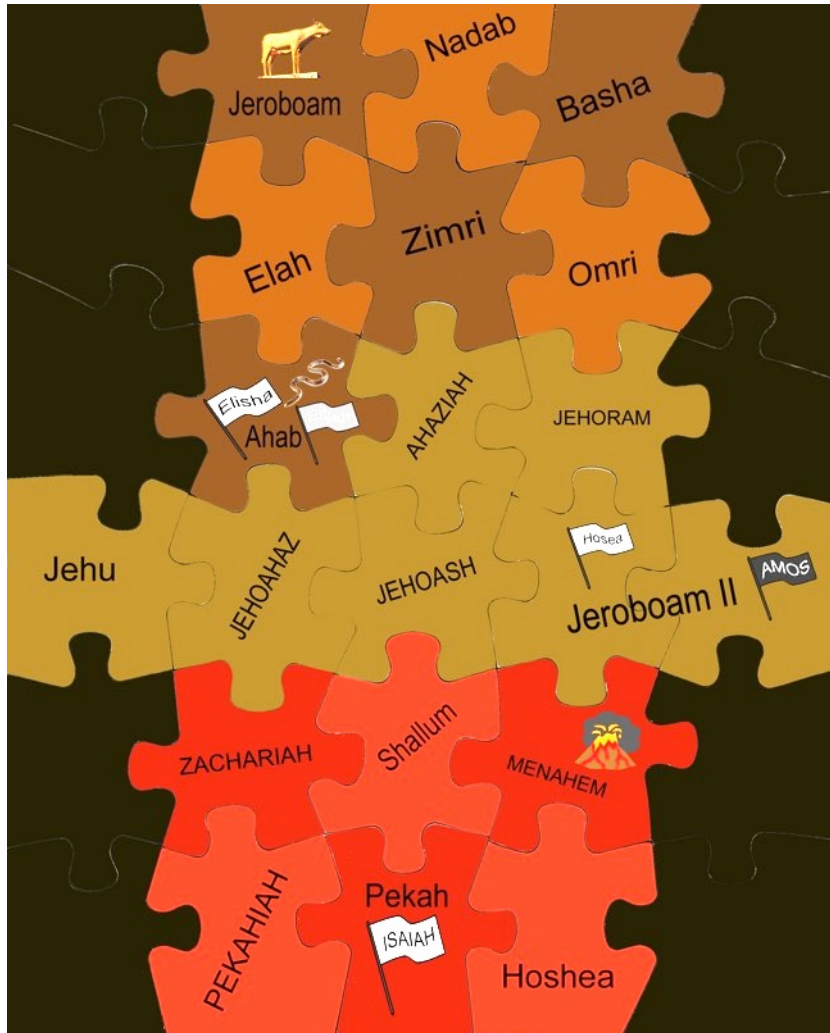


# The Bible Project

Part 1

## *Dispersed Northern Kingdom—Slouching toward Gomorrah*



Solomon:

In Bright: “The temptation was inevitable to hallow the state in the name of God and to suppose that the aims of the state and the aims of religion [God] must necessarily coincide. (Hist, 227)

Solomon began the process of identifying the blessing of God with having wealth, success and a grand kingdom. 1 K 11. 4-8 shows a thoroughly decadent Solomon worshipping the gods of his wives:

Astarte (Sidon)

Chemosh (Moab)

Molech (Ammon) – on Mt. Olives

***Solomon’s pursuit of success, as if it were God’s blessing, led directly to rebellion of the Northern Kingdom***

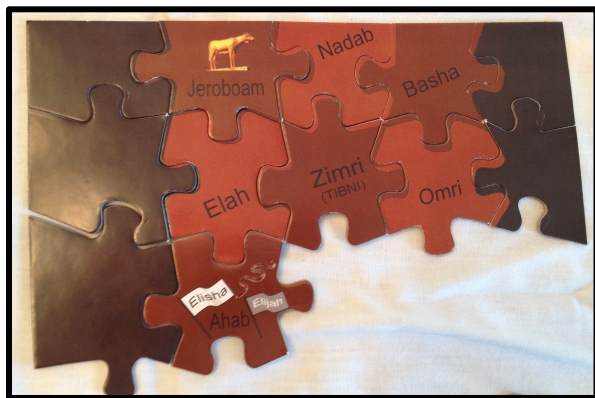
The indisputable result of Solomon’s foreign worship AHIJAH of Shiloh gave God’s promise that Jeroboam (Ephraim) would reign over 10 tribes and, though Solomon had promoted Jeroboam to head of forced labor, he sensed his incipient disloyalty and drove him into hands of the rising power of Shishak in Egypt, who protected Jeroboam trying to make trouble for the Israelite empire.

