

# **HISTORY OF OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL PERIOD #6—THE DIVIDED MONARCHY**

Emphasis: “To your tents, O Israel...”

---

The sixth period of Israel’s history is known as the Divided Monarchy. This period is recorded for us in 1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles 10-36. This period covers about 345 years from the division of the kingdom in 931 BC to the Fall of Judah in 586 BC. It includes the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

The glory of the United Kingdom began to fade with the death of Solomon. After his death the nation divided. The ten tribes in the north came together as the nation of Israel ruled from Samaria, while the two tribes in the south became Judah and continued to be ruled from Jerusalem. This period is characterized by a rapid degeneration of the once great nation into a period of uninterrupted wickedness in the north and seldom interrupted wickedness in the south. Both kingdoms eventually fall: 1) The destruction of the Northern Kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC and 2) The destruction of the Southern Kingdom at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC.

## **I. Chronological Considerations**

Remember that there are certain chronological considerations that must be worked out in order to accurately determine the dating of the periods of Old Testament history. The following is a review of those matters that we have already discussed:

### The matter of absolute dates

Remember that the matter of an absolute or fixed date for Old Testament Chronology can be determined based off the historical records of the Assyrians. The Assyrians based their history on the data of astronomy. We can check the Assyrian data against the movement of the stars, which our present knowledge enables us to plot accurately. Then we can use that information to pinpoint the dates mentioned in those lists, which show up in the Old Testament.

As stated before, one important source of information are the Assyrian Eponym lists. Remember that the term *eponym* means “nickname” or “honorific title.” The Assyrians named each year to honor a certain individual within the government, usually the king. Clay tablets from Nineveh and other Assyrian cities list the names of these individuals, along with consecutive years of Assyrian history.

These years give us a history from 892 BC to 648 BC. During that time, several Assyrian leaders made contact with Hebrew Kings. At one place, the Assyrian lists mention Bur-Sagale, governor of a region called Guzana. The record says that an eclipse of the sun occurred during his term. Astronomers date that eclipse on June 15, 763 BC. Therefore, Bur-Sagale governed in

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

763 BC, and using that figure it is possible to date the other Assyrian leaders from the eponym lists with a great deal of accuracy.

One of the Assyrian tablets states that Daian-Assur governed during the sixth year of Shalmaneser III. In that same year, the Assyrians fought an important battle at Qarqar, near the Mediterranean seacoast, and the tablet lists King Ahab of Israel among the combatants. [The Old Testament does not mention this battle.]

Other information in the Assyrian lists places the date of that battle and the death of King Ahab as 853 BC.

Another eponym list states that a certain King “Ia-a-u” of Israel began paying tribute to Shalmaneser III in the 18th year of Shalmaneser’s reign. This was certainly King Jehu of Israel. This event can be dated to occur about 841 BC. Thus, the eponym lists have supplied us with two “fixed dates” for Old Testament History:

- 853 BC—The year of the death of King Ahab of Israel
- 841 BC—The year Jehu took the throne of Israel

### The matter of dating systems used in the Old Testament

Remember that there are three specific issues that must be recognized with regard to the dating systems used in the Old Testament.

#### 1) *The issue of divergent systems of figuring dates.*

Remember that after the division of the kingdom at the death of Solomon, the chroniclers in the southern kingdom of Judah evidently used a method of figuring the dates of kings, which was different from that used in the northern kingdom of Israel. The conclusion is that the method used in Judah was to figure the dates based off the beginning of the civil year, while the method used in Israel was to figure dates based off the religious year.

Note: There is no Scriptural passage, which clearly indicates that Israel used the religious year to figure dates. However, Edwin Thiele insists that if we assume the above divergence of method, “the perplexing discrepancies with the reigns of the kings of the divided monarchy” disappear and a harmonious chronological pattern results.

#### 2) *The issue of divergent systems of figuring elapsed time.*

Remember that the issue at hand is the method employed in reckoning the regnal years (years of a king’s reign) for the kings in Israel and Judah. There are two distinct systems of counting the years of a king’s reign:

1-**The “non-accession year” system:** If a king termed the year in which he ascended the throne his first official year, that is called the “non-accession year dating or antedating.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

So, if a king assumed the throne in mid-year then that portion of the year is considered to be the first year of the king’s reign.

**2-The “accession year” system:** If a king termed the year commencing with the new year’s day after his accession to the throne, the first official year of his reign and the portion of the year in which he came to the throne his accession year, then he used “accession year” dating or postdating.

<b>Two Divergent Dating Systems for Regnal Years:</b>			
<b>Non-accession-year system</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year
<b>Accession-year system</b>	accession year	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year

Evidently, a king would decide for himself, which system would be used by his chroniclers. Generally, the non-accession year system was used in Israel, while the accession year system was used in Judah. The following chart will highlight the differences between the two types of reckoning that Israel and Judah seemed to follow:

	<b>Northern Kingdom of Israel: Non-Accession Year Reckoning</b>	<b>Southern Kingdom of Judah: Accession Year Reckoning</b>	
Begins with New Year Nisan 1 (in spring)	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Accession year	Begins with New Year Tishri 1 (in fall)
⇒⇒⇒⇒	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	1 <sup>st</sup> year	⇐⇐⇐⇐
	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
	4 <sup>th</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
	5 <sup>th</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year	

The possibility of the non-accession year system being used in the northern kingdom of Israel can be noted with the reigns of the two kings between Ahab and Jehu. According to the eponym lists, Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in 841 BC, which was 12 years after King Ahab fought in the battle of Qarqar. The Old Testament places two kings between Ahab and Jehu. According to 1 Kings 22:51, Ahaziah ruled 2 years, while according to 2 Kings 3:1, Joram ruled 12 years. Together they would total 14 years; a figure that does not match the separation of 12 years between Ahab and Jehu from the eponym lists. However, assuming the non-accession year system, one year should be deducted from each reign, bringing the total to 12 years, which is what the eponym lists indicate.

The kings of Judah seem certainly to have used the accession year system, except when that kingdom came under the close influence of Israel, as in the days of Jehoram, who married Athaliah, princess of Israel, and “walked in the way of the kings of Israel...” (2 Kings 8:18; 2 Chronicles 21:6).

3) *The matter of co-regencies in determining the dates of the kings.*

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

Remember that in order to assure that his chosen son would succeed him as king, a monarch would often appoint that son as his co-regent late in his life. So the son's first years of reign would be the same as his father's last years of reign. Co-regencies are not explicitly chronicled, but they are often indicated, and they make it possible to reconcile seemingly divergent data.

Given the absolute dates fixed above (reigns of Ahab and Jehu), along with taking into account the three matters relating to the dating systems and the reckoning of time, we can begin with those established dates and figure backward to the kings of the united monarchy.

Taking these matters and issues into consideration enable us to piece together the kings of the Divided Monarchy and assign with some degree of accuracy the dates for their reigns. The following chart provides an overview for the entire period of the Divided Monarchy:

<b>THE PERIOD OF THE DIVIDED MONARCHY</b>				
The Division of the Kingdom after the death of Solomon.	The Northern Kingdom of Israel (10 Tribes)	The Fall of Israel to Assyria.		
	The Southern Kingdom of Judah (2 Tribes)		The Fall of Judah to Babylon.	
931 BC	931 to 722 BC	722 BC	722 to 586 BC	586 BC

The next two charts provide an overall glimpse of the kings of the Divided Monarchy:

<b>The Kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel:</b>		
Jeroboam	1 Kings 12:25-14:20	931-910 BC
Nadab	1 Kings 15:25-28	910-909 BC
Baasha	1 Kings 15:33-16:7	909-886 BC
Elah	1 Kings 16:8-10	886-885 BC
Zimri	1 Kings 16:10-20	885 BC
Omri	1 Kings 16:21-28	885-874 BC
Ahab	1 Kings 16:29-22:40	874-853 BC
Ahaziah	1 Kings 22:51-53	853-852 BC
Jehoram/Joram	2 Kings 2:19-8:15	852-841 BC
Jehu	2 Kings 9:1-10:35	841-814 BC
Jehoahaz	2 Kings 13:1-9	814-798 BC
Jehoash	2 Kings 13:10-25	798-782 BC
Jeroboam II	2 Kings 14:23-29	793-753 BC
Zechariah	2 Kings 15:8-12	753 BC
Shallum	2 Kings 15:13-16	752 BC
Menahem	2 Kings 15:17-22	752-742 BC
Pekahiah	2 Kings 15:23-26	742-740 BC
Pekah	2 Kings 15:27-31	740-732 BC

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

Hoshea	2 Kings 17:1-6	732-722 BC
<b>Israel Falls to Assyria in 722 BC</b>		

<b>The Kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah</b>		
Rehoboam	1 Kings 14:21-31; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16	931 BC-914 BC
Abijah	1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1	914-911 BC
Asa	1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14:2-16:14	911-870 BC
Jehoshaphat	1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37	873-848 BC
Jehoram	2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21:2-20	853-841 BC
Ahaziah	2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9	841 BC
Athaliah	2 Kings 11:1-20	841-835 BC
Joash	2 Kings 11:21-12:21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27	835-796 BC
Amaziah	2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chronicles 25:1-28	796-767 BC
Azariah/Uzziah	2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23	792-740 BC
Jotham	2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27:1-9	750-732 BC
Ahaz	2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chronicles 28:1-27	735-715 BC
Hezekiah	2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 29-32	715-686 BC
Manasseh	2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20	697-642 BC
Amon	2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25	642-640 BC
Josiah	2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-36	640-609 BC
Jehoahaz	2 Kings 23:31-35; 2 Chronicles 36:2-4	609 BC
Jehoiakim	2 Kings 23:36-24:7; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8	609-598 BC
Jehoiachin	2 Kings 24:8-17; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10	598-597 BC
Zedekiah	2 Kings 25:18-20; 2 Chronicles 36:11-14	597-586 BC
<b>Judah Falls to Babylon in 586 BC</b>		

**II. Historical Considerations**

We will examine the reigns of the kings of the Divided Monarchy separately, beginning with the kings of the Northern Kingdom, Israel followed by the kings of the Southern Kingdom, Judah.

