

Getting Into The Promised Land Without Falling Asleep In Leviticus

9. The Divided Kingdoms The Northern Kingdom – Israel – The Kings

Tim Attaway

**A Teaching Commentary
of the Old Testament**

Note – This piece has been segmented out of a larger document.

© Copyright 1996, 1999, 2007 by Tim Attaway
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission from the author.

Unless otherwise stated, the Bible translation used in this commentary is taken from the HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society.

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVIDED KINGDOMS.....	5
1.1	TABLE OF THE KINGS AND THE PROPHETS.....	7
2	THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL – THE KINGS.....	9
2.1	JEROBOAM.....	10
2.2	NADAB.....	11
2.3	BAASHA.....	11
2.4	ELAH.....	12
2.5	ZIMRI.....	12
2.6	TIBNI.....	12
2.7	OMRI.....	12
2.8	AHAB.....	13
2.9	AHAZIAH.....	15
2.10	JORAM.....	15
2.11	JEHU.....	16
2.12	JEHOHAZ.....	17
2.13	JEHOASH.....	18
2.14	JEROBOAM II.....	18
2.15	ZECHARIAH.....	19
2.16	SHALLUM.....	19
2.17	MENAHAM.....	19
2.18	PEKAHIAH.....	19
2.19	PEKAH.....	20
2.20	HOSHEA.....	20
2.21	THE END OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.....	21
3	INDEX OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.....	24
4	TOPICAL INDEX.....	25

1 Introduction to the Divided Kingdoms

1 Kings 12:1-24, 2 Chronicles 10:1-11:4

When Solomon died, there was already a considerable amount of friction between the northern tribes and the rulers from Judah. Solomon had undertaken massive and ambitious building projects during his reign. To secure labor for these projects he had conscripted the men of the nation into labor one month out of every three. To pay for materials and for help from neighboring countries he placed heavy taxes upon the people of the land. Thus the men had only two thirds of a year to make a living and yet were forced to pay heavy taxes out of what they were able to make. To make matters worse, there is evidence that he might have exempted the men of Judah from the labor or the taxes or both. By the time that Solomon died, the people had had quite enough of this treatment.

When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam was to be the next king. At the time of his death, Jeroboam was in Egypt, hiding from Solomon. While Jeroboam was a high ranking official in Solomon's court, God came to him and promised to make him king over ten of the tribes. This was a result of Solomon's idolatry. Solomon found out and tried to kill Jeroboam, causing Jeroboam to flee. When Solomon died, Jeroboam returned.

The people of the northern tribes rallied around Jeroboam. They asked Rehoboam whether or not he would continue with the harsh policies of his father – specifically referring to the forced labor and the heavy taxes. Rehoboam did not know what to say. He asked the people to give him three days to come up with an answer. During that time, he sought counsel. The wise elders of his court advised him that the people were tired of the harsh treatment and that he needed to ease up on them. Some of his friends (who were most likely young men from Judah who had not been subject to the labor and the taxes) told Rehoboam to take a "tough guy" approach, telling the people that he intended to be even harder than Solomon. Rehoboam foolishly listened to the advice of the young men. The people of the northern tribes rejected Rehoboam as their leader. They went home and made Jeroboam their king.

Rehoboam made an attempt to bring them into line and sent the head of his forced labor to Israel to try to press them back into work. They killed him.

Only the tribe of Judah was loyal to Rehoboam. The other tribes gave their loyalty to Jeroboam. The tribe of Benjamin was on the border between Judah and the northern tribes. Because of their location, the Benjamites were the subject of border wars from time to time. By and large Judah forced them to be a part of the Southern Kingdom. Thus, even though their loyalties were really with Jeroboam, they became part of the nation of Judah. Notice also that the territory that had been allocated to Simeon when the people originally took the land was completely surrounded by the territory of Judah. Over time, Simeon lost its identity and became part of Judah.