At exactly this point of forced labor the kingdom split through the foolishness of Rheoboam.

His Forced Labor Chief Adoram was stoned and Jeroboam was anointed King of North (1K 12.20)

### THREE ERAS IN NORTHERN KINGDOM HISTORY

- **Brown Section – Age of civil strife: Jeroboam I – Ahab**
- **Golden Section – Age of Wealth & Prosperity: Ahaziah – Jeroboam II**
- **Red Section – Age of Rapid Decline: Zechariah -- Hoshea**



**BIG IDEA BROWN: Civil strife** delayed by Shemaiah (1K 12.21-24) did break out (1K 14.30, 15.16 – Ramah) Until menace from Syrian King (1K 22.1-4, 29) forced **alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat** – See chart.

Remember that Civil War is the most horrible of All Catastrophes

[Prophets – throwback to the old means of leading God’s people – hardly accidental that on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line were Prophets who supported the split of the kingdom.]

Look at the place where Rehoboam had to come to be confirmed in the north == Shechem.

Shechem became Jeroboam’s first capital → Tirzah just 7 miles north.

Jeroboam had formidable task to unite the Northern Kingdom and to give it a separate identity:

- 1 Capital
- 2 Administration – probably continued Solomon’s system
- 3 Military – conscription like Solomon
- 4 Religion

### Golden Calf on Jeroboam – Dan & Bethel Shrines de-emphasize Jerusalem

Because religion had come to be associated with the reason for being of the state, Jeroboam had to be particularly sharp on establishing a credible Northern Kingdom Worship Plan

He comes up with Shrines at Dan and Bethel – extreme north and south in land

He is a REFORMER[!] – he goes back to the bull symbol from Ex 32.

Probably this should not be thought of as an idol in the strict sense, but as a sort of way to say the whole land is sacred, like the space between the cherubim on the holy of holies. Judah might have a few square yards of holiness, but look God is enthroned on our whole land – holy of holies.

Advantage: Everybody could participate in this kind of worship.

Problem: Bulls were also adaptable to all forms of worship:

Baal is pictured by the Canaanites as enthroned on Bulls.

And the EX 32 precedent cuts against him – because of God’s rejection of that attempt.

So Ahijah rejects Jeroboam I, like Samuel rejects Saul (1K 14.7ff.)

AND THE NORTHERN KINGDOM BECOMES A **BANANA REPUBLIC** WITH CONSTANT INTRIGUE, REBEL AND COUPS D’ETAT. ISRAEL HAS NO STABLE DYNASTY.

In addition John Bright makes clear that in the split the empire of Solomon/David disintegrates:

Damascus – seizes independence

Moab—has to be re-conquered by Omri – according to the Moabite Stone

Ammon

Judah only holds on to Gath of Philistines

Judah fortifies Jerusalem by capturing Benjamin

Shishak – ravages whole land – even though Kings does not say that – stele is found at Megiddo.

Fortunately Shishak is forced by home weakness to withdraw – not by either Israel or Judah.

Economy suffers – no tribute, no trade routes

Jeroboam dies, Nadab his son inherits throne for two years but done in by Palace Conspiracy led by Baasha  
Assassination at Gibbethon where Israel was fighting the Philistines again. Jehu the prophet predicts his  
downfall.

Ahijah the Shilonite had predicted this. So we now see the prophets being King-makers or un-makers in  
North Kingdom.

Baasha follows Jeroboam’s religious policies and his son Elah succeeds him but not for long (2 yrs)

Zimri Chariot general kills him in Tirzah at a party.

Zimri was king for a week! Committed suicide and saved OMRI the trouble.

It took Omri several [4?] years to consolidate his power. [Conflict with Tibni]

## **ASCENDENCY OF Syria threatens Baasha→ Omri – Egypt in decline**

Baasha attacks Benjamin and fortifies RAMAH 5 miles north of Jerusalem—BORDER WAR W/JUDAH  
ASA of Judah then bribes Ben-hadad I of Damascus (SYRIA) to break treaty with Baasha and harry North  
Galilee so that ASA could recapture RAMAH for the south.

Syrians then take over Trans-Jordan north of the Yarmuk more or less

Ben-hadad II attacks westward all the way to **Tyre and makes treaty with Phoenicians there**. Dedicates  
stele to Baal Melqart at Aleppo as marker of treaty. SYRIANS ALLY WITH PHOENICIANS.

