

OpenTheo

1 Kings



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

1 Kings is a book in the Hebrew Bible that covers Israel's history from the death of King David to the destruction of the nation, including the division of the kingdom. The book focuses on the reigns of various kings in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, with some being good and others being wicked. The book also highlights the importance of prophets in Israel's history, including Elijah and Elisha, who performed miracles and signs from God. Despite its historical nature, the book's value lies in God's assessment of events and the way it offers moral lessons and instructions for obedience to God's word.

Transcript

Every month we have a meeting here. Well, not every single month. There are times when that gets interrupted, but in general, we meet here once a month.

And we've been for some time, been going through the various books of the Bible in order. Started in Genesis how many months ago? I don't know. But tonight we're in the books of Kings.

And what we do is we have an introduction to the book and an overview of the book. Now I say book when I talk about the books of Kings because the books of Kings were one book originally. In the Hebrew Bible, it's only one book.

And it was divided into two books about 285 B.C. or approximately that time when the Alexandrian Jewish Translation Committee, almost three centuries before Christ, translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Now the Hebrew Scriptures don't have vowels and therefore the words are short. The Greek words are very long and therefore they couldn't fit as much material on a single scroll.

And what was one book, the book of Kings, in Hebrew became divided into two scrolls, two books. Originally these were not called First and Second Kings. They were given different names.

The Septuagint did the same thing with the books of Samuel. There was one book of Samuel. We have two.

We have two for the same reason that we have two books of Kings, exactly the same issue. And when the Septuagint divided Samuel into two books and Kings into two books, they called First and Second Samuel First and Second Kingdoms. And they called First and Second Kings Third and Fourth Kingdoms.

So the books we call Samuel and Kings were First, Second, Third, and Fourth Kingdoms in the Septuagint. Later on the Latin Vulgate referred to them as the books of Kings, First, Second, Third, and Fourth Kings. So it went down from First, Second, Third, and Fourth Kingdoms to First, Second, Third, and Fourth Kings.

And it was in the King James Version that First and Second Samuel were called by that name and First and Second Kings received the name that we have them by. But the point is there was only one book of Kings originally. And so we're going to take both the books of Kings because it's one unbroken, continuous story, very much the way we found was the case in the books of First and Second Samuel.

Now the books of Kings cover the period of history from the death of David to the death of the nation of Israel. The books of Samuel talked about the end of the period of the judges, the rise of the first king Saul, and his failure at the end of First Samuel. King Saul dies and in Second Samuel David becomes king.

And so that Second Samuel covers the entire reign of David. When we come to First Kings it begins with the death of David. And then as I say, once you get to the end of Second Kings, it's the death of the nation.

We see the nation of Judah carried away into Babylon for 70 years. Now I say it's the death. It was only a temporary death.

They came back together like dry bones coming together into an army of men, according to Ezekiel's vision about this in Ezekiel 37. And they did come back to their land, but that's not found in the books of Kings. That's found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

And so those books remain to be seen in a later date. But the books of Kings are going to take us through the entire history of Israel after the death of David. David was replaced in the throne by his son Solomon.

And then Solomon's son Rehoboam mismanaged the nation and got it split into two nations. So there's a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. And they had separate histories, which are traced parallel in the books of Kings until the northern kingdom is destroyed.

In 722 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians. And from that point on, the books of Kings only take us through the remainder of the history of the southern kingdom until it is taken away into Babylon. So that's what we've got.

The division of the kingdom in Rehoboam's time was a major turning point in Israel's history, though it happens fairly early in Kings. Well, actually, in mid-first Kings. And then, of course, the destruction of the northern kingdom is another major turning point.

And then the destruction of the southern kingdom is yet a third major turning point. So we have three major disasters, really, in the life of Israel after the death of David. And those disasters are the splitting of the kingdom into two, then eventually the destruction, thank you, of the northern kingdom, and then eventually the destruction of the southern kingdom.

So Israel's history was tragic, but no more tragic than what they deserved. Because God had set them up to be God's special people, a peculiar nation under a covenant that he'd made with them at Mount Sinai. They had special obligation to be faithful to God, and it wasn't really that hard.

When you think about it, keeping the Ten Commandments isn't really that hard if someone wants to do it. Most people can live their whole life without murdering somebody. Most people can live their whole life, even non-Christians, you know, without stealing necessarily.

I guess a lot of people do steal in small ways, but it's not something you have to do. Same thing with committing adultery. I mean, the commands of God can be kept.

Those ones can, at least, by anyone who wants to. But the most important command that God gave Israel, and the one that they violated most consistently, and the one that caused the end of their nation, was the first command. You shall have no other gods before me.

And the second, you shall not make any graven image, and you shall not bow down and worship them. Because I, the Lord, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. And so God warned them when he established the nation at Mount Sinai.

He doesn't want them to worship any other god. Now, this was like a marriage covenant. So it's just like a husband saying to his wife, I don't want you to sleep with other men.

It's the same thing. God was the husband. Israel was the bride.

She was supposed to worship only God, and he was going to be faithful to her in a unique way. And they couldn't do it, or they wouldn't do it. They kept lapsing into idolatry, and it was because of the idolatry of the northern kingdom that they were destroyed.

And the southern kingdom would have been destroyed about the same time, except they happened to have a good king around that time named Hezekiah, and he was abolishing

idolatry, which had also crept into the southern kingdom of Judah. And since he was bringing about reforms, God spared the nation. In fact, Assyria tried to destroy Judah as well and encamped around them.

But Hezekiah, under the instruction of Isaiah the prophet, prayed and asked God for deliverance, and God sent an angel who killed Assyrian soldiers who were encamped around Jerusalem, 185,000 of them. And that, of course, ended the threat to Jerusalem from the Assyrians. But later, kings of Judah were just as bad as some of the kings of the northern kingdom, and eventually the Babylonians came and took them away.

The last prophet to be warning them about that at the time that the Babylonians eventually destroyed the southern kingdom was Jeremiah. It is thought that Jeremiah is one of the authors of the books of kings. The author does not identify himself, but there are apparently a number of sources.

Jeremiah lived during the latter part of the period, and at the end of the period, he was living. He was living at the time that Judah was taken into captivity in Babylon. He lived beyond that a few years.

And in his own book, he records it just like the second king records the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. In fact, there's a section in 2 Kings 24, verse 18, through chapter 25, verse 30, which is almost identical verbatim to Jeremiah 52, 1 through 34. Not quite, but it's very close.