**THE NORTHERN KINGDOM:**

In the northern kingdom of Israel we find very little that is commendable. Jeroboam I set up false idols and an illegitimate priesthood immediately to prevent his people from going up to Jerusalem. In Ahab’s reign (874 to 853 BC), we find the ministry of Elijah, and the conflict between the priests of Baal and of Yahweh. Jehu (841 to 814 BC) was used by God to purge Baalism out of the land, trapping them in a banquet hall and killing them. Jeroboam II (793 to 753 BC) and Menahem (752 to 742 BC) had particularly corrupt rules. The kingdom was doomed and would fall to the Assyrians in 722 BC.

**DYNASTY #1:**

<b>JEROBOAM I of Israel [931-910 BC] 1 Kings 12:25-14:20</b>
Jeroboam is prototypical of the “wicked king.” Although God chose Jeroboam as the king of Israel, his rebellion was flagrantly designed to counterfeit the true worship of God. His apostate system of worship was motivated by unbelief and included a counterfeit personnel, place, time and object of worship. It was thoroughly heretical so that Jeroboam became the canon of wickedness for the rest of the kings in the Northern Kingdom. By the visit of the unnamed prophet, God serves notice that Jeroboam’s actions have been displeasing. Jeroboam, however, persisted in his sin despite the rebuke (1 Kings 13:33-34). Therefore, Ahijah was sent to deliver a prophecy of the downfall of Jeroboam’s house which occurred in the reign of Baasha (1 Kings 16:7).
1-He had been a “cabinet member” under Solomon, but fled to Egypt to escape the king’s wrath. 2-He led the revolt of the 10 tribes at Shechem, and after successfully establishing the Northern Kingdom, he instituted a new religion. 3-Because of his sin, his pagan altar was destroyed, his arm was paralyzed, and his son stricken by God. 4-Jeroboam was stricken with a plague from God and died.

<b>NADAB of Israel [910-909 BC] 1 Kings 15:25-28</b>
Nadab was the son of Jeroboam. He succeeded him to the throne of the Northern Kingdom, but he endured as monarch for only 2 years. The history of the Northern Kingdom was a chronicle of dynastic upheavals, and the first of those resulted in the death of Nadab.
1-He was the son of Jeroboam. 2-He was assassinated by a rebel named Baasha; thus the first dynasty of Israel came to an end after just 2 generations.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

DYNASTY #2:

<b>BAASHA of Israel [909-886 BC] 1 Kings 15:33-1 Kings 16:7</b>
Baasha's only significant contribution to covenant history was his annihilation of the house of Jeroboam in fulfillment of the prophecy of Ahijah. Ironically, Baasha was the human instrument for the extermination of Jeroboam's house but he later experienced a similar fate for the same kind of sin (cf. 1 Kings 16:11-13).
1-He assassinate Nadab, thus fulfilling a prediction by Ahijah the prophet. 2-He fought with Asa (3 <sup>rd</sup> king of Judah) and built a wall to cut off trade with Jerusalem. 3-It was prophesied that his seed would suffer the same judgment as had that of Jeroboam.

<b>ELAH of Israel [886-885 BC] 1 Kings 16:8-10</b>
Elah's short life was the result of his sin (1 Kings 16:13). He was slain and replaced by Zimri. Thus the second dynasty of Israel came to an end—4 kings and 2 dynasties.
1-Elah was the son of Baasha; he was assassinated by a rebel soldier while drunk.

DYNASTY #3:

<b>ZIMRI of Israel [885 BC] 1 Kings 16:10-20</b>
Although Zimri's reign lasted only a few days, the author is careful to attribute his death to sins which he committed and to his "walking in the ways of Jeroboam..." (1 Kings 16:19).
1-he fulfilled prophecy by slaughtering the seed of Baasha. 2-Zimri was trapped by rebel soldiers in his own palace, resulting in a fiery suicidal death.

DYNASTY #4:

<b>OMRI of Israel [885-874 BC] 1 Kings 16:21-28</b>
Omri withstood rebellion against his authority early on in his reign (1 Kings 16:21-23). For all of Omri's political achievements, however, nothing is as important as his spiritual performance—which was found wanting. To the writer of the book, little else matters.
1-He is best remembered for establishing the capital of the Northern Kingdom at Samaria (1 Kings 16:24-25). [The capital was initially at Shechem, then was moved to Tirzah, and finally to Samaria by Omri.] 2-Omri arranged the marriage of his son, Ahab, to Jezebel, daughter of a king of Phoenicia named Eth-baal, and devotee to the pagan god, Baal.

<b>AHAB of Israel [874-853 BC] 1 Kings 16:29-22:40</b>
While Ahab's life is discussed more extensively later in the narrative of his interaction with Elijah, a summary is provided in 1 Kings 16:29-34. The essence of that spiritual summary is this: the wickedness and sins of Ahab exceeded even that of Jeroboam (1 Kings 16:31). While Jeroboam set up a counterfeit worship system in Bethel, Ahab exceeded this sin by encouraging the spiritually seductive worship of Baal. For this reason he becomes the new standard of degeneracy by which wicked kings are measured.
1-He married Jezebel, who then introduced Baal worship into the land. It was because of this

terribly wicked Baal-worship that a great famine befell the land.  
2-He made military and marital alliances with Jehosaphat of Judah.  
3-Twice he defeated the Syrians under the direction and empowerment of Elijah.  
4-His death for his many sins was predicted by 3 different prophets. That of his wife, Jezebel, was predicted by Elijah.  
5-He was slain in a battle with Syria.

**EXCURSES: A Note Concerning The Prophetic Ministries of Elijah and Elisha—During the Reign of Ahab in Israel: [1 Kings 17:1 to 2 Kings 8:15]**

The purpose of this section is to briefly highlight the prophetic ministry during the reign of Ahab. The primary prophets during this time period were Elijah and Elisha. Elijah and Elisha were raised up by Yahweh to rescue the worship of the God of Israel from extinction. The worship of God was threatened by the invasion of Baal worship, through the influence of Ahab in Israel.

Remember, Baalism was actually introduced in Israel through Ahab who was married to Jezebel, a Tyrian princess. Jezebel was a follower of Baal. In the Southern Kingdom, King Jehosaphat allowed his son, Jehoram to wed Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of the North. Therefore introducing Baal worship into the Southern Kingdom of Judah as well. However, it was a much larger problem in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

The role of the prophet during this period was often one of restoration. Thus the presence and activity of a prophet who cried out against the king were generally signs of some covenantal deviation. Whenever the leadership—whether civil or religious—failed to carry out its mission in covenantal faithfulness, God’s Word could be heard through the mouth of the prophet so that there might be repentance and a return to the covenant.

The measure of emphasis given to a prophet who challenged the leadership of the nation serves as a general barometer of Elijah, Elisha and other prophets in the book of Kings. Since nearly 14 chapters or almost 30% of the entire corpus is devoted to the prophetic ministry. It is a weighty testimony to the serious covenantal corruption of the times. In other words, because the Scripture spends a great deal of time on the prophetic ministry during this period, it demonstrates the serious nature of the sin and corruption of the kingdoms at the time.

Elijah and Elisha continued to minister after the demise of Ahab; indeed, they ministered during the reigns of three kings of Israel (Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram) and during the reigns of two kings of Judah (Asa and Jehosaphat).

The Prophetic Ministry During the Reign of Ahab

There are four specific events worthy of mention:

- 1) *Elijah and the drought: Emphasizing God’s faithfulness to His covenant*  
(1 Kings 17:1-18:46)

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

This section of Scripture, all of which concerns the drought imposed upon the land by the prayer of Elijah, actually includes several distinct episodes.

- The first involves Elijah’s announcement to Ahab that in fulfillment of God’s covenantal promise there will be a drought in Israel as a result of sin.
- The second episode shows that while Israel is unworthy of blessing, God will be gracious to a believing widow in a Gentile land.
- The final incident in this section involves God’s vindication before Ahab. With the slaughtering of his prophets the rain comes.

This whole series of events serves as a focused polemic against Baal worship.

### *2) Elijah’s flight to Horeb: Emphasizing God’s faithfulness to His Covenant (1 Kings 19:1-21)*

The message in 1 Kings 19 may seem somewhat puzzling. It may be, however, that while Elijah’s fiery personality and negative assessment of Israel caused him to demand judgment upon the nation of Israel immediately, God’s intent was to simply continue to rebuke and warn His people. Though Elijah saw a windstorm, earthquake and fire, God’s voice was not in any of these as directly state in the passage. The divine purpose at this point was not judgment—but to encourage Elijah to continue His ministry among His people and to pass that ministry on through a successor to Elijah—Elisha.

### *3) Ahab’s sin and failure to exterminate his enemies (1 kings 20:1-43)*

In this account Ahab’s sin once again confronts him through the word of the prophet. As with Nathan’s rebuke of David, Ahab is tricked into pronouncing his own sentence. Because Ahab failed to inquire of the Lord for direction and let his enemy go free, God required the life of Ahab in exchange.

### *4) Ahab’s violation of social law (1 Kings 21:1-28)*

The intent of the author in recounting this story is not simply to substantiate his theses concerning the culpability of Israel’s kings. At the end of this section he is careful to note that although Ahab’s wickedness was notorious (“*There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord*” 1 Kings 21:25), he also repented (1 Kings 21:26). And more importantly, God heard him and delayed judgment upon him until his son’s days (1 Kings 21:27).

Ahab’s death is recorded as the fulfillment of the prophecy given against him (1 Kings 22:34-40).

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

### DYNASTY #4 CONTINUED:

Remember that we have already seen three dynasties pass in the Northern kingdom and we are currently working through the fourth. Thus far they have all been wicked kings:

Dynasty #1-Jeroboam ☞ and Nadab ☞

Dynasty #2-Baasha ☞ and Elah ☞

Dynasty #3-Zimri (only a few days) ☞

Dynasty #4-Omri ☞ and Ahab ☞...so far

#### **Ahaziah of Israel [853-851 BC] 1 Kings 22:51-53 ☞**

Ahaziah receives a short epitaph reflecting his evil life and thus demonstrating the need for the prophetic ministry. His life was obviously not emphasized in comparison to his father.

1-Ahaziah was the eldest son of Ahab and Jezebel.

