

# KINGS

## Introduction

*The two books of Kings narrate the history of the People from David's death till the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon. It is a sad history, a history of infidelity and decadence.*

*David is followed by one of his sons, Solomon. Splendid and full of wisdom he builds the fabulous Temple of Jerusalem. But his alliances with other countries and his marriages with foreign princesses introduce in his court corruption and the cult to foreign gods. From here on, the books narrate the infidelities of Israel along with the misfortunes that follow. The kingdom is divided into two: Israel on the North and Judah on the South. Both kingdom carry out an agitated and vulgar existence, until finally they are destroyed by the great powers of Mesopotamia: Assyria and Babylon.*

*This history is reflected in the books of the Prophets, who are constantly advising Israel about the danger of their infidelity to Yahweh and the terrible consequences that awaits them unless they convert and fulfill the Covenant*

## 1 KINGS

### David's testament

**2**<sup>1</sup>When David was about to die, he gave his son Solomon this instruction:

<sup>2</sup>—I am about to go the way of all creatures. Be strong and show yourself a man! <sup>3</sup>Keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and walk in his ways. Keep his statutes, his commands, his ordinances and declarations written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in whatever you do and wherever you go. <sup>4</sup>If you do so, Yahweh will fulfill the promise he made to me: 'If your sons take care to walk before me faithfully with their whole heart and their whole soul, you shall always have one of your descendants on the throne of Israel.'

<sup>10</sup>Then David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup>David reigned over Israel for forty years: seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup>So Solomon sat on the throne of David his father and his reign was firmly established.

*After Moses, David will be the most famous personage in the history of Israel. He will be the symbol of God's fidelity as it is expressed in the book of Psalms. You can read from Psalms 16 to 50, 67 to 72, 78 and 89.*

### Vision of Solomon

**3**<sup>1</sup>Solomon entered into a marriage alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own palace, Yahweh's House and the wall around Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>The king used to sacrifice at Gibeon, the great high place; on the altar there he had offered a thousand burnt offerings. <sup>5</sup>It was in Gibeon, during the night, that Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream and said:

—Ask what you want me to give you.

<sup>6</sup>Solomon answered:

—You have shown your servant David my father a great and steadfast love because he served you faithfully and was righteous and sincere towards you. You have given him proof of your steadfast love in making a son of his sit on his throne this day. <sup>7</sup>And now, O Yahweh my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a young boy who does not know how to undertake anything. <sup>8</sup>Meantime, your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen—a people so great that they can neither be numbered nor counted.

<sup>9</sup>Give me, therefore, an understanding mind in governing your people that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to govern this multitude of people of yours?

<sup>10</sup>Yahweh was pleased that Solomon had made this request. <sup>11</sup>And he told him:

<sup>12</sup>—I shall grant you your request. I now give you a wise and discerning mind such as no one has had before you nor anyone after you shall ever have.

<sup>13</sup>I will also give you what you have not asked for, both wealth and fame; and no king shall be your equal during your lifetime. <sup>14</sup>Moreover, if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and commands, as your father David did, I shall give you long life.

<sup>15</sup>Solomon awoke and knew that this was a dream. So he went to Jerusalem and, standing before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, he offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and gave a feast for all his servants.

## The judgment of Solomon

<sup>16</sup>Then two harlots came to the king and stood before him. <sup>17</sup>One of the two women said:

—Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a child while she was there with me. <sup>18</sup>Three days after my child was born, this woman also gave birth. We were alone, and there was no one in the house but the two of us. <sup>19</sup>Then this woman's son died during the night because she lay on him. <sup>20</sup>So during the night, she got up, took my son from my side while I slept, laid it beside her and her dead son beside me. <sup>21</sup>When I got up in the morning to nurse my child, I saw it was dead. But when I looked at it closely in the morning, I saw that it was not my child.

<sup>22</sup>The other woman said:

—No, the living child is mine; the dead child is yours. To this, the first replied:

—Not so, the dead child is yours; the living child is mine.

And they quarreled this way in the king's presence.

