

A Very Simple Survey of the Old Testament

Block #7 — Lessons 49–56

Block #7 • Lessons 49–56 | Keith R. Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Block

Block #7 covers I Kings 1 through Daniel 1 — from Solomon’s reign as Israel’s king to the commencement of the fifth course of punishment of Leviticus 26. Across 8 lessons (with Lesson 52 divided into two parts) Keith R. Blades traces Israel’s rapid descent from the pinnacle of glory under Solomon through each successive course of contracted punishment until the nation is finally taken captive by her enemies. The block opens with the magnificent foretaste of kingdom blessings under Solomon’s reign, then follows Israel’s reversion to apostasy and the breaking of the kingdom into two. The prophets Elijah and Elisha are shown to be God’s instruments specifically connected to the second and third courses of punishment, while good king Josiah provides one of the few bright spots during the fourth course. The story of Jonah is presented as both a merciful opportunity for Israel and a foreshadow of God’s ultimate provision of salvation. The block concludes with Daniel and his three friends being taken captive into Babylon as the fifth course of punishment arrives.

Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Title — Scripture Reference
Lesson 49	Solomon’s Choice — II Chronicles 1, 2, 5
Lesson 50	God Cares for Elijah — I Kings 17
Lesson 51	Elijah on Mount Carmel — I Kings 18–19
Lesson 52 Pt 1	Elisha Makes a Dead Boy Live (Part 1) — II Kings 1–2
Lesson 52 Pt 2	Elisha Makes a Dead Boy Live (Part 2) — II Kings 2–4
Lesson 53	Captive Maid — II Kings 5–10:31
Lesson 54	Good King Josiah — II Kings 10:32–23:37
Lesson 55	Story of Jonah — Jonah
Lesson 56	Daniel and His Three Friends — Daniel 1

Lesson Summaries

L49

Solomon's Choice *II Chronicles 1, 2, 5 • The Foretaste of Kingdom Blessings Under Solomon*

- David anointed Solomon as king in accordance with God's will and the Davidic Covenant — the interlude of glorious blessing that began under David now enters its second phase: under David, Israel experienced mighty deliverance ("man of war"); under Solomon, Israel experiences peace and prosperity ("man of rest")
- Solomon builds the temple in Jerusalem according to the pattern God gave to David — a magnificent structure of gold, silver, and precious materials; when the ark is brought in and the Levites praise the LORD, God's glory fills the house so that the priests cannot stand to minister

Solomon's Wise Request

- God appears to Solomon and says "Ask what I shall give thee" — Solomon asks for wisdom to rule God's people properly, not personal riches or honor; God is pleased and grants both the wisdom and the riches Solomon did not ask for
- Under Solomon's reign Israel experiences unparalleled peace, prosperity, and fame — the nations come to see Israel's glory and hear Solomon's wisdom; a foretaste of what the Lord Jesus Christ will establish when He reigns in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
- This interlude of gracious blessing under David and Solomon lasted approximately 80 years (40 under each) — blessings Israel did not deserve, given solely on the basis of God's mercy and grace as a foretaste of His covenanted kingdom

L50

God Cares for Elijah *I Kings 17 • Solomon's Apostasy and the Second Course of Punishment*

- Near the end of Solomon's reign he "loved many strange women" of the idolatrous nations — directly disobeying God's explicit command; his 1,000 wives turned his heart after other gods, and he built high places for idol worship right before Jerusalem, more prominent than the LORD's temple
- Solomon's apostasy plunged all Israel back into rebelliousness — provoking the LORD to anger and putting the nation back in the position of deserving the second course of punishment (Lev. 26:18–20): the breaking of governmental power and drought upon the land

The Kingdom Divided

- God divided Israel's kingdom into two: the northern kingdom under Jeroboam and the southern kingdom under Rehoboam (Solomon's son) — this fracturing of governmental power is exactly what the second course of punishment contracted: "I will break the pride of your power"
- Jeroboam established idolatry as state religion in the north, setting up golden calves just as Israel did at Sinai — Israel's rebelliousness deepened rather than being corrected by the first aspect of the second course

Elijah and the Drought

- God raised up Elijah to announce and bring the rest of the second course: "there shall not be dew nor rain these years" (I Kings 17:1) — for over three years God made Israel's "heaven as iron and earth as brass," exactly as Leviticus 26 contracted
- God cared for Elijah through the drought: first by ravens at the brook Cherith,

then through a Gentile widow at Zarephath whose supplies God miraculously sustained — God also raised the widow's dead son, honoring her faith while Israel as a whole rejected His chastening