2-He persuaded Jehosaphat to enter into a ship-building enterprise with him at Ezion-Geber.

3-He suffered a severe fall in his palace at Samaria, and the fall eventually proved to be fatal.

4-He turned to the pagan god Baal-zebub for healing, and was rebuked for this by Elijah.

5-He tried unsuccessfully to arrest Elijah.

EXCURSES—Elijah’s last prophecy and the transfer of the prophetic mantel to Elisha (2 Kings 1:1-2:18):

After the prophetic author of 2 Kings completes a short evaluation of the life of Ahaziah, he records the incident involving the monarch’s interaction with the prophet Elijah, evidently because this narrative so graphically demonstrates Ahaziah’s insolence in regard to the Word of God.

This section also includes the transfer of the power and office of Elijah to Elisha. God is faithful to his people in providing them with a constant and steadfast voice of truth. The miracles of these two men are nearly identical.

#### **Jehoram (Joram) of Israel [852-841 BC] 2 Kings 2:19-8:15 ☞**

Elisha was very active during the reign of Jehoram in Israel, and his ministry during this time seems to be one of restoration and deliverance. He first delivers the armies of Israel and Judah from both thirst and foreign troops. He then provides for a needy widow (the Shunamite) and for some prophets. The next one to receive deliverance (this time from disease) is the Gentile Naaman. Then a needy prophetic disciple requires Elisha’s services to locate a lost instrument. Elisha’s attention is next turned to the deliverance of Israel from Aramean raiders and also from Ben-Hadad. The final story in this section involves restoration of the Shunamite’s land to her. Elisha’s ministry also has a positive note to it. Besides his rebuke of sin, he powerfully displays the healing hand of God in his ministry. All of this ministry takes place during the reign of Jehoram in Israel.

1-Jehoram was the youngest son of Ahab and Jezebel, who persuaded Jehosaphat of Judah to ally with him in a battle against Syria. Elisha the prophet performed a miracle for the sake of Jehosaphat, and that miracle won the battle against Syria. Elisha later aided Jehoram by warning

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

him of several planned ambushes by the Syrians.

2-Elisha blinded a Syrian army and led them to Samaria; however, he would not allow Jehoram to slaughter those enemy troops.

3-It was during the reign of Jehoram that Namaan, the Syrian officer, came to the Jordan to be healed of leprosy, as Elisha had instructed him to do.

4-Jehoram was king when the Lord used four lepers to drive away an enemy army from Samaria and deliver that city from starvation.

5-Jehoram was murdered by the crusading Jehu at his summer palace in the Valley of Jezreel, thus ending Dynasty #4.

### DYNASTY #5

#### **Jehu of Israel [841-814] 2 Kings 9:1-10:35** ☞

The fact that Jehu's reign is a bright spot in Israel is a sad commentary on the spiritual/political situation of the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Jehu did fulfill the desires of the Lord in his destruction of Ahab's house (2 Kings 9:36) and of the ministers of Baal (2 Kings 10:28), but he failed to turn away from the sins of Jeroboam (worship of golden calves at Dan and Bethel, 2 Kings 10:29).

1-Jehu was anointed as king of Israel by a messenger of Elisha, and then commissioned to destroy the wicked house of Ahab. He was promised four generations to succeed him on the throne of Israel if he obeyed that commission.

2-He executed Judah's king Ahaziah (not to be confused with Ahab's eldest son); Israel's sitting king Jehoram (youngest son of Ahab and Jezebel); Jezebel; Ahab's 70 sons, relatives and friends; 42 princes of Judah; and the princes of Baal.

3-Though he fulfilled the commission of Yahweh, he did so for selfish reasons and in fact went viciously beyond that commission.

#### **Jehoahaz of Israel [814-798 BC] 2 Kings 13:1-9** ☞

Although Jehoahaz followed the sins of his fathers, he did seek the Lord when under foreign pressure. The text states that God delivered him because of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not because of any righteousness on the part of the people (2 Kings 13:23). The nation at this point is clearly deserving of punishment. The only reason God would not destroy them completely was not because of their faithfulness, but because of His faithfulness.

1-Jehoahaz was the son of Jehu (generation #1 of the 4 promised to Jehu).

2-Jehoahaz saw his army almost annihilated by the Syrians.

#### **Jehoash of Israel [798-782 BC] 2 Kings 13:10-25** ☞

Jehoash's story is a sad one because of the lost opportunity which the nation experienced. He was limited only by his unbelief.

1-Jehoash was the grandson of Jehu (generation #2 of the 4 promised to Jehu).

2-Jehoash visited Elisha when the prophet lay dying.

3-Jehoash defeated Amaziah (6<sup>th</sup> king of Judah) in a battle, and then plundered Jerusalem, taking many hostages and much wealth.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

<b>Jeroboam II of Israel [793-753 BC] 2 Kings 14:23-29</b> ?
The suffering of the people of the Northern Kingdom was so great under Jehoash that God gave them a deliverer. Consequently the nation enjoyed greater prosperity under Jeroboam II than any other king since David and Solomon. The writer of Kings, true to his theme, mentions nothing of this prosperity.
1-Jeroboam II was the great-grandson of Jehu (generation #3 of the 4 promised to Jehu). 2-Jeroboam II reigned longer than any other king of the Northern Kingdom, and he was by far the most effective monarch in the history of the Northern Kingdom. 3-He recovered much territory, which earlier kings of Israel had lost. 4-None of the success of Jeroboam II was due to any spirituality on his part or on the part of the people; there was a number of elements of the contemporary political situation in the Near East that contributed to the temporary prosperity of Israel under Jeroboam II.

<b>Zechariah of Israel [753 BC] 2 Kings 15:8-12</b> ?
Zechariah continued in the sins of Jeroboam I.
1-Zechariah was the great-great grandson of Jehu (generation #4 of the 4 which God promised to succeed Jehu). 2-Zechariah was murdered by a rebel named Shallum, thus fulfilling God's prophecy against Jehu (2 Kings 10:30; 14:29; 15:8-12).

DYNASTY #6:

<b>Shallum of Israel [752 BC] 2 Kings 15:13-16</b> ?
Shallum is remembered for his cruelty. He was murdered by a cruel soldier named Menahem. Thus, this dynasty lasted only one generation, and the one representative of that dynasty only ruled for 1 month.

DYNASTY #7:

<b>Menahem of Israel [752-742 BC] 2 Kings 15:17-22</b> ?
Menahem, like so many before him, continued in the sins of Jeroboam I and, unlike them, was forced to make the first installment of the final judgment at the hands of the king of Assyria.
1-Menahem was one of Israel's most brutal dictators. 2-He bought off the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileaser, with a bribe.

<b>Pekahiah of Israel [742-740 BC] 2 Kings 15:23-26</b> ?
Pekahiah's two years introduce nothing new in the apostate government of Israel. He was the son of Menahem, and was killed by a commander in his army, Pekah.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

DYNASTY #8:

<b>Pekah of Israel [740-732 BC] 2 Kings 15:27-31</b> 
Although Pekah's invasion of Judah was very politically significant, the author here records only that he contributed to the exile by his sin. Tiglath-Pileser gobbled up more of Israel under Pekah's rule, which was a portent of things to come. Unfortunately, just like the Babylonian nobles a few centuries later, none of the leadership in Israel could read the "handwriting on the wall."
1-Pekah joined Syria in an unsuccessful attempt to punish Judah for its refusal to ally with them against Assyria. (Isaiah promised the king of Judah, that Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria would be punished by Yahweh, and gave the prophesy of Isaiah 7 as a sign of that promise.) 2-Pekah saw Assyria capture some of Israel's northern and eastern cities. 3-Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea.

DYNASTY #9:

<b>Hoshea of Israel [732-722 BC] 2 Kings 17:1-6</b> 
Hoshea's sin culminated generations of wickedness and resulted in the exile of Israel.
1-Hoshea was the final king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. 2-He joined with Egypt in an attempt to rebel against Assyria; for this he was imprisoned in Assyria, and the nation of Israel was destroyed and carried off by Assyria.

ISRAEL'S FALL [722 BC]

Commentary on Israel's Exile: 2 Kings 17:7-41

True to the theme of 1 & 2 Kings, the author spills much ink on the reason for the exile: covenant disloyalty. By careful repetition, he underscores the point that the sin of Israel was flagrant and deliberate. Each time God rebuked the people for failing to honor Him they simply added Yahweh to their pantheon. Although God was patient with the Northern Kingdom, allowing them ample time and opportunities to repent and follow Him, they refused and rejected God and were ultimately judged and removed from the land by the Assyrians.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

### THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH:

Judah would fare much better with their kings, as there were periodic revivals. Jehoshaphat (872 to 848 BC) stands out for his reforms, but he did enter into an unholy alliance with Ahab. The line was put into jeopardy by the wicked Queen Athaliah (841 to 835 BC), who tried to destroy all pretenders to the throne. Jehoida the priest had hid the young boy Joash (835 to 796), who tried to repair the temple and re-establish true worship. Uzziah (792 to 740 BC) was a good king, but in the end he died of leprosy as a result of his presumptuous acts. Hezekiah was a righteous king (716 to 687 BC). He not only brought in religious reforms, but reorganized worship by collecting the psalms of David and other psalms available. His son Manasseh (697 to 643 BC) was an exceedingly wicked king because of his bloodshed and idolatry. Josiah (641 to 609 BC) on the other hand was very good. During his reign they found the Book of the law and instituted widespread reforms. Josiah foolishly got involved with a war between Babylon and Egypt and died. The last kings were short-lived and could not turn the tide of events to prevent the Babylonian captivity and the kingdom was destroyed in 586 BC. The following is an overview of the kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

**EXCURSES A DEFINING MOMENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY!** {From “Wiser is Better” by Thomas C. Simcox in *Israel My Glory* September/October 2008, pp. 20-21.}

King Solomon’s son Rehoboam should have known to heed the advice of the men who had counseled his father, but he chose instead to listen to his peers, and the cost to both him and his kingdom was enormous. Scripture says that Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. And the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy” (1 Kings 12:1, 3-4).

Taxes are nothing new. Solomon had taxed his people heavily to build his palace, the Temple, and the many cities he established for Israel’s protection. As his kingdom grew, the monetary burden increased; and the people felt they needed a break.