<sup>23</sup>Then the king said:

—One says: 'This is my son who is alive; your son is dead'; the other says: 'That is not so, your son is dead; my son is the live one.'

<sup>24</sup>And the king said:

—Bring me a sword.

When they brought the king a sword, <sup>25</sup>he gave this order:

—Divide the child in two and give half to one, half to the other.

<sup>26</sup>Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king out of pity for her son:

—Oh, my lord, give her the living child but spare its life.

The other woman, however, said:

—It shall be neither mine nor yours. Divide it!

<sup>27</sup>Then the king spoke:

—Give the living child to the first woman and spare its life. She is its mother.

<sup>28</sup>When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had given, they revered at him, seeing that God's wisdom was in him to render justice.

## **Riches and wisdom**

**4** <sup>21</sup>Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and on to the frontiers of Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>God gave Solomon great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sand on the shore, <sup>30</sup>so that his wisdom surpassed that of all the people of the east and of the Egyptians.

<sup>31</sup>He was wiser than any man; wiser than Ethan, the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol and Darda, sons of Mahol; and his fame spread among all the surrounding nations.

## **Covenant with Hiram of Tyre**

**5** <sup>1</sup>Now, Hiram King of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that he had been anointed king in place of his father. For David had always been Hiram's friend. <sup>2</sup>Solomon then sent this message to Hiram:

<sup>3</sup>—You know that David my father could not build a temple for Yahweh his God because his enemies were at war with him until the time when Yahweh gave him victory over them. <sup>4</sup>But now Yahweh my God has given me peace on all sides and there is no enemy or calamity that afflicts us. <sup>5</sup>And so I intend to build a temple for Yahweh my God as Yahweh told David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set upon your throne, shall build the House for my Name.' <sup>6</sup>Now, therefore, give orders to have cedars of Lebanon cut for me. My servants will join yours and I will pay your servants the wages you set, for you know that none of us can cut timber like the Sidonians.

## **Construction of the temple**

**6** <sup>1</sup>In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites left the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, Solomon began to build the temple of Yahweh. <sup>2</sup>The House which King Solomon built for Yahweh was sixty cubits long, twenty wide, and thirty high. <sup>3</sup>The vestibule fronting the Sanctuary was twenty cubits long from side to side, the width of the temple, and ten cubits deep in front of the House.

<sup>37</sup>In the month of Ziv of the fourth year, the foundation of Yahweh's House was laid. <sup>38</sup>In the month of Bul, the eighth month of the eleventh year, the House was finished, complete and according to all specifications. It took Solomon seven years to build it.

## **Dedication of the temple**

**8** <sup>1</sup>Then Solomon assembled before him in Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, as well as the leaders of the ancestral houses of the Israelites, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, which is Zion.

<sup>2</sup>All the Israelites assembled near King Solomon in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests carried the ark of Yahweh <sup>4</sup>and brought it up together with the Tent of Meeting and all the holy vessels that were in the tent.

After the priests and Levites had brought them up, <sup>5</sup>King Solomon with the entire congregation of Israel that had assembled before him and were with him before the Ark, sacrificed so many sheep and oxen that they could neither be counted nor numbered.

<sup>6</sup>Then the priests laid the ark of the covenant of Yahweh in its place in the inner sanctuary of the House—the Most Holy Place—underneath the wings of the cherubim. <sup>7</sup>The cherubim had their wings spread out over the place of the ark, providing a covering above the ark and its poles. <sup>8</sup>The poles were so long that their ends were seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary but not from the outside. <sup>9</sup>There was nothing in the ark except the two tables of stone which Moses placed there at Horeb, where Yahweh made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>10</sup>And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, such a cloud filled Yahweh's House <sup>11</sup>that the priests could not continue to minister. Indeed, the glory of Yahweh filled his House.

