vv13-15: cp 2Chr. 15.16-18] He even deprived his own grandmother Maacah of her rank as queen mother because she had an obscene object made for the worship of Asherah; Asa cut it down and burnt it in the gorge of the Kidron. <sup>14</sup>Although the hill-shrines were allowed to remain, Asa himself remained faithful to the LORD all his life. <sup>15</sup>He brought into the house of the LORD all his father's votive offerings and his own, gold and silver and sacred vessels.

<sup>16</sup>Asa was at war with Baasha king of Israel all through their reigns. <sup>17</sup> [vv17-22: cp 2Chr. 16.1-6] Baasha king of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah to cut off all access to Asa king of Judah. <sup>18</sup>So Asa took all the gold and silver that remained in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the royal palace, and sent his servants with them to Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion, king of Aram, whose capital was Damascus, with instructions to say, <sup>19</sup>'There is an alliance between us, as there was between our fathers. I now send you this present of silver and gold; break off your alliance with Baasha king of Israel, so that he may abandon his campaign against me.'  
<sup>20</sup>Ben-hadad listened willingly to King Asa; he ordered the commanders of his armies to move against the cities of Israel, and they attacked Iyyon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and that part of Kinnereth which marches with the land of Naphtali. <sup>21</sup>When Baasha heard of it, he stopped fortifying Ramah and fell back on Tirzah. <sup>22</sup>Then King Asa issued a proclamation requiring every man in Judah to join in removing the stones of Ramah and

the timbers with which Baasha had fortified it; no one was exempted; and he used them to fortify Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

<sup>23</sup> [vv23-24: cp 2Chr. 16.11-14] All the other events of Asa's reign, his exploits and his achievements, and the cities he built, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah. But in his old age his feet were crippled by disease. <sup>24</sup>He rested with his forefathers and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David; and he was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat.

<sup>25</sup>Nadab son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned for two years. <sup>26</sup>He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD and followed in his father's footsteps, repeating the sin which he had led Israel to commit. <sup>27</sup>Baasha son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him and attacked him at Gibbethon, a Philistine city, which Nadab was besieging with all his forces. <sup>28</sup>And Baasha slew him and usurped the throne in the third year of Asa king of Judah. <sup>29</sup>As soon as he became king, he struck down all the family of Jeroboam, destroying every living soul and leaving not one survivor. Thus the word of the LORD was fulfilled which he spoke through his servant Ahijah the Shilonite. <sup>30</sup>This happened because of the sins of Jeroboam and the sins which he led Israel to commit, and because he had provoked the anger of the LORD the God of Israel. <sup>31</sup>The other events of Nadab's reign and all his acts are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. <sup>32</sup>Asa was at war with Baasha king of Israel all through their reigns.

<sup>33</sup>In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah became king of all Israel in Tirzah and reigned twenty-four years. <sup>34</sup>He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD and followed in Jeroboam's footsteps, repeating the sin which he had led Israel to commit. **16**<sup>1</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu son of Hanani concerning Baasha: <sup>2</sup>I raised you from the dust and made you a prince over my people Israel, but you have followed in the footsteps of Jeroboam and have led my people Israel into sin, and have provoked me to anger with their sins. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I will sweep away Baasha and his house and will deal with it as I dealt with the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat. <sup>4</sup>Those of Baasha's family who die in the city shall be food for the dogs, and those who die in the country shall be food for the birds.' <sup>5</sup>The other events of Baasha's reign, his achievements and his exploits, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. <sup>6</sup>Baasha rested with his forefathers and was buried in Tirzah; and he was succeeded by his son Elah. <sup>7</sup>Moreover the word of the LORD concerning Baasha and his family came through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani, because of all the wrong that he had done in the eyes of the LORD, thereby provoking his anger: because he had not only sinned like the house of Jeroboam, but had also brought destruction upon it.