So they implored their new king, “Now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you” (v. 4). They asked for relief and promised their unflinching loyalty in return.

“Depart for three days, then come back to me.” Rehoboam told them (v. 5). He wanted time to consider the situation. He showed some wisdom here in taking time before answering his subjects. He then “consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, How do you advise me to answer these people?” (v. 6).

Rehoboam first went to the advisors of the previous administration and requested their input. They advised him, “Be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (v. 7).

However, Rehoboam “rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him” (v. 8).

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

In other words, he went to his buddies. He did not really consider the wisdom of his elders. His young friends told him to increase the tax burden, not lessen it. Rehoboam took this extremely bad advice, which infuriated 10 of the 12 tribes and led to their rebellion against his authority. To make matters worse, he unwisely dispatched Adoram, the revenue man, to collect taxes from the rebelling tribes. The result? They “stoned him [Adoram] with stones, and he died” (v. 18).

And thus ended the United Kingdom over which Saul, David and Solomon had presided. For the next 209 years (931-722 BC) there would be a northern kingdom called Israel, composed of 10 tribes; and for the next 345 years (931-586 BC) there would be a southern kingdom called Judah, composed of two tribes. All of Jewish history changed with Rehoboam’s bad decision.

<b>Rehoboam [931-914 BC] 1 Kings 14:21-31; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16 ☞</b>
<p><b>1 Kings:</b> Among Rehoboam’s foolish acts was the restoration of Canaanite worship throughout the land. God’s response was to remove the blessings, which He gave under Solomon. Pathetically, the golden shields of Solomon were carried off to Egypt and replaced by bronze shields. The process of spiritual decay in the kingdom, with its attendant military defeat, had begun under Solomon, but is now continued and accelerated.</p>
<p><b>2 Chronicles:</b> Rehoboam’s reign was often poorly administered and yet God was faithful to him throughout. In obedience God blessed him; in rebellion God punished him; in repentance God forgave him, just as he promised he would do for David’s sons.</p>
<p>1-Rehoboam was the son of Solomon. 2-His stupidity, and stubbornness, sparked the civil war which resulted in the division of the kingdom. 3-He had 18 wives and 60 concubines, but his favorite wife was Maachah, the evil daughter of Absalom (Rehoboam’s uncle). 4-He saw his capital, Jerusalem, invaded by Shishak, Pharaoh of Egypt, who wanted control of the main highway. 5-Rehoboam was known as a wicked king and seems to be the one whom the Proverbs of Solomon were written to.</p>

<b>Abijah/Abijam [914-911 BC] 1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-14 ☞</b>
<p><b>1 Kings:</b> The simple summary of Abijah in 1 Kings is one of spiritual failure. Such an indictment, multiplied countless times, was designed to demonstrate unequivocally to the reader the guiltworthiness of the king and the justice of God in punishing him.</p>
<p><b>2 Chronicles:</b> The account of Abijah here is nearly three times as long as that in Kings, basically due to the chronicler’s inclusion of Abijah’s speech/sermon (2 Chronicles 13:4-12). In addition, Abijah’s rule is evaluated positively here. In the account detailed here Abijah expresses great trust in God and particularly in His promise to David. In this respect Abijah was a model king and is thus held up as a faithful son of David.</p>
<p>1-He defeated the northern king, Jeroboam, on the battlefield, only because God intervened on his behalf. 2-In spite of the help of Yahweh, Abijah degenerated into a wicked king.</p>

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

<b>Asa [911-870 BC] 1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1</b> ↻
<p><b>1 Kings:</b> Asa was a “good” king, but his actions involve a strange admixture of belief and unbelief. The point is made that even the few good kings had serious flaws.</p> <p><b>2 Chronicles:</b> Once again, the account in Chronicles is much longer than that devoted to Asa in Kings. The chronicler divides Asa’s reign into three parts with emphasis upon God’s response to Asa’s covenant loyalty or lack of the same. Although he trusted God for much of his life Asa proved that he was not the ultimate chosen seed by his self-sufficiency.</p>
<p>1-Asa was the first good king of the Southern Kingdom, Judah, he led Judah in a revival, and he saw Yahweh answer his prayer by delivering Jerusalem from a massive attack by Ethiopian invaders (2 Chronicles 14:11).</p> <p>2-He deposed Maacah (his grandmother, the favorite wife of Rehoboam and the daughter of Absalom) because of her idolatry.</p> <p>3-Later in his reign, Asa grew careless and at one time threw into prison a prophet who rebuked him for his sin. Asa finally died of a foot disease, for which he refused to go to Yahweh for healing.</p>

<b>Jehoshaphat [873-848 BC] 1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37</b> ↻
<p><b>1 Kings:</b> With the exception of failing to remove the high places, Jehoshaphat is compared favorably with David. He is one of the few bright spots in the record.</p> <p><b>2 Chronicles:</b> Again the account here is nearly twice as long as that in Kings. Jehoshaphat’s reign began and ended well. His main failing according to the chronicler was his ill-advised alliances, in particular with wicked Ahab. In his instruction of the people, his stance against paganism, and his trust in Yahweh are positives.</p>
<p>1-He instituted a national religious education program by sending out teachers of the Law.</p> <p>2-He later marred his testimony by compromising with three ungodly kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. The greatest mistake he made—one which would haunt the southern kingdom for generations—was arranging a marriage between his son, Jehoram, and Athaliah, the wicked and ambitious daughter of King Ahab and queen Jezebel of Israel.</p> <p>3-When Jerusalem was threatened by a massive Moabite invasion, Yahweh heard Jehoshaphat’s prayer and intervened.</p>

**EXCURSES: JEHOSHAPHAT’S BIG MISTAKE—AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE!** {From “Jehoshaphat’s Big Mistake” by Steven Herzig, in *Israel My Glory*, September/October 2008, pp. 32-33.}

When ancient Israel was divided in two, the northern kingdom (Israel) had bad kings only. The Bible says of each one that he “did evil in the sight of the LORD.” In the southern kingdom (Judah), 12 of its 20 rulers did the same. Yet eight kings “did what was right in the sight of the LORD.” And Jehoshaphat was one of them.

Jehoshaphat ruled for 25 years from 873 to 848 BC. Yet, though he loved the Lord, he stands today as an example of someone who failed to lean on godly wisdom and consequently made several dreadful decisions that cost him and his kingdom dearly.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

Jehoshaphat was a powerful, prosperous king (2 Chronicles 17:10-13). Mindful of the fact that Judah was bordered by Moab, Ammon, and Israel—all hostile—he knew he needed a strong and well-positioned military. So Jehoshaphat fortified his borders and increased his troops (vv. 12, 14-19).

His actions did not go unnoticed because “the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah” (v. 10).

A strong military was only part of the equation. Wanting no part of Israel’s spiritual corruption, Jehoshaphat tried to lead Judah to worship the Lord. In his third year of rule, he sent priests throughout the cities to teach his people the Law (vv. 7-9).

He also “set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city (19:5). He gathered the people to pray and seek the Lord, acknowledging Him as the God of heaven, the powerful one who rules all nations (20:6). As he prayed, “all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord” (v. 13).

In addition, he appointed singers who led in songs of praise, lifting up the Lord’s name. Jehoshaphat was truly a minority among the kings of Israel and Judah because he did what was right in God’s sight.

Yet despite this zeal, Jehoshaphat played the fool by trying to travel two roads at the same time. On the one hand, he loved the Lord. But on the other hand, he formed a bond with ungodly Israel by forging a military alliance with Ahab, one of the northern kingdom’s most wicked kings, and letting his son marry Ahab’s daughter.

Jehoshaphat seemed to want an insurance policy in case the Lord failed him. While marriage alliances were a common way to forge peace between countries at odds with each other, this pact was an unholy union. Ahab and Jezebel were evil. They practiced abject paganism, flooded the land with Baal worship, and almost obliterated the worship of Jehovah from Israel.

The late C. I. Scofield astutely noted, “The marriage of Jehoshaphat’s son, Jehoram, to Ahab’s daughter, Athaliah, was a great mistake. The union was supposed to foster peace and cooperation between the two kingdoms, but it only degraded Judah.

Jehoshaphat should have known better. He made the monumental error of relying on the world’s wisdom instead of God’s. Years later, Athaliah usurped the throne of Judah and murdered all the heirs to the throne but one, almost annihilating the messianic line, before being killed herself...

True wisdom comes only from God. Jehoshaphat’s life is a warning to everyone who loves the Lord. Do what is right with a loyal heart, and always heed His Word “because the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). “How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver” (Proverbs 16:16).

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

**EXCURSES: HOW DO THE PROPHETS FIT INTO THE PICTURE?**

It is necessary for an accurate understanding of Old Testament history and chronology to have an idea of how the Old Testament prophets fit into the picture of the Divided Monarchy. The following chart provides an overview of this period of Old Testament prophets:

<b>A Chronology of the Old Testament Prophets:</b>			
<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Prophets to the Northern Kingdom of Israel</i>	<i>Prophets to the Southern Kingdom of Judah</i>	<i>Prophets to the Foreign Nations</i>
ASSYRIAN PERIOD (BOTH ISRAEL & JUDAH IN THE LAND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (ELIJAH &amp; ELISHA)</li> <li>• AMOS (763-755 BC)</li> <li>• HOSEA (755-710 BC) [Began ministry in Israel, but later in Judah]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JOEL (835-796 BC)</li> <li>• ISAIAH (739-680 BC)</li> <li>• MICAH (735-710BC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBADIAH (850-840 BC) to Edom</li> <li>• JONAH (ca. 775 BC) to Ninevah</li> <li>• NAHUM (650-630 BC) to Ninevah</li> </ul>
BABYLONIAN PERIOD (ONLY JUDAH IN THE LAND)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ZEPHANIAH (635-625 BC)</li> <li>• JEREMIAH (627-570 BC)</li> <li>• HABAKKUK (620-605 BC)</li> <li>• DANIEL (605-536 BC)</li> <li>• EZEKIEL (593-570 BC)</li> </ul>	
PERSIAN PERIOD (BOTH NATIONS IN EXILE)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HAGGAI (520-505 BC)</li> <li>• ZECHARAIAH (520-470 BC)</li> <li>• MALACHI (437-417 BC)</li> </ul>	

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

### An Overview of the Prophetic Ministry During the Divided Monarchy

- *Prophets to the Northern Kingdom Of Israel in addition to Elijah and Elisha:*

#### **AMOS: [about 763-755 BC]**

- He was from Tekoa, a small village 10 miles south of Jerusalem.
- He was the only prophet to identify his profession prior to his divine commission, which was that of a “sheepbreeder” (Amos 1:1) and a “tender of sycamore fruit” (Amos 7:14).
- His ministry took place during the reigns of Uzziah of the southern Kingdom of Judah and Jeroboam II of the northern Kingdom of Israel.
- He was a Judean prophet called to deliver a message primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos 7:15).
- His ministry took place during a time of prosperity for the northern kingdom and a period of peace for the southern kingdom.
- He addresses Israel’s two primary sins: 1) an absence of true worship, and 2) a lack of justice.