And so it's easy to imagine Jeremiah could have written both those sections and maybe all of the books of kings. We don't know. There are other sources, though, for the books of kings that are mentioned in the book.

For example, in chapter in 1 Kings chapter 11 and verse 41, at the close of the story of Solomon, it says there's more about Solomon available to be known from a book called the book of the acts of Solomon, which the author recommends to his readers. He says if you want to know more about what Solomon did, you can read that in the book of the acts of Solomon, which is a book we don't have. But that's not too surprising.

You know, we're talking about books that were written almost 3000 years ago, 2500 years ago. Most books that old have not survived. They had lots of books back then that we don't we can't find.

They don't exist anymore. And one of those was the book of the acts of Solomon and the author apparently is familiar with it and no doubt used it as one of his sources on Solomon's life. After all, he was a historian and historians have to use if possible, if they're available contemporary sources for their subject matter.

There are two other books that are mentioned repeatedly, 17 times each in the books of kings. One is called the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. And one is called the

book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

These books apparently were chronicles of the kings of the northern and southern kingdom and were sources of information because the writer of kings from time to time says, especially after it records the death of a particular king. If he's a Judean king, he'll say, and you can find out the rest of the story about him by looking in the chronicles of the kings of Judah. And if it's a northern king of Israel, then he'll say, you can find out more about this by reading the chronicles of the book, the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

So obviously the author and his readers had at least these three books available. And then there was more, because there's a section in kings, that's in second kings chapter 18 through 20. That is again almost verbatim the same as Isaiah.

It's chapters 36 through 39. That tells a couple of important stories about Hezekiah. And the stars are told in essentially the very same detail, essentially the same words in second kings chapters 18 through 20.

So we've got now see Isaiah lived about 100 years before Jeremiah. And so Jeremiah would have had Isaiah's work he could exert from he had these other books he mentions that we don't have. And so these are being the historical sources that the author had.

Now, if Jeremiah is the author, which is a Jewish tradition, the author does not actually identify himself, but it certainly is a realistic suggestion. Then we have in the book of kings. A book by an inspired writer.

And that's a very important part of a books being included in the Bible. There are many historical books about Israel that have come from Old Testament times that are not in our Bible. For example, there are four books of Maccabees of which the Roman Catholic Bible includes two first and second Maccabees.

Those are historical books. For the most part, they're counted to be reliable by historians. Why aren't they in our Bible? Catholics ask us that, too.

Why don't you have them in your Bible? The reason is because they were not written by inspired writers. They were written during the intertestamental period at a time where God was not sending prophets to Israel during those 400 years. And therefore, any book that was written during that time was not written by a prophet and was written merely by a human historian.

Now, a human historian can still get things right, so they can be reliable histories, but they're not the word of God. They're not written by inspired authors. It is believed that the books of kings were, in fact, written by an inspired author, a prophet.

And that's why that book is in our Bibles, and so many of the Old Testament time books

like Maccabees and others are not in our Bible. They may be good books, but they're not the word of God. Now, the book of 1 Kings is divided essentially exactly in half.

The first 11 chapters of 1 Kings are the story basically of Solomon. We have David still living in the first chapter, and he dies, and Solomon becomes king. He's not the only contender.

David had a lot of sons, and there was more than one that wanted to be king. David appointed Solomon, and he had to defend his claim against a rival, Adonijah, his brother. But that's something that got taken care of.

Then Solomon's reign is given in detail, some detail, in the first 11 chapters. The next 11 chapters, the last 11 chapters in 1 Kings, are about the divided kingdom, how that Solomon's son Rehoboam really mismanaged the complaints of the people. There was a rebellion, a division of the kingdom into north and south.

Now, the southern kingdom was comprised of Judah, which was David's own tribe, and Solomon's tribe, and therefore Rehoboam's tribe, Judah in the south, and the much, much smaller tribe of Benjamin. The two tribes in the south were Judah and Benjamin, and because Benjamin was so small, the nation in the south is simply called Judah, named after the much larger tribe. The other 10 tribes of Israel were associated with the north, and they were having to be located in the north from the time of Joshua on.

Their tribal boundaries were in the north, and therefore they were simply called Israel, because 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel belonged to the northern kingdom. Now, sometimes they were called Ephraim in the Bible. Sometimes the prophets referred to that northern kingdom as Ephraim.

Ephraim was the largest tribe of the 10 tribes of the north, and so just like Judah, being the largest larger tribe in the south, gave its name sometimes to the nation itself, so Ephraim is sometimes given as the name of the northern kingdom, though it's really 10 tribes, not just the tribe of Ephraim. And so the kingdom is divided in the second half of 1 Kings. And the main division in 2 Kings is at chapter 17, because that's the fall of the northern kingdom.

You have the kingdom divided in the first 17 chapters, but with the fall of the nation of Israel in the north to Assyria, there's no longer a divided kingdom. There's only Judah, and its history occupies the remainder of the book of 2 Kings. The northern kingdom - now, let me just say this.

The author goes into detail about how many years each king reigned, and so you could kind of total up the number of years and get totals of how long the period was. The problem is it doesn't total up right. That is to say, if you total up the reigns of the northern kings and the reigns of the southern kings from one point in history to another,

they don't get the same number, although the two points in history you're measuring from are the same point.

And the reason is because they had various ways of reckoning the length of a king's reign. For example, if one king reigned during the first part of a year, that year would be counted as the last year of his reign. If the next king reigned for the latter part of the same year, that same year would be counted as the first year of his reign.

So the whole year would be counted. Even though two kings reigned different portions of that year, each of them could claim that year as part of their total. And the same thing, there's other kinds of reckoning like that that gets things kind of confused for us.

Sometimes there were co-regencies that would appear. Sometimes a king and his son, their reigns would overlap, perhaps because the older king was incapacitated and his son was acting as a regent while his father was still alive. And whatever years their reigns overlapped were counted in both of their years, so that the older king's years included those years in his number, and the younger king's years included the same years in his number.

And therefore, it's very, very difficult to be certain of which exact year this begins and ends of a given king's reign by calculating from them. As the numbers are given to us, the Northern Kingdom lasted 254 years, and the Southern Kingdom lasted another 135 years. The Northern Kingdom, in its 254 years, had 19 kings, not a good one among them.

They're all bad. They're all idolaters. They're all wicked.

They all came to evil ends. And the nation did not survive as long as the Southern Kingdom because the Northern Kingdom never had a reprieve in its idolatry. All of its kings were evil, 19 altogether.