<sup>8</sup>In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king of Israel and he reigned in Tirzah two years. <sup>9</sup>Zimri, who was in his service commanding half the chariotry, plotted against him. The king was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, comptroller of the household there, <sup>10</sup>when Zimri broke in and attacked him, assassinated him and made himself king. This took place in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah. <sup>11</sup>As soon as he had become king and was enthroned, he struck down all the family of Baasha and left not a single mother's son alive, kinsman or

friend. <sup>12</sup>He destroyed the whole family of Baasha, and thus fulfilled the word of the LORD concerning Baasha, spoken through the prophet Jehu. <sup>13</sup>This was what came of all the sins which Baasha and his son Elah had committed and the sins into which they had led Israel, provoking the anger of the LORD the God of Israel with their worthless idols. <sup>14</sup>The other events and acts of Elah's reign are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned in Tirzah for seven days. At the time the army was investing the Philistine city of Gibbethon. <sup>16</sup>When the Israelite troops in the field heard of Zimri's conspiracy and the murder of the king, there and then in the camp they made their commander Omri king of Israel by common consent. <sup>17</sup>Then Omri and his whole force withdrew from Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. <sup>18</sup>Zimri, as soon as he saw that the city had fallen, retreated to the keep of the royal palace, set the whole of it on fire over his head and so perished. <sup>19</sup>This was what came of the sin he had committed by doing what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD and following in the footsteps of Jeroboam, repeating the sin into which he had led Israel. <sup>20</sup>The other events of Zimri's reign, and his conspiracy, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel.

<sup>21</sup>Thereafter the people of Israel were split into two factions: one supported Tibni son of Ginath, determined to make him king; the other supported Omri. <sup>22</sup>Omri's party proved the stronger; Tibni lost his life and Omri became king.

<sup>23</sup>It was in the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah that Omri became king of Israel and he reigned twelve years, six of them in Tirzah. <sup>24</sup>He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver and built a city on it which he named Samaria after Shemer the owner of the hill. <sup>25</sup>Omri did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD; he outdid all his predecessors in wickedness. <sup>26</sup>He followed in the footsteps of Jeroboam son of Nebat, repeating the sins which he had led Israel to commit, so that they provoked the anger of the LORD their God with their worthless idols. <sup>27</sup>The other events of Omri's reign, and his exploits, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. <sup>28</sup>So Omri rested with his forefathers and was buried in Samaria; and he was succeeded by his son Ahab.

## **Ahab and Elijah**

<sup>29</sup>AHAB SON OF OMRI BECAME KING of Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel in Samaria for twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup>He did more that was wrong in the eyes of the LORD than all his predecessors. <sup>31</sup>As if it were not enough for him to follow the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he contracted a marriage with Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon, and went and worshipped Baal; he prostrated himself before him <sup>32</sup>and erected an altar to him in the temple of Baal which he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup>He also set up a sacred pole; indeed he did more to provoke the anger of the LORD the God of Israel than all the kings of Israel before him. <sup>34</sup>In his days Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho; laying its foundations cost him his eldest son Abiram, and the setting up of its gates cost him Segub his youngest son. Thus was fulfilled what the

LORD had spoken through Joshua son of Nun.

**17**<sup>1</sup>Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'I swear by the life of the LORD the God of Israel, whose servant I am, that there shall be neither dew nor rain these coming years unless I give the word.'<sup>2</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him:<sup>3</sup>'Leave this place and turn eastwards; and go into hiding in the ravine of Kerith east of the Jordan.<sup>4</sup>You shall drink from the stream, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.'<sup>5</sup>He did as the LORD had told him: he went and stayed in the ravine of Kerith east of the Jordan,<sup>6</sup>and the ravens brought him bread and meat morning and evening, and he drank from the stream.<sup>7</sup>After a while the stream dried up, for there had been no rain in the land.<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him:<sup>9</sup>'Go now to Zarephath, a village of Sidon, and stay there; I have commanded a widow there to feed you.'<sup>10</sup>So he went off to Zarephath. When he reached the entrance to the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a little water in a pitcher to drink.'<sup>11</sup>As she went to fetch it, he called after her, 'Bring me, please, a piece of bread as well.'<sup>12</sup>But she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I have no food to sustain me except a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a flask. Here I am, gathering two or three sticks to go and cook something for my son and myself before we die.'<sup>13</sup>'Never fear,' said Elijah; 'go and do as you say; but first make me a small cake from what you have and bring it out to me; and after that make something for your son and yourself.'<sup>14</sup>For this is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: "The jar of flour shall not give out nor the flask of oil fail, until the LORD sends rain on the land." '<sup>15</sup>She went and did as Elijah had said, and there was food for him and for her and her family for a long time.<sup>16</sup>The jar of flour did not give out nor did the flask of oil fail, as the word of the LORD foretold through Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>Afterwards the son of this woman, the mistress of the house, fell ill and grew worse and worse, until at last his breathing ceased.<sup>18</sup>Then she said to Elijah, 'What made you interfere, you man of God? You came here to bring my sins to light and kill my son!'<sup>19</sup>'Give me your son', he said. He took the boy from her arms and carried him up to the roof-chamber where his lodging was, and laid him on his own bed.<sup>20</sup>Then he called out to the LORD, 'O LORD my God, is this thy care for the widow with whom I lodge, that thou hast been so cruel to her son?'<sup>21</sup>Then he breathed deeply [*Or stretched himself*] upon the child three times and called on the LORD, 'O LORD my God, let the breath of life, I pray, return to the body of this child.'<sup>22</sup>The LORD listened to Elijah's cry, and the breath of life returned to the child's body, and he revived;<sup>23</sup>Elijah lifted him up and took him down from the roof into the house, gave him to his mother and said, 'Look, your son is alive.'<sup>24</sup>Then she said to Elijah, 'Now I know for certain that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD on your lips is truth.'