#### **HOSEA: [about 755-710 BC]**

- Hosea was probably a native of the northern Kingdom of Israel, since he shows a familiarity with its history, circumstances and topography.
- He refers to Israel’s king as “our king” (Hosea 7:5).
- He ministered a lengthy period of time during the reigns of the last six kings of Israel.
- He began his ministry during the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, under whose guidance, Israel was enjoying both political peace and material prosperity, but moral corruption and spiritual bankruptcy.
- The theme of Hosea’s message is God’s loyal love for His covenant people, Israel in spite of their idolatry.

- *Prophets to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, while Israel still existed:*

#### **JOEL: [about 835-796 BC]**

- He is identified as Joel, son of Pethuel (Joel 1:1), with very little other data provided.
- Extra biblical tradition records that he was from the tribe of Reuben. The context of the prophecy seems to imply that he was from the area of Jerusalem.
- He ministered during the reign of Joash of the southern Kingdom of Judah.
- Joel prophesied during a period of weakness in Judah. Tyre, Sidon and Philistia had made frequent incursions into Israel; an extended drought and massive invasion of locsts had created severe economic devastation in Judah.
- Joel’s message focused on the Day of the Lord. Although applies part of Joel’s prophecy to the day of Pentecost, its ultimate fulfillment will come during the millennial kingdom of Christ.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

### **ISAIAH: [about 739-680 BC]**

- He was the son of Amoz and ministered in and around Jerusalem during the reigns of four kings of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah).
- He came from a family of some rank and had access to the king (Isaiah 7:3).
- He was married and had two sons, who both had symbolic names: “Shear-jashub” meaning a remnant will return, and “Maher-shalal-hash-baz” meaning hasting to the spoil, hurrying to the prey.
- He ministered at the same time as Hosea and Micah.
- The major thrust of his message was to the southern kingdom of Judah.
- He condemned the empty ritualism of his day and the idolatry into which so many of the people had fallen.
- He foresaw the coming Babylonian captivity of Judah because of its departure from the Lord.
- In addition to the focus on Judah, He did proclaim God’s judgment upon the nations as well (Ammon, Babylon, Damascus, Edom, Egypt, Moab, Philistia, and Tyre).
- There is also a good portion of Isaiah’s message that is focused on Israel’s future kingdom as well as on Israel’s coming Messiah.

### **MICAH: [about 735-710 BC]**

- Little is known about Micah, but his name does suggest that he had a godly heritage.
- He traces his roots to the town of Moresheth, located in the foothills of Judah, approximately 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem on the border of Judah and Philistia, near Gath.
- He was like Amos, a country resident removed from the national politics and religion, yet chosen by God to deliver a message of judgment to the princes and people of Jerusalem.
- Micah places his ministry during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
- Primarily, Micah proclaimed a message of judgment to the people persistently pursuing evil.
- He offers indictments of social injustices and religious corruption.

- *Prophets to the foreign nations:*

### **OBADIAH [about 850-840 BC]**

- Nothing is known for certain about the prophet Obadiah. References to other Old Testament do not seem to be referring to the same person as the prophet.
- In his writing, the frequent mentions of Jerusalem, Judah, and Zion suggest that he belonged to the southern kingdom.
- He was probably a contemporary of Elijah and Elisha, whom we have already mentioned during the reign of Ahab in the north.
- He apparently wrote in response to the Edomite assault on Jerusalem.
- His prophecy is focused on two interrelated themes 1) the judgment of Edom by God for cursing Israel; & 2) the restoration of Judah.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

### **JONAH [about 775 BC]**

- He came from Gath-hepher near Nazaret (2 Kings 14:25).
- Likely during the reign of Jeroboam II, making him a prophet to the northern tribes just prior to the ministry of Amos.
- Tradition suggests that Jonah was the son of the widow Zarephath whom Elijah raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24).
- Of course he was a reluctant missionary to the Ninevites, who needed to be swallowed by a giant fish in order to comply with God's command.
- Although he was a prophet to Israel, he is not known for his ministry to Israel, but for his prophecy to Ninevah.
- Ninevah was known for its cruelty and was considered the nemesis of Israel and Judah.
- Jonah preached a message of repentance or face destruction by God.

### **NAHUM [about 650-630 BC]**

- Not much is known about Nahum except that he was an Elkoshite (Nahum 1:1), referring either to his birthplace or place of ministry.
- Attempts to identify the location of Elkosh have been unsuccessful and include: Al Qosh, situated in northern Iraq (thus Nahum would have been a descendent of the exiles taken to Assyria at the fall of the northern kingdom); Capernaum ("town of Nahum") or a location in southern Judah.
- A century after Ninevah repented at the preaching of Jonah, she returned to idolatry, violence and arrogance.
- Nahum would once again call them to repentance or face destruction "with an overflowing flood." They did not listen to Nahum and the Tigris overflowed to destroy enough of the walls to let the Babylonians through.
- This is why the northern kingdom was destroyed by Assyria, but the southern kingdom would later fall not to Assyria, but Babylon.

- *Prophets to the southern kingdom of Judah after Israel's fall:*

### **ZEPHANIAH [about 635-625 BC]**

- Little is known about Zephaniah. Three other Old Testament individuals share his name.
- He traces his genealogy back four generations to King Hezekiah, standing alone among the prophets descended from royal blood.
- He prophesied during the reign of Josiah.
- The moral and spiritual conditions highlighted in the book of Zephaniah would suggest that his prophesy took place prior to Josiah's reforms.
- The emphasis of his ministry was a focus on the Day of the Lord, which would have been a warning to Judah that the final days were near.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

### **JEREMIAH [about 627-570 BC]**

- Jeremiah served both as a priest and a prophet.
- He was the son of Hilkiah (not the high priest from 2 Kings who discovered the book of the Law).
- He was from the small town of Anathoth about three miles northeast of Jerusalem in Benjamin's tribal allotment.
- Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet because he witnessed the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, which he had previously predicted and warned Judah about.
- He ministered from the time of Josiah to beyond the fall of Jerusalem.
- The main theme of his prophecy was God's judgment upon Judah and a future restoration in the Messianic kingdom.

### **HABAKKUK [about 620-605 BC]**

- Nothing is known about Habakkuk, but clues in the book suggest that he ministered to the southern kingdom of Judah shortly before the fall of Judah to Babylon and thus he would be a contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zephaniah.
- Justice had disappeared from the land; violence and wickedness were pervasive. In the midst of these dark days, he cried out for divine intervention.

### **DANIEL [about 605-536 BC]**

- He was likely a teenager, when he was kidnapped from his noble family in Judah and deported to Babylon. Thus, he would be a transitional figure between the period of the Divided Monarchy and the period of the Exile.
- Thus, he spent most of his long life in exile. Prophetically, his ministry was to the Jews during the exile, but his significance for the Divided Monarchy is that he was actively involved by being kidnapped by Babylon in one of the stages of the fall of Jerusalem/Judah.
- Daniel's ministry was to encourage the Jews, which included a prediction of Gentile history and a hope for future restoration as well as a mention of the last days.

### **EZEKIEL [about 593-570 BC]**

- He was also taken captive at a young age but may have been as much as 20 years older than Daniel. His ministry like Daniel's took place primarily during the period of the Exile, but he also serves as a transitional figure, because he was actively involved in the fall of Judah.
- He actually received his call to prophesy about 593 BC after taken captive to Babylon, but prior to the final fall of Judah in 586 BC.
- Babylon had defeated Assyria, Egypt and now Judah as well as the great city of Ninevah and the Jewish religious center in Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel's central message was focused on the glory of the Lord. He emphasizes the disobedience of both Israel and Judah, despite God's kindness. There is also emphasis on God's holiness, sovereignty as well as His working behind the scenes and His promises to preserve a remnant of Israelites for restoration.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

### THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH CONTINUED:

We pick up the story of the Southern Kingdom of Judah with Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram. Jehoram had a great deal of potential being the eldest of seven sons. He was old enough to remember his grandfather Asa's reign and he lived through his father Jehoshaphat's reign. Both were good kings who walked in the ways of the Lord. However, Jehoram's father had spoiled him and his brothers with great gifts resulting in his desire to be served rather than to be a servant when he took the throne. As a result, he made bad choices, he rejected his heritage and the Lord, he murdered his brothers and he turned the nation in the wrong direction by aligning Judah with the wicked kings of the northern kingdom of Israel.

#### **Jehoram [853-841 BC] 2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21:2-20** ☞

**1 Kings:** Jehoram's wickedness is compared with Ahab of Israel. The most striking feature of his kingdom was the loss of control over Edom, that renowned enemy of Israel. Considering the historically poor relations between the two countries, such a step downward on the geo-political scale was momentous.

**2 Chronicles:** Jehoram's life serves as a negative example of Davidic kingship. His disobedience was severely punished by God. The chronicler's interpretation of his life emphasizes its testimony to God's faithfulness to David. In spite of his evil "because of the covenant the Lord had made with David, the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever" (21:7).

1-He married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

2-He began his reign by murdering his six brothers in order to secure the throne for himself.

3-He received a posthumous message from Elijah prophesying judgment upon him because of his wicked and murderous reign over Judah.