The Southern Kingdom had 20 kings in its history. Some of them were good, not very many, but some of them were good. And the others that were not good were just as bad as the ones in the North.

There were seven good kings of the Southern Kingdom out of 20. So about one out of three of their kings was a good guy. The others were bad.

Now, the Bible makes a point of saying whether a king was good or bad, partly because, as an inspired writer, the author is not only interested in giving us the facts of the history, but also God's assessment of the history. That's what makes a biblical historical book of value. If it's written by an inspired author, we not only get to be told what happened, but what God thought of what was happening.

We have things happen in this country all the time, and Christians speculate, well, that

was a judgment from God. When New Orleans was wiped out by Katrina, a lot of Christians said, oh, that was a judgment from God. Others said, no, that wasn't a judgment from God.

Well, was it or wasn't? Who knows? We don't have an inspired prophet writing the history of it to tell us what God thought. An inspired author would presumably have that information. We don't, and most historians don't.

They may speculate at why bad things happened or what God thought about things, but unless it's a prophet who's getting inspiration from God, it's only a guess. But if Kings is written by Jeremiah or some other prophet, as is believed to be true, then his assessment of whether God was happy or sad by any given event is telling us something. It's giving us a prophetic interpretation of history, not only the recitation of historical facts, but the interpretation of them in terms of what God thinks about them.

And from time to time, like I said, there's about seven kings in the south, the kingdom of Judah, who are actually said to be good kings. They're said to have followed the way of their father David. And the kings of Judah that were not good were said they didn't follow the way of their father David, and they did evil in the sight of the Lord.

But what you find is even the good kings have some black marks against them. That is to say, as you read their story, each one of them does something or another that's not pleasing to God. A caller on the radio this week mentioned King Asa, and she was surprised that he's referred to as a good king because in his latter years he was sick in his feet, and he consulted physicians instead of the Lord, and that was considered to be a bad thing, and yet he's said to be a good king.

Hezekiah is one of the very best of the kings of Judah, and yet in the latter part of his life, he made a mistake of showing off his wealth to some Babylonian emissaries, and Isaiah the prophet had to tell him, well, the Babylonians, now they're going to come back and take all that stuff from you. Big mistake. Josiah was one of the very best kings Israel ever had, and yet his final act was an act of disobedience to a command given by God through a prophet.

He went out to fight against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, and a prophet said, don't, don't go do it, and he ignored it, and he went out and got killed in battle, and yet he's a good king. Even the kings that are good kings, there are usually something recorded against them to show that they're not seamlessly good. They're not all good, because nobody is all good.

Only God is all good, but the reason a king is considered to be good or not is because he did or did not sponsor idolatry. A king can make all kinds of mistakes, but worshipping idols dooms him as a bad guy. A person who doesn't worship idols is considered to be a good king, even if he's not the perfect man, and this is very much like marriage.

I said Israel had a covenant with God, like a marriage covenant, and husbands and wives do many things in the course of their lifetime together that aren't exactly what the other would be pleased with, but as long as they're not unfaithful to each other, the marriage remains intact. At least it's supposed to. Jesus said a man who divorces his wife for any other cause than fornication is causing her to commit adultery, and him remarrying is committing adultery, so clearly God doesn't allow for divorce in any case other than marital unfaithfulness, and likewise he didn't divorce Israel when they did many things wrong or even consider kings to be really bad people when they did things wrong unless they were committing adultery spiritually speaking, which is what idolatry was viewed as.

Jeremiah, Hosea, even Isaiah had spoken of idolatry on the part of Israel being like adultery on the part of a wife in a marriage, and so many of the kings, though they weren't very good, are still remembered as good, and some of them, none of them were perfectly good, but they are good if they are faithful to the covenant in the sense that they don't sponsor idolatry. In that sense, Solomon was the first king to go bad. Now Solomon we usually think of as a hero because he made a good decision when he was a child.

God was pleased with him. He made him wise. He was world famous.

He was wealthy, and he wrote the book of Proverbs and some other books of the Bible too. So you think, well, he must be a good one. Well, he was up to a point, but the problem is he also began to sponsor idolatry.

He married pagan women who had other gods they worshipped. He accommodated them by building shrines and temples to their gods in Jerusalem to keep his wives happy, and this was an offense. This led him far away from God, the Bible says.

And so he was the first king to go wrong. All the following kings went wrong of the northern kingdom, and most of the kings of the southern kingdom did too, and at the end of it, God had to wipe them out, and that's how 2 Kings reaches its conclusion. That's what God does to them.

Now there are some real bright spots in the books of kings. Not only are there some good kings that are a little refreshing after reading most of their stories, it's refreshing to read of a godly king like Jehoshaphat or Josiah or Hezekiah or Azariah. Good kings are hard to find.

It's always refreshing when you've had corrupt leadership in government, and you finally get someone honest in government. And so you feel like, well, this may turn the tide. You know, the nation's been going downhill toward oblivion, but maybe we've got a good man in power, and maybe he can turn things around in such a way that the nation will have a new lease on life.

Maybe things will get better. That's what you find in the book of kings many times. You've got a series of idolatrous kings, then finally there's one who surprises everyone, and he's good.

He's honest. He loves God. He tries to get rid of idolatry and tries to reform the nation.

You think, wow, maybe this nation does have hope after all. But it's usually the son of the righteous king who takes the nation back into idolatry. In fact, as I said, one of the best kings was Hezekiah.

His son Manasseh was the very worst king they ever had. He even offered babies to idols, burned babies alive as sacrifices to idols, a wicked, wicked man. And he's the worst king Judah had, and he reigned longer than any other one, 50 years.

So, you know, you get a good one, and then you get a bad one. But one bright spot, or we could say two, that comes up late in first kings and occupies the early part of second kings, are the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Elijah is a character whose ministry is largely in the first book of kings.

He's still around at the beginning of second kings, but he goes up in a whirlwind early in first kings. And he leaves his mantle to his apprentice prophet, Elisha. And Elisha's ministry then is covered in second kings up to chapter 13 when he dies.

So we've got two really interesting characters. Elijah is an interesting character. He did a great number of miracles, and Elisha did even more.

Now, you might say, well, that's not surprising. They're in the Bible. The Bible's full of miracles, right? Really not.

Really not. There's much less than you think in terms of manifestation of miracles in the Bible. You see a lot of them because the Bible focuses a lot on the periods of time when these miracles were done.