## **New apparition and oracle**

**9** <sup>1</sup>After Solomon had finished building Yahweh's House, the royal palace, and everything he wanted to build, <sup>2</sup>Yahweh appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>Yahweh said to him:

—I have heard the prayer and supplication you made before me. I have consecrated this House you have built, that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there forever. <sup>4</sup>As for you, if you will live in my presence, the way your father David did, with sincerity and uprightness, doing all that I have commanded you and keeping my decrees and laws, <sup>5</sup>I will affirm your kingship in Israel forever, as I promised your father David when I said, 'You shall always have someone from your family on the throne of Israel.'

<sup>6</sup>But if you or your children refuse to follow me, and disobey my commands and laws which I have set before you; if they serve and worship other gods, <sup>7</sup>then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them and I will remove from my sight this House I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. <sup>8</sup>This House will be reduced to a heap of stones and everyone passing by will be astonished and jeer: 'Why has Yahweh done such a thing to this land and to this House?' <sup>9</sup>Then people will answer: 'Because they abandoned Yahweh their God who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods, worshiping and serving them. That is why Yahweh has brought all this evil on them.'

## **Visit of the queen of Sheba**

**10** <sup>1</sup>The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame, and came to test him with difficult questions. <sup>2</sup>She arrived in Jerusalem with a vast retinue and with camels loaded with spices, an abundance of gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she told him all that she had on her mind <sup>3</sup>and Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing that the king could not explain to her.

<sup>4</sup>And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the palace he had built, <sup>6</sup>she said to the king:

—All that I heard in my own land concerning you and your wisdom was true. <sup>7</sup>But I did not believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes. And what did I see! I was told only half the story; for your wisdom and wealth surpass the report I heard.

<sup>8</sup>Fortunate are your wives! Fortunate are your servants who are ever in your presence and hear your wisdom! <sup>9</sup>Blessed be Yahweh your God, who has looked kindly on you and has put you on the throne of Israel! Because of Yahweh's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so that you may dispense justice and righteousness.

<sup>10</sup>Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in abundance, and precious stones. Such an abundance of spices as those which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon was never again seen. <sup>13</sup>King Solomon, in turn, gave the queen of Sheba all that she desired and all that he in his generosity wanted to give her. Then she went back to her own land together with her servants.

## Idolatry of Solomon

**11** <sup>1</sup>King Solomon loved many foreign women besides the daughter of Pharaoh. There were Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women <sup>2</sup>from nations about which Yahweh had commanded the Israelites, "You shall not marry them; nor shall they marry you, lest they win over your heart to their gods." Solomon, however, imitated these peoples because of his love. <sup>4</sup>In Solomon's old age, his wives led him astray to serve other gods and, unlike his father David, his heart was no longer wholly given to Yahweh his God.

<sup>5</sup>For he served Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the idol of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup>He did what displeased Yahweh and, unlike his father David, was unfaithful to him. <sup>7</sup>Solomon even built a high place for Chemosh, the idol of Moab, on the mountain east of Jerusalem and also for Molech, the idol of the Ammonites. <sup>8</sup>He did the same for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

<sup>9</sup>Yahweh became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from Yahweh, the God of Israel. <sup>10</sup>Yahweh appeared to him twice and commanded him not to follow other gods. But he did not obey Yahweh's command. <sup>11</sup>Therefore, Yahweh said to Solomon:

—Since this has been your choice and you have kept neither my Covenant nor the statutes I commanded you, I will take the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. <sup>12</sup>Nevertheless, I will not do this during your lifetime for the sake of your father David; I will take it from your son. <sup>13</sup>But I will not take it all; I will reserve one tribe for your son for the sake of David my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen.

<sup>42</sup>Solomon reigned over all Israel in Jerusalem for forty years. <sup>43</sup>Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David; Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

## THE SCHISM: THE TWO KINGDOMS

### The schism

**12** <sup>1</sup>Rehoboam went to Shechem because all Israel had gathered there to make him king.

<sup>16</sup>All Israel realized that the king refused to listen to them, and they answered the same way:

—What have we to do with David?

Is the son of Jesse from our tribes?

Let the son of David deal with his own and you, people of Israel, go back to your homes!