4-He was attacked and defeated by both the Philistines and the Arabians, and finally died of a horrible disease and was unmourned by the nation.

#### **Ahaziah [841 BC] 2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9** ☞

Ahaziah's short reign negatively compared to Ahab's reign, a striking assessment for a king of Judah. The life of Ahaziah emphasizes the immediate retribution of disobedience.

1-He was the son of Jehoram and Athaliah.

2-He was slain by Jehu, the 10<sup>th</sup> king of the northern kingdom of Israel.

#### **Athaliah [841-835 BC] 2 Kings 11:1-20** ☞

Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the queen/wife of King Jehoram (son of Jehoshaphat, and mother of King Ahaziah. When Ahaziah died, she usurped the throne, took murderous and drastic steps to secure her position, and ruled in abject wickedness for some 6 years. Her greatest wickedness was the introduction to Baal worship into the southern kingdom.

1-She took the throne after Ahaziah's death and slaughtered all the royal seed except Joash, who had been hidden from her.

2-After a rule of 6 years, she was executed and her grandson, Joash, the rightful heir to the throne, as made king.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

<b>Joash/Jehoash [835-796 BC] 2 Kings 11:21-12:21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27</b> ↻/↻
<u>2 Kings</u> : Although Joash contributed to a certain amount of revival, the author of Kings notes that much of what he did in restoration of the temple was nullified by his unbelief.
<u>2 Chronicles</u> : Joash’s life and work is divided into three phases by the chronicler. His preservation by Jehoida demonstrates God’s faithfulness to preserve a lamp for David. His restoration of the temple demonstrates God’s approval of such actions and his treacherous murder of Zechariah results in severe punishment from God. In each incident, whether positive or negative, God’s retributive hand is evident.
1-He was the one member of the royal seed to survive the purge by his wicked grandmother, Athaliah; he was kept alive by a godly priest, Jehoida, who hid him until the time was opportune to set him on the throne and execute Athaliah.
2-Joash lived for God for much of his life under the tutelage of the godly priest, Jehoida; but later Joash became a cruel tyrant.
3-When Hazael of Syria came to attack Jerusalem, Joash stripped the temple and gave the sacred objects to the enemy as tribute. He later sanctioned the stoning of the high priest, Zechariah, who had fearlessly rebuked the sin of the nation.
4-Joash was executed by his own palace guard.

<b>Amaziah [796-767 BC] 2 Kings 14:22; 2 Chronicles 25:1-8</b> ↻
<u>2 Kings</u> : Amaziah’s reign was characterized by moderate spiritual sensitivity. He was careful to order many of his actions by the covenant and God gave him victory over the nation’s prototypical “near” enemy, Edom. Unfortunately, he was defeated militarily by Israel and imprisoned by Jehoash. The writer is atypically silent in his comment on the reason for Amaziah’s defeat.
<u>2 Chronicles</u> : Characteristic of the author, Amaziah’s life is divided into faithfulness and unfaithfulness. Each action is met with an appropriate and divine response.
1-He was a good king for a time; he began his reign by executing the murderers of his father.
2-When Edom attacked Judah, Amaziah hired mercenary soldiers from Israel rather than trusting in YHWH; a prophet rebuked the king for this, and thus he reluctantly dismissed those paid soldiers and saw God give him the victory.
3-Amaziah rebelliously brought back some of the Edomite gods after his victory, intending to include them in his worship.
4-He recklessly declared war on the Northern Kingdom and was soundly defeated.
5-Because of a conspiracy against him, Amaziah fled to Lachish; his enemies pursued him to Lachish and assassinated him there.

<b>Azariah/Uzziah [792-740 BC] 2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23</b> ↻
<u>2 Kings</u> : Azariah’s reign is notable primarily for the moderate obedience of that king.
<u>2 Chronicles</u> : Uzziah was a faithful king until his pride caused his downfall. His fate of being excluded from the temple is particularly hapless given the emphases of this book.
1-He was a mighty warrior and builder.
2-He attempted to intrude into the office of the priesthood and was punished for this with leprosy, of which he died.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

### **Jotham [750-732 BC] 2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27:1-9 ☞**

2 Kings: Jotham is credited with sufficient righteousness and was able to evidence an apparent blessing of God, the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, thus fulfilling his responsibility of protecting the nation.

2 Chronicles: Among Jotham’s accomplishment is the fact that he, unlike his father, did not enter the temple. His success is directly attributed to his steadfastness.

1-He was a good king; he built the upper gate of the Temple and erected fortresses and towers.  
2-He defeated his enemies and received huge annual tribute from them.

### **Ahaz [735-715 BC] 2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chronicles 28:1-27 ☹!**

2 Kings: Ahaz of Judah was a wicked king who not only sinned but worked hard at it. His most egregious error was the reconstitution of worship at Jerusalem based upon the pagan worship from Damascus.

2 Chronicles: Ahaz is the one king for which the chronicler has no redeeming words. In fact, his evaluation of the king seems to draw upon the speech of Abijah, which is derogatory of Israelite kings.

1-He was probably the second worst king Judah ever endured; he sacrificed his own children to pagan gods.  
2-It was to Ahaz that Isaiah spoke the prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).  
3-Ahaz ordered the construction of a pagan Assyrian altar and placed it in the temple to appease Tiglath Pileaser, the emperor of Assyria.  
4-It was during the reign of Ahaz that the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria.

**Excurses:** One of the most difficult chronological problems related to the Divided Monarchy has to do with Uzziah-Jotham-Ahaz-Hezekiah; it seems best to understand the following:

- Uzziah made his son Jotham co-regent with him for the last 11 years of his reign (750-740 BC);
- Jotham made his son, Ahaz, co-regent in 744 BC (while Uzziah was yet alive); Ahaz continued as co-regent with Jotham until Jotham’s death (732 BC); for the last four of those years (735-732 BC), Jotham and Ahaz reigned as equals, neither claiming predominance.
- Ahaz ruled as sole authority for 16 years, 731-715 BC, and then died in 715 BC. However, in 729 BC he appointed his son, Hezekiah, as assistant.
- Hezekiah became king in 715 BC when his father, Ahaz, died. He ruled alone until 697/696 BC until he appointed his son, Manasseh, co-regent; Hezekiah and Manasseh ruled as co-regents for ten years, until the death of Hezekiah in 686 BC.
- Although there are some difficulties with this reconstruction, there is nothing in the OT record which forbids it, and there is nothing about it which is inconsistent with what we know about the customs of the day. Most importantly, this reconstruction enables us to accept as historically factual all of the data supplied in the OT narrative.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

### Hezekiah [715-686 BC] 2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 29-32 ☞

**2 Kings:** Hezekiah's story is proof that God still hears and answers the prayers of his people. Military victory was experienced by Hezekiah, when he waged the battle on his knees. But, he soon stood up however and forgot God. Isaiah's response indicates that Hezekiah's actions evidenced a proud and self-sufficient heart, just the opposite characteristic he had displayed in battle with Sennacherib, when he had humbled himself in prayer.

**2 Chronicles:** Hezekiah's reign is a happy contrast to his father's. His revival involved the purification of the temple, the reinstatement of the Passover for all 12 of the tribes. There was a renouncement of false worship and the reception of provisions to ensure future worship. There is emphasis upon his revival of worship and attention to the temple. He is cast in the light of a "second Solomon" by the writer in his temple arrangements, dedicatory sacrifices, wealth, and the honor given to him by the Gentiles.

1-He was one of the very best kings who ever ruled in Judah; he was certainly the wealthiest since Solomon.

2-He repaired the Temple in Jerusalem, organized an orchestral group and Levitical choirs for help in the worship conducted there, and conducted the greatest Passover feast since the time of Solomon.

3-When the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem, Hezekiah went to YHWH; the prophet Isaiah predicted that God would deliver, and that night the death angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

4-Hezekiah contracted a terminal disease, prayed to God, and was given an additional 15 years to live; the sun-dial was set back 10 degrees as a sign that God would deliver him.

5-He boasted of his wealth to Babylonian ambassadors who came to congratulate him on his recovery, and as a result Babylon came to carry off that wealth about 90 years later.

6-Hezekiah added 15 psalms, the completed book of Proverbs, and perhaps more to the Old Testament canon.

### Manasseh [697-642 BC] 2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 ☞!!!

**2 Kings:** While Isaiah prophesied that "some" of Hezekiah's descendants would be carried off, the prophecy given to Manasseh is much more severe, indicating a full scale destruction and exile. The sins of the covenantal promise: "I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law..." Manasseh set a new precedent of paganism, which, when persisted in, led to the certain exile in Babylon. It is interesting to compare the record of the chronicler where it is recorded that at the end of his long and terribly wicked life, Manasseh repented and was forgiven by God. However, the punishment for his sins—destruction by a foreign power—could not be set aside.

**2 Chronicles:** The account of Manasseh in Chronicles is the antithesis of that in Kings. While in the latter the sins of Manasseh are explained as the main contributing factor to the exile, in Chronicles the author uses his life as a demonstration of the faithfulness of God to David's sons. When Manasseh sins God disciplines him. Manasseh repents and God accepts him again.

1-He ruled longer than any other king, in the Northern or Southern kingdom's.

2-He was the most wicked king of Judah, but he repented in an Assyrian prison.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

**Amon [642-640 BC] 2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25 ☞**

**2 Kings:** Amon continued in the ways of his father, but he did not repent as had Manasseh. He was executed by his own household servants.

**2 Chronicles:** The chronicler also acknowledges that Amon followed his father's example of wickedness, and that it was because Amon multiplied guilt that God allowed Amon's servants to conspire against him and put him to death. However, the chronicler is then quick to note that the people of the land then slew those conspirators and elevated Amon's son, Josiah to the throne; thus in spite of the wickedness of the people and the treachery of the conspirators, the Davidic line was preserved.

**Josiah [640-609 BC] 2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-36 ☞**

**2 Kings:** Of all the events of Josiah's life and death, the focus in this book concerns his covenant renewal. Josiah's work of retrieving the nation from apostasy was unprecedented. "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did..." (2 Kings 23:25). Nevertheless, the work of Josiah was only superficially accepted by the people who returned to their old ways upon his death. Thus, even the godly Josiah could not prevent the tidal wave of God's judgment, which had been building for generations.