For example, the Exodus, when God delivered Israel from Egypt and brought them into the promised land. A lot of miracles were done through Moses and Joshua. But not many before Moses were done, and not many after Joshua were done.

Through the whole book of Judges, which is almost 400 years long, you really don't read of miracles. Even in the books of kings, most of the time you don't read of miracles until the time of Elijah and Elisha. There's actually hundreds of years between the time of Moses and the time of Elijah.

And during those hundreds of years, almost 1,000 years perhaps, not quite, maybe 800, there's virtually no miracles that are really recorded. Not much going on that way. There's a few here and there, but not many.

But when Elijah comes on the scene, there's miracles through his life all the time. He's a miracle-working prophet. He even stops the rain for three and a half years, and then it comes back when he prays for it to come back.

He's an amazing man. He can call fire out of heaven on people who come to arrest him. Elisha also did miracles, mostly healing miracles and food multiplication miracles.

A lot of the miracles that Jesus did were replicas of Elisha's miracles, actually. Elisha the prophet did mostly constructive miracles. Whereas Elijah had a lot of miracles that were judgment miracles.

Some people think Elijah the prophet may even be a picture of the old covenant and Elisha of the new covenant because of the severity of the ministry of Elijah and the mercifulness and beneficial aspect of the miracles of Elisha. In any case, those stories are fun reading. If you find some parts of the historical narrative of the Old Testament hard to read, it's probably not the stories of Elijah and Elisha.

They are full of wonders, and it's really enjoyable reading, a wonderful part of the Old Testament to read. Besides Elijah and Elisha, there are a lot of other prophets and prophetesses. At least one prophet, his name Huldah, is mentioned.

When Jezebel becomes the queen of the northern kingdom of Israel, she puts a contract out on all of Yahweh's prophets. A man in her administration who is secretly favorable to the prophets, a guy named Obadiah, hides 100 prophets, 50 to a cave, in two caves and feeds them secretly to keep them from Jezebel's wrath. Somehow he found 100 prophets in an apostate nation.

Elijah at one point claimed not to know of any prophets other than himself. God told him, no, I have 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal. So even when the nation was completely sold over to idolatry, God had his remnant, and many of them were prophets.

Elijah actually started five communities of prophets. Sometimes commentators refer to them as schools of the prophets, but the Bible doesn't use the term schools of the prophets. That would give the impression that you can learn to be a prophet by going to classes.

But they are simply called the sons of the prophets. And there were five different cities where Elijah frequented. Each of them had sons of the prophets.

And these sons of the prophets, we saw them also in Samuel. In fact, Samuel the prophet had founded these groups. These were communities of spiritual men who, we don't know what they did.

I mean, they're prophets, so they must prophesy. But we don't know if they went out and preached and prophesied publicly or if they just hung out together and said, what do you

think God's saying? Well, I think he's saying this. What do you think? But they would live together.

These sons of the prophets lived together. They were musicians in many cases, and they played music together. We read of it.

And when a man like King Saul, wicked as he was, would come among them, the spirit would come upon him and overpower him, and he became momentarily a prophet. That's how much the spirit of God resided in these companies of prophets. Some people call them prophetic guilds.

As I say, it's very common for people to speak of them as schools of the prophets. But they were just communities of prophets, and they were called the sons of the prophets. And Elijah in his time was kind of the leader of them.

And when it came time for him to die, the sons of the prophets knew he was going because they were prophets. And they kept telling Elisha the prophet, do you know your master is going to be taken up today? He said, I know it. Be quiet.

And we'll talk maybe more about that when we come to that portion. But Elisha apparently was respected by the sons of the prophets after Elijah was gone because we find Elisha, for example, sending one of the sons of the prophets on a mission to actually anoint Jehu, one of the kings of Israel. So the prophets were very influential because, after all, even in its apostasy, Israel was still supposed to be God's wife.

And God was still speaking and communicating to them when they went wrong. And so the prophets usually had something to say to Israel when it's going wrong. There are several, several other prophets by name.

One's named Ahijah. There's a prophet named Jehu. There's one named Micaiah, an interesting story about him at the end of First Kings in Chapter 22.

Micaiah, the prophet. There's Jonah. Yeah, that Jonah, the Jonah who was swallowed by a whale.

He was a prophet in Second Kings also during the reign of Jeroboam II. Isaiah, the prophet, lived at that time only in Judah. And so did, of course, Jeremiah was from that period of time.

Most of our minor prophets in the Bible were of that period. And so there are actually at least four unnamed prophets in the books of Kings. We don't have all their names.

Most of these prophets didn't write anything, which is why we don't perhaps know their names. And maybe they were lesser significant. But the presence of the prophets in Israel's history in the book of Kings really set Israel apart and their history apart from the

history of other nations.

You know, the history of America is a very fascinating history. There's been some wonderful things, and it's a great thing to study American history. But what you don't find in American history is the presence of these prophets giving instructions to the leaders of the nation, rebuking them when they go wrong or giving them instructions.

As some of the kings actually sought instruction from the prophets. And that's how they knew to do the right thing. Because the nation of Israel was specially unlike America, unlike every nation other than Israel at the time.

It was uniquely God's nation, and God had a unique promise to guide them if they wanted to hear from him. So the prophets were there for that purpose. Now, I want to quickly just kind of go through the books of Kings and tell you what you find in the various sections as you move through.

I've already said some of those things in a broad way, but just deal a little more in detail with some of these things. In the first 11 chapters of First Kings, that would be the first division of the books. I mentioned that's the chapters about Solomon.

First Kings begins with David in his old age, 60 years old. Lots of these guys died at 60. So, you know, the lifespan of these guys was less than modern people, generally speaking.

David was considered old and died around age 60. He, in his old age, had some disease, consumption of some kind. And his body was not able to generate heat any longer.

So he's always cold. And the Bible says no matter how many blankets they put on, he couldn't keep warm. His body was just not making any heat.

And so they sought for a beautiful young woman to be a bed warmer for him. Not a sex partner, but a bed warmer. He didn't have relations with her.

But this girl, Abishag was her name, the Shunammite, she became the bed warmer for David in his old age. And that story is told because that becomes significant later on. You see, she was considered to be the most beautiful girl in the kingdom.

They sought her on those qualifications. To be a bed warmer, you don't have to have a lot of talent or a good education. But looking good was one of the things they required.

And she's going to be with the king. But the reason she's interesting is because later after David died, more than one of his sons wanted Abishag. And in the Middle East, it was understood that one of the things that gave power to a man as a new king was that he had the wives of the previous king, the wives and the concubines.