L51

Elijah on Mount Carmel *I Kings 18–19 • God's Mercy in Confronting Israel with the Truth*

- Despite three years of drought Israel stubbornly refused to respond to the LORD — king Ahab and Jezebel actively hunted Elijah to kill him; Jezebel attempted to destroy all of God's prophets; Obadiah risked his life to hide 100 prophets in a cave
- God mercifully gave Israel one more opportunity before the third course: He sent Elijah back to confront king Ahab and all Israel at Mount Carmel — God was not required by the Law contract to do this; it was solely His mercy and longsuffering

The Showdown on Mount Carmel

- “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (I Kings 18:21) — Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal to a test: the god who answers by fire is the true God
- Baal's prophets call from morning until evening with no answer — Elijah mocks them, then repairs the LORD's broken altar with twelve stones, drenches everything with water three times, and prays simply to the LORD
- “The fire of the LORD fell” — consuming the sacrifice, the wet wood, the stones, the dust, and all the water in the trench; the people fall on their faces: “The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God” (I Kings 18:39)
- God lifted the drought and mercifully gave Israel the opportunity to return — but Jezebel immediately swore to kill Elijah, and the nation's response proved short-lived; Israel continued in its rebelliousness

L52a

Elisha Makes a Dead Boy Live (Part 1) *II Kings 1–2 • The Transition from the Second to the Third Course of Punishment*

- Israel's response to God's mercy at Mount Carmel was short-lived — Ahab and Jezebel persisted in rebellion; further opportunities were spurned; God judged Ahab and he died in battle; his son Ahaziah continued in evil, serving Baal and provoking the LORD
- Ahaziah's flagrant rejection of the LORD: when injured, he sent to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron rather than the God of Israel — God sent Elijah to declare his death; Ahaziah's three attempts to capture Elijah showed Israel's utter contempt for the LORD

God Leaves and Re-enters the Land

- When the time came to transition to the third course, God had Elijah take a specific route out of the land — from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan, reversing the route by which God entered the land under Joshua; Elijah parts the Jordan and crosses out
- God was symbolically leaving the land with Elijah (His second course prophet) and would re-enter with Elisha (His third course prophet) — prepared now to “walk contrary” to His people as Leviticus 26:21–22 warned
- Elijah taken up to heaven by a whirlwind with a chariot and horses of fire —

Elisha takes Elijah's mantle, parts the Jordan, and re-enters the land; God comes back in with the third course of punishment ready to be administered

L52b

Elisha Makes a Dead Boy Live (Part 2) *II Kings 2–4 • The Third Course of Punishment and God's Care for the Faithful*

- The third course of punishment (Lev. 26:21–22): wild beasts robbing Israel of children, destroying cattle, reducing them in number, and desolating their commerce — God begins to position Himself to “walk contrary” to Israel
- First expression of the third course: youths from Bethel mock Elisha; he curses them in the name of the LORD and two she-bears come out of the wood and maul 42 of them — exactly what the third course contracted: wild beasts robbing them of their children

God's Provision for the Faithful Remnant

- While Israel as a whole persisted in rebellion, God through Elisha honored the faithful few: miraculous multiplication of a widow's oil to pay her debts; healing poisoned food at Gilgal; feeding 100 men with a small provision
- The Shunammite woman's faith: she recognized Elisha as “a holy man of God” and provided for him; God honored her with a son — while the third course robbed others of children, God gave this faithful woman a child
- When the boy later died, the Shunammite's faith remained and God raised her son from the dead through Elisha — a powerful testimony that God cares for and provides for those who remain faithful even in the midst of national judgment

L53

Captive Maid *II Kings 5–10:31 • Naaman's Faith as a Rebuke to Israel*

- As Israel's apostasy deepened under the third course, God singled out individuals for blessing — the most remarkable was Naaman, a Syrian (Gentile) military commander and leper, whom God honored through Elisha
- A young Israelite captive girl, faithful to the LORD, testified about Elisha to Naaman's wife — her captivity served God's purpose; when the king of Syria sent Naaman to Israel's king, the king of Israel could not even perceive Naaman's positive response because of his own rebellion

Naaman's Cleansing and Confession

- Elisha tells Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan — Naaman initially resists, expecting an impressive ritual like pagan worship; his servants convict him of foolishness, and when he obeys he is cleansed of leprosy
- Naaman confesses: “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel” — he takes a load of Israel's dirt back to Syria to worship the LORD on it; a devastating rebuke: a Gentile worships the LORD on Israeli soil in Syria while Israel worships idols in God's own land