And so the Israelites left for their homes. <sup>17</sup>Only the Israelites who dwelt in the cities of Judah let Rehoboam reign over them.

<sup>20</sup>As Jeroboam had returned and was with them at the assembly, having been called by them, they made him king of Israel. And so, with the exception of the tribe of Judah, no one followed the house of David.

<sup>21</sup>When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he called together all the people of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, numbering a hundred and eighty thousand select warriors, to fight against the people of Israel in a bid to restore the kingship of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. <sup>22</sup>But the word of God was directed to Shemaiah, the man of God:

<sup>23</sup>—Give Rehoboam, son of Solomon, king of Judah, and all the people of Judah and Benjamin, and the rest of the people, this message from Yahweh: <sup>24</sup>‘You shall not go up to fight against your kinsmen, the Israelites. Let everyone return to his home for I am the author of this.’

When they heard this word they went back home according to what Yahweh had ordered.

## **The schismatic cult**

<sup>25</sup>Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. Then, he set out to fortify Penuel.

<sup>26</sup>Jeroboam thought, “The kingdom could return to the house of David. <sup>27</sup>Should this people go up to offer sacrifices in Yahweh’s House in Jerusalem, their heart would turn again to their master, Rehoboam king of Judah. They would kill me and go back to him.”

<sup>28</sup>And so the king sought advice and made two golden calves. Then he said to the people:

—You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>He put one of these in Bethel, the other in Dan.

## **Ahab of Israel (874–852)**

**16** <sup>29</sup>Ahab, son of Omri became king in the thirty-eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel in Samaria for twenty-two years.

<sup>30</sup>Ahab did what displeased Yahweh, even more than all those who preceded him. <sup>31</sup>Apparently the example and the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat were not enough for him; he even married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. So he served Baal and worshiped him. <sup>32</sup>He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal which he built in Samaria <sup>33</sup>and proceeded to make an Asherah. So Ahab did everything that could make Yahweh angry, even more than any of the kings of Israel who ruled before him.

<sup>34</sup>During his reign, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. On laying its foundation he sacrificed Abirma, his firstborn. And when he set up the gates of the city, he sacrificed his youngest son, Segub, in accordance with the word of Yahweh spoken through Joshua, son of Nun.

## **ELIJAH’S CYCLE**

### **Elijah exiled. First miracles**

*Here begins the cycle of the Prophets. Even though the kings and their reign provide the frame of the events, it is the figure of the prophets the one that guide the selection of the narrative material.*

*Elijah's cycle. After the introduction about the reign of Ahab, it is Elijah the protagonist. He leaves the stage to other prophets and reappears; he leaves his post to the prophet Micah but reappears again to confront the new king; he disappears completely after naming a successor.*

## **Elijah: the drought**

**17** <sup>1</sup>Now Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab:

—As Yahweh, the God of Israel whom I serve lives, neither dew shall drop nor rain fall except at my command.

<sup>2</sup>Then the word of Yahweh came to Elijah:

<sup>3</sup>—Leave this place and go eastward. Hide yourself by the brook Cherith, east of the Jordan.

<sup>4</sup>You shall drink from the brook and, for your food, I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.

<sup>5</sup>So Elijah obeyed the word of Yahweh and went to live by the brook Cherith, east of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup>There the ravens brought him bread in the morning and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. <sup>7</sup>After a while, the brook dried up because no rain had fallen in the land.

<sup>8</sup>Then Yahweh spoke to Elijah:

<sup>9</sup>—Go to Zarephath of the Sidonites and stay there. I have given word to a widow there to give you food.

<sup>10</sup>So Elijah went to Zarephath. On reaching the gate of the town, he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and said:

—Bring me a little water in a vessel that I may drink.

<sup>11</sup>As she was going to bring it, he called after her and said:

—Bring me also a piece of bread.

<sup>12</sup>But she answered:

—As Yahweh your God lives, I have no bread left but only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am just now gathering some sticks so that I may go in and prepare something for myself and my son to eat – and die.