You may remember in 2 Samuel that when David's son Absalom rebelled against him,

one of the first things he did as a public act was go and sleep with David's ten concubines in public. Because to be with the former king's concubines was basically saying I've usurped his power completely. The last thing a man will surrender to another person is his wife.

And therefore, if you've got the previous king's wives and you can have them, then it's symbolically an emblem that you're the king. Now, you've usurped the place of the king. Now, David wanted Solomon, the son of Bathsheba, to be his successor.

And he told Bathsheba that and Solomon that. But there were other sons of David that wanted to be king, too. He had another son named Absalom who later wanted to be king.

David's son, I should say earlier, had wanted to be king and had tried to usurp David's power. But he was gone now. He died.

But there is one named Adonijah who had never been very well disciplined. And it says David had never rebuked him, never even said, why do you do that? Basically, we're telling him that he was an indulgent father. And this son wanted to be king, although David had suggested it was going to be Solomon.

This man, Adonijah, actually tried to get some of the military top brass and some of the other king's counselors of his father David over onto his side to declare him king. And he held a party where he had all these important people shout, Adonijah is king. Well, Nathan the prophet was, or Gad, I think it was Nathan, one of David's friends was also on Solomon's side.

And he said, hey, Adonijah just declared himself king and all these guys are with him. And so this is how David was actually still alive. And so David said, no, you put Solomon on my horse and parade him through the town and say he is the king now.

So Solomon and Adonijah both were proclaimed king probably within a day of each other. But it was clear that since David was still alive, that he was endorsing Solomon. And that made Adonijah's claim look like treason.

And it was. So he fled. And when Solomon became king, he says, OK, I'm going to let you live as long as you behave yourself.

Well, Adonijah did not behave himself. He wanted to still usurp power. So after David was gone, Adonijah came to Solomon with a modest proposal.

And that was, could I have Abishag, the Shunammite for my wife? And Solomon saw that not only as a probably attempt to get a woman that Solomon wanted for himself, but also as a political power grab. If Adonijah had Abishag, that would be at least one thing in his favor to claim the kingdom because he'd have the previous king's. Well, she wasn't a concubine because the Bible specifically says they didn't have relations.

But let's face it. She slept with next to the king in his later years of his life. So, I mean, she was of a concubine status.

So anyway, the point is that Adonijah then was put to death for that act of treason. There were other people that had disappointed David that David told Solomon on his deathbed. I want you to punish these people when I'm gone.

One of them was Shimei, the guy who, when David was fleeing from Solomon, was throwing dirt and rocks at David saying, you're a bloody man. God is punishing you for what you did to the house of Saul. And David's bodyguards wanted to go and kill Shimei at the time.

But David was feeling kind of depressed and said, no, don't let him speak. Maybe God sent him to speak. And then David forgave the guy after David came back to power.

But he told him, behave yourself. And Solomon was told by David, take care of Shimei, that is, get rid of him. So Solomon told Shimei, if you'll stay within your town, you can live.

If you ever leave your town, you're going to die. And after a few years, Shimei left his town. Solomon caught him and killed him.

So that was another thing David had left for Solomon to do. Also, David's cousin, Joab, who had been David's general and leader of the whole army during David's reign and had been very loyal to David. Yet he'd been a very corrupt man in some respects.

He'd killed rivals of his own, others who were rivals for his position. He killed them in cold blood. And he also offended David because in the rebellion Absalom, David's son, staged against David, David had told his armies, including Joab, go easy on Absalom if you happen to catch him.

Well, Joab found Absalom dangling from a tree still alive, and Joab killed him. And David had told him not to do that. Now, frankly, Joab was politically probably wiser than David.

To keep Absalom alive would only mean Absalom could have another rebellion. Killing a rival king was politically a pretty astute thing to do. But David loved that rival king because it was his son.

And so David felt that Joab had gone against his orders and had done other bloody deeds in his life. He'd killed some other guys who were rivals of his. And so David, when he was dying, told Solomon, make sure that Joab doesn't come to a peaceful end.

And so after David died, Joab was also put to death. So, some of Solomon's first acts as king were vengeance acts against people that David, if he wanted these punishments, he should have done it himself. David was kind of a weak king in the end.

He was a great kid. He could kill giants. And he was a great king in the beginning when he was conquering all the Gentile lands around him.

But after he sinned with Bathsheba, he seemed to have lost his moral strength. He was forgiven by God because he repented, but he never seemed to recover in his conscience from it completely. Which is why when his own son raped his daughter, David heard about it and he was angry, but he didn't say anything about it.

He was just like, he'd lost all his moral authority, he felt, I think, and he just didn't really, he wasn't a strong ruler. That's why when Absalom rebelled against him, he thought, well, maybe God's judged me. You know, maybe I should have let him have the kingdom.

And so David didn't really pull off some of the executions of people who really deserved to die in his kingdom. And he said, Solomon, you do that when I'm gone, which was kind of a wimpy thing for David to do. But Solomon did what his dad said to do.

Now, in the first four chapters, therefore, of first Kings, we have all of these intrigues taking place until you come to the fourth chapter. And David or Solomon becomes the king during a certain point in all of this. God appears to Solomon and says, listen, anything you want, I'll give it to you.

What do you want? And Solomon said, well, I want wisdom. I'm a child. I'm a youth.

I can't really reign over these people. They're a multitude. Give me a discerning heart.

Give me wisdom. And the Bible says God was pleased with this request because it wasn't a very selfish request. He says you could have asked for wealth.

You could have asked for great fame. You could have asked for victory over all your enemies, but you didn't ask for this. You just asked for wisdom.

And God says, I like that. I'm going to give you wisdom. I'm going to make you the wisest man ever.

But I'm also going to give you what you didn't ask for. I'm going to make you the richest, most powerful man ever. And you'll have a peaceful reign.

Your enemies will not hurt you. So Solomon got what he asked for and what he didn't ask for, too. And he was basically known for his wisdom, of course.

And that's why the books we have written by Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, are books that are called wisdom books. They are proverbial wisdom for the most part. Not all those books are equally so.

But he wrote a lot. He actually wrote over 3,000 proverbs and 1,000 songs, 1,005 songs, I think. The Song of Solomon in our Bible was his favorite of the songs that he wrote.