**2 Chronicles:** While similar in length and some content to the account in Kings, this book de-emphasizes the destruction of false worship and concentrates upon the administration of positive, covenant worship. While the remnant to which this book was addressed may not have been troubled by idolatry, they desperately needed positive examples of covenant worship.

1-He was the godliest king of Judah since David; he was the last of the godly kings of the southern kingdom.

2-He repaired the temple, which had been much desecrated during the reign of his wicked grandfather Manasseh. In so doing, the workmen found a copy of the book of Moses among the debris, and Josiah had it read to the people, sparking a great revival in the land.

3-Josiah conducted a larger Passover celebration than that of Hezekiah.

4-He fulfilled a prophecy spoken some 300 years earlier (compare 1 Kings 13:1-2; 2 Kings 23:15).

5-Josiah tried to keep Pharaoh Necho of Egypt from resisting Assyria, and was killed at Megiddo by the Egyptians.

**Jehoahaz [609 BC] 2 Kings 23:31-35; 2 Chronicles 36:2-4 ☞**

**2 Kings:** The author notes that Jehoahaz predictably "did evil" in his short three month reign.

**2 Chronicles:** No moral judgment of Jehoahaz's life is given by the chronicler.

1-He was the middle son of Josiah; after reigning only 90 days, he was deposed by the Pharaoh who had slain his father, Josiah.

2-He was taken as a prisoner to Egypt, where he eventually died.

*Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

**Jehoiakim [609-598 BC] 2 Kings 23:36-24:7; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8** ☞

2 Kings: Jehoiakim's rebellion was the "straw" which exasperated Nebuchadnezzar and finally precipitated the exile of Judah to Babylon.

2 Chronicles: Jehoiakim's eleven year reign is summarized with the familiar, "he did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God" (2 Chronicles 36:5).

1-He was the first son of Josiah; the eldest brother of Jehoahaz; he was placed on that throne by the Pharaoh of Egypt when that pharaoh had deposed Jehoahaz. He had previously been named Eliakim.

2-Jehoiakim was king when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 606 BC. He became a vassal to Babylon and was left on the throne only because he promised to pay annual tribute to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It was at this time – that Daniel and his friends were carried off to Babylon.

3-Jehoiakim persecuted and challenged the prophet Jeremiah. He had once burned a prophetic message that Jeremiah had given him from God.

4-He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, hoping for help from Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar had set out to punish this Hebrew king, but he died before Nebuchadnezzar got there.

**Jehoiachin [598-597 BC] 2 Kings 24:8-17; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10** ☞

Jehoiachin only reigned 3 months. There is no negative assessment of his short reign. Nebuchadnezzar carried King Jehoiachin to Babylon, along with articles taken from the temple to the temple of Nebuchadnezzar's god in Babylon.

1-Jehoiachin was the son of Jehoiakim. He occupied the throne of Judah for the amount of time it took Nebuchadnezzar to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem.

2-Both Ezekiel (19:5-9) and Jeremiah (22:24-26) prophesied that Jehoiachin would be carried off to Babylon.

3-Nebuchadnezzar came in and carried off 10,000 captives, including the king, Jehoiachin as well as the prophet Ezekiel.

4-Jeremiah prophesied that no son of Jehoiachin would sit on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:30).

5-When Nebuchadnezzar died about 561 BC, his successor showed favor to Jehoiachin, released him from prison and allowed him to live a rather privileged life in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30).

6-Jehoiachin was the grandfather of Zerubbabel, leader of the first stage of the restoration of Israel (Ezra 1-6).

**Zedekiah [597-586 BC] 2 Kings, 24:18-20; 2 Chronicles 36:11-14** ☞

Zedekiah's only mention here is negative, "He did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (2 Kings 24:19). Of course, Zedekiah was the last monarch of Judah, and witnessed the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Zedekiah's reign evidenced a hardened heart (2 Chronicles 36:13), which only confirmed the guilt of Judah's kings.

1-He was the youngest son of Josiah, an uncle of Jehoiachin; thus the prophecy of Jeremiah that no seed of Jehoiachin would occupy the throne of David was not compromised in Zedekiah.

2-Hoping for aid from Egypt, Zedekiah again rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar; as a result, the king of Babylon came, laid siege to Jerusalem for 2 years, and finally captured and blinded the king, destroyed the Solomonic Temple, and burned the city of Jerusalem to the ground.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

### THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

In the fall of the city, special mention is made of the punishment of Zedekiah and the ruin of the Temple. The monarchy and the temple, the two most prominent symbols of the theocracy, are overcome by the Babylonian army. The remnant left in the land remains incorrigibly rebellious, however, demonstrating their spiritual sensitivity by assassinating Nebuchadnezzar's proxy, Gedaliah. Thus, the experience of the exile by itself did not necessarily produce a repentant heart in the people. Judah would follow in the footsteps of Israel and cease to exist as a kingdom, but God had not forgotten his promises and had preserved the seed of David, because He is faithful to keep his promises (i.e. to Abraham, David). Both the northern kingdom and southern kingdom cease to exist bringing the period of the Divided Monarchy to a close.

### **III. Cultural Considerations**

We will examine the cultural considerations of this period by looking at the northern and southern kingdoms separately since they functioned as distinct nations during this time frame.

#### **THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM:**

How quickly the glory of the kingdom can fade. Up until Solomon's death the Kingdom of Israel was united and prosperous. It had enlarged its borders, strengthened its military, developed peaceful relationships with its neighbors and was known as a wealthy nation. Things seemed well with Israel until Solomon's death.

The empire that David had created and Solomon had strengthened and organized fell like a house of cards and would never be as well respected as under the reign of Solomon, "all the earth sought the presence of Solomon" and "each man brought his present" (1 Kings 10:24, 25).

Why did the Kingdom of Israel split apart? There are three perspectives that each add an underlying element moving the kingdom toward its division.

#### **The Religionist Perspective:**

This perspective suggests that Solomon's idolatry brought on the decay of the kingdom. God had warned Solomon after the completion of the temple, "Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked...and if you keep My statutes...then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever...But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me...but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them" (1 Kings 9:4-7).

The religionist perspective insists that Solomon's loss of focus on the God of Israel resulted largely from his marriage to idolatrous women from other nations. He knew that the leaders of nations and commerce evaluated greatness by the size of the harem. Moreover, marriage alliances commonly served the cause of peace with one's neighbors. And he did enjoy peace with his neighbors.

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

Solomon's marriage to princesses from Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Phoenicia, and the Hittite states (1 Kings 11:1) went a long way toward establishing peaceful borders. It is quite possible that Solomon had taken wives from Syria and Arabia creating peace with every border nation.

God had condemned both the king's multiplication of wives and especially his marriage alliances with pagan peoples, since such practices would lead to idolatry (Deuteronomy 7:3-4; 17:17).

And this is exactly what we see happen to Solomon as he seeks to accommodate his wives by building high places to his wives' gods. This also has a negative impact upon his son Rehoboam as well (cf. 2 Chronicles 12:1).

### **Foreign Religious Practices Brought in with Idols:**

When Solomon accepted the religious practices of his foreign wives, he tolerated some of the worst examples of heathen idolatry. Solomon accepted the worship of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Molech.

1-Ashtoreth is variously known as Ishtar, Astarte, and Venus, was principally the goddess of sex and war. Her name was altered from Astarte to Ashtoreth by vocalizing with the vowels of the Hebrew word *bosheth*, meaning "shame."

2-Chemosh was the national god of Moab, and was sometimes worshipped with child sacrifices.

3-Molech or Moloch, an Ammonite deity, also could be worshipped with human sacrifice.

Solomon built high places for Chemosh and Molech on "a height of Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:7), the Mount of Olives.

### **The Economist's Perspective:**

The economist will say the split occurred for financial reasons—an inflated bureaucracy and extensive construction resulted in too-burdensome level of taxation. Solomon had lived high on the hog. He had built an extensive palace complex, the temple, fortified the military, a seaport and more. In addition, he maintained an expensive lifestyle.

Even the wealthy queen of Sheba was impressed with "food on his table," both the variety and the elegance of the table settings etc... (1 Kings 10:1-29). While some of this wealth was a result of gifts given to the king, much of it was the result of a heavy tax burden on the people.

Apparently the people felt the tax bite was too big. Some may have even asserted, Solomon left Israel in a near state of bankruptcy. This tax burden is what led those representatives of the northern tribes to beg Solomon's son to lighten the "hard" or "harsh labor" and "heavy yoke" that Solomon had imposed upon them (1 Kings 12:4).

**The Political Perspective:**

Others contend that a key reason for the breakup of the kingdom lay in the old tribal division, which had always lain under the surface, but now exploded. True, not all Israel favored Saul as king when he was chosen (1 Samuel 10:27; 11:12-13).

There had also been an earlier division of the kingdom. After Saul's death, David ruled over only the tribe of Judah from Hebron (2 Samuel 5:5), while Saul's son, Ishbosheth reigned over the rest of the tribes (2 Samuel 2:8-11). Only after the murder of Ishbosheth did the rest of the tribes send their representatives to David seeking to negotiate his kingship over all Israel.

Solomon had also created division, because he exempted Judah from the obligation to pay taxes for the support of the national bureaucracy. Judah's favored status accentuated tribal rivalries and contributed to the split that occurred during Rehoboam's day.

**THE CULTURAL SETTING OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL:**

**THE LAND**—The topography of this small area varied greatly. Along the Mediterranean lay the virtually at sea level was the Plain of Sharon. Inland rose the hills of Samaria at about 2,000 to 4,000 feet in altitude. Farther east lay the Jordan Valley, which Israel controlled from Galilee to the northern shore of the Dead Sea.

**THE GOVERNMENT**—1 Kings 12:20 says “There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.”

When the rupture between Rehoboam in Judah and the northern tribes of Israel was complete, the northern rebels cried, “to your tents, O Israel” (1 Kings 12:16), the equivalent to “Let's go home.” But when they went home, Jeroboam, who had been an official in Solomon's administration, and who had fled to Egypt had to establish a government for the northern kingdom.

