

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 27, Divided Judah and Israel to the Time of Ahab and Elijah

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Well, this seems like an opportune time to start. There's a little bit of a lull in the conversations. Peace of Christ be with you.

This is a wonderful week that we're entering, one that we can really spend some time in contemplating again, and hopefully on a very profound level, the kinds of things that transpired about 2,000 years ago on our eternal behalf. From that, back to the mundane, one of the things that I usually do with these papers is to hand them back as I read them. And the reason I'm making that announcement in this regard is your friend, roommate, or whatever may get his or her paperback.

Don't start thinking, she's lost mine. I just haven't got around to it yet. This time around, I'm reading the hard-copy papers first.

I do them in groups, so the 25 Proverbs are just about done. But it's going to take about a week and a half before all of them get over with, but I'll get some of them back to you today and as the week goes on. But again, so that you don't think that I've gone and lost yours somehow.

If that happens, we'll know in a week and a half if that's true. Other than that, I don't think there's anything I need to remind you of in terms of announcements. Excuse me, let's sing something that's old and familiar to us.

All right? Psalm 133 together as we start.

Our Father in heaven, you have so richly blessed us. You've blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places through Christ.

And we pray that our hearts would be warmed again, burning with desire to love you better, to know you better. Father, we know there's lots of things that entangle us. We know the busyness, the illness for some people, the frustrations, the anxieties.

Please help us to bring those to the foot of the cross again and know that you are entirely sufficient to meet our needs for which we are ever so thankful. Teach us today, Lord. We pray that your word would come alive for each one of us.

Father, we know you have lessons to teach us. May our hearts be receptive. Father, we would pray not only for ourselves but also to help us to have hearts that reach out to a world that's broken.

We pray for those who are struggling for their lives in various parts of the world through hostility, famine, and all manner of other things that are so distressing. By your spirit, Lord, please meet their needs. Help your people to be beacons of light in those contexts.

We do pray for men and women in our armed forces that you would protect them as well. Lord, in all these things, we acknowledge that you're master of the universe, and so we're bold to ask them. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well, we're going to move on, which means we're going to go back to history. We've got to review just a little bit because, obviously, we've spent the last week talking about wisdom literature in conjunction with Solomon. So, let's back up.

First of all, all the way back, the period of the judges. Why am I going back that far? Because the same pattern that we're going to see in the materials for today was one that was well-established back then. People were really on fire for the Lord, and then they apostatized, and then God brought oppression to them, and then because of that, they turned back to him.

He sent them deliverers, but you remember that cycle just kept repeating itself? It's sort of that human nature cycle, and we're going to see that go on. We talked about the transition to the monarchy, Samuel being the key prophet in this whole enterprise, and then the first king being Saul, but of course, God's choice of David because Saul was disobedient in several ways. David is the one who will be king, and it's the Davidic dynasty that gets established.

Now, why am I going back this far? Well, as I said, we've just had a week talking about wonderful things in Proverbs and perplexing questions in Ecclesiastes and Job, and having gone that route into wisdom literature, we've got to kind of get ourselves back into thinking about history now. So, I hope you love history. I mean, I enjoy the wisdom literature, but history is great fun, and there are lots of things to learn from that as well.

So, at any rate, here's a review question for you. Just to take ourselves back a week and a half, God determined to remove a large part of the kingdom from the house of David because this is multiple choice; David's sin with Bathsheba was unforgivable. There were no sons left after the death of Solomon.

How about three? Solomon gave up too much of his wealth to the queen of Sheba. Or D, Solomon built altars to foreign gods to please his wives, but it displeased the

Lord. That's kind of a no-brainer, isn't it? What are you going to opt for? D. Is anybody going to contradict Chris? Yeah, it's D. Oh, that was supposed to come up all together.

Sorry about that. I forget to do that. At any rate, yeah, we saw in 1 Kings 11 that what's happening here is that Solomon, in spite of his wisdom, because God granted him profound amounts of wisdom, in spite of that he had his human flaws, and he made alliances, particularly political alliances, and the political capitals, we've said, were wives and concubines, and unfortunately he allowed his heart to go after them.

He made altars for them, and the Lord informed him twice, once in a dream and then also through Ahijah, the prophet from Shiloh. That's kind of where we left it. So, first of all, the division, Solomon's apostasy, and I've just referred to that.

You can kind of go back and check that stuff already, and then this prophet, who actually comes to Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and tells him, God is going to take ten tribes away from the dynasty of David, from Solomon's son, and give them to you. So that's where we left things off last time. Now, as we pick up with 1 Kings 12 and go all the way through 19, hopefully, we'll get that far today with the parallels and chronicles; there's some stuff that we kind of need to have as background information.

So here we go on the background information. We're now going to have a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. And by the way, as the lecture notes go on in the succeeding days, I'm going to say N and S to help us distinguish between various rulers.

If you've done some of the reading, you're aware that the names can become alarmingly confusing. There are kings of the same name in the north and the south, and that gets a little bit confusing. So, we'll try to sort that out by saying north and south, N and S. However, the scriptures themselves have their own names for what's going on in each of these separate kingdoms.

So, just for future reference, when we're talking about the northern kingdom, that from this point on is usually going to be Israel. We've been thinking of Israel as a whole bunch, all the descendants of Jacob slash Israel. But now, the northern kingdom will be referred to as Israel primarily, not always, but primarily.