**Over the historical horizon, Assyria** is rising. Ashur-nasirpal II made frightfulness an instrument of state  
and conquered Aramean--SYRIAN kingdoms all the way to the Mediterranean where he “washed his  
weapons in the sea.” Then he withdraws leaving opportunity for Omri to expand at Syria’s expense.

Omri’s foreign policy: modeled on David’s

- 1 internal peace
- 2 friendly relations with Judah
- 3 close ties with Phoenicia
- 4 strong hand against east – especially the Syrians [Arameans].

Implementation of this policy – difficult to give in chronological order

1. Alliance with Ittobaal (Ethbaal) of Tyre (priest-king) → marriage of Jezebel (“princess of baal?”) to Omri’s son Ahab.

Tyre at height of colonial expansion – Carthage was founded later in the century

[**Carthage** *An ancient city and state of northern Africa on the Bay of Tunis northeast of modern Tunis. It was founded by the Phoenicians in the ninth century B.C. and became the center of Carthaginian power in the Mediterranean after the sixth century B.C. The city was destroyed by the Romans at the end of the Third Punic War (146 B.C.) but was rebuilt by Julius Caesar and later (A.D. 439-533) served as capital of the Vandals before its virtual annihilation by the Arabs (698 AD).*]

2. Alliance with Jehoshaphat – Marries daughter Athaliah to Jehoram, Jehoshaphat’s son – military and commercial – tried to start up trade through Ezion-geber to recapture routes of Solomonic resource gathering.

Recaptured all of Trans-Jordan except Ammon

Eventual alliance with Damascus

Vassal of Ben-hadad

Later conquered Ben-hadad in Trans-Jordan near Aphek? Spared Ben-hadad and makes alliance with him – to dismay of prophets [1K 20.35]

Assyria attacked [not in Bible] coalition of Syria, Judah, Israel, etc at **Qarqar 853 BC**,

Ahab sent 2000 chariots & 10K infantry and Assyria stopped for 5 years.

Internal situation – external alliances created internal tensions that will crack dynasty.

Socioeconomic situation – Material prosperity

Best evidence was new capital of Samaria – high hill, defensible, purchased by Omri

[1K 16.24 – like Jerusalem crown property.

The best fortifications in Palestine

Ivory inlays – like Ivory house Ahab said to have built [1K 22.39]

Second residence at Jezreel—the Summer Palace

Fortified Megiddo & Hazor with tunnels to springs.

Ahab or Omri also built the stables at Megiddo for 450 horses. Great ingenuity for offensive weaponry and battle gear such as the chariots on the battlefield at Qarqar.

But society began to deteriorate. No telling how many people lost land and freedom in the drought. Poor at mercy of rich. Usurious interest rates, led to mortgaging of land, slavery of children. Practices denounced by Amos a century later hardly developed overnight.

Ahab, Naboth and Jezebel show different conceptions of monarchy – Jezebel has absolute monarch in mind – Ahab still held to the rights of the subjects given them by covenant. But he capitulated.

“Israel was full of people who, like Jezebel, had no conception of covenant law, or like Ahab, little concern for it.” [Bright, 245]

*Burke--Nothing is so fatal to religion as indifference which is, at least, half infidelity.*

## **Snake on Ahab segment – Baalism cult gains solid foothold in Israel in Ahab’s reign.**

### **RELIGIOUS CRISIS**

Jezebel: A worshipper of Tyrian deities, Baal Melqart and Asherah, Jezebel was naturally allowed, together with her retainers and merchants to practice her native religion. –

Solomon had done it ...

ONLY THE NARROW-MINDED OBJECTED.

Jezebel was missionary for Baal. – apparently sought to supplant Yahweh with Baal.  
By this time many would have welcomed a state policy officially including Baal.

Enemy from without replaced by enemy from within.

See Bright Comment.

Now the Canaanites absorbed by David were at best – half-baptized Yahwists – limping  
between two opinions – 1K 18.21.

*question: what was the cause of this kind of popular weakness in Israel?*

Baal prophets became the court prophets –divided prophets – Micaiah against the rest. Elijah  
alone against the 450 prophets of Baal.

### **Elijah and Elisha banners on Ahab segment – These Prophets denounce Baalism**

Elijah – Nazarite probably, from Gilead – declared holy war on the pagan state – throwback to the  
God of Sinai who brooked no rivals.

Ahab dies fighting the Syrians – had success at Qarqar which may have set the allies to  
quarreling? Killed by a stray arrow while in disguise after luring Jehoshaphat into his ill-  
fated scheme.



### **BIG IDEA: GOLDEN PERIOD: Wealth & Prosperity**

Sons – Ahaziah – 850-49 reigned for a few months, fell and died.