And the proverbs in the Book of Proverbs are a small sampling of the over 3,000 proverbs that Solomon actually spoke in his lifetime. So he was known internationally for his wisdom. Now in the Middle East, sages and wise men were particularly appreciated by the intelligentsia.

And so people liked to hear people who just answer riddles and say wise things back then. And so people from all over the world, the known world at the time, would come to visit Solomon and hear him speak. One of those was the Queen of Sheba, which was probably down in Arabia.

And she came to hear him speak, and she was so amazed at his wisdom, she said, Wow, I'd heard about all this about you, but she said the half had not been told me. She said, Blessed are your servants who get to stand around and just listen to this wisdom all the time. And she gave him a lot of money, gold and things like that from Arabia.

And then she went home. And then what Solomon is famous for next is for his building projects. The most important building project of Solomon was the temple.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, the Ark of the Covenant was a piece of furniture that represented the presence of God. And it was kept in a tent called the tabernacle. It was actually a prefab building that they could tear down and set up as they moved around.

It had rigid walls made of boards overlaid with gold, but they were covered over with tarps, several tarps and curtains, making it more like a tent. And the tabernacle, as it was called, was what housed the Ark of the Covenant and where the sacrifices were offered. But in David's time, back in 2 Samuel, David had expressed a wish to build a house rather than a tent for the Ark of the Covenant to be in.

David, after all, had a great palace himself. And as he looked out his window once and saw the little tent that the Ark was in, he said, you know, I live in a house of cedar and the Ark of God is in a tent. And the prophet he was speaking to, Nathan, said, do what's in your heart.

And then God told Nathan, no, you go back and correct that. I didn't tell him to make a building for the Ark. Tell him I don't want you to do it because you're a man of blood.

You fought wars. You've got blood on your hands. But your son will build a house for my name.

That's in 2 Samuel 7.12. And so Solomon set out to do that. And David, in his final years, had taken a collection from all the tribes of Israel of gold and jewels and things like that that would be used in the temple project. So when Solomon became king, he took over the kingdom at a very wealthy time.

David had made the kingdom very wealthy. And Solomon made this elaborate temple, took seven and a half years to build it with a huge labor force. He actually had slave labor.

He had foreign slaves. He also made a lot of Israelite slaves. That wasn't a popular policy, by the way.

And that's one reason Israel rebelled against his son, Rehoboam. But Solomon spent seven and a half years building the temple and dedicating it. When he did, God owned it by causing the Shekinah glory cloud to appear in the temple at the time of its dedication.

And from that point on, in the holy of holies of the temple is where God was believed to dwell. And that's where the priests went with their sacrifices and things. That's the most significant thing Solomon built.

He then spent twice as long, almost, 13 years, building his own palace and a lot of other building projects. He was a builder, and he had unlimited funds. He was a very wealthy king.

His father, David, had left him really in a position with virtually unlimited funds. I say virtually. He did use them up.

By the time Solomon left power, the kingdom was depressed. The kingdom was poor. He had taken control at the beginning of his reign when the kingdom was at its richest point probably in its history.

And when he left power, it was at a very low point economically. But it was not only at a low point economically. Solomon himself had fallen to a low point spiritually.

Because we read in Chapter 11 that Solomon married many wives, way too many. Now a man really shouldn't have more than one wife. But some of the kings in the Middle East had plenty of wives.

It was sort of a status symbol of power, and David had had eight wives. Solomon decided to have a few more, like 700 wives and 300 concubines. And, you know, some of those were political marriages.

Kings would often marry the princesses of another nation, and because of the marriage, the two nations would be at peace with each other. It was sort of a peace treaty way of doing things. A king or a prince of one nation marrying the queen or the princess of another nation.

That was how nations often guaranteed they wouldn't go to war against each other. But there were not 700 nations around Solomon. There's not even 700 nations today in the world, much less in the Middle East or around the Mediterranean world.

So he obviously didn't only have political marriages. He had some marriages just apparently for fun or just for status perhaps, so he'd have more wives than anybody else around. A lot of the wives he married were pagans.

He married the pharaoh's daughter, and her Egyptian religion came with her. He no doubt married Moabite and Edomite and Ammonite and other pagan Syrian women too. And we know that there were various nationalities, and each nation had their own gods, false gods.

And Solomon, to please his wives, built shrines for these gods of his wives, and therefore this displeased God. And God sent a prophet saying that God was going to take away from the house of Solomon and the house of David ten of the twelve tribes. Now, during his building projects, Solomon had a foreman on the projects named Jeroboam.

And he was a good worker and so forth, and apparently a charismatic fellow. People liked him. But a prophet came to Jeroboam and said, God is going to take ten of the tribes from Solomon and give them to you.

Now Solomon heard about that, so he sought to kill Jeroboam, and Jeroboam fled to Egypt and got away. But after Solomon died, Solomon's son Rehoboam became king. And the people came to Rehoboam in the first few days of his reign and said, listen, your dad Solomon, he taxed us excessively.

He drained us dry. He oppressed us. He made slaves of us.

He was a heavy oppressor. Now, if you continue his policies, we're going to rebel against you. But if you lighten the load, the tax burden and so forth, we'll serve you.

And Rehoboam said, well, let me go check with my counselors. Now, he was only about 20 years old. He didn't - not a very wise kid at that, just a pampered kid, grew up king's son.

And he asked the older counselors who had been with Solomon, and they said, do what these people say, and they'll serve you for your whole life. And he didn't like that. He didn't want to lighten the tax load.

He liked to have money, like his father had. So he went to the younger counselors of his own age, the ones who grew up with him, it says, and they said, these people, you've got to show them who's boss. These are young fools giving him counsel.

He said, you know, you've got to establish your dominion here early on or they're going to take advantage of you for your whole reign. So you tell them, my little finger be thicker than my father's loins. If he chastens you with whips, I'll chasten you with scorpions, which is kind of a Middle Eastern way of saying I'm going to be harder on you than my dad was.

That was a real stupid thing to do, and he soon found that out. The people said, okay, we're done with you, and they rebelled. And they got Jeroboam to come back from Egypt and be their leader, and he became the king of the northern kingdom, and Rehoboam ruled in the southern kingdom.

Initially, Rehoboam sent armies out to reunite the kingdom, to defeat the northern confederacy, but God's prophets told him not to do it, so he laid off and the two kingdoms now existed as separate kingdoms. And that's how chapter 12 basically, 1 Kings, that's what it brings us to. So in chapters 12 through basically through 2 Kings 17, the kingdom is divided because the northern kingdom is still around until 2 Kings 17.