The southern kingdom will be Judah because the tribe of Judah is the centerpiece of the southern kingdom. Now, having said that you'll want to keep in mind that the northern kingdom is also often called Ephraim. Do you know why? Does anybody want to make a guess? This is not a rhetorical question.

Why call the northern kingdom Ephraim? Or let's back up. Who is Ephraim? Chelsea. Well, actually, Joseph's son that is going to get raised to the preeminence, it actually goes Manasseh, Ephraim, but remember that crossing of the hands bit, right? So, Ephraim is going to be the prominent son here and will be the dominant tribe.

Not necessarily in terms of size, Manasseh gets just all sorts of acreage, but Ephraim's really the dominant tribe. So, kind of keep that in mind. It's kind of like saying, well, that plus the next one.

You know, oftentimes, when foreign countries refer to the United States, they don't say the United States. They may say Washington, D.C. says, or something of that sort. So, it's one of these prominent locations that becomes representative in some way of the whole political entity.

That will be true not only when using the term Ephraim, but it will also be true when they use the term Samaria. As we're going to see today, Samaria will eventually become the capital of the northern kingdom. It doesn't start out there, but it's going to become the capital.

So oftentimes, especially in the prophets, as you're reading the prophets, they're not always going to say Israel, Israel, Israel. They're going to call this northern kingdom Ephraim and sometimes Samaria, and that's going to represent the entirety of the northern kingdom. As I said, the south is usually called Judah.

Here's another thing you want to have in mind in terms of important things that will unfold in the next, well, week and a half for us, 200 and some years for them. Excuse me. First of all, as I just intimated a moment ago when I talked about Samaria, the capital is going to change up north.

We're going to watch it happen in a moment. So don't think for a moment that there's stability in terms of where the capital is located. It's got at least three; some people suggest four possible locations.

It would sort of be like when Washington, D.C. is under attack, things kind of move inland a little bit, maybe Philadelphia, all right? So it would be that sort of thing. Whereas in the south, Jerusalem is always the capital. Even when they're under attack, and there will be several occasions when that happens, Jerusalem maintains its position as capital.

Also, it is indicative of the instability, the potential instability. We will have some dynasty changes from time to time, and you'll want to hang on to that as well. In the north, I'm going to mention four major dynasties as we talk through these northern years, kingdom years, in the next week or so. There's actually more than that, but I'm

going to want you to know four major dynasties, and so as we go through each one, we'll talk about them.

That right away talks about some instability, doesn't it? And in your reading for today, you certainly saw it. There are points in time when there's so much upset, notably First King 16, that people are just, I mean, there's a civil war going on and military rulers taking over. Sounds contemporary, doesn't it? Not necessarily for us, but in other parts of the world.

David is always, or sorry, the Davidic dynasty is always the line that we have in the south. With one tiny, tiny exception that we'll talk about when we get to her. Her name is Athaliah, and she's a wicked woman, but we'll talk about that later.

Otherwise, it's the Davidic dynasty. The third thing I'd like you to keep in mind is that, again, we're talking about an overview of about 200 years at this point. But because of its topography, here's where geography becomes so interesting again.

Remember, we've talked about the importance of geography in a number of different contexts. Here, it's important again. When the northern kingdom, especially after it moved its capital to Samaria, and I'll look at a map in a moment, has opened it up to foreign influence.

Because the topography is easier, and therefore the people there are not so isolated, these things just kind of drift in a little bit more, these bad influences from the north. So, hang on to that. That's going to be important for us.

Questions? Am I speaking English so far? That's a relief. Okay, let's go on. Here's our map.

You can find this map in the reference section of the library, the NIV Atlas of the Bible, or any other thing like that. Find a map that addresses the divided kingdom if you need to review this stuff because there are some important things that we want to make a note of. Here we go, first of all.

Northern tribes, by and large, what's up here, and of course, it's going to be these folks over here, the two and a half tribes there, are pretty much going to side with the north. Now, if you've read the material for today carefully, there are people from those northern tribes who are so distressed at what Jeroboam does that they're going to come over to the south. But by and large, our northern tribes are going to be up in here, and then it's Judah here.

Benjamin and you'll remember the tribal allotments that I forced you to memorize; Benjamin's caught in between, always caught in between. And that leads us to our second point, border area, because the border area is going to fluctuate. Again, if

you've read the material for today, you know that there are points in time when the South is going to be a little stronger, and they're going to push north.

And as a matter of fact, Abijah's going to push so far north that he takes places even beyond Bethel. But then it's going to come back down south again. In contemporary situations, the same thing happens.

Look at what goes on in other parts of the world, where there's battle and strife, there's always fluctuating borders. They don't stay the same. The same thing's going on back here.

Third bullet, again, looking at the map. Here's Bethel, here's Dan, what happened there? One of the most distressing things as a result of the split in the kingdom is what happened at Bethel and Dan. Yes, Chelsea? Yeah, it's the setting up of the golden calves, okay? Now, I'm making you look at the map in conjunction with this in a moment. We'll look at some of the other things a little later on.

But here you've got all these tribes we've been talking about. What were they required to do three times a year as people of God, as covenant folks? What were they supposed to do three times a year? This goes back to Torah. Can't forget Torah.