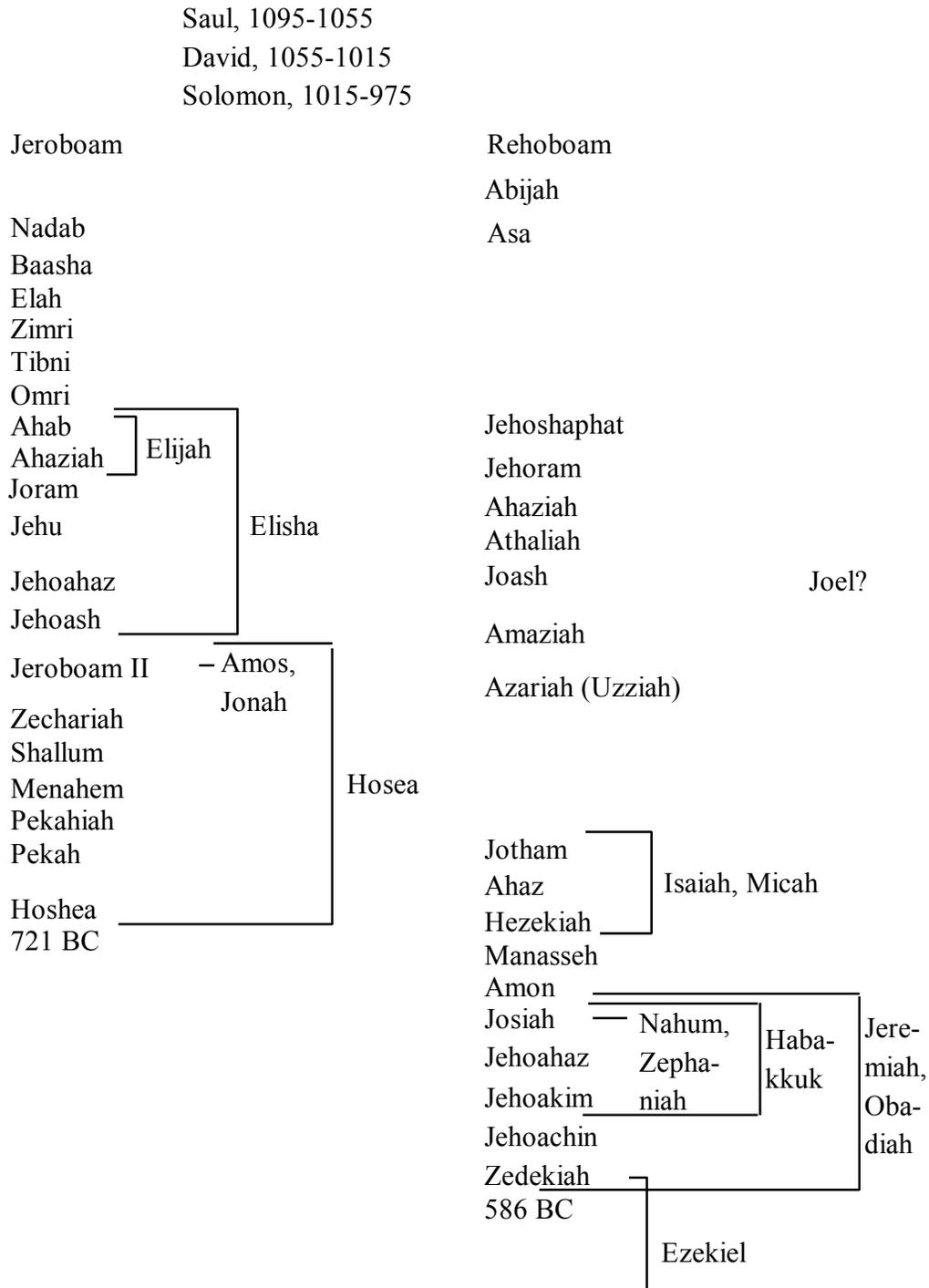
Thus two kingdoms emerged. The Northern Kingdom became known as Israel. It really consisted of the nine northern territories. The Southern Kingdom became known as Judah and consisted of the territories given to Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

The two new nations immediately went to war with one another. They spent much of their existence at war with one another. There was a great deal of jealousy and animosity between the north and the south. Right after the split, Rehoboam tried to assemble an army to attack the north. God told him not to do so because the split was God's doing. Rehoboam held off on going to battle at that time, but they frequently engaged in warfare after that.

The united monarchy was no more.

The following chart shows the kings and prophets of the Northern and Southern Kingdom. The spacing in the chart attempts to show which kings of the north served concurrently with which kings of the south. Some of the kings in a given kingdom had terms that overlapped a bit, particularly when a son followed his father (the father and son would serve side-by-side in the latter years of the father's reign). Note that the date of Joel's prophecy is uncertain. Ezekiel began his prophecy in the very last days of the Southern Kingdom but most of it took place during the exile. Elijah and Elisha were not writing prophets, but they are significant characters in 1 and 2 Kings.

1.1 Table of the Kings and the Prophets



Statistically, after the split of the kingdoms, both the north and the south had 20 kings. The twenty kings of the south had a combined reign that was about 135 years longer than the kings of the north.

For the Northern Kingdom:

- The average reign of a king was about 12.7 years (not figuring in Tibni – if you include him it is shorter)
- 1 king served at least 40 years
- 6 kings served at least 20 years
- 11 kings served at least 10 years
- No kings gave truly positive spiritual leadership

For the Southern Kingdom:

- The average reign of a king was about 19.7 years
- 4 kings served at least 40 years
- 8 kings served at least 20 years
- 13 kings served at least 10 years.
- 7 kings were positive spiritual influences

Thus the south saw much greater stability of leadership than did the north. The fact that the south had some kings who were spiritual leaders is probably the main reason that the south had more stability in its leadership. God let the Southern Kingdom exist longer and let its leaders serve longer because they were more faithful to him than their northern counterparts.

The reigns of the kings of the Northern Kingdom are presented in 1 and 2 Kings, interwoven with descriptions of the reigns of the kings of the Southern Kingdom. The books jump back and forth between the history of the north and the south trying to give a chronological flow of events. 1 and 2 Chronicles deal only with the Davidic line and thus they do not present the kings of the north. The kings of the south are all descendants of David and there was a biological succession of leadership. In the north, there was occasion where son succeeded father, but as often a new king came to power by killing the previous king and taking the throne by force.

2 The Northern Kingdom of Israel – The Kings

The following chart summarizes the kings of the north. Following the chart is a short history, giving the high points of each.