**18**<sup>1</sup>Time went by, and in the third year the word of the LORD came to Elijah: 'Go and show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the land.'<sup>2</sup>So he went to show himself to Ahab. At this time the famine in Samaria was at its height,<sup>3</sup>and Ahab summoned Obadiah, the comptroller of his household, a devout worshipper of the LORD.<sup>4</sup>When Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, he had taken a hundred of them and hidden them in caves, fifty by fifty, giving them food and drink to keep them alive.

<sup>5</sup>Ahab said to Obadiah, 'Let us go through the land, both of us, to every spring and gully; if we can find enough grass we may keep the horses and mules alive and lose none of our cattle.' <sup>6</sup>They divided the land between them for their survey, Ahab going one way by himself and Obadiah another.

<sup>7</sup>As Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him and fell prostrate before him and said, 'Can it be you, my lord Elijah?' <sup>8</sup>'Yes,' he said, 'it is I; go and tell your master that Elijah is here.' <sup>9</sup>'What wrong have I done?' said Obadiah. 'Why should you give me into Ahab's hands? He will put me to death. <sup>10</sup>As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom to which my master has not sent in search of you. If they said, "He is not here", he made that kingdom or nation swear on oath that they could not find you. <sup>11</sup>Yet now you say, "Go and tell your master that Elijah is here." What will happen? <sup>12</sup>As soon as I leave you, the spirit of the LORD will carry you away, who knows where? I shall go and tell Ahab, and when he fails to find you, he will kill me. Yet I have been a worshipper of the LORD from boyhood. <sup>13</sup>Have you not been told, my lord, what I did when Jezebel put the LORD's prophets to death, how I hid a hundred of them in caves, fifty by fifty, and kept them alive with food and drink? <sup>14</sup>And now you say, "Go and tell your master that Elijah is here"! He will kill me.' <sup>15</sup>Elijah answered, 'As the LORD of Hosts lives, whose servant I am, I swear that I will show myself to him this very day.' <sup>16</sup>So Obadiah went to find Ahab and gave him the message, and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, 'Is it you, you troubler of Israel?' <sup>18</sup>'It is not I who have troubled Israel,' he replied, 'but you and your father's family, by forsaking the commandments of the LORD and following Baal. <sup>19</sup>But now, send and summon all Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal with them and the four hundred prophets of the goddess Asherah, who are Jezebel's pensioners.' <sup>20</sup>So Ahab sent out to all the Israelites and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>Elijah stepped forward and said to the people, 'How long will you sit on the fence? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' Not a word did they answer. <sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, 'I am the only prophet of the LORD still left, but there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. <sup>23</sup>Bring two bulls; let them choose one for themselves, cut it up and lay it on the wood without setting fire to it, and I will prepare the other and lay it on the wood without setting fire to it. <sup>24</sup>You shall invoke your god by name and I will invoke the LORD by name; and the god who answers by fire, he is God.' And all the people shouted their approval.

