

## A Bible Background Example

Commentary for February 1, 2017 — A Great Deal Is Going On

This month's article, "Israel and Judah: 22. Evil Kings of Israel" should be read after the "[February 2017 Newsletter](#)." While you read the article, keep in mind that a great deal of background information is not mentioned, usually because (1) it is not relevant to the point of the narrative, and (2) it would take too much space to tell the full story.

### Sources for Bible Histories

The writers of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles compiled their books from source material. They refer to those sources 29 times in Kings and 3 times in Chronicles.<sup>1</sup> These were scrolls containing court records or histories. After a while, these writings became public record. Some writings of participants, such as King David in his psalms, as well as Solomon with his proverbs, Book of Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, also give useful historical information, even though they were books of wisdom.

Some writers like Gad the Seer and others (1 Chronicles 29:29) were officials at royal courts of the kings. The writings of the prophets tell of events that occurred during their times. As we proceed through the traumatic histories of Israel and Judah, remember that such things as these were written for our example, as the apostle Paul tells us:

**"Now these things became types of us, for us not to be lusters after evil things, according as they also lust.**

- **Nor yet be becoming idolaters, according as some of them, even as it is written, 'Seated are the people to eat and drink, and they rise to sport [citing Exodus 32:6-8].'**
- **Nor yet may we be committing prostitution, according as some of them commit prostitution, and fall in one day twenty-three thousand.**
- **Nor yet may we be putting the Lord on trial, according as some of them put Him on trial, and perished by serpents.**
- **Nor yet be murmuring even as some of them murmur, and perished by the exterminator.**

**Now all this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained."**

**• 1 Corinthians 10:6-11, Concordant Literal Version**

Paul's example was about the people of Israel during the Exodus, but they were doing the

---

<sup>1</sup> Here are 4 (of 32) examples such as **"the annals of Solomon"** of the united kingdom in 1 Kings 11:41; **"the annals of the days of the kings of Israel,"** in 1 Kings 16:5; and **"the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah,"** 1 Kings 22:45. There are the accounts of individuals: **"the annals of Nathan the prophet, and the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the vision seer"** in 2 Chronicles 9:29. There is even a reference to daily records of the King of Persia in Esther 10:2.

same or worse soon after Solomon died. They were the same stiff-necked people as their ancestors in the Exodus period, and ... they killed the prophets, as was confirmed by Stephen in Acts 7:52–54.

### **Background Information on the Prophets**

We can also assume that many important events happened which are not mentioned in our biblical texts, but can be implied. For example, the chief of King Ahab's palace, Obadiah, hid some 100 prophets of YHWH from Ahab's queen Jezebel (as you will read in this month's article). He hid them because they would have been murdered on Jezebel's command. We can assume that several were killed before Obadiah acted to hide and save the 100 prophets.

We are not told anything more about those 100 prophets of YHWH. There was a larger body of men called the "**sons of the prophets.**"<sup>2</sup> In 1 Samuel 19:20 they are called an "assembly" or a "company" of prophets (later called a "school of the prophets").

**"But while the prophetic gift was thus exercised from the beginning, the prophetic order as such began with Samuel. Colleges, 'schools of the prophets', were instituted for the training of prophets, who were constituted, a distinct order (1 Samuel 19:18–24; 2 Kings 2:3, 15, 4:38) which continued to the close of the Old Testament. Such 'schools' were established at Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal, Gibeah, and Jericho.**

**The 'sons' or 'disciples' of the prophets were young men (2 Kings 5:22, 9:1, 4) who lived together at these different 'schools' (2 Kings 4:38–41). These young men were taught not only the rudiments of secular knowledge, but they were brought up to exercise the office of prophet [which was],**

[1] **to preach pure morality and the heart-felt worship of Jehovah [YHWH], and**

[2] **to act along and co-ordinately with the priesthood and monarchy**

**in guiding the state aright and checking all attempts at illegality and tyranny."**

• **"*Prophet*" in Easton's Dictionary of the Bible**

We will read more about the "**sons of the prophets**" as we proceed in future accounts. Though the prophets had some successes, by the end of the Old Testament, these faithful men were unable to stem the tide of sin and evil (common to all human beings) in the two Israelite kingdoms.

These were the people Jezebel was trying to murder or drive out of the northern Kingdom of Israel, with the approval of her husband, the king. Ahab did nothing to save the prophets of Baal from being killed by the soldiers and people at Mount Carmel. He lacked the courage to do anything except save himself. Jezebel was not pleased. Ahab will pay a price for his sins that led the people of Israel to violate Israel's covenant with YHWH, worship idols, and commit murder. Such is the background of just one story in the Book of Kings.

David Sielaff  
david@askelm.com

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Kings 20:35, 2 Kings 2:3–7, 15, 4:1, 38, 5:22, 6:1, and 9:1.