<sup>13</sup>Elijah then said to her:

—Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said, but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me; then make some for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup>For this is the word of Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of meal shall not be emptied nor shall the jug of oil fail, until the day when Yahweh sends rain to the earth.’

<sup>15</sup>So she went and did as Elijah told her; and she had food for herself, Elijah and her son from that day on. <sup>16</sup>The jar of flour was not emptied nor did the jug of oil fail, in accordance with what Yahweh had said through Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>After this, the son of this housewife became ill. And such was his illness that he stopped breathing. <sup>18</sup>She then said to Elijah:

—What did you do, O man of God? Have you come to uncover past sins and cause my son's death?

<sup>19</sup>He answered:

—Give me your son.

Taking him from her lap, he carried him up to the upper room where he was staying and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup>Then he called on Yahweh:

—O Yahweh, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am residing by letting her son die?

<sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself on the child three times and called on Yahweh:

—O Yahweh, my God, let this child's breath return to him.

<sup>22</sup>Yahweh listened to the pleading of Elijah and the child's breath returned to him, and he lived. <sup>23</sup>Elijah then took the child and brought him down from the upper room. He gave him to his mother and said:

—See, your son is alive.

<sup>24</sup>Then the woman said to Elijah:

—Now I am certain that you are a man of God, and that your words really came from Yahweh!

## Judgment of God at Carmel

**18** <sup>1</sup>After several days (in the third year) Yahweh spoke to Elijah and said:

—Go, show yourself to Ahab that I may let it rain on the earth.

<sup>2</sup>So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab.

<sup>17</sup>On seeing Elijah, Ahab said to him:

—Is it you, the plague of Israel?

<sup>18</sup>Elijah replied:

—Who is troubling Israel? Isn't it you and your family who have disobeyed the commands of Yahweh and followed instead the Baals? <sup>19</sup>Now, therefore, give an order for the Israelites to gather before me at Mount Carmel, together with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal who are sustained by Jezebel.

<sup>20</sup>So Ahab sent for all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel.

<sup>21</sup>Then Elijah addressed the people and asked:

—How long will you follow two ways at the same time? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal is God then follow him.

The people remained silent. <sup>22</sup>So Elijah continued:

—I am the only prophet of Yahweh left here to face Baal's four hundred and fifty prophets.

<sup>23</sup>Get us two bulls. Let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood and I will do the same with the other bull. But we will not set it on fire. <sup>24</sup>Then you shall call on the name of your gods while I shall call on the name of Yahweh. The God who answers with fire is the true one.

Then the people answered:

—That is right.

<sup>25</sup>Then Elijah told the prophets of Baal:

—Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many. Then call on the name of your god lest you are left without fire!

<sup>26</sup>So they took the bull and prepared it, and they called on the name of Baal:

—Baal, answer us!

But there was no voice and no one answered them while they went on dancing on one foot around the altar they had built.

<sup>27</sup>By noontime, Elijah began to mock them:

—Shout out louder. Baal is a busy god; or he may have gone out or perhaps he has gone on a trip, or he is sleeping and must be wakened!

<sup>28</sup>So they shouted louder gashing their skin with knives, as they are used to doing, until they bled. <sup>29</sup>It was already past noon and they were still raving on until the time of the evening offering. But still there was no voice; no one answered or gave a sign of life.

<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to the people:

—Draw closer to me.

And the people drew closer to him. He then repaired the altar of Yahweh which had been thrown down. <sup>31</sup>He took twelve stones corresponding to the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob whom Yahweh had addressed saying, “Israel shall be your name.” <sup>32</sup>With these stones, he built an altar to the Name of Yahweh and dug a trench around it that would contain about thirty liters. <sup>33</sup>He then arranged the firewood, cut the bull in pieces and laid them on the wood. Then, he said:

—Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the firewood.

<sup>34</sup>He said:

—Do it again.

And they did it again.

—One more time.

And they did it a third time. <sup>35</sup>The water ran around the altar and filled the trench.

<sup>36</sup>When the time of the evening offering came, Elijah the prophet came near and said:

—O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant, doing all these things at your command. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me so that this people may know that you, O Yahweh, are God and that you are turning back their hearts to you.