Katie? Yeah, they were supposed to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for those three important festivals. Now, just stop and think for a moment. Let's say you're living, well, let's say you're living in Jezreel, which happens to be right here, which we're going to come to in a moment.

Going to Jerusalem is a long and arduous journey. It's going to take you two and a half, three days, and now it's enemy territory. Or let's say you're living in Kadesh or Hazor.

Going to Jerusalem is going to be the same thing: an even longer, probably four-day journey. Isn't it easier to just kind of pick up your stuff and go to Dan and worship? What Jeroboam has done is to create a seeker-friendly religion. Oh, you don't have to go to Jerusalem, just come on over here.

These are your gods who brought you out of Egypt, pointing to the golden calf. When you look at the map, it makes a little more sense. It's going to be easy.

But as I'll say to you later on, because I'm going to say it twice, here and then, it's the truth that's going to set us free, not being comfortable and not being at ease. And when the people were told to go to Jerusalem and obey the Lord, that's what the covenant says, Deuteronomy chapter 12, as well as other places. They were supposed to do that instead of enjoying an easy kind of religion.

So, at any rate, Bethel and Dan and the locations are important, and they've got a fairly significant lesson built in. Yeah, Rebecca? Yeah, the question is, why build the golden calf? Why not have a temple? He seems to have had a temple as well, and he's got an altar too because when you read that whole business about the altar splitting, and we're going to look at that in chapter 13 in a moment, he's got some of those accouterments there. He, as you know, appoints non-Levite priests, so he's got everything that looks, well, it looks good, it's just not right.

The golden calf has a precedent, of course. What's the precedent? It's what Aaron did. As we said when we talked about Aaron's situation, Aaron is probably not setting up an Egyptian idol.

He thinks, at least if we're going to read Exodus 32 correctly, that he has actually set up a representation of Yahweh himself. And that's going to make it easier for the people to conceptualize and worship. You know, it's this making it an easy thing that's so insidious.

Now, that may be what's going on with Jeroboam. I would suggest there's something else going on as well because there may be some foreign Canaanite influences that are coming into this. The calf had a lot to do with Baal worship, and Baal worship is no stranger to these folks at this point in time.

So, it's long and complicated, but that would be sort of my quick answer. It's a good question. Let's look at the capitals in the north, because they're going to be significant as well.

Things start out at Shechem. That is right here. And, of course, we know that Shechem has a long and traditional, veritable, venerable history here because that's the place where Abraham first came into the land, and other things will unfold, such as the covenant renewal.

So, Shechem is significant. There's going to be a short time that it's going to move up to Tirzah. Just a short time.

And the reason seems to be, although you've got to read between the lines to catch this, the reason seems to be that when Shishak, that pharaoh from Egypt, comes to invade, he not only makes life miserable for south and Jerusalem, he goes and attacks Shechem as well. How do we know that? We know it from reading his stuff, the things that he left in Egypt. That's probably what forced people to go up to Tirzah.

It doesn't look far away, but it's far enough away and more secluded. It's a safer location for a while. It's a safer location for a while.

And then, in instances that we're going to see in about, oh, half an hour or so, there's going to come a guy whose name is Omri, who happens to be the father of Ahab, about whom we're going to talk at a fair amount of detail, who's going to say, nope, you know, we're moving the capital out here. Now again, on the map, it looks small. It really does.

I know that. But moving out to Samaria is like moving to a different world. Because, as I said a moment ago, it's geographically more open.

When he chooses to move his capital, Samaria, he is making a public statement. I embrace the culture out there. It happens to be Phoenician. It happens to be full of Baal worship.

Omri's son, Ahab, is going to adopt Baal worship as the state religion. There was no separation of church and state back then.

And part of it is aided and abetted by this move out to Samaria right here. So, you're going to want to know those three capitals and the implications of that move. What happens on Mount Carmel? Mount Carmel, as we know, is this thing that juts right out here into the Mediterranean Sea, a high promontory.

It actually extends this whole length. Right about in there, high point, what happens at Mount Carmel? Famous story. Matt? Yeah.

The prophets of Baal versus the prophets of Elijah. Not only the prophets of Baal, but Baal and Asherah. They're all sort of there in this big mess.

Here's the interesting thing about this. If you look at this map, here's Sidon, here's Tyre, and there's the Phoenician, which is technically the Phoenician area of control. But by the time of our narratives of Elijah, Phoenicians had pretty much extended their de facto reign right down to Mount Carmel.

It was a boundary. It was a natural boundary. It's a mountain.

It serves as a barrier. And basically, you've got Baal worship Phoenicians controlling right about down to here. That means they've overrun some northern tribes, right? They've overrun Asher, the tribe that is right up in here.

Now, that becomes important when we talk for about 20 minutes about the contest between the prophets of Baal, Asherah, and Elijah. So, kind of hang on to that. Jezreel, I mentioned it a moment ago, right about here.

It's not terribly far from Samaria. As it turns out, during the divided kingdom, very often in the wintertime, the ruling family, the royal family, would move their base of

operations from Samaria, which is kind of windy and cold and high elevation, to Jezreel, which is lower elevation.

It's warmer. They don't have central heating the way you and I do. They wouldn't have survived in Massachusetts in February.