Obviously, he chose to establish a monarchy, however it would not be nearly as successful as the United Monarchy or the Southern kingdom of Judah. Over its short history this kingdom would have 19 different kings from 9 different dynasties. One of the main issues for the government was the location of a capital. Jeroboam first chose Schechem, then Penuel and finally Tirzah (1 Kings 12:25; 14:17).

**THE RELIGION**—Jeroboam worried aloud that a central sanctuary in Jerusalem and the religious ties that bound the Twelve Tribes together would eventually heal the split between the two nations. In fact, he believed that some day the people would kill him and accept rule under Rehoboam. So, he decided to set up a new national religion with important cult centers at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:26-33).

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

- **Calf Worship:** Jeroboam may have decided on a form of calf worship as a result of Egyptian influence. Remember that he had fled to Egypt during the last half of Solomon’s reign. Egyptians worshipped the whole bovine family in the cow, the calf and the bull. Hathor was the cow goddess, daughter of the sun-god Re and symbolic mother of Pharaoh. They worshipped the bull as: Apis, the creator god; and Mnevis, the sun-god. They worshipped the calf as simply the way to becoming a cow or bull. Jeroboam himself, offered sacrifices at Bethel (1 Kings 13:1-10).
- **Baal Worship:** Later on Ahab through his wife Jezebel introduced baal worship to Israel. And of course, their daughter Athaliah married Jehoram in the South and thereby introduced Baal worship in the southern kingdom. Baal worship was not new for it had invaded the land during the period of the Judges (1 Samuel 7:3-4). Baal worship was from Phoenicia. El ruled the Phoenicians pantheon of gods and his son, Baal ruled as one of the chief male deities and served as god of agriculture. As such he was responsible for fertility of the field and was associated with human and animal production. Thus the worship centers were usually high places (i.e. on hills) consisting of an altar, a sacred tree or pole.

**WARFARE**—Warfare was fought much the same way as in previous periods. What is notable is that warfare or in the least military activity was a characteristic of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The following is a list of some of those activities:

- Jeroboam’s almost war with Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:21-24)
- Jeroboam’s tangle with Shishak of Egypt
- Asa’s skirmish with Ben-Hadad of Aram (1 Kings 15:17-19)
- Nadab and Elah deal with a resurgence of the Philistines
- Ahab’s early wars with Syria (1 Kings 20:1-43)
- Ahab helps in the battle at Qarqar against Shalmaneser of Assyria
- Ahab dies in battle against Ben Hadad of Syria (1 Kings 22:34-35)
- The Moabite war (2 Kings 3:6-27)
- Consistent skirmishes between Israel and Judah.
- The end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel with the Assyrian invasion of Tiglath Pileser III.

FAMILY LIFE:

**HOUSING**—Little has changed from earlier times in Israel. Houses still consisted of an open courtyard where people could gather. There were usually an opened pillared room used as a kitchen and sometimes another pillared room off the courtyard used as a workshop. Then in a horseshoe shape are other closed rooms, which were used as either storerooms or family rooms.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

Above them sometimes was a second story of rooms. Of course, the kings lived in much greater elegance. Among the more well to do was the incorporation of ivory plaques or panels decorating the walls and furniture.

FOOD/DIET—Little has changed in the diet/menu of the Israelites. It is essentially the same as the previous periods. One important note is that the Northern Kingdom inherited the better and more fertile land for agriculture than did the Southern Kingdom.

CLOTHING—The king is usually depicted with a short rounded beard and soft cap on his head. He wears a long sleeveless tunic with a fringed bottom. Over the tunic they often wore sleeved robes open at the sides and fringed down the edges of the split. This would have been the common dress of the upper class. The lower classes dressed much the same as in previous periods.

EDUCATION—Mothers continued to be responsible for much of the child’s education except reading and writing. It is unknown who taught these arts. The spread and ease of the Hebrew alphabet (only 22 letters compared to hundreds of cuneiform shapes in Mesopotamia or pictures in Egypt) made it possible for widespread literacy among the Hebrews. It was a very literate society compared with others at the time. In other nations only the professional scribes mastered the task of reading.

### THE CULTURAL SETTING OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH:

THE LAND—The territory of Judah was very small. It consisted of a slice of land between the Dead Sea and the coastal plain or the land of the Philistines. It stretched approximately 55 miles from east to west and 110 miles from north to south. It ranged in sized from about twice the size of Rhode Island to about the size of Connecticut depending on whether they had control of the land of Edom or areas south toward the Gulf of Aqaba. Due to the desert terrain, water resources were at a premium due to lack of rainfall.

THE GOVERNMENT—As with most monarchies, the king was the government. He supervised the religious, military, economic and judicial aspects of public life—and served as the final court of appeals in judicial matters. He essentially controlled all of the affairs of the state. He stood as the head of the administrative organization and appointed officials at all levels.

The king ruled as the wealthiest person in the kingdom. He owned many royal estates. For instance, 2 Chronicles 17:13 tells us that Jehoshaphat “had much property in the cities of Judah.”

The king was often involved in international trade, often undertook building programs, fortified cities and served as commander-in-chief for the nations military. This often took place in person on the battlefield. The families were often large with many wives, concubines and children from both. None competed with Solomon’s 700 wives and 300 concubines, but Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 concubines, 28 sons and 60 daughters (2 Chronicles 11:21), while Abijah had 14 wives, 22 sons, and 16 daughters (2 Chronicles 13:21).

## Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

**THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**—The king often appointed government officials to take charge of various aspects of government. The following is a list of known positions in the United Monarchy and carried forward in the kingdom of Judah:

*The Minister of the Palace:* literally “he who is over the house” appears to have held a position second only to the king. Often times the minister of the palace would be one of the king’s sons. For instance Jotham, son and successor to King Uzziah, occupied this position and governed the “people of the land” (2 Kings 15:5) after Uzziah contracted leprosy.

*The Royal Secretary:* apparently ranked just under the Minister of the Palace. The Royal Secretary usually functioned as the king’s private secretary and carried on both foreign and domestic correspondence and served as head of the royal archives, located at the king’s palace. Presumably they kept such annals as the “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.”

*The Royal Herald:* directed communications between the king and the nation, announced visitors to the king and proclaimed the king’s orders to the people. King Hezekiah sent the Royal Herald as one of the three delegates that negotiated with Sennacherib’s officials during the siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC (2 Kings 18:18).

*Supervisor of District Governors:* Solomon had divided the United Monarchy into 12 different districts and placed an officer in charge of each district. The supervisor was appointed over all of them. He administered the bureaucratic system and saw that it functioned effectively.

**THE RELIGION**—Judah continued the worship system under the United Monarchy through the temple that Solomon had built. However at times they would fall away from the worship of God and worship false gods such as Baal or Ashtoreth. Some conclusions can be reached concerning the religious practices of Judah from the books of Kings and Chronicles:

1-It appears that the kings and people did not regularly keep up the national observances and festivals commanded in the Law, such as the Passover. In fact, two special Passovers are singled out in the days of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 35).

2-The Law does not seem to have been regularly taught. It apparently disappeared for a while, being rediscovered during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:8).

3-They did not obviously maintain the temple. Periodically the kings stripped away its revenues and gold décor to pay tribute to foreign invaders.

4-During much of the history of Judah rampant idolatry was practiced and angered God. Most notably was the worship of Baal and the high places built for the fertility goddess Ashtoreth.

5-Religion in the nation seemed to follow the pattern of the king. In general, whoever the king followed the nation followed. Some kings were wicked and built high places to honor false gods, while other kings were good and sought to tear down those high places and restore true worship of God.

## *Valley Bible Church – Adult Class*

**WARFARE**—From the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam to the final days under Zedekiah, Judah like the northern kingdom was engaged in frequent warfare. Most of the time the nation served a rather defensive posture. Some significant issues include:

- Egypt’s invasion during the reign of Rehoboam (cf. 1 Kings 14:15).
- Consistent battles with Edom (cf. 2 Kings 8:20-22; 14:7-14)
- Occasional confrontations with Egypt, Assyria and Babylon.
- Eventual destruction at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.
- Many of the kings put a great deal of emphasis strengthening the fortifications of Jerusalem, because many of the surrounding nations knew of the wealth and gold in the temple.

### FAMILY LIFE:

**HOUSING**—Once again little has changed over the time periods. In Judah, the four-room style house belonged primarily to the high officials or landlords. Most common people possessed two-room or smaller houses. Most houses maintained a rectangle shape with a courtyard open to the sky and divided by stone pillars, with one or two rooms at the rear. There was usually a clay baking oven, grinding stones to make flour, wooden weaving looms, and sometimes a small grape or olive press in the courtyard. Rarely would you find cisterns or lavatories. The water supply usually came from nearby springs or wells. There was very little furniture with most sitting and sleeping on mats or skins.

**FOOD/DIET**—The food eaten was much the same as the United Monarchy and the Period of the Judges. But there was not as good farmland in Judah as in Israel because it was more desert terrain. As a result farmers greatly increased terracing of hillsides so they could provide the necessary food for the populace. There was an emphasis on wine production and storage. They crushed grapes by foot in wine presses. Then they separated the juice from the skins and pulp and allowed it to ferment. They would filter it and pour it into large jars and stored it underground in wine cellars that were at a constant 65 degrees.

**CLOTHING**—The Hebrews resisted much change in clothing—at least among the lower classes. They chose a wool fabric, which they could produce rather easily from the sheep that they raised. They wore fairly standard tunic style and conservative garments.

**OTHER**—Literacy was evidently widespread in the Kingdom of Judah, though archaeologists cannot confirm the existence of formal schools. It could be from the extensive activity of the priests and Levites. It is also noted during this period that the use of family plots were used for burial of the deceased. Often they would carve out a cave in a hillside with a burial bench to lay the dead body. Once the body had sufficiently decayed, the bones would be placed in a bone box. Many of the poorer families had one box for all family members bones. Others had individual bone boxes for each family member. Cut outs were either made under the stone bench or at the back of the tomb for the bone boxes.

### CONCLUSION

The nation divided would fall into exile. The northern kingdom of Israel would fall to Assyria in 722 BC and the southern kingdom of Judah would fall to Babylon in 586 BC leaving all twelve tribes in exile with the hope of restoration to their promised land.