Jehoram 849-843 [12 yrs?] sensed the resentment – tried to remove some of the pagan cult – but  
kept Jeroboam's practices. BUT Jezebel still lived.

### **Prophet banners in black and white – Prophet voices of doom and hope**

Elisha and the Prophets continued to oppose the Omride dynasty.

Moab rebelled. Damascus [Syria] kept Israel engaged for 8 years after Ahab fell at Ramoth  
Gilead.

The war with Syria showed that the foreign policy internally and externally was losing its  
power in Israel.

The military leads the purge under Jehu – the fact that this was the quarter from which rejection came  
was indicative of ineffectual leadership and a resentment of the importation of “soft, foreign  
ways.”

Elisha takes advantage of Jehoram's absence --- healing wounds in Jezreel to anoint Jehu—soldiers  
acclaim him – Prophetic designation → popular acclamation pattern.



Jehu in 843 kills Jehoram and his cousin Ahaziah, king of Judah

Jehu proceeds to Jezreel and kills Jezebel and all others there.

Then to Samaria and destroys delegation of Judah before a great slaughter at the Baal Melqart temple built there by Jezebel – unspeakable and inexcusable brutality leads to “disastrous consequences.”

But Baal put down. Yahweh raised up—at least officially.

**Jehu founds a dynasty that lasted a century – longest in Israel’s history 843-815.**

Results of Jehu’s purge:

Alliance with Phoenicia is destroyed;

Alliance with Judah is destroyed – Athaliah reigns at least temporarily there.

Lost source of commerce at Phoenicia and only dependable military ally in Judah.

Crippled internally

Must have created tremendous recriminations from indiscriminate bloodletting.

Hosea says Jehu went too far. (Hos 1.4—I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel.)

Destroyed public servants, who were also servants of Baal.

Jehu shows no evidence of leadership or administration – nor was he God’s man.

Syria became ascendant under Hazael who had to deal with Assyrians who did not come to stay.

Jehu did pay tribute to Assyria at this time, but real enemy was Hazael of Syria.

Jehu lost entire Trans-Jordan to Syria.

Jehoahaz 815-801 was restricted to a body guard for his army, 10 chariots and 50 horsemen + 10K infantry.

Israel became a virtual dependency of Damascus under Jehoahaz

Amos 1 – “taken advantage of by all her neighbors.”

## **Amos & Hosea banners on Jeroboam II segment – they warn against spiritual laxness during Jeroboam II’s age of gold**

Resurgence in 8<sup>th</sup> Century

World events favored a time of peace for Israel

Damascus defeated by now seriously **rising Assyrian empire** – Adad-nirari III [802BC]

Israel paid tribute but was not attacked.

Jehoash [802-786 BC] recovered all the cities lost by his father – no details in 2 K 13.25.

he even conquered Amaziah of Judah and sacked Jerusalem, but left Amaziah in place.

Jeroboam II (786-746 BC) – Stable and able leader

Though we know nothing of his battles – 2 are alluded to in Amos 6.13—Jeroboam II was able to place his borders at Solomon’s borders –defeated Damascus and retook north of Yarmuk t

Trans-Jordan south to the Sea of the Arabah – Amos 6.14; Ammonites and Moabites ejected – Israel may have taken all the way to south end of Dead Sea.

Judah prospered likewise into the full size of Solomon’s empire—so trade, taxes and economic benefit were fully as great as Solomon’s – Tyre, as with Solomon and the Omrides was drawn into treaty.

Prosperity like no one remembered came to be in Samaria

Splendid buildings and costly ivory inlays of Phoenician or Damascene origin have been unearthed at Samaria – Amos did not exaggerate the luxury of the upper classes.

Population was probably at its greatest density ever in this period.

Archeology reveals industry:

Weaving and dying at Debir, eg.

*Are you better off than ever – YES*

Amos and Hosea reveal a somewhat different reality than the golden surface – like a golden painted casket – society in an advanced state of decay.

State did nothing to alleviate extreme poverty

Amos: egregious injustices and shocking contrast between wealth and poverty.

Harsh system made harsher by greed, falsification of weights, various legal dodges and dishonest practices – can't wait to finish temple worship to chew up the poor.

People no longer knew the covenant of God, no longer lived in a society where that could be communicated, tribal ties were gone, and secular monarchy with much Canaanite and foreign influence had eroded even covenant concepts given by Moses in such detail.

Yahwism may have been the nominal religion, but its practice had suffered so many additions as to be unrecognizable – as practiced at Dan and Bethel

Samarian name lists contain almost as many names made with Baal as with Yahweh. – Contemporary Judah by this time yields no such compound names!