Name	Length of Reign	When He Took the Throne	Spiritual Quality
Jeroboam	22 yr	Death of Solomon	bad
Nadab	2 yr	2nd year of Asa	bad
Baasha	24 yr	3rd year of Asa	bad
Elah	2 yr	26th year of Asa	bad
Zimri	7 days	27th year of Asa	bad
Tibni	(Overlap with Omri)	27th year of Asa	bad
Omri	12 yr	27th year of Asa, sole reign 31st year of Asa	bad
Ahab	22 yr	38th year of Asa	bad
Ahaziah	2 yr	17th year of Jehoshaphat	bad
Joram	12 yr	2nd year of Jehoram	bad
Jehu	28 yr		good, turned bad
Jehoahaz	17 yr	23rd year of Joash	bad
Jehoash	16 yr	37th year of Joash	bad
Jeroboam II	41 yr	15th year of Amaziah	bad
Zechariah	6 mo	38th year of Azariah	bad
Shallum	1 mo	39th year of Azariah	bad
Menahem	10 yr	39th year of Azariah	bad
Pekahiah	2 yr	50th year of Azariah	bad
Pekah	20 yr	52nd year of Azariah	bad
Hoshea	9 yr	12th year of Ahaz	bad

2.1 Jeroboam

1 Kings 12:25-14:20

- After Jeroboam led a revolt against Rehoboam, the tribes of the north made him their king. This was in fulfillment of a promise that God had made to him in 1 Kings 11.
- He ruled for twenty-two years, spanning around 922-909 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes.
- When Jeroboam became king, he had an immediate problem. The temple (which his followers had built and for which they had paid) was in Jerusalem, which was in Judah. The people of the north would have to travel to Judah in order to fulfill the religious aspects of their lives. This was a matter of concern to Jeroboam. If the spiritual authority of the nation was still in Judah, how could the political authority be in Israel? He feared that if the people continued to go to the temple in Jerusalem then they would ultimately give their allegiance to the king in Jerusalem. Basically he did not trust God to fulfill his promise to give the northern tribes to Jeroboam.

His solution was to erect alternate places of worship. He constructed two idols – golden calves – and set them up in Bethel and in Dan, basically on the southern and northern borders of his kingdom. He declared to the people "Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." (1 Kings 12:28) He took a large number of non-Levite men and set them up as priests. He encouraged the people to begin offering sacrifices to these idols. Apparently the idolatry spread to worship of other pagan gods as well.

Jeroboam's golden calves are reminiscent of the one that Aaron built for the children of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness. In fact, cow worship continues to be a predominant part of some religions today. One might wonder what the significance of the cows is. The answer might be that idolatry is a bunch of bull.

- God sent an unnamed prophet from Judah to confront Jeroboam about the idolatry. He came to him and said: (1 Kings 13:2)

O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: "A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you."

He also told them: (1 Kings 13:3):

This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.

When he said all of this, Jeroboam was not pleased. He stretched out his hand towards the prophet, pointing at him and yelling, "Seize him!" When he did, his hand withered and he was unable to pull it back. The altar split apart and its ashes were poured out, just as the prophecy had said. Jeroboam asked the prophet to pray to God to restore the hand. He did and the hand was restored.

Jeroboam invited the prophet to come and eat with him. He replied that God had told him not to eat or drink while there and to return via a different path than he came. The prophet departed.

Another, older prophet was living in the area and he heard what had happened. He went and found the man, who was on his way back to Judah. The man told him that God had told him not to eat or drink in Israel. The older prophet lied to him, telling him that an angel had told him to feed the man. The man went to the older prophet's home and ate. During the meal, the Lord came to the older prophet and told him to tell the man that he had disobeyed God's instructions. As a result, his body would not be buried with his fathers. The man left and continued on his journey. A lion attacked him and killed him. He ended up being buried in Israel.

- Jeroboam's son became very ill. Jeroboam was very concerned. He got his wife to disguise herself and go to Ahijah, the prophet that had originally told him he would become king of the north. She was to ask Ahijah the fate of the son. Ahijah was in Judah. While she was on her way, the Lord came to Ahijah and told him that Jeroboam's wife was coming, that she would be in disguise, and that she would ask about the fate of her son. When she came he immediately said that he knew who she was and that he had bad news. God was angry with Jeroboam because of the idolatry. The house of Jeroboam would be destroyed. As soon as she returned home and set foot over her threshold, her son would die. Furthermore Israel itself would be uprooted and scattered because of its idolatry.

His wife left and returned home. As soon as her foot crossed the threshold, her son died.

- Later Jeroboam died. His son, Nadab succeeded him.
- Morals of the story: God looks for obedience in his leaders and his prophets. He does not tolerate idolatry because it is a direct rejection of him. Also, if God gives you an order and then someone else tells you that an angel or God himself has told him to give you conflicting instructions, wait until you hear it from God yourself before you change.

2.2 Nadab

1 Kings 15:25-32

- Nadab became king the second year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He reigned for two years, spanning around 909-908 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes.
- He was assassinated by Baasha.

