

Lesson 3: Sharing



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The historical books are mainly in the second fourth of the Bible.

The Old Testament: History

With the death of King Solomon (1 Kings 11), the time of the unified monarchy came to an end. Because of disputes in the royal house, God's people were split into a Northern Kingdom (Israel) and a Southern Kingdom (Judah), both of which began to fall into idolatry.

Biblical Time Period: Division

This period was the time of many prophets, who spoke the Word of God to the leaders and people of both kingdoms. God criticized the people for following pagan idols, and he warned them of the coming disaster resulting from their sins.

Ahab, for example, was the seventh king of Israel. Both he and his queen, Jezebel, were greedy and idolatrous, leading the people to sin and pagan worship. They erected a temple for the false god Baal in Samaria. God sent Elijah to confront them about their worship of idols.

Introduction

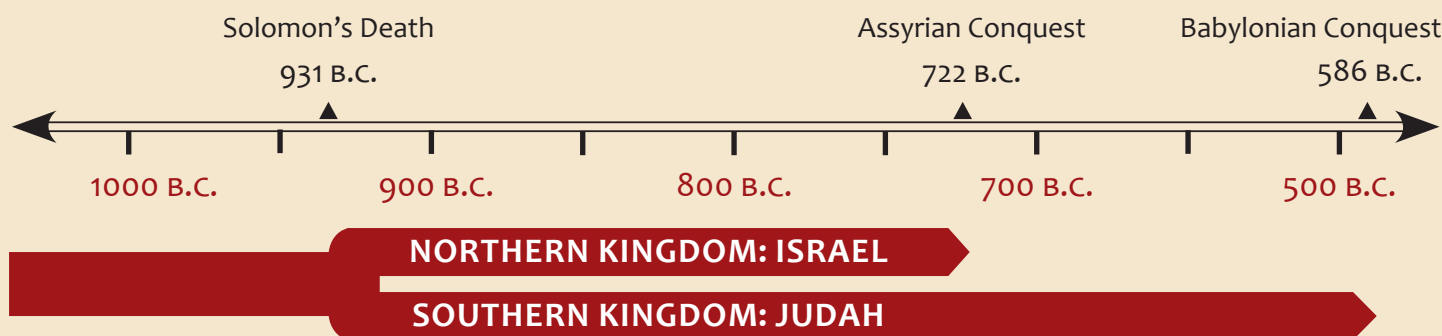
When Elijah spoke against King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, he had to flee to the wilderness, where God sustained him during a severe famine. God sent him to the house of a widow in Zerephath, whose generosity to the prophet sustained her and her son as well.

Read: 1 Kings 17:1-16

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

After King Solomon died in 931 B.C., the kingdom split into two. The Northern Kingdom, called Israel, had its capital in Samaria. The Southern Kingdom, called Judah, had its capital in Jerusalem.



Discuss: 1 Kings 17:1-16

1. Why was the prophet Elijah hiding out by the Cherith brook? Who was he afraid of? How did Elijah's faithfulness to God get him in trouble with leaders in his day?
2. In what ways or by what means did God provide for Elijah's needs in the wilderness? Would you call this a miracle? What eventually caused the brook to dry up?
3. A widow is a woman whose husband has died. Why was the widow in Zarephath collecting sticks? What did Elijah ask of the woman?
4. Under the circumstances, do you think this was a rude request? Why or why not? What did Elijah know that the woman didn't?
5. How much food did woman say that she and her son had to live on? Do you think there were other people in that town in that same situation? Why didn't Elijah go to them?
6. In verse 14, what did Elijah tell the woman that God had promised? Do you think that the woman believed God's promise? Or do you think she doubted and just went along with it anyway?
7. What does this story show us about God's faithfulness to his Word? How do you know that you can trust the promises God has made to you?
8. Read Psalm 111:1-6. What attitude does the writer of the psalm have? What reasons does he give for his confidence and faith?

Where in the World?

The border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah ran from the north edge of the Salt Sea at the River Jordan to the western coast.

- a) The Kingdom of Judah consisted of that tribe's land along with lands in the south that had previously belonged to Simeon and Benjamin.
- b) The Kingdom of Israel consisted of the remaining ten northern tribes: Dan, Ephraim, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Asher, Naphtali, Issachar, and Zebulun. Simeon is also counted among the tribes of the north.

Northern and Southern Prophets

The biblical prophets are often distinguished by the region in which they operated, either Israel in the North or Judah in the South. Here are some examples:

Northern Prophets

Elijah, Elisha
Amos, Hosea

Southern Prophets

Micah, Isaiah
Ezekiel, Jeremiah