But you get the point. Jezreel was also, in some ways, a bit of a capital, kind of a second capital. That's significant because we have Jezebel there and that's going to be important in our Elijah story as well.

Well, Mount Horeb is off the map, right? It's way down in the Sinai Peninsula. We're going to have Elijah fleeing there. All this stuff, these three, have to do with our Elijah story.

Remote Gilead is right over here. And you can't read the fine print, or if you can, you've got really good eyes. But the fine print's important.

It says this is a frequent battleground between the northern kingdom and Syria. Remember, Syria is our buffer zone area just to the north and the east of the northern kingdom. And beyond that, it's going to be whoever's controlling Mesopotamia.

Maybe it's the Assyrians. Maybe it's the Babylonians. Depends on what time period we're talking about.

The capital of Syria, or Aram, is Damascus. Right up here. And those folks, by the way, again, another geographical issue here.

This road is not just a red line on the map. That's an extremely important trade route. And so, whoever controls such an important, significant crossroads as Remote Gilead has got an extreme amount of power.

That's why Israel's often fighting with Syria over this. It should have belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. Didn't always.

They often succumbed and lost it. So, am I making sense with this? These are important places you'll want to know. Go back and catch a map somewhere in some atlas.

Perhaps the back of your Bible had one. Any questions? Yeah, Trevor? Can you just repeat what you said about Jezreel? What I said about Jezreel. It serves interestingly enough, we don't read it in the scriptures, but it's fairly evident when you unpack it as the winter capital for the Northern Kingdom folks.

So, their capital is technically Samaria, but they spend a lot of time in Jezreel. It's warmer there. And that counts for a lot.

Good, thank you. How are we doing? I feel like I'm being very soporific today. You know, for some people, wisdom literature is much more fascinating than history.

But history's got tons of lessons for us. Here we go—international politics.

There are a few more things you need to know. This is just tapping into what you've been reading in Old Testament parallels, by the way. So, kind of make these little bits of connections.

Syria's ruled by a guy named Ben-Hadad. You read about him in the text. First Kings 20 mentions Ben-Hadad.

It's going to be an important name. It seems to be a dynastic name. There's probably more than one of these guys.

Ben means son. So, this is son of Hadad. Hadad is another linguistic parallel to Baal or Baal.

So obviously their ruling figure has a name that has bound into it their God's name. You see this in the Israelite names as well. Aviyah, Abijah.

Aviyah means Yahweh is my father. We can go on and look at some of the other meanings, too. Well, another one we want to note is that Assyria is another country superpower in Mesopotamia.

Not to be confused with Syria. And one of our major figures internationally here, geopolitically, is going to be a guy named Shalmaneser III. You're going to read some texts that are in Old Testament parallels from Shalmaneser III.

What I want you to note is what I've got up here. He mentions Ahab, Ahab being the son of Omri. Shalmaneser III also mentions Jehu, another northern king to whom we're going to refer later this week.

What that tells us is that even though these guys were really, really wicked kings, and if you don't know that yet, you will once you read the text. On a horizontal level, they look kind of good. You know, the rest of the countries recognize them.

Ahab and Omri are mentioned by texts outside of this because their kingdoms are a little more powerful, bigger, and more cosmopolitan. But that doesn't cut much ice with God.

1 Kings 16 has a very, very nasty word to say about Ahab. The worst king ever, we learn. All right? Well, then, finally, the other thing we need to say in terms of international stuff is probably our key in terms of what's unfolding with the Elijah narrative, and that's Phoenicia, which I just mentioned a moment ago.

Now, we talked about Baal when we talked about the Book of Judges. So, let's just remind ourselves in terms of what's really going on here. Baal is the, as I've noted, king of the gods.

You've got El, but then you've got Baal, and you've got Anat, and you've got a few others, and a few others, many others in this Canaanite pantheon. But he's sort of one of those chief honcho types. And the reason he's so important for anybody who lives in that area is what I've just got up on the board.

Baal controls rain, storms, and thunder. Do you remember that this southeastern, sorry, southwestern edge of the Fertile Crescent is dependent for its absolute livelihood on rain and storm? It's all the storms that come off the Mediterranean Sea that make for agricultural productivity for them. If they don't have the rain, it's goodbye because they don't have rivers to work with.

So, it was awfully significant and an incredible temptation to the people to try and do those things that would manipulate Baal, so Baal would bring rain, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And if you don't think there aren't contemporary parallels, think again. We do all manner of things to try and manipulate God to try and do the stuff that we want him to do.

The sin of idolatry in this case, well, clearly they are, and we've seen this pattern over and over and over again, rejecting God's rule over them and trying to make Baal do what they want Baal to do, to serve their own needs. It's a very self-serving kind of thing. So those are our international politics, and as we've said before, politics are always bound up with religion in this part of the world.

Okay, don't lose sight of that. One more awful thing is a chart with names and dates. Oh, heaven forbid.

We've got to know some names and dates when we get back to history. Here's what I want you to see about this. We're going to grow this.

Every day, we're going to add a little bit more to it. Okay, but here we are at the starters. There aren't a lot of dates I want you to know, but this one I want you to know.

The split in the kingdom. Depending on whom you read it, it might be 933, it might be 931, but you know that's close enough, right? 931, you have the secession of the

northern ten states, if you will, from the whole union. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, is going to be the ruling figure.