2.3 Baasha

1 Kings 15:33-16:7

- Baasha became king the third year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He reigned for twenty-four years, spanning around 908-886 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes.
- He came to power by assassinating Nadab. In fact, he killed Jeroboam's entire family, fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah (perhaps he did not understand the reason that God used

him to obliterate the household of Jeroboam; perhaps he did it for political reasons, not knowing that he was fulfilling prophecy).

- Baasha continued to lead the nation in idolatry. Because of this, God delivered a prophecy to Baasha that his house would be obliterated just as had happened to Jeroboam.
- He died and his son Elah succeeded him as king.

2.4 Elah

1 Kings 16:8-14

- Elah became king during the twenty-sixth year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He ruled for two years, spanning around 886-885 BC.
- At a time when he was drunk, one of his officers, Zimri, killed him and assumed the throne.

2.5 Zimri

1 Kings 16:15-20

- Zimri became king during the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He only reigned for seven days, in 885 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes, continuing in idolatry.
- He took the throne by assassinating Elah. After killing Elah, he wiped out the family of Baasha, fulfilling the prophecy that had been given against that house.
- After Zimri killed Elah, Omri mounted an army and came against him. Zimri went to the palace and set it on fire around himself and killed himself.

2.6 Tibni

1 Kings 16:21-22

- Tibni became king during the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He never really reigned over the whole nation. We are not sure exactly long he held out, but it seems to have been about four years, spanning around 885-880 BC.
- After Elah was killed followed by the rapid rise and fall of Zimri, the leadership of the nation was contested. Some followed Tibni and others followed Omri. The followers of Omri proved to be stronger and Tibni was killed.

2.7 Omri

1 Kings 16:21-28

- Omri became king during the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign in Judah.

- He reigned for twelve years, spanning around 885-874 BC.
- He was evil in the eyes of the Lord, worse than his predecessors. He continued in the ways of idolatry.
- Initially his leadership was contested and the kingdom was split between Omri and Tibni. Eventually Omri took over. It seems that he became the sole ruler during the thirty-first year of Asa's reign.
- Omri established the capital of the Northern Kingdom in the city of Samaria. (Jeroboam and Nadab had been in Shechem. Baasha, Elah, and Zimri had been in Tirzah.) The capital remained at Samaria for the duration of the kingdom.
- He died and his son, Ahab, succeeded him as king.

2.8 Ahab

1 Kings 16:29-22:40

- Ahab became king during the thirty-eighth year of Asa's reign in Judah.
- He ruled for twenty-two years, spanning around 874-853 BC.
- He was worse than any king before him in the eyes of God.
- He not only continued in the idolatry of Jeroboam, but he introduced Baal worship to Israel. He married a woman named Jezebel who was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians. She was a Baal worshipper. He adopted her religion, building Baal temples in Samaria and setting up idols. He also worshipped Asherah, building Asherah poles. He was a man of many gods.
- Ahab was closely aligned with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Their families intermarried.
- During Ahab's reign, a man by the name of Hiel rebuilt the city of Jericho. In the process, both his oldest and youngest sons died. This fulfilled the words of Joshua in Joshua 6:26:

At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the Lord is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho:

At the cost of his firstborn son
will he lay its foundations;
at the cost of his youngest
will he set up its gates."

- Ahab was the main king with whom Elijah contended. For more information about the reign of Ahab, see the section on Elijah and Elisha.
- While Ahab was king, Israel was attacked by Ben Haddad, king of Aram. A prophet told Ahab that God would give him victory over Ben Haddad. The battle ensued and the Israelites defeated the Arameans. A prophet told Ahab that the Arameans would return the next spring and attack again. They did. Again, the Israelites soundly defeated the Arameans. Ben Haddad was captured. Ahab said he would release Ben Haddad on the condition that a peace treaty be established between them. He let Ben Haddad go. Another

prophet came to Ahab and told him that he had released a man that God intended to kill and as a result, God would take Ahab's life in place of Ben Haddad's.

- There was a man named Naboth who had a vineyard close to Ahab's palace. Ahab wanted the land for a vegetable garden. He tried to buy the vineyard, but Naboth did not want to give up the land that had been the inheritance from his father. Ahab went home and sulked about it. Jezebel found out what had happened and thought that it was ridiculous that the king should not have everything he wanted.

Jezebel conspired with some people in Naboth's hometown to accuse him of blasphemy. They did so and Naboth was stoned. Then she told Ahab that Naboth was dead and that he could go take the vineyard. Ahab was happy to do so.

Elijah came and confronted Ahab over what had happened. He said that because of his sin (not just this one but his idolatry, etc), Ahab's blood would be shed in the same location as Naboth's (in fact he said that dogs would lick the blood). Furthermore, because of his sin, his whole family would be cut off just like the house of Jeroboam or the house of Baasha. Because Jezebel was at the heart of so much of this evil, she would be eaten by dogs by the wall of Jezreel. Dogs would eat the descendants of Ahab as well.

When Ahab heard this, he believed God. He was truly broken by the message. He tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted. Because he humbled himself at the receipt of this news, God told Elijah that the message would be carried out against his son rather than against Ahab.