Israel's Continued Rebellion

- Israel's rebelliousness persisted through the remainder of the third course — further invasions, siege, famine; God mercifully provided deliverances but Israel refused to respond; king Jehu started well but failed to walk in the Law (II Kings 10:31), and Israel moved into the fourth course of punishment

L54

Good King Josiah *II Kings 10:32–23:37 • The Fourth Course and One Bright Spot*

- The fourth course of punishment (Lev. 26:23–26): God now “walks contrary” to Israel in earnest — invading armies, siege of cities, pestilence, being delivered into the hand of the enemy; territory is reduced as enemies take possession of portions of the land
- “In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short” (II Kings 10:32) — Hazael of Syria invaded and took territory; Israel was reduced in size, people gathered into cities under siege; the fourth course curses piled on top of the first three
- The northern kingdom ran headlong into the fifth course — one wicked king after another; the southern kingdom (Judah) also declined, with Manasseh introducing abominations worse than anything before, including human sacrifices

King Josiah’s Reformation

- Josiah became king at age 8 and “turned to the LORD with all his heart” (II Kings 23:25) — when the book of the Law was found in the neglected temple, Josiah was stunned to understand the contracted curses and knew Israel deserved the fifth course
- Josiah read the Law to all the people, made a covenant to return to the LORD, and systematically destroyed all idolatrous abominations throughout the land — but the people’s hearts were not truly turned; after his death, evil kings returned and the fifth course could not be avoided

L55

Story of Jonah *Jonah 1–4 • A Foreshadow of Israel’s Salvation*

- Jonah was God’s prophet during the fourth course of punishment — God used king Jeroboam to mercifully restore some of Israel’s lost territory, and Jonah announced this mercy; but Israel did not respond positively
- God sent Jonah to Nineveh (capital of Assyria, Israel’s enemy) — Jonah knew God intended to spare the Assyrians to use them as His instrument of the fifth course of punishment; Jonah fled to Tarshish rather than obey

Jonah as a Sign of Christ

- God had Jonah cast into the sea, swallowed by a prepared great fish, dead for three days and three nights, then raised from the dead — the Lord Jesus Christ declared this was a “sign” foreshadowing His own death and resurrection (Matt. 12:39–40)
- Jonah’s experience illustrates the truth that “salvation is of the LORD” — Israel’s only hope is for God Himself to come through David’s line, take upon Himself the judgment for sin, die, and rise again as Israel’s Redeemer
- Jonah fulfilled his ministry: Nineveh responded to God’s message and was spared — thereby being prepared as the instrument God would use to bring the fifth course of punishment upon the northern kingdom of Israel

L56

Daniel and His Three Friends *Daniel 1 • The Fifth Course of Punishment Begins*

- The fifth course of punishment (Lev. 26:27–33): God walks contrary to Israel “in fury” — cities laid waste, sanctuaries desolate, the people scattered

among the nations, the land left a desolation; the most severe contracted curse

- The fifth course came in two phases: first, the Assyrians overran the northern kingdom and carried them into captivity (II Kings 17:5–6); later, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded the southern kingdom (Judah) over a period of years until Jerusalem was completely destroyed

Daniel's Faithfulness in Captivity

- Daniel and his three friends (Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah) were taken captive into Babylon — their Hebrew names honoring the LORD were changed to Babylonian names honoring false gods: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego
- Daniel determined not to defile himself with the king's meat and wine (offered to idols) — he understood that the LORD had not been defeated but had brought Israel into captivity according to the Law contract; his faithfulness was tested and God honored it
- God gave Daniel and his friends superior wisdom and understanding, and Daniel special insight into visions and dreams — Nebuchadnezzar found them ten times better than all his wise men and placed them in positions of great authority; exactly where God needed them for His special purpose

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Leviticus 26 as the Key to Understanding Israel's History

Block #7 demonstrates with crystal clarity that Leviticus 26's five courses of contracted punishment are the key to understanding and appreciating the entire Old Testament record. Every major event in this block — the division of the kingdom, Elijah's drought, the Mount Carmel confrontation, Elisha's ministry with wild beasts, the progressive loss of territory, and the final Babylonian captivity — corresponds precisely to the contracted curses of the successive courses of punishment. When these courses are understood, Israel's history ceases to be a disjointed collection of stories and becomes a coherent testimony of God dealing with His nation exactly as the Law contract specified. The prophets, the kings, the judgments, and even the merciful deliverances all fit within this framework.