He starts the first dynasty. These names in color are dynastic names. So, Jeroboam was our first dynasty.

Baasha is going to be the second dynasty. Omri is going to be the third dynasty. We'll add one more in, Lord willing, next time.

All right? So that's the first thing we want to keep in mind. Know those dynastic names. Notice how quick the overturn is.

And as you've read between the lines, you don't have to read between the lines. You read between these lines. You know, these guys don't last very long. Zimri, well, he lasts a grand... Do you know how long he lasts as ruler? Trevor? Oh, even less.

Even less, Chris. Seven days. Seven days.

In other words, things are in incredible uproar, turmoil, turbulent stuff going on. And so when Omri takes over, it's after a time of just unbelievable dissension and fractiousness in the northern kingdom. Omri and Ahab will establish some stability.

We'll probably see more of that next time. Now, let's look at some prophetic names to try and get some things in place. Ahijah is the guy who actually, remember, tore that robe up, and he'll have some other things to say to Jeroboam and Jeroboam's wife regarding Jeroboam's son.

We're going to talk about the man of God a little bit later on. He's actually from the south, but he's going to go prophesy up north. I won't mention Shemaiah in lecture, but just know that he's there.

Hanani is important, and of course Elijah is our major figure. Today, we're going to try and make our way in terms of the southern kings through Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, and that'll be just about all we'll do for the south. We'll save Jehoshaphat for next time, and we've already noted the foreign influences that are most important during this time period.

Again, this chart will continue to grow as we move through the divided kingdom period. Well, let's talk a little bit about what happens in this split of the kingdom. What's Rehoboam's error in judgment? What does he do wrong, Rebecca? Yeah.

When Rehoboam becomes king, he's smart in one way. He goes to Shechem. He doesn't stay in Jerusalem.

He goes to Shechem, but then the people there come to appeal to him and say, your father, Solomon, made our life kind of miserable. Taxation, forced labor, because, of course, Solomon was building the temple, and that takes taxation and forced labor and so forth. And so the people are making an appeal to Solomon's son.

And as Rebecca has said, Rehoboam consults the elders who say, why don't you be gracious? He consults the young folk who say, be tough. And, of course, he goes with the latter, and that drives those northern tribes away, and it's from the Lord. But notice how Rehoboam is also involved in the process.

He's not just a mindless pawn in this thing. He makes a wrong choice. Well, Jeroboam, unfortunately, sets up what I've already described to you.

And again, I know this might be offensive to some folks, but that's really what it's boiling down to. He's trying to make it user-friendly. And there are dangers in making things a little too user-friendly.

As you put together both 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles on this, we see these things happening. And they are a total affront to what God has said in the covenant. It was only members of the family of Aaron, who was a Levite, who were to be priests.

Jeroboam appoints anybody who wants to be a priest can be a priest, right? Now, you'll remember back in Numbers chapter 16, we had the whole family of Korah dying off as a result of making that kind of decision. So, we know it's wrong. He sets up the golden calves in Bethel and Dan.

Talked about that already. It is also mentioned in Chronicles that he sets up goat idols. So, there's some idolatry that's spreading all over here.

And then he has the audacity to say, these are your gods who brought you out of Egypt. That's blasphemy. Again, it's breaking those first three of the Ten Commandments.

The festival is in the eighth month; what's wrong with that one? When was the festival, the fall festival supposed to be? The seventh month, right? The Feast of Tabernacles, when they were to go to Jerusalem and all those wonderful kinds of things. He sets it up in the eighth month.

Very convenient. Oh, you guys haven't made it down there yet? Not a problem. Just come here.

It's a month later. No big deal. Got stuff you can worship in this location as well.

Well, as I note for you, the faithful folks did head south. They knew better. And it does mention there are people from various tribes, not only Levites who are really disaffected by this, but others as well go south.

Now, just one other thing to note, and again, I know I'm preaching when I say this, but one of the reasons Jeroboam could get by with this is the same thing that happened that we saw at the end of the Book of Judges. There was such a lack of covenant literacy. The people didn't know the conditions or the terms of the covenant, and therefore, this probably looked really good.

And again, it was just easier. Friendly. And, of course, we have the same kind of problem today.

If folks don't know the Bible, there's a lot of stuff that looks just fine because it's got a veneer of what's kosher about it. Well, into that context... Yeah, Rebecca, go ahead. Okay, in other words, who are Rehoboam and Jeroboam? Rehoboam is Solomon's son, okay? Solomon has a bunch of sons, but Rehoboam is the one who's going to be the king succeeding Solomon.

He's therefore in the Davidic dynasty. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, is that character who already back in 1 Kings 11 had been rebelling against Solomon and then had to flee to Egypt. Once Solomon dies, Jeroboam comes back because he knows his time has come.

So, he's going to be someone from the northern kingdom, who will be the northern king. Rehoboam's south. Yeah, Rehoboam's south, Jeroboam's up north.

So, Jeroboam has the bigger, more powerful, more influential kingdom at this point, but Rehoboam's got the Davidic dynasty and Jerusalem and the tribe of Judah. That doesn't mean Rehoboam's perfect. He has his own problems as well, as we see when we continue to read chapter 14 there.