<sup>25</sup>Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the bulls and offer it first, for there are more of you; invoke your god by name, but do not set fire to the wood.' <sup>26</sup>So they took the bull provided for them and offered it, and they invoked Baal by name from morning until noon, crying, 'Baal, Baal, answer us'; but there was no sound, no answer. They danced wildly beside the altar they had set up. <sup>27</sup>At midday Elijah mocked them: 'Call louder, for he is a god; it may be he is deep in thought, or engaged, or on a journey; or he may have gone to sleep and must be woken up.' <sup>28</sup>They cried still louder and, as was their custom, gashed themselves with swords and spears until the blood ran. <sup>29</sup>All afternoon they raved and ranted till the hour of the regular sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no answer, no sign of attention.

<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They all came, and he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down. <sup>31</sup>He took twelve stones, one for each tribe of the sons of Jacob, the man named Israel by the word of the LORD. <sup>32</sup>With these stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; he dug a trench round it big enough to hold two measures of seed; <sup>33</sup>he arranged the wood, cut up the bull and laid it on the wood. <sup>34</sup>Then he said, 'Fill four jars with water and pour it on the whole-offering and on the wood.' They did so, and he said, 'Do it again.' They did it again, and he said, 'Do it a third time.' They did it a third time, <sup>35</sup>and the water ran all round the altar and even filled the trench. <sup>36</sup>At the hour of the regular sacrifice the prophet Elijah came forward and said, 'LORD God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known today that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant and have done all these things at thy command. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O LORD, answer me and let this people know that thou, LORD, art God and that it is thou that hast caused them to be back-sliders [*Or thou that dost bring them back to their allegiance*].' <sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the LORD fell. It consumed the whole-offering, the wood, the stones, and the earth, and licked up the water in the trench. <sup>39</sup>When all the people saw it, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The LORD is God, the LORD is God.' <sup>40</sup>Then Elijah said to them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.' They seized them, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon and slaughtered them there in the valley.

<sup>41</sup>Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go back now, eat and drink, for I hear the sound of coming rain.'  
<sup>42</sup>He did so, while Elijah himself climbed to the crest of Carmel. There he crouched on the ground with his face between his knees. <sup>43</sup>He said to his servant, 'Go and look out to the west.' He went and looked; 'There is nothing to see', he said. Seven times Elijah ordered him back, and seven times he went. <sup>44</sup>The seventh time he said, 'I see a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, coming up from the west.' 'Now go', said Elijah, 'and tell Ahab to harness his chariot and be off, or the rain will stop him.' <sup>45</sup>Meanwhile the sky had grown black with clouds, the wind rose. and heavy rain began to fall. Ahab mounted his chariot and set off for Jezreel; <sup>46</sup>but the power of the LORD had come upon Elijah: he tucked up his robe and ran before Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

**19**<sup>1</sup>Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets to death with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Jezebel then sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'The gods do the same to me and more, unless by this time tomorrow I have taken your life as you took theirs.' <sup>3</sup>He was afraid and fled for his life. When he reached Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there <sup>4</sup>and himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came upon a broom-bush, and sat down under it and prayed for death: 'It is enough,' he said; 'now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers before me.' <sup>5</sup>He lay down under the bush and, while he slept, an angel touched him and said, 'Rise and eat.' <sup>6</sup>He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a pitcher of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. <sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD came again and touched him a second time, saying, 'Rise and eat; the journey is too much for you.' <sup>8</sup>He rose and ate and drank and, sustained by this food, he went on for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>He entered a cave and there he spent the night.

Suddenly the word of the LORD came to him: 'Why are you here, Elijah?' <sup>10</sup>'Because of my great zeal for the LORD the God of Hosts', he said. 'The people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, torn down thy altars and put thy prophets to death with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life.' <sup>11</sup>The answer came: 'Go and stand on the mount before the LORD.' For the LORD was passing by: a great and strong wind came rending mountains and shattering rocks before him, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup>and after the earthquake fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a low murmuring sound. <sup>13</sup>When Elijah heard it, he muffled his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice: 'Why are you here, Elijah?' <sup>14</sup>'Because of my great zeal for the LORD the God of Hosts', he said. 'The people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, torn down thy altars and put thy prophets to death with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life.'

<sup>15</sup>The LORD said to him, 'Go back by way of the wilderness of Damascus, enter the city and anoint Hazael to be king of Aram; <sup>16</sup>anoint Jehu son [*Or grandson (cp 2 Kgs. 9.2)*] of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to be prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>Anyone who escapes the sword of Hazael Jehu will slay, and anyone who escapes the sword of Jehu Elisha will slay. <sup>18</sup>But I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all who have not bent the knee to Baal, all whose lips have not kissed him.'