Elijah and Elisha — Prophets Connected to Specific Courses of Punishment

Elijah and Elisha were not simply miracle-working prophets whom God raised up for storytelling purposes. Their ministries were specifically connected to the contracted courses of punishment. Elijah was God's prophet for the second course: his miracles related directly to the drought and famine that the second course called for. Elisha was God's prophet for the third course: his ministry began when God symbolically left the land with Elijah and re-entered with Elisha, prepared to "walk contrary" to His people. The incident of the she-bears at Bethel was the first expression of the third course's curse of wild beasts robbing Israel of her children. Understanding the prophets' connection to the contracted curses transforms their stories from exciting adventures into a sobering testimony of God administering the terms of His covenant.

God’s Mercy Exceeding the Terms of the Contract

Throughout Block #7, at every stage of escalating punishment, God provided merciful opportunities for Israel to repent that the Law contract did not require Him to give. He raised up Elijah to confront Israel at Mount Carmel rather than simply moving to the third course. He had Elisha honor the faithful remnant while administering the third course. He gave Israel territory back under Jeroboam through Jonah’s ministry during the fourth course. He raised up good king Josiah to turn the southern kingdom back to the LORD. At every turn, God’s “Jehovah-ness” — His mercy, grace, and longsuffering — moved Him to provide what the strict terms of the contract did not demand. Israel’s persistent rejection of these mercies only deepened the tragedy of the eventual captivity.

Jonah as a Foreshadow of God’s Ultimate Provision

The story of Jonah was far more than a remarkable event involving a great fish. God designed Jonah’s experience to serve as a “sign” — a foreshadowing figure of what would be required for Israel’s ultimate salvation. As Jonah was given over to death and was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish before being raised, so the Son of man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Jonah’s declaration that “salvation is of the LORD” encapsulates the entire message of Israel’s history: the nation cannot save itself through its own performance under the Law contract. God Himself must come through David’s line, take upon Himself the judgment their sins merit, die, and rise again as their Redeemer. Everything in Israel’s history pointed to this necessity.

God’s Purpose Not Thwarted by Captivity

The arrival of the fifth course of punishment and Israel’s captivity in Babylon did not mean God was casting away His people or abandoning His covenanted plan. God raised up Daniel and his three friends in captivity to fulfill a special purpose. Their faithfulness in refusing to defile themselves with pagan practices, and God’s honoring of that faithfulness by placing them in positions of authority in Nebuchadnezzar’s government, demonstrated that God’s plan continued to operate even under the severest contracted curse. Daniel would receive revelations concerning the duration of the fifth course and the time when God would establish His covenanted kingdom — the story was far from over.

Key Scripture References

II Chronicles 1:10	Solomon’s wise request: “Give me now wisdom and knowledge” to rule God’s people properly
II Chronicles 5:13–14	God’s glory fills the temple when Israel praises Him: “for his mercy endureth for ever”
I Kings 11:1–8	Solomon’s apostasy: strange wives turn his heart to other gods; he builds high places for idols before Jerusalem
Leviticus 26:18–20	The second course of punishment: “I will break the pride of your power” and drought upon the land
I Kings 17:1	Elijah announces the second course drought: “there shall not be dew nor rain these years”

I Kings 18:21	“How long halt ye between two opinions?” — Elijah confronts Israel at Mount Carmel
I Kings 18:38–39	The fire of the LORD falls and consumes everything; the people confess: “The LORD, he is the God”
Leviticus 26:21–22	The third course: wild beasts rob Israel of children, destroy cattle, reduce them in number
II Kings 2:11–14	Elijah taken to heaven; Elisha re-enters the land with the third course of punishment
II Kings 5:15	Naaman’s confession: “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel”
II Kings 10:31–32	Jehu departs not from sin; “the LORD began to cut Israel short” — the fourth course begins
Leviticus 26:23–26	The fourth course: invading armies, siege, pestilence, delivered into the hand of the enemy
II Kings 23:25	Josiah: “like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart”
Jonah 1:17	The LORD prepared a great fish; Jonah three days and three nights in its belly — a sign of Christ
Matthew 12:39–40	Christ declares Jonah’s experience a “sign” foreshadowing His own death and resurrection
Leviticus 26:27–33	The fifth course: scattered among the nations, land desolate, cities waste — complete captivity
Daniel 1:8–9	Daniel determines not to defile himself; God brings him into favor — faithfulness honored in captivity

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