Yeah, good question. If you've got your text, I want to read parts of this man of God from Judah's venture in chapter 13. By the word of the Lord, a man of God from Judah came to Bethel as Jeroboam... are you noticing this? Not a priest... was standing by the altar to make an offering.

By the way, in this chapter, if you've read it, if you haven't, read it. It's a fascinating chapter. But in this chapter, there are two persons who are serving as prophets.

Did you notice that neither of them is named? There's a man of God from Judah. We're going to talk about him more in a moment. And there's an old prophet from Bethel also not named.

Possibly... because naming is an honor. Possibly the text is keeping them anonymous because they're both really disobedient and doing things that are totally in a front. But let's see what goes on.

The man of God comes, and he says, right in Bethel where the golden calf is, Oh, altar, altar, this is what the Lord says. A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you, he will sacrifice the priests of the high places.

And he's going to burn human bones there. And there's going to be a sign. Verse 3, The altar will be split apart and its ashes will be poured out.

Well, just a couple things to say. Do you have any idea when Josiah comes on the scene? It's a fur piece down the line. Josiah's not going to show up until about 625 BC.

Yeah, BC. That's about 300 years later. Now, when you've got a prophecy that is that long-range, how's anybody going to know? All these folks are going to be up and dead by that time, 300 years later.

When you have, in conjunction with prophecies, a sign given, the sign is something that happens close up chronologically so that these folks will know that the long-range prophecy is also going to come true. Does that make sense? The sign does happen. The altar splits.

The ashes pour out. And interestingly enough, there's a second sign too because Jeroboam's a little bit vexed by this. He stretches out his hand and his hand withers.

And then this man of God from Judah prays, and it's healed again. But those two things that are there on the spot that people can see when those are fulfilled that is indicative of the fact that long-term prophecy about a guy named Josiah, who again doesn't show up for a long time, that too is going to happen. Keep that in mind because this is not the only place that we're going to see signs, prophetic signs.

So, hang on to that. It's important. At any rate, that unfurls and then Jeroboam is temporarily smitten.

So, he says, why don't you come home with me? And the unnamed prophet, the man of God from Judah says, nope, can't do that. I was told that Josiah wasn't supposed to eat here and wasn't supposed to go back by the same way I came. I got to get going.

And then what happens? Along comes an old prophet from Bethel. Let me read for you. I'm in verse 18.

And by the way, notice he's from Bethel. Your antennas, if you're reading carefully, ought to be waving at this point. What should this guy have been doing once the golden calf was set up? Probably he should have been uttering some words of rebuke, right? Here's a golden calf.

Here's Jeroboam saying, here's your whole new religion. And there's a prophet there. And this is taking place on his turf.

And he's not saying anything. Or at least we don't know he is. Now, along comes somebody from Judah.

Somebody who's had the courage to cross enemy lines, if you will, and make this pronouncement. The old prophet is probably, well, you know, a combination of ashamed, embarrassed, and now maybe challenged. Look at what he does.

Verse 18. I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord, bring him back with you to your house so he may eat bread and drink water.

But he was lying to him. And I suggest to you the lying is because this prophet is, well, you know, he's internally vexed and frustrated and he's been shamed. And so, in a moment of ugliness, he's out to get this young guy.

And he does. Because the man of God from Judah turns aside, he eats and drinks with him.

Unfortunately, and then the old prophet says, verse 21. This is what the Lord says.

You defied the word of the Lord, and you not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to do it. And therefore, you're going to die.

So, both of them have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. Of course, as the young man is going away, he's indeed killed by a lion. The old man's sons tell the old man that this is the case.

They bury this young prophet, the man of God from Judah. And the old prophet is convicted enough that he says, when I die, please bury my bones with his. But notice the impact of the story.

Obedience is absolutely essential in this context—in any context—and neither of them was very good at it.

Alright. So, the fate of the man of God from Judah. We've already talked about that.

And I've made a suggestion. Again, I'm reading a bit between the lines, but I've made a suggestion as to why the old prophet might have been so heinously deceptive at this point. His own pride, I would suggest, has been trampled.

Ugly stuff. Well, the sad conclusion is that in spite of all this, Jeroboam doesn't change his ways. He goes on and sets up all the false religion, and it continues to be a snare for the rest of the existence of the northern kingdom.

Well, that's the split in the kingdom. We need to follow a little bit of the apostasy and some of the things that are going on. Rehoboam as I said a moment ago and as 1 Kings 14 tells us starts out pretty well, but then he really falters.

And he engages in an unfortunate amount of religious apostasy. Set up high places, sacred stones, asherah poles on every high hill under every spreading tree. That's not a very good spiritual legacy to leave.

But again, it's making an appeal to folks that, well, this is what the rest of the culture is doing. This is what the people around us are doing. It seems to quote unquote work.

And so they fall for it. Up north, same kinds of things are going on. And by the way, we just talked about the punishment is that Pharaoh Shishak invades and we have stuff from Shishak.

The Egyptian texts call him Shishak. It's the same person talking about his invasion up into Judah Israel. Jeroboam's dynasty ends pretty early as well.

His son Abijah dies. His son Nadab is assassinated. Very short dynasty.

Now we're going to move on. You now have, and here's where we start our S for south and our N for north. First Kings 15 describes two very different kinds of things going on.