<sup>19</sup>Elijah departed and found Elisha son of Shaphat ploughing; there were twelve pair of oxen ahead of him, and he himself was with the last of them. As Elijah passed, he threw his cloak over him, <sup>20</sup>and Elisha, leaving his oxen, ran after Elijah and said, 'Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and then I will follow you.' 'Go back,' he replied; 'what have I done to prevent you?' <sup>21</sup>He followed him no further but went home, took his pair of oxen, slaughtered them and burnt the wooden gear to cook the flesh, which he gave to the people to eat. Then he followed Elijah and became his disciple.

**20**<sup>1</sup>BEN-HADAD KING OF ARAM, having mustered all his forces, and taking with him thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots, marched against Samaria to take it by siege or assault. <sup>2</sup>He sent envoys into the city to Ahab king of Israel to say, 'Hear what Ben-hadad says: <sup>3</sup>Your silver and gold are mine, your wives and your splendid sons are mine. [*Or are your wives and your sons any good to me?*]' <sup>4</sup>The king of Israel answered, 'As you say, my lord king, I am yours and all that I have.' <sup>5</sup>The envoys came again and said, 'Hear what Ben-hadad says: I demand that you hand over your silver and gold, your wives and your sons. <sup>6</sup>This time tomorrow I will send my servants to search your house and your subjects' houses and to take possession of everything you prize, and remove it.' <sup>7</sup>The king of Israel then summoned all the elders of the land and said, 'You see this? The man is plainly picking a quarrel; for I did not demur when he sent to claim my wives and my sons, my silver and gold.' <sup>8</sup>All the elders and all the people answered, 'Do not listen to him; you must not consent.' <sup>9</sup>So he gave this reply to Ben-hadad's envoys: 'Say to my lord the king: I accepted your majesty's demands on the first occasion; but what you now ask I cannot do.' The envoys went away and reported to their master, <sup>10</sup>and Ben-hadad sent back word: 'The gods do the same to me and more, if there is enough dust in Samaria to provide a handful for each of my men.' <sup>11</sup>The king of Israel made reply, 'Remind him of the saying: "The lame must not think himself a

match for the nimble." ' <sup>12</sup>This message reached Ben-hadad while he and the kings were drinking in their quarters [in their quarters: *or* at Succoth]. At once he ordered his men to attack the city, and they did so.

<sup>13</sup>Meanwhile a prophet had come to Ahab king of Israel and said to him, 'This is the word of the LORD: "You see this great rabble? Today I will give it into your hands and you shall know that I am the LORD." ' <sup>14</sup>'Whom will you use for that?' asked Ahab. 'The young men who serve the district officers', was the answer. 'Who will draw up the line of battle?' asked the king. 'You', said the prophet. <sup>15</sup>Then Ahab called up these young men, two hundred and thirty-two all told, and behind them the people of Israel, seven thousand in all. <sup>16</sup>They went out at midday, while Ben-hadad and his allies, those thirty-two kings, were drinking themselves drunk in their quarters [in their quarters: *or* at Succoth]. <sup>17</sup>The young men sallied out first, and word was sent to Ben-hadad that a party had come out of Samaria. <sup>18</sup>'If they have come out for peace,' he said, 'take them alive; if for battle, take them alive.'

<sup>19</sup>So out of the city the young men went, and the army behind them; <sup>20</sup>each struck down his man, and the Aramaeans fled. The Israelites pursued them, but Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some of the cavalry. <sup>21</sup>Then the king of Israel advanced and captured the horses and chariots, inflicting a heavy defeat on the Aramaeans.

<sup>22</sup>Then the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, 'Build up your forces; you know what you must do. At the turn of the year the king of Aram will renew the attack.' <sup>23</sup>But the king of Aram's ministers gave him this advice: 'Their gods are gods of the hills; that is why they defeated us. Let us fight them in the plain; and then we shall have the upper hand. <sup>24</sup>What you must do is to relieve the kings of their command and appoint other officers in their place. <sup>25</sup>Raise another army like the one you have lost. Bring your cavalry and chariots up to their former strength, and then let us fight them in the plain, and we shall have the upper hand.' He listened to their advice and acted on it.