- There was a time when Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab were considering joining together in war against Aram. Jehoshaphat felt that they should consult a prophet before proceeding. They gathered together around 400 "prophets" of Israel and asked them whether or not they should go into war. They all said to go for it. Jehoshaphat perceived that they were useless "yes men," telling the king anything he wanted to hear. He asked Ahab whether or not there were any good prophets around. Ahab said that there was one, a man named Micaiah, but Ahab hated him because he always prophesied bad things about Ahab. Jehoshaphat wanted to see him so they sent for him.

As the king's servants were bringing Micaiah, they warned him to give a positive message to the king. He said that he could only say what God told him but they pressured him. When he arrived the kings asked him whether or not they should go to war. He gave into the pressure from the king's servants and told them to go to war. One of them (presumably Jehoshaphat) said to tell the truth. Micaiah then told them that he saw Israel as sheep without a shepherd, indicating that he foresaw Ahab being killed. He continued and told them that he saw a council in heaven. God asked who would lure Ahab into battle to get him killed. A spirit came forth and said that he was a lying spirit and would put lies into the mouths of the prophets of Israel to give Ahab encouragement to go to war. Thus God had sent this lying spirit into the mouths of these "yes men." A servant of Ahab named Zedekiah stepped forward and slapped Micaiah in the face, offended at what he had said.

They threw Micaiah in jail and went to war. Ahab was shot and he died. They brought his body back to Samaria and buried him. The chariot he had been riding was washed out and the dogs did indeed lick his blood, just as Elijah had prophesied. Ahaziah, his son, succeeded him as king.

There are a couple of interesting points that can be made from the story that just transpired. First of all, the council in heaven sounds much like the one that takes place at the beginning of Job. In Job, Satan presented himself before God in such a council. Here, a demon (a

lying spirit) presents himself before God. Demons and Satan himself are created beings. They are subject to God and can only do what God allows them to do. Although their goal in life is not to honor God, God is still able to use their activity to accomplish his means, particularly through testing people. And did God really seek to send a lying spirit to Ahab? Apparently. God also sent a voice of truth to Ahab. Ahab had to decide which voice he would follow. God does test us. He does hold us accountable for the choices we make. He may choose to allow the outcome of such a test to be our own destruction. It happened to Ahab.

2.9 Ahaziah

1 Kings 22:51-2 Kings 1:18

- Ahaziah became king in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah.
- He reigned for two years, spanning around 853-852 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes. He continued to lead the nation in the idolatrous practices of his parents.
- At some point, Ahaziah sustained a major fall and injured himself. Elijah prophesied that he would die from the injuries. For more information about this exchange, see the section on Elijah. He did indeed die from the injury. He had no sons and thus was succeeded by his brother Joram.

2.10 Joram

2 Kings 3:1-10:35

- 2 Kings 3:1 identifies Joram as the son of Ahab. Thus he was Ahaziah's brother. He became king when Ahaziah died, in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah.
- He reigned for twelve years, spanning around 852-841 BC.
- He was evil in the sight of God. He did get rid of some of the objects of Baal worship but continued in idolatry.
- The king of Moab had been paying tribute to Ahab. Under Joram's reign, he revolted and refused to do so. Joram mounted a war against him and got Jehoshaphat of Judah and also the king of Edom to ally with him against Moab. They set out to war. On the way, they found themselves for seven days without water. They called for Elisha to help them. Elisha rather curtly asked Joram why he did not go to the prophets of his own religion and said that he would help only out of his respect for Jehoshaphat. He told the people to dig ditches. He said that the next day they would see neither wind nor rain but that the valley would be filled with water. He also told them that God had given Moab into their hands. The next day, without a storm coming, water came flowing into the valley from the direction of Edom. They had all of the water they could use. They invaded Moab and destroyed it. They cut down all of its good trees. They stopped up its springs. They threw boulders into all of the good fields. They basically ravaged the land. During the siege, the king of Moab sacrificed his oldest son to his god. Eventually the Moabite resistance grew fierce and Israel returned to its own land.

- Ahaziah, the king of Judah, was a relative of Joram, king of Israel. Ahaziah was responsible for extending the religious practices of Jezebel into Judah.
- The prophecies against the house of Ahab would be carried out in the time of Joram by Jehu.

2.11 Jehu

2 Kings 9:1-10:35

- Jehu was a leader in Joram's army. At Mount Horeb, God told Elijah to anoint Jehu to be the next king of Israel. Elisha carried out that instruction in 2 Kings 9. Elisha sent his servant to Jehu to anoint him and give him a message. We read in 2 Kings 9:6-10:

This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "I anoint you king over the Lord's people in Israel. You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the Lord's servants shed by Jezebel. The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel – slave or free. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her."

- Jehu reigned for twenty-eight years, spanning around 841-814 BC.
- Initially he was faithful to carry out God's instructions to wipe the dynasty of Omri from the nations of Israel and Judah. In the end, he himself became evil in the sight of the Lord.
- When Jehu was anointed to be king, Joram still sat on the throne. Joram had been in battle with Hazael, king of Aram (the other person that Elijah had been instructed to anoint). He needed rest from the battle and returned to Jezreel. Ahaziah (Joram's relative and the king of Judah) came to visit him. Jehu heard that they were there. He took his troops to go find them. As they approached, watchmen informed Joram that troops were approaching. He sent a messenger to find out whether or not they came in peace. Jehu convinced the messenger to simply join his troops. Joram figured out that the messenger was not returning so he sent another messenger with the same question. Jehu convinced this messenger to join him as well. Finally Joram and Ahaziah mounted chariots and came out to meet Jehu personally. Joram asked Jehu whether or not he came in peace. We read in 2 Kings 9:22,

"How can there be peace," Jehu replied, "as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?"

Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram. Ahaziah fled. Joram died and his body was flung on the ground, which happened to be the site of Naboth's vineyard. Elijah's prophecy in 1 Kings 21 against the house of Ahab had just been fulfilled.

Jehu pursued Ahaziah and shot him as well. He died and his body was returned to Jerusalem for burial.

- Next Jehu went to find Jezebel. She heard he was coming and decided to take care of the really important things in life and so she put on makeup and fixed her hair. Then she waited by a window for him to arrive. When he came, she said in 2 Kings 9:31:

Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?

She was likening Jehu to Zimri, the man who became king of Israel by murdering Elah.

Jehu looked up at her and noticed that she had several servants with her. He said in 2 Kings 9:32-33:

"Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. "Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

Jehu then went into the town to rest and refresh himself. Sometime later he told men to go and find her body and bury it. They came back and said that nothing was left except her skull, feet, and hands. Then they remembered that Elijah had prophesied that dogs would eat her by the wall of Jezreel. This prophecy had been fulfilled.

- There were seventy surviving sons of Ahab. They were under the care of guardians. Jehu sent letters to each of the guardians inviting them to select the best of Ahab's heirs and to declare him king and then let him try to defend his throne. They all replied that they had no business trying to fight against Jehu. He had already killed two kings and they did not stand a chance against him. He said that if they were loyal to him, they had to show it by sending the heads of Ahab's sons. Thus all of the sons of Ahab were executed and their heads were delivered to Jehu. All of Ahab's survivors in Jezreel were executed. He then headed to the city of Samaria. On the way, he encountered forty-two relatives of Ahaziah and killed them. He arrived at Samaria and found any other survivors of Ahab and executed them as well. He had great zeal in carrying out Elijah's prophecies against the house of Ahab.
- Jehu had one last crusade to accomplish. He sent a message throughout Israel saying that he was a bigger and better Baal worshipper than Ahab ever thought about being. He said that he was going to hold a big Baal festival and he wanted all of the remaining prophets of Baal to attend.

He held a big party. All of the prophets of Baal came. He gathered them together and put special robes on them for the festival. He told them to look among themselves and make sure that there were no "spy" servants of God among them. He only wanted the prophets of Baal to be there. He let them start their sacrifices. Then he left the room. He sent in soldiers and told them to kill all of the prophets of Baal that had on the special robes. Masses of them were killed that day. They tore down the Baal temple and converted it to a latrine.

- Jehu was zealous in ridding the land of Baal worship. Unfortunately, he did nothing about the idolatrous worship that had been introduced by Jeroboam. The golden calves remained. Because of the good that he had done, God promised to let his descendants remain king for four generations, but in the end, God was disappointed with him for not completely restoring pure worship to the land. Because of this, God began to reduce the size of Israel during the reign of Jehu. Specifically, the Transjordan lands (the territories of Gad and Reuben and part of Manasseh) fell to Hazael of Aram during this time.
- Jehu died a natural death and was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz.

2.12 Jehoahaz

2 Kings 13:1-9

- Jehoahaz became king in the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash, king of Judah.

- He reigned seventeen years, spanning around 814-798 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes, continuing in the practices of Jeroboam. He also allowed Asherah poles to be in Samaria. Because of this, God subjected Israel to harassment by Hazael of Aram. At one point, Jehoahaz turned to God for help and God was faithful to intervene. Still he did not respond by reforming the nation's religious practices. The army of Israel was greatly reduced during the reign of Jehoahaz. In spite of that, God was faithful to the promise he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and would not drive the people out of the land completely. After Hazael of Aram died, Jehoahaz was able to recapture from his son Ben-Hadad some of the territory that had been lost.
- Jehoahaz died a natural death and was succeeded by Jehoash, his son.

2.13 Jehoash

2 Kings 13:10-13

- Jehoash became king in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Joash, king of Judah.
- He reigned sixteen years, spanning around 798-782 BC.
- He was evil in God's eyes and continued in the religious practices of Jeroboam.
- He engaged in war against Amaziah of Judah.
- Jehoash was successful in recapturing some of the land that had been taken by Hazael of Aram.
- He died and was succeeded by his son, Jeroboam II.

2.14 Jeroboam II

2 Kings 14:23-29

- Jeroboam II became king during the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, king of Judah.
- He reigned forty-one years, spanning around 793-753 BC (he was coregent for a time with his father).
- He was evil in the sight of God, continuing with the idolatry of Jeroboam I.
- Jeroboam II was successful in restoring land that had been taken from Israel by Aram and experienced a great deal of military success. During his reign, God bestowed mercy on Israel and relieved much of its suffering.
- The prophets Amos and Jonah ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II.
- Jeroboam II died and was succeeded by his son, Zechariah.