Asa, perhaps you pronounce it Asa. I'll do both just to keep us on track here. Asa is a good king in the line of David.

Does what's right. I know I've skipped the southern king, Abijah, but don't worry about him, alright? We're on to Asa because he's fairly significant. And as I note for you some of the things he's doing.

Getting rid of the idols that have been set up under Rehoboam. Just moving that stuff out. When you read Chronicles, the Chronicles parallel, we also find out that he has had a remarkable victory against a guy named Zerah the Cushite.

Cush is this whole area that's south of Egypt and we're told that there's just a monstrous invasion force that comes in. Huge invasion force. Something that they could not in and of themselves withstand.

And yet, by God's help, Asa, who appeals directly to God, is able to withstand these people out in the Shephelah area, remembering that lowlands area to the south and the west of Jerusalem. That's where the battle takes place. Asa's commended because in that context he depended upon the Lord.

And the prophet comes and tells him this is great. You've done what's right. Kudos.

Congratulations. Thank the Lord. It's a good thing to have done.

But then, as we often do the next time, he's threatened, and this time not from a great big huge force from the Kushite empire, this time just from a maneuver from up north. Right? Isn't that interesting? Big things he depended on the Lord. Smaller threat thinks he can get it by using his own brains and diplomacy, but it's a huge mistake.

But here's what happens. Again, go back and read it in 1 Kings 15 if you haven't had a chance to look at it yet. Baasha becomes king.

Second dynasty. He thinks to himself well, you know what, let's just go south and let's take Ramah. And you're thinking so? Once he has Ramah, he's got a handle hold on traffic in and out of Jerusalem.

This is strangling Jerusalem. This is strangling the southern kingdom. It's making life really miserable for him.

He's pushed the border now far down into Benjamin. Well, instead of getting on his knees and praying to the Lord, what does Baasha do? He uses diplomacy. Who's the big power up here? It's way up there somewhere.

Syria. Ben-Hadad. Remember them? And Baasha basically says I think I'll just pay them off.

They'll be really helpful. They can come and attack the northern kingdom from the north. That'll remove all the military forces off my neck, and I'll be free to do what I need to do here militarily.

And so, he does that. Ben-Hadad attacks, takes some very significant places up north, it names them in First Kings 15 an invasion route, and Baasha, true to form, removes himself. They go up and fight, and Asa says ha, here's my chance. He fortifies

Mitzpah, he fortifies Geba and notice he's protecting this very vital crossroads area here.

Has that gone over very well with the Lord? It's a no-brainer question, isn't it? No. The prophet comes back to him and says you have made a huge mistake. You trusted the Lord against the Kushites; you should have done it here, too.

The prophet's name is Hanani. You can read all about it. Chronicles fleshes this out more than Kings does. That's why the Chronicles parallels are important here.

Well, that's enough on that. Yeah, Kaitlin? It's the same kind of pattern that we saw when in the conquest, Joshua and the Israelites instead of consulting the Lord when the Gibeonites came, they just saw okay, moldy bread, worn out shoes, let's make a treaty. I'm not at all saying it's wrong to use your brains, it's not.

But they ignored the input of God on these things. Did under Joshua in that whole situation, which meant they were saddled with Gibeonite stuff for centuries to come, not least of which was the Gibeonites demanding those descendants of Saul to kill them. Here, the same thing is going to go on.

Basically, Asa should have consulted the Lord in this context and then carried on from there. That's the prophetic review. Yeah, Rebecca.

Rama is the one that he goes and grabs and starts taking and when he's got that, he's got the crossroads. This road is not the best. It should go right through Rama.

Rama's where the crossroads are. That's what Basha is trying to do. Once he's driven off to protect his northern boundaries, then Asa very cleverly fortifies those two, Mitzpah and Geba.

Instead of consulting God in terms of what should I do when Basha is basically knocking at my back door, he just does all this diplomacy and pays off Ben-Hadad as well. I mean, that's the other part of it. He's making an alliance with a foreign, ungodly, shall we say, entity, political entity.

Well, lots more to do, I think. The Omri dynasty. The worship of Baal is not new, but Omri has a son.

His name is Ahab. Whom does Ahab marry? Her name starts with J, Jezebel. Jezebel is a Phoenician woman, a Phoenician bride.

She's also not any wallflower. She's a pretty ugly woman in terms of the kinds of things that she does and the brutalities she engages in. And her intent, along with Ahab, as I note for you, is to make Baal worship the state religion.

And that's going to have some long-term repercussions. At any rate, Baasha's dynasty ends, Il is assassinated, and Zimri reigns for seven days, as we've said. The north descends into absolute chaos.

And then Omri, who is a general, he's a commanding general in the army, is going to take over. It's a military coup. It's basically what's going on.

There's been civil war. He takes over and kind of brings order and he's the one who's going to move the capital out to Samaria. In so doing, as I've said already, he's opening up that whole northern kingdom to influence from Phoenicia and particularly religious influence.

Ahab marries Jezebel. They reject the lord in favor of Baal, the god of rain, thunder, agricultural productivity, and of course that sets the stage for Elijah. Chapter 17, verse 1. Elijah the Tishbite, who just jumps onto the scene with no background whatsoever.