<sup>26</sup>At the turn of the year Ben-hadad mustered the Aramaeans and advanced to Aphek to attack Israel. <sup>27</sup>The Israelites too were mustered and formed into companies, and then went out to meet them and encamped opposite them. They seemed no better than a pair of new-born kids, while the Aramaeans covered the country-side. <sup>28</sup>The man of God came to the king of Israel and said, 'This is the word of the LORD: The Aramaeans may think that the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys; but I will give all this great rabble into your hands and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

<sup>29</sup>They lay in camp opposite one another for seven days; on the seventh day battle was joined and the Israelites destroyed a hundred thousand of the Aramaean infantry in one day. <sup>30</sup>The survivors fled to Aphek, into the citadel, and the city wall fell upon the twenty-seven thousand men who were left. Ben-hadad took refuge in the citadel, retreating into an inner room; <sup>31</sup>and his attendants said to him, 'Listen; we have heard that the kings of Israel are men to be trusted. Let us therefore put sackcloth round our waists and wind rough cord round our heads and go out to the king of Israel. It may be that he will spare your life.' <sup>32</sup>So they fastened on the sackcloth and the cord, and went to the king of Israel and said, 'Your servant Ben-hadad pleads for his life.' 'My royal

cousin,' he said, 'is he still alive?' <sup>33</sup>The men, taking the word for a favourable omen, caught it up at once and said, 'Your cousin, yes, Ben-hadad.' 'Go and fetch him', he said. Then Ben-hadad came out and Ahab invited him into his chariot. <sup>34</sup>And Ben-hadad said to him, 'I will restore the cities which my father took from your father, and you may establish for yourself a trading quarter in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.' 'On these terms', said Ahab, 'I will let you go.' So he granted him a treaty and let him go.

<sup>35</sup>One of a company of prophets, at the command of the LORD, ordered a certain man to strike him, but the man refused. <sup>36</sup>'Because you have not obeyed the LORD,' said the prophet, 'when you leave me, a lion will attack you.' When the man left, a lion did meet him and attacked him. <sup>37</sup>The prophet fell in with another man and ordered him to strike him. He struck and wounded him. <sup>38</sup>Then the prophet went off, with a bandage over his eyes, and thus disguised waited by the wayside for the king. <sup>39</sup>As the king was passing, he called out to him, 'Sir, I went into the thick of the battle, and a soldier came over to me with a prisoner and said, "Take charge of this fellow. If by any chance he gets away, your life shall be forfeit, or you shall pay a talent of silver."' <sup>40</sup>As I was busy with one thing and another, sir, he disappeared.' The king of Israel said to him, 'You deserve to die.' And he said to the king of Israel [You deserve ... Israel: *prob. rdg, Heb omitted*], 'You have passed sentence on yourself.' <sup>41</sup>Then he tore the bandage from his eyes, and the king of Israel saw that he was one of the prophets. <sup>42</sup>And he said to the king, 'This is the word of the LORD: "Because you let that man go when I had put him under a ban, your life shall be forfeit for his life, your people for his people."' ' <sup>43</sup>The king of Israel went home sullen and angry and entered Samaria.

**21**<sup>1</sup>NABOTH OF JEZREEL HAD A VINEYARD near the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. <sup>2</sup>One day Ahab made a proposal to Naboth: 'Your vineyard is close to my palace; let me have it for a garden, I will give you a better vineyard in exchange for it or, if you prefer, its value in silver.' <sup>3</sup>But Naboth answered, 'The LORD forbid that I should let you have land which has always been in my family.' <sup>4</sup>So Ahab went home sullen and angry because Naboth would not let him have his ancestral land. He lay down on his bed, covered his face and refused to eat. <sup>5</sup>His wife Jezebel came in to him and said, 'What makes you so sullen and why do you refuse to eat?' <sup>6</sup>He told her, 'I proposed to Naboth of Jezreel that he should let me have his vineyard at its value or, if he liked, in exchange for another; but he would not let me have the vineyard.' <sup>7</sup>'Are you or are you not king in Israel?' said Jezebel. 'Come, eat and take heart; I will make you a gift of the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel.' <sup>8</sup>So she wrote a letter in Ahab's name, sealed it with his seal and sent it to the elders and notables of Naboth's city, who sat in council with him. <sup>9</sup>She wrote: 'Proclaim a fast and give Naboth the seat of honour among the people. <sup>10</sup>And see that two scoundrels are seated opposite him to charge him with cursing God and the king, then take him out and stone him to death.' <sup>11</sup>So the elders and notables of Naboth's city, who sat with him in council, carried out the instructions Jezebel had sent them in her letter: <sup>12</sup>they proclaimed a fast and gave Naboth the seat of honour, <sup>13</sup>and these two scoundrels came in, sat opposite him and charged him publicly with cursing God and the king. Then they took him outside the city and stoned him, <sup>14</sup>and sent word to Jezebel that Naboth had been stoned to death.