2.15 Zechariah

2 Kings 15:8-12

- Zechariah became king during the thirty-eighth year of Azariah, king of Judah.
- He reigned only six months, in 753 BC.
- He was evil in the sight of God, continuing in the idolatry of Jeroboam I.
- He was publicly assassinated by Shallum, who took the throne from him. Jehu had been promised that four generations of his descendants would be king. That time was over.

2.16 Shallum

2 Kings 15:13-16

- Shallum assassinated Zechariah in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Azariah, king of Judah, and took the throne.
- He reigned for one month, in 752 BC.
- He was assassinated by Menaham, who took the throne.

2.17 Menaham

2 Kings 15:17-22

- In the thirty-ninth year of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Menaham assassinated Shallum and took the throne.
- He reigned for ten years, spanning around 752-742 BC.
- He was evil in the sight of God, continuing in the idolatry of Jeroboam.
- The prophet Hosea ministered during his reign.
- He was attacked by Pul, king of Assyria. He taxed the people of Israel in order to collect tribute money to pay to the Assyrian king. When the tribute was paid, Assyria backed off from attacking Israel and supported Menaham as king.
- He died and was succeeded by his son, Pekahiah.

2.18 Pekahiah

2 Kings 15:23-26

- Pekahiah became king during the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah.
- He reigned for two years, spanning around 742-740 BC.
- He was evil in the sight of the Lord, continuing in the idolatry of Jeroboam.

- The prophet Hosea ministered during his reign.
- He was assassinated in his palace by one of his chief officers, Pekah.

2.19 Pekah

2 Kings 15:27-31

- Pekah became king during the fifty-second year of Azariah, king of Judah.
- He reigned for twenty years, spanning around 752-732 BC. Note that the date of the beginning of his reign is coincident with that of Menahem. It is supposed that he set up a rival government at the same time Menahem came to power and eventually took over by assassinating Menahem's son, Pekahiah.
- He was evil in the sight of God, like all of the other kings of Israel.
- The prophet Hosea ministered during his reign.
- During his reign, serious harassment by the Assyrians began (thanks in part to an alliance between Assyria and Ahaz of Judah). Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, captured many of the northern parts of Israel and deported the residents. The Assyrians were cruel oppressors. They tortured people and did unspeakable things to them. When they captured an area, they would take the residents and disperse them. They would send a few here and a few there and force them to settle and be absorbed into their new surrounding. As a result, the people that were dispersed lost their identity as Israelites. They became Assyrians. They lost their culture and their heritage and their religion.
- Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea, who took the throne.
- It is not true that Pekah's last name was "Boo."

2.20 Hoshea

2 Kings 17:1-6

- Hoshea became king during the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah.
- He reigned for nine years, spanning around 732-722 BC.
- He was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as bad as some of the kings who preceded him.
- The prophet Hosea ministered during his reign.
- During his reign, Israel was a vassal state to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. They paid tribute to him. Hoshea decided to get Israel out of this subjection. He sought an alliance with the king of Egypt and then ceased paying tribute to Shalmaneser. The Assyrians attacked Israel. Hoshea was arrested and imprisoned. The land was besieged for three years. Finally it fell to Assyria. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was no more.

2.21 The End of the Northern Kingdom

2 Kings 17:7-41

The Assyrians took the majority of the people from Israel and resettled them. They put a few in this town and a few in that town and really scattered the people. A few people were left behind in Israel. Then they brought people from other lands and settled them in Israel, occupying the territory. This was standard Assyrian practice and they had a reason for doing this.

Suppose that there were massive numbers of captives that had been resettled as a unit to some other area. If they were resettled with their former friends and family, then those people would continue to be their friends and family. They would retain their culture. They would continue to marry their own kind. Their identity as a race would be preserved. Furthermore, as a unit they would look for a time to return to their homeland. This is what happened when the Babylonians took the Judeans into captivity years later.

The Assyrian captives did not have this luxury. They were resettled in places where they really did not know anybody. There were none of their own kind with whom they would continue to identify and marry, preserving race and culture. In addition, there was no homeland waiting to be reoccupied because new people lived there. They had no place to go. The only way to survive was to be absorbed into their new surroundings. That is what the people did. It may have taken a generation or two, but these people ceased to be Ephraimites or Asherites or Danites or whatever. They became Assyrians. The northern tribes ceased to exist.

So why did this all happen? It's so simple that it is sad. Consider, for example, Deuteronomy 4:25-27:

After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time – if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you.

This is one example among very many. Exodus through Deuteronomy is basically one long, extended warning that if the people became idolatrous, God would drive them out of the land that he was giving them.

2 Kings 17:7-23 is a lengthy indictment against Israel. Reading an excerpt from it we see (2 Kings 17:7-13):

All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshipped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the Lord had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the Lord to anger. They worshipped idols, though the Lord had said, "You shall not do this." The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

With the Northern Kingdom, the trouble really began when Jeroboam built the golden calves and said "Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). He introduced idolatry to his nation. Because of that, 1 Kings says that he was evil in the sight of God. As kings subsequently followed him, some were better and some were worse. Still 1 and 2 Kings identifies every last one of them as being evil in the sight of God because none of them would address the problem of idolatry in the nation.