And as I said, they had a bunch of kings, no good ones. They all worshipped idols, and Solomon's successors in the south also mostly worshipped idols, but not all of them. So in this section, 1 Kings 12 through 2 Kings 17, we have the period of the divided kingdom.

The revolt against Rehoboam took place in chapter 12, and in chapter 13, there's a very interesting story about the king Jeroboam in the north. Once he became the king of the new northern kingdom, Jeroboam realized that he had a little bit of a problem. These were religious nations, and his subjects of the northern kingdom always went to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, the southern kingdom, for holidays.

They would go to Passover and Pentecost and Tabernacle, and go to Jerusalem and have these religious holidays. Uh-oh, when my people go back down there, they'll get sentimental about being part of this, and then they'll rebel against me, and they'll go back to Rehoboam. So Jeroboam instead set up two golden calves, one at the northern city of Dan, and one in the southern city of Bethel, of his kingdom, and he said to Israel, these are the gods we're going to worship now.

Well, a lot of the people went along with him. A lot of the more devout members of his kingdom said, no way, we're not going to worship these calves, and so they migrated south and became part of Rehoboam's kingdom. So that his kingdom in the south, though it was primarily the tribe of Judah, actually had some of the better folks from the other ten tribes, too, who had complained about the golden calves and went south.

In fact, Jeroboam had to build fortifications along his border to keep his people from defecting in large numbers. Now, when he set up the golden calf in Bethel, Jeroboam was confronted by a prophet who's unnamed. He's an unnamed prophet from Judah.

He goes up to the northern kingdom, and he rebukes Jeroboam for this. He curses the altar at the golden calf, and he says, this altar is going to be broken down, its ashes are going to be poured out, the priests of this altar, their bones are going to be defiled, and a man named Josiah will do all of this. What's amazing is Josiah, actually the king, did this hundreds of years later.

Josiah wasn't born yet. Josiah was the last, best king of Judah, and he actually did go up there and do those very things that this prophet said he would do. But he was actually mentioned by name by this prophet.

Amazing, this prophet, most prophets don't give names. They don't name names of people who are going to do things hundreds of years hence. Isaiah did.

He spoke of Cyrus that way. But only Isaiah and this unnamed prophet did that. And yet this guy, his name is not given, partly because he blew it.

He was pretty powerful though, because the king, Jeroboam, reached out to grab him and his hand withered. And he couldn't use his hand. And so he begged the prophet to pray for him.

The prophet prayed for him and his hand was restored. And then Jeroboam let him go. The prophet got on his donkey and started going back to Judah.

In the meantime, this had happened rather publicly, and there were some young people who were sons of an old prophet. Also unnamed. This old prophet hadn't seen a real prophet for a long time.

He's kind of an old retired prophet, and he's living in an apostate nation, and probably lonely for fellowship with the real thing. And you can tell from this story being told him, this guy was the real deal. So he told his sons to saddle the donkey, and he invited this young prophet from Judah to come over to his house to eat.

And the prophet said, no, God has told me not to eat or drink until I have done my errand and returned back to Judah, my home. And the old prophet lied to him and said, an angel of the Lord appeared to me and told me that you're supposed to forget those instructions and come eat with me. And so the prophet from Judah did.

He went to this old prophet's house. And as soon as he took a bite of food, the old prophet reviewed him and said, Thus saith the Lord, you disobeyed my words. You're not supposed to eat and drink until you get to Judah.

He says, therefore, a lion will meet you and kill you, and you won't get home alive. Sure enough, when this young prophet started home, a lion met him, killed him, didn't eat him. The whole thing is miraculous, because the lion killed him and lay down next to him, didn't touch the body after he killed it.

And the donkey didn't run away. The donkey's just staying there, too. And so passersby told the old prophet this had happened.

So he went out and collected the body. He found the lion laying there alive, the dead prophet, and the donkey standing there alive just munching on grass, I guess. A pretty

unusual situation.

And the old prophet gave the Judean prophet a decent burial and told him, Since when I die, I want to be buried next to him, because he truly spoke the word of the Lord against the golden calf. Strange story. But it underscores the fact that God expects you to obey if he tells you to do something.

Once in a while, Mormons have asked me, Would you be willing to pray and ask God if Joseph Smith is a prophet and if the Book of Mormon is the word of God? And I say, No way. He's already told me in the Bible what's true, and the Book of Mormon contradicts it. And they say, But he's a prophet.

No new prophets are allowed to come and contradict what God said. That can go badly. If you ignore what God has already said clearly and say, But an angel told me to do it.

That's what Joseph Smith claims. Well, that's what this old prophet said, too. An angel told me that you shouldn't obey the word God gave you.

That was not the right move. You better believe what God told you the first time and don't listen to false prophets. Now, the old prophet was not a false prophet.

He lied, but he had true prophetic powers. He knew that the young prophet had told the truth and apparently respected him for it. I think everyone wants to know what's going on in that story.

It's so weird. It is a weird story, but I think what it is is the old prophet living in an apostate nation really wanted to find a noncompromising person who really loved God and couldn't be corrupted. And so he tested this young prophet to see if the young prophet would stay faithful to what God told him or not.

I think he was disappointed that the younger prophet caved in and that he had to denounce him as he did. But he did so with respect for what he had earlier prophesied and wanted to be buried next to him. Very strange story.

That's 1 Kings 13. The next few chapters, 14 through 16, are successive kings. It bounces back and forth between the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom.

It mentions the various kings up to Ahab. Those kings in the north are King Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri. In the south, it's only Rehoboam's son Abijah, who is also called Abijah.

Then Eza, who reigned for 41 years. That's a long reign and a good one, by the way. And then his son Jehoshaphat, who is also a good king.

So the chapters 14 through 16 bring us up to the reign of Ahab in the north who was contemporary with Jehoshaphat in the south. Now Ahab made a real big blunder. He

married Jezebel.

Jezebel was the princess of Phoenicia. Phoenicia worshipped a god named Baal. And it was a bad marriage.

And Ahab was not a strong man, not a good man. He is a wimpy man. He is a kind of a henpecked husband.

And whatever Jezebel wanted, he went along with. And he was very wimpy. It's kind of funny reading his story because he seems like such a strange character.

He's a king, and he'll even, you know, do kingly things sometimes. But in his private life, he's really a weak-kneed guy. And his wife is the strong, evil, corrupt queen.