<sup>15</sup>As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, she said to

Ahab, 'Get up and take possession of the vineyard which Naboth refused to sell you, for he is no longer alive; Naboth of Jezreel is dead.' <sup>16</sup>When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went to the vineyard to take possession. <sup>17</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: <sup>18</sup>'Go down at once to Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; you will find him in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession. <sup>19</sup>Say to him, "This is the word of the LORD: Have you killed your man, and taken his land as well?" Say to him, "This is the word of the LORD: Where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, there dogs shall lick your blood." ' <sup>20</sup>Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, my enemy?' 'I have found you', he said, 'because you have sold yourself to do what is wrong in the eyes of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>I will bring [he said, ... bring: or he said. 'Because you ... LORD, I am bringing] disaster upon you; I will sweep you away and destroy every mother's son of the house of Ahab in Israel, whether under protection of the family or not. <sup>22</sup>And I will deal with your house as I did with the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked my anger and led Israel into sin.' <sup>23</sup>And the LORD went on to say of Jezebel, 'Jezebel shall be eaten by dogs by the rampart of Jezreel. <sup>24</sup>Of the house of Ahab, those who die in the city shall be food for the dogs, and those who die in the country shall be food for the birds.' <sup>25</sup>(Never was a man who sold himself to do what is wrong in the LORD's eyes as Ahab did, and all at the prompting of Jezebel his wife. <sup>26</sup>He committed gross abominations in going after false gods, doing everything that the Amorites did, whom the LORD had dispossessed in favour of Israel.) <sup>27</sup>When Ahab heard this, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted; he lay down in his sackcloth and went about muttering to himself. <sup>28</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: <sup>29</sup>'Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has thus humbled himself, I will not bring disaster upon his house in his own lifetime, but in his son's.'

**22**<sup>1</sup>FOR THREE YEARS THERE WAS NO WAR between the Aramaeans and the Israelites, <sup>2</sup> [vv2-35: cp 2Chr. 18.2-34] but in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel. <sup>3</sup>The latter said to his courtiers, 'You know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and yet we do nothing to recover it from the king of Aram.' <sup>4</sup>He said to Jehoshaphat, 'Will you join me in attacking Ramoth-gilead?' Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'What is mine is yours: myself, my people, and my horses.' <sup>5</sup>Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'First let us seek counsel from the LORD.' <sup>6</sup>The king of Israel assembled the prophets, some four hundred of them, and asked them, 'Shall I attack Ramoth-gilead or shall I refrain?' 'Attack,' they answered; 'the Lord will deliver it into your hands.' <sup>7</sup>Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there no other prophet of the LORD here through whom we may seek guidance?' <sup>8</sup>'There is one more', the king of Israel answered, 'through whom we may seek guidance of the LORD, but I hate the man, because he prophesies no good for me; never anything but evil. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah.' Jehoshaphat exclaimed, 'My lord king, let no such word pass your lips!' <sup>9</sup>So the king of Israel called one of his eunuchs and told him to fetch Micaiah son of Imlah with all speed.

<sup>10</sup>The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were seated on their thrones, in shining armour, at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them. <sup>11</sup>One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made himself horns of iron and said, 'This is the word of the LORD: "With horns like these you shall

gore the Aramaeans and make an end of them." ' <sup>12</sup>In the same vein all the prophets prophesied, 'Attack Ramoth-gilead and win the day; the LORD will deliver it into your hands.' <sup>13</sup>The messenger sent to fetch Micaiah told him that the prophets had with one voice given the king a favourable answer. 'And mind you agree with them', he added. <sup>14</sup>'As the LORD lives,' said Micaiah, 'I will say only what the LORD tells me to say.'