He's from across the Jordan. Gilead is on the east side of the Jordan. And he comes to Ahab and he says, as the lord, the god of Israel lives, whom I serve, there shall be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.

And, of course, we know that's three and a half years. The book of James is fascinating; we won't look at it now, but chapter 5 talks about how the fervent prayer of a righteous person accomplishes a whole lot. I mean, that's a truth that we know.

The fervent prayer of a righteous person accomplishes is effective. But then James uses as his example Elijah, who, as James goes on to say, prayed, and for three and a half years, there was no rain. And then, of course, as we'll see in a moment, he prays again, and there is rain.

During that three and a half years, first of all, he goes across the Jordan and hides. But things dry up there as well. Then, isn't it fascinating that he goes to Phoenicia?

He's hiding right on Baal's turf. Did you notice that? He's going to Baal's home territory. Interestingly enough it's a woman from Zarephath.

In the meantime, there's a guy named Obadiah. Does anybody know what the name Obadiah means? Servant of the Lord. Servant of Yahweh.

This is not the Obadiah who's written that one chapter book in the Minor Prophets. We're going to get to him later. This is simply a man who's working in Ahab's court

and he's a godly man even in a place so awful and degenerate there's Obadiah faithfully serving the Lord.

Protecting some of the prophets of the Lord from the fierce hand of Jezebel. So, keep that in mind. Elijah comes back he says to Obadiah you know it's about time for Ahab and me to come together.

Obadiah's a little afraid, but he arranges it, and then Elijah says to Ahab gather all the prophets of Baal. Now, one of the first things you see is Elijah going before the people in verse 21. I'm in chapter 18 now, and we're going to read some of this stuff. Elijah goes before the people, and he says how long are you going to waver between two of them? In other words, how long are you going to sit on the fence? How long are you going to just sit there and not declare your allegiance? If the Lord is God follow him.

If Baal is God follow him. And then what does the text say? The people said nothing. They thought saying nothing was a safe way to go.

It's not. By the way, Elijah's name means Yahweh is my God. Eli my God Yah Eliyahu Elijah's my God.

That's what the people are going to say once we've had this dramatic thing. Then they're going to say the Lord he is God the Lord he is God but they aren't there yet. They're ambivalent.

All these guys get gathered on the top of Mount Carmel, which is the perfect staging ground for this to take place, and let me just reiterate what I said a moment ago. Carmel high elevation juts into the Mediterranean Sea. High elevations get lots of rain usually.

After three and a half years of drought Carmel has withered Mount Carmel. In fact, the prophets talk about when Carmel withers Amos Nahum, then things are really bad. Now Carmel has withered.

What a perfect place because it's on Baal's turf for all these prophets to be dancing and slashing themselves and all sorts, and nothing happens. And Elijah mocks them, as you know, and they keep on doing this, and nothing happens. And then Elijah rebuilds the altars, sets them up, and pours water, precious water all over these sacrifices until it runs at the bases of the altars, and fire descends from heaven.

And then what do the people say? The Lord he is God the Lord he is God but it's not over yet is it? What does Elijah have to do next? I haven't said that put it up here. Do you remember Deuteronomy 13? If a prophet should come and claim to speak in my name and lead you away from me and tell you to do things that are not part of the

covenant what are you supposed to do with him? Yeah. Take all the prophets of Baal let not one of them escape you take them down to Kishon's Brook and there let them be slain.

And so, 450 prophets of Baal and Asherah are going to be killed in that context because they have led the people away from the Lord. A quick picture of that there's a wonderful little Carmelite monastery up on Mount Carmel, and here's a statue of Elijah and he's not a benign Elijah this is Elijah with a sword in his hand and those things that you can barely see down there are heads of the prophets because he's keeping God's covenant word. Then he prays it rains he runs ahead of Ahab to Jezreel possibly expecting that now Ahab and Jezebel are going to be convinced that Yahweh is God.

Guess what? He's horribly disappointed because Jezebel says I'm going to fix you and she threatens him, and then he runs to Mount Carmel, I mean Mount Horeb, Mount Sinai, going to the source of the covenant. When he's there, a couple of things happen that we need to catch, and then I'll let you go. First of all chapter 19 he's discouraged and the Lord speaks to him. Interestingly enough, it's not a still, small voice. The Hebrew means a crushing silence after the earthquake after the fire. The Lord's not in those things, but then the Lord speaks to me and says I got three things for you to do.

The first is you're going to anoint Hazael, the second Jehu and the third Elisha we're going to see how those work out next time, but God's basically saying I've got work for you to do, and by the way, there are 7000 folks in Israel that have not yet vowed their knee to Baal. You're not alone well we also haven't seen the end of Elijah in terms of New Testament connections as you know or you read the gospels when John the Baptist is born before he's born his father receives a message from the angel Gabriel in the temple and what is said is that he will come in the spirit and power of Elijah which is picking right up on Malachi chapter 4 because in Malachi chapter 4 it says before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes I will send Elijah who will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers or I'll come and strike the land with a curse.

Interesting, that's how Malachi ends. We're going to revisit that when we do Malachi but notice that we've got those connections being made between Elijah now and the ministry of John the Baptist who was the forerunner for the Messiah of course.

Lots more to say but guess what it's ten past ten see you on Wednesday.