And she's the one who tried to kill all the prophets of Yahweh because she came from a nation that worshipped Baal. She tried to enforce Baal worship in the northern kingdom and apparently succeeded, except for the fact that a hundred of God's prophets were hidden in a cave by this guy Obadiah and kept alive. And there was another prophet that really gave Jezebel a lot of trouble.

His name was Elijah. And when Ahab and Jezebel were reigning in the north and Jehoshaphat was reigning in the south, Elijah the prophet came. And there's no introduction in terms of who his parents were or how, you know, what his early life was.

It just says Elijah the Tishbite came and came into the palace of Ahab and Jezebel and just said, It's not going to rain or dew or snow until I say so. And he left. In fact, he ran away because he knew that he'd probably be captured by Jezebel and killed.

But he ran, he hid in the woods and stuff, in the wilderness, I should say. Eventually, he found a widow woman who, because of his pronouncing a drought, a drought came for three and a half years. And because of drought, starvation started to come, and not only in Israel, but all around.

And there was a woman up to the north in Phoenicia, where Jezebel had actually come from, a widow who had a son, and she was gathering sticks to make her last bun of bread for her son or herself. And they figured, well, that's all we got. We're going to die after that.

Elijah came up to her and said, Why don't you give me some of that first, and then you'll have plenty to eat, and you won't run out of food. So she did. She baked her last bun, gave Elijah some first, and then she and her son ate.

And then she never ran out of food. Every day there was more flour in her bin and more oil in the flask that was needed to make more bread. So she and Elijah and her son had bread for the whole three and a half years.

Now, Elijah had left the country. He's up in Syria or Phoenicia, Lebanon, really, today. And so King Ahab couldn't get to him, didn't know where to look for him, and he wasn't even in Ahab's jurisdiction now.

In the meantime, there was famine throughout the land. And at the end of that three and a half years, Elijah was told by God to go and announce that it's going to rain now. But before he did that, he called for the prophets of Baal to meet him on Mount Carmel, and they had a big standoff.

The prophets of Baal were going to build an altar and put animals on it for sacrifice, but they're not to put any fire on it. And they're supposed to cry out to Baal to bring fire from heaven to see if he's a real god. Well, they did for about half the day.

They jumped around on the altar and did their hocus-pocus and cut themselves, and blood was gushing out of their arms and stuff. But Baal wasn't hearing very well or wasn't responding. Elijah actually began to mock them and said, Where's your god? Has he gone on a journey? Maybe he's sleeping.

How come he's not listening to you? And finally, when it got to be about noon, he said, Okay, you've had enough time. I'm going to build an altar to Yahweh now. So Elijah built an altar, put animals on it, poured water over it, and called out.

God and fire came down from heaven and consumed the altar, the stones, the fire, the animals, the water. Everything was supernaturally destroyed by this fire from heaven, and all the people who've been worshipping Baal fell on their faces and said, Yahweh is God. At the moment that Elijah had the crowd on his side, he said, Take the prophets of Baal and kill them.

There were 4,000 of them, and they were all put to death. Now you might say, Well, that's not very nice. But that's what the law said.

Israel was living under the law that Moses gave them. It said if anyone worships idols, they should be put to death. So these guys lived too long worshipping idols.

They finally got their just rewards, like capital punishment, to worship idols under the law of Moses. So when Jezebel heard about this, she threatened the life of Elijah, and he ran off. So when it came time at the end of the three and a half years for the rain to come, Elijah went up and he prayed for the rain to come, and it came.

The book of James makes reference to that as an example of what can be done through faithful prayer. In fact, the book of James practically ends with the example of Elijah doing that. But of course, the story is found in 1 Kings.

Now, chapters 17 through 22 are basically this whole story of Elijah and his miracles and things he did and the encounters he had. And in the last chapter of 1 Kings, chapter 22,

there's another prophet, Micaiah, who rebukes Ahab. On this occasion, Ahab is consulting with Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah.

And he says, Listen, I've lost some territory to the Syrians up at Ramoth Gilead. I want to go back and recover it, but I'm not sure I'll win this war. Would you join me? And would your armies join me? And Jehoshaphat said, Well, let's see if there's a prophet of God who can give us some insight about this.

And so Ahab had his prophets, but they're all false prophets. And they all told him what he wanted to hear. And so he brought them in and they said, Yes, go and prosper at Ramoth Gilead.

You'll win. You'll get the territory back. But Jehoshaphat, who is a godly king, thought, I'm not hearing anyone referring to Yahweh here.

Don't you have any prophets of Yahweh? And Ahab said, Yeah, there's this one guy named Micaiah, but I don't like him because he always says bad stuff. He's so negative. And Jehoshaphat said, Nonsense.

Call him in here. So they sent a messenger to get Micaiah, the prophet, to come to consult about whether he should go fight at Ramoth Gilead. And the servant that was bringing Micaiah said to him, Now all the prophets of Ahab have said to go and prosper.

You should say the same thing and it'll go well for you. And Micaiah said, I'll just say whatever the Lord tells me to say. Micaiah brought him before Ahab and Ahab said, Okay, Micaiah, how about it? Shall I go and fight at Ramoth Gilead? And Micaiah, apparently with some kind of sarcasm that was evident, said, Go and prosper.

He said the same thing the other prophets had said. But it's obvious he didn't mean it. And Ahab said, Micaiah, how many times have I had to tell you to only speak the truth to me in the name of the Lord? So Micaiah said, Oh, you want the truth? Well, I'll tell you what.

I saw a vision and I heard a voice and the hills were empty. And someone said the sheep have all scattered because the shepherd has been killed. And I saw a vision in heaven and the Lord was saying to all the angels, Who will go and make Ahab fall at Ramoth Gilead? I mean, be killed.

And different suggestions were made. Finally, a spirit came up and said, I'll convince him to go. And God said in this vision, How will you do it? And the spirit said, I'll be a lion spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And so Micaiah said to Ahab, Therefore know that the Lord has sent a lion spirit in the mouth of all these prophets so you'll be destroyed at Ramoth Gilead. Well, that's not what Ahab wanted to hear. And he said, Okay, you go to jail until I get back safe and

going.

And Micaiah's last recorded words were, If you come back safely, God hasn't spoken by me. And Ahab didn't get back safely. Ahab was killed in battle.

And that's how that story, the first Kings ends. In second Kings, we have the history continuing. And I really should probably give you a break here.

We've been going for about an hour and we don't have another full hour to go. I don't believe it. We should probably take a stretch break for you.

So we're going to do that right now.