<sup>38</sup>Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering, together with the wood, the stones also, and the dust; the water also dried up in the trench.

<sup>39</sup>All the people witnessed this. Then they fell on their faces and said:

—Yahweh is God! Yahweh is God!

<sup>40</sup>Then Elijah commanded them:

—Seize the prophets of Baal and let none of them escape.

And so they seized them. Then Elijah brought them down to the brook Kidron and had them slaughtered there.

<sup>41</sup>Elijah then said to Ahab:

—Go up, eat and drink, for the sound of rain is rushing in.

<sup>42</sup>So Ahab went up to eat and drink. Elijah, in the meantime, went to the top of Carmel, bowed to the ground and put his face between his knees. <sup>43</sup>Then he said to his servant:

—Go up and look in the direction of the sea.

The man went up, looked, and said:

—There is nothing.

Then Elijah said:

—Go again!

And seven times he went.

<sup>44</sup>At the seventh time, he perceived a little cloud, the size of a man’s hand, rising out of the sea. Elijah told him:

—Go, tell Ahab: Prepare your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.

<sup>45</sup>A little later the sky grew dark with clouds and wind and a strong rain fell. Ahab was riding on his way to Jezreel; <sup>46</sup>as for Elijah, the hand of Yahweh was on him, and tucking his cloak in his belt, he ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

## **Elijah at Horeb mountain**

**19** <sup>1</sup>Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Jezebel then sent word to Elijah:

—May I be cursed if by this time tomorrow I have not dealt with you as you dealt with them.

<sup>3</sup>Elijah was scared and fled for his life. He reached Beer-sheba of Judah and left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>He himself disappeared into the desert going on a day's journey. Then he sat down under a broom tree and prayed to die:

—That is enough, Yahweh, take away my life for I am dying!

<sup>5</sup>He lay down and went to sleep under the broom tree. Then an angel touched him and said:

—Get up and eat.

<sup>6</sup>Elijah looked and saw, at his head, a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and went back to sleep. <sup>7</sup>The angel of Yahweh came a second time to him, saying:

—Get up and eat, for the journey is too long for you. <sup>8</sup>He got up, ate and drank, and on the strength of that food, he traveled for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>On reaching the place, he came to the cave and stayed in it. Then the word of Yahweh came to him:

—What are you doing here, Elijah?

<sup>10</sup>He answered:

—I am burning with jealous love for Yahweh, the God of Hosts, because the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword. No one is left but myself and they are still trying to kill me as well.

<sup>11</sup>Then Yahweh said:

—Go up and stand on the mount, waiting for Yahweh.

And Yahweh passed by.

There was first a windstorm, wild wind which rent the mountains and broke the rocks into pieces before Yahweh, but Yahweh was not in the wind. After the storm, an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup>After the earthquake, a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. After the fire, the murmur of a gentle breeze. <sup>13</sup>When Elijah perceived it, he covered his face with his cloak, went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Then he heard a voice addressing him again:

—What are you doing here, Elijah?

<sup>14</sup>He answered:

—I am burning with jealous love for Yahweh, the God of hosts, because the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars and slain your prophets with the sword. No one is left but myself, yet they still seek my life to take it away.

<sup>15</sup>Yahweh said to him:

—Take the road back through the desert and go to Damascus. <sup>18</sup>Yet I will spare seven thousand in Israel who have not knelt before Baal and whose lips have not kissed him.

<sup>19</sup>So Elijah left. He found Elisha, son of Shaphat, who was plowing a field of twelve acres and was at the end of the twelfth acre. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak over him. <sup>20</sup>Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah and said:

—Let me say goodbye to my father and mother; then I will follow you.

Elijah said to him:

—Return if you want, don't worry about what I did. <sup>21</sup>However, Elisha turned back, took the yoke of oxen and slew them. He roasted their meat on the pieces of the yoke and gave it to his people who ate of it. After this, he followed Elijah and began ministering to him.