<sup>15</sup>When Micaiah came into the king's presence, the king said to him, 'Micaiah, shall we attack Ramoth-gilead or shall we refrain?' 'Attack and win the day,' he said; 'the LORD will deliver it into your hands.' <sup>16</sup>'How often must I adjure you', said the king, 'to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?' <sup>17</sup>Then Micaiah said, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd; and I heard the LORD say, "They have no master, let them go home in peace." ' <sup>18</sup>The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Did I not tell you that he never prophesies good for me, nothing but evil?' <sup>19</sup>Micaiah went on, 'Listen now to the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD seated on his throne, with all the host of heaven in attendance on his right and on his left. <sup>20</sup>The LORD said, "Who will entice Ahab to attack and fall on [*Or at*] Ramoth-gilead?" One said one thing and one said another; <sup>21</sup>then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, "I will entice him." <sup>22</sup>"How?" said the LORD. "I will go out", he said, "and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." "You shall entice him," said the LORD, "and you shall succeed; go and do it." <sup>23</sup>You see, then, how the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, because he has decreed disaster for you.' <sup>24</sup>Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah came up to Micaiah and struck him in the face: 'And how did the spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?' he said. <sup>25</sup>Micaiah answered, 'That you will find out on the day when you run into an inner room to hide yourself.' <sup>26</sup>Then the king of Israel ordered Micaiah to be arrested and committed to the custody of Amon the governor of the city and Joash the king's son [*son: or deputy*], <sup>27</sup>'Lock this fellow up', he said, 'and give him prison diet of bread and water until I come home in safety.' <sup>28</sup>Micaiah retorted, 'If you do return in safety, the LORD has not spoken by me.'

<sup>29</sup>So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah marched on Ramoth-gilead, <sup>30</sup>and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will disguise myself to go into battle, but you shall wear your royal robes.' So he went into battle in disguise. <sup>31</sup>Now the king of Aram had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots not to engage all and sundry but the king of Israel alone. <sup>32</sup>When the captains saw Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel and turned to attack him. But Jehoshaphat cried out <sup>33</sup>and, when the captains saw that he was not the king of Israel, they broke off the attack on him. <sup>34</sup>But one man drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel where the breastplate joins the plates of the armour. So he said to his driver, 'Wheel round and take me out of the line; I am wounded.' <sup>35</sup>When the day's fighting reached its height, the king was facing the Aramaeans propped up in his chariot, and the blood from his wound flowed down upon the floor of the chariot; and in the evening he died. <sup>36</sup>At sunset the herald went through the ranks, crying, 'Every man to his city, every man to his country.' <sup>37</sup>Thus died the king. He was brought to Samaria and they buried him there. <sup>38</sup>The chariot was swilled out at the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up the blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, in fulfilment of the word the LORD had spoken.

<sup>39</sup>Now the other acts and events of Ahab's reign, the ivory house and all the cities he built, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. <sup>40</sup>So Ahab rested with his forefathers and was succeeded by his son Ahaziah.

<sup>41</sup> [vv41-43: cp 2Chr. 20.31-33] Jehoshaphat son of Asa had become king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. <sup>42</sup>He was thirty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-five years; his mother was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. <sup>43</sup>He followed in the footsteps of Asa his father and did not swerve from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But the hill-shrines were allowed to remain; the people continued to slaughter and burn sacrifices there. <sup>44</sup>Jehoshaphat remained at peace with the king of Israel. <sup>45</sup>The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, his exploits and his wars, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah. <sup>46</sup>But he did away with such of the male prostitutes attached to the shrines as were still left over from the days of Asa his father.

<sup>47</sup>There was no king in Edom, only [only: *prob rdg, Heb omitted*] a Viceroy of Jehoshaphat; <sup>48</sup>he built merchantmen to sail to Ophir for gold, but they never made the journey because they were wrecked at Ezion-geber. <sup>49</sup>Ahaziah son of Ahab proposed to Jehoshaphat that his own men should go to sea with his; but Jehoshaphat would not consent.

<sup>50</sup>Jehoshaphat rested with his forefathers and was buried with them in the city of David his father, and was succeeded by his son Joram.

<sup>51</sup>Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned over Israel for two years. <sup>52</sup>He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD, following in the footsteps of his father and mother and in those of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had led Israel into sin. <sup>53</sup>He served Baal and worshipped him, and provoked the anger of the LORD the God of Israel, as his father had done.