God put up with this for a long time. The kingdom split around 975 BC. The Northern Kingdom fell around 721 BC. It lasted for almost 250 years, longer than the United States of America has been in existence. God put up with this for a long time. He gave them plenty of chances to repent. Jehu came close to turning things around but then stopped short of what needed to be done. There reached a point when God said, "Enough is enough" and poured out his judgment on the situation.

God is like that. He has standards and demands conformance to those standards. He also has mercy and is patient to give people time to decide where they stand with respect to the standards. In the end, he is judge. He will separate those who want to meet the standards from those who do not.

Israel had 250 years to come into alignment with God's standards. During that time, according to 2 Kings 17:16-23:

- they forsook all of God's commandments.
- they made idols, including the golden calves.
- they made Asherah poles.
- they participated in Baal worship.
- they practiced child sacrifice to these gods.
- they practiced divination and sorcery.
- they influenced Judah to do many of the same things.
- they rejected the prophets who were sent to warn them and turn them away from these practices.

This brings up an important point. How many times do we hear people talk about how God dealt with sin in the Old Testament and comfort themselves (i.e. rationalize their own sin) by saying that we now live in an "age of grace." It is true. We do live in an age of grace. But when have people not lived in an age of grace? The more you read and understand the Old Testament, the more you understand that God has always operated in cycles:

- Make people aware of his plan.
- Give them time – an age of grace – to embrace the plan.
- Come down in judgment. Separate the chaff from the wheat or the goats from the sheep or whatever analogy you want to use.

He deals with the masses, preserving his faithful remnant, and then moves on with his plan. When judgment comes, he has always had people rise up in surprise saying "But Lord, we did this and that in your name" to which he has had to reply "Away from me; I never knew you." The main difference between then and now is that we have a much fuller revelation of the plan because we are operating this side of the cross, having free access to the Holy Spirit. God, his game plan, and his strategy are the same as they always have been. I fear that when that next big day of judgment comes, masses of people are going to be caught short because they have spent their lives excusing the state of their souls and hiding it behind "the age of grace."

Thus the Northern Kingdom was gone. Some Jews were left in the land and others eventually did return. Masses of people from other nations and other religions were brought into the land. There was considerable intermarriage among the different peoples of the land. The generations that followed became the Samaritans of the New Testament. The events we have seen as we studied the Northern Kingdom contributed to the fact that the Jews despised the Samaritans by New Testament times. The Jews of the New Testament looked upon the Samaritans as people who had perverted the law, intermixed the Scriptures with idolatrous religious practices, and intermarried with foreigners, producing an impure race. The Samaritans continued to revere the writings of Moses as Scripture but rejected the rest of what we consider to be the Old Testament. The reason is that none of the rest of it existed by the time they became a separate nation.

Jesus found that the remnant of these people had a longing to be returned to God's favor. They, too, were awaiting the Messiah. In fact, he found a warmer reception among them than he did among many of the Jews. Jesus extended a hand to them to bring them back into the fold. In spite of everything wrong that they did, God never forgot about them.

3 Index of Scripture References

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1 Kings 12:1-24	6
1 Kings 12:25-14:20	11
1 Kings 12:28	11, 22
1 Kings 13:2	11
1 Kings 13:3	11
1 Kings 15:25-32	12
1 Kings 15:33-16:7	12
1 Kings 16:15-20	13
1 Kings 16:21-22	13
1 Kings 16:21-28	13
1 Kings 16:29-22:40	14
1 Kings 16:8-14	13
1 Kings 21	17
1 Kings 22:51-2 Kings 1:18	16
1 Thessalonians 5:1-4	35
2 Chronicles 10:1-11:4	6
2 Kings 1:1-18	16
2 Kings 13:10-13	19
2 Kings 13:1-9	18
2 Kings 14:23-29	19
2 Kings 15:13-16	20
2 Kings 15:17-22	20
2 Kings 15:23-26	20
2 Kings 15:27-31	20
2 Kings 15:8-12	19
2 Kings 17:1-6	21
2 Kings 17:16-23	23
2 Kings 17:7-13	22
2 Kings 17:7-41	21
2 Kings 3:1-10:35	16
2 Kings 9:1-10:35	17
Deuteronomy 4:25-27	22
Joshua 6:26	14

4 Topical Index

Ahab	14
Ahaziah	16, 17
Amos	19
Asherah.....	14
Baal	14
Baasha	12
Bethel.....	11
Dan	11
Elah	13
Elijah	14, 16
Elisha.....	16, 17
Golden Calves.....	11
Hosea	20, 21
Hoshea	21
Jehoahaz	18
Jehoash	19
Jehoshaphat.....	14
Jehu	17
Jeroboam.....	6, 11
Jeroboam II	19
Jezebel	14, 17
Jonah	19
Joram	16
Menaham.....	20
Moab.....	16
Naboth's Vineyard.....	15, 17
Nadab.....	12
Northern Kingdom, Fall.....	21
Omri	13
Pekah	20
Pekahiah	20
Rehoboam	6
Samaritans	23
Shallum.....	20
Shalmaneser.....	21
Tibni	13
Tiglath-Pileser.....	21
Zechariah.....	19
Zimri.....	13