Even the official state religion had absorbed rites of pagan origin (Amos 2.7f, 5.26, Hosea *passim*) and what was worse, accorded the cult the wholly pagan function of ***appeasing the Deity by ritual and sacrifice*** in order to secure the peace of *status quo* --Bright, 261.

Priests had become pagans, too. Religion was an instrument of the state – so no rebuke was forthcoming. And no effective rebuke from prophetic orders either.

The optimism of the times was seen to be God's blessing – blessing was sought, obligations forgotten. Notion had established itself that the bond between God and people was something in the nature of things, assuring the nation unconditionally of the divine favor. Covenant obligation, insofar as it had not lost all meaning, was conceived to belong to the worship setting – met by elaborate ritual and lavish shrines.—Bright 261,62

Amos in particular attacks the heresy that Yahweh's election of Israel guarantees her protection – (Chs. 1, 2 3.1f, 9.7)

Hosea warns of future ruin for Israel's breaking of the marriage covenant with God—as Hosea's Gomer had broken his marriage covenant with him.

But he does foresee the time when God, after disaster, renews his covenant.



**BIG IDEA: RED PERIOD: rapid decline**

## **Erupting volcano on Menahem segment – Assyrian –violent threat**

Jeroboam dies 746 BC Anarchy prevails in Israel at the resurgence of Assyria

Tiglath-Pileser III [T-P III] rises 745-727 BC

By 738 T-P III is taking tribute from Israel – Judean coalition could not stop him.

T-PIII did not do tribute-gathering campaigns, but conquest campaigns. – he incorporated a novel approach to conquered lands – when they rebelled he simply deported their residents.

Jeroboam II's son Zechariah – murdered after 6 months by Shallum ben Jabesh.

Shallum killed 1 month later by Menahem ben Gadi – country plunged into civil war.

## **Tribute money to Assyria to maintain semblance of peace**

Menahem [745-737] gave T-PIII tribute from head tax levied on every landholder. Menahem relied on the Assyrians to shore up his dynasty, but when his son Pekahiah [737-6] came to the throne, the populace rose; officer assassinated him – Pekah ben Remaliah

## **Pekah seeks freedom from military alliance with Syria**

Rezin of Damascus, Philistines, backed Pekah to overthrow Menahem – may have hoped for Egyptian help. Pekah (737-732) becomes leader in anti-Assyrian coalition which led to war with Judah and set in motion the death throes of Israel.

Hosea – descriptive of the utter moral collapse of Israel – like an oven their hearts burn with intrigue Hos 4.1-3; 7.1-7, 8.4, 10.3 f.

Pekah and Rezin attack Judah under Jotham and Ahaz [who burns his son]. Jerusalem is besieged. Edom revolts against Judah and Ahaz of Judah calls on his friend T-PIII for help. Edom joins fight from east, Philistines from southwest

## **Isaiah banner on Pekah – Isaiah cites futility of military alliance and prophesies destruction of Northern Kingdom**

—Isaiah 9 shows the perspective from Judah – Rezin and Pekah are cigar butts – Isaiah warns against involving T-PIII – trust God, but Ahaz is unwilling (incapable) to do that.

734 T-PIII moves down the coast to Gaza strip and River of Egypt to cut off any help that might come from a meddling Egypt.

733 takes Galilee and Trans-Jordan and deports some Israelites.

Israel saved from immediate annihilation by Hoshea's coup d'état. Hoshea surrendered to T-PIII and gave tribute and ruled as Assyrian Vassal – [as if Obama had paid off Trump to remain President.]

All Israel that was left was a little of Ephraim and part of Manasseh.

Meanwhile, T-PIII dies and Shalmanezar V begins to rule.

## **Hoshea attempts military alliance with Egypt to rid of Assyrian Threat**

Hoshea decides to withhold tribute, make coalition with Egypt and rebel. [What was he thinking???



The “So” whom Hoshea approaches in Egypt may not even have been a king

724 BC Shalmanezzer V attacks –Hoshea gives himself up

Samaria resists and Shalmanezzer V dies

### **Say “Goodbye Hoshea” – full scale destruction during Hoshea’s reign**

Sargon II becomes Assyrian king and captures Samaria in 722 and destroys her

### **Overall portrayal – Assyria destroys Northern kingdom in 722 BC**

Sargon claimed to have defeated and scattered 27,290 people

Israel is no more.

Assyria settles refugees from Babylonia; Hamath and elsewhere in Samaria under Assyrian direct rule.

Israel is no more → **SAMARITANS ENTER HISTORY’S STAGE.**