

BIBLE STUDY REFERENCE  
GUIDE

1 Kings  
&  
2 Kings

Digest This! Bible Study

SACRED HEART MINISTRY

## Introduction to the Bible Reference Guide

The Bible is a rich and complex historical narrative, spiritual studies and divine revelation. The book of 1 Kings offers a compelling narrative of the rise and fall of kingdoms, the lives of powerful rulers, and the unshakable faith of prophets who stood as God's voice in unstable times. This reference guide is designed to help you navigate the complex details of 1 Kings and 2 Kings, the historical developments of the Nations of Israel and Judah, and the purposeful ministry of the prophet Elijah.

### Purpose of the Guide

The primary purpose of this reference guide is to provide you with a comprehensive and accessible resource that deepens your understanding of 1 Kings and its key figures. Whether you are a student of the Bible, a teacher, or simply someone seeking to grow in your knowledge of Scripture, this guide aims to provide insight into the text with clarity. By exploring the historical context, significant events, and key themes, you will gain a deeper appreciation of how God worked through His people and leaders in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

### How to Use the Guide

This reference guide is organized into several sections, each focusing on different aspects of 1 Kings and related topics. You can use this guide in a variety of ways:

- **Study Companion:** As you read through 1 Kings and 2 Kings, refer to this guide for background information, explanations of key terms, and summaries of important events.
- **Teaching Resource:** If you are preparing a lesson or sermon, this guide provides a wealth of material to support your teaching, including timelines, glossaries, and thematic discussions.
- **Personal Reflection:** Use the study questions and practical applications to reflect on how the lessons of 1 Kings apply to your own life and faith journey.

## **1 & 2 Kings, Judah, Israel, and Elijah**

1 Kings & 2 Kings covers a critical period in the history of God's people, beginning with the final years of King David's life and the subsequent reign of his son Solomon. The book then chronicles the division of the united monarchy into two separate kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Throughout this period, the spiritual state of the nation fluctuates, with both kingdoms experiencing times of apostasy and reform.

Central to this narrative, is this bible study lesson's focus on the ministry of the prophet Elijah(1 Kings), who stands as a prophet of God's truth during one of Israel's darkest times. Elijah's confrontations with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, as well as his miracles and encounters with God, highlight the ongoing battle between the worship of Yahweh and the idolatry of Baal.

### **Theological and Spiritual Significance**

The stories and characters in 1 Kings & 2 Kings are not just historical accounts; they carry deep theological significance and spiritual lessons that are relevant to believers today. The guide will help you explore themes such as obedience, God's faithfulness, God's sovereignty, and the role of prophetic ministry in calling people back to God.

As you journey through this reference guide, our hope is that you will not only gain a better understanding of the text but also experience personal spiritual growth. I pray that this guide serve as a valuable tool in your study of God's Word and in your walk of faith.

## Glossary of Key Terms for 1 Kings

### Ahab

- The seventh king of Israel, known for his marriage to Jezebel and his promotion of Baal worship. A central figure in 1 Kings, Ahab's reign was marked by idolatry and conflict with the prophet Elijah.

### Asa

- The third king of Judah, noted for his religious reforms and efforts to rid Judah of idolatry. He was a righteous king who sought to return Judah to the worship of Yahweh.

### Baal

- A Canaanite deity worshiped in Israel during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. The worship of Baal was strongly opposed by the prophets, especially Elijah.

### Bethel

- A city in the Northern Kingdom of Israel where King Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves as an alternative place of worship to Jerusalem.

### Elijah

- A major prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. Elijah is known for his miracles, confrontation with the prophets of Baal, and his ascension into heaven.

### Elisha

- A prophet and successor of Elijah, who performed numerous miracles and played a significant role in the history of Israel.

### Golden Calves

- Idols made by King Jeroboam of Israel to prevent his people from traveling to Jerusalem for worship. These calves were set up in Bethel and Dan and became a major point of idolatry in Israel.

### Horeb (Mount Sinai)

- A mountain where Elijah encountered God after fleeing from Jezebel. Also known as Mount Sinai, it is the same place where Moses received the Ten Commandments.

## Israel

- The Northern Kingdom after the division of the United Kingdom of Israel under Solomon's son Rehoboam. It consisted of ten tribes and was often characterized by idolatry and conflict with Judah.

## Jeroboam I

- The first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel after the division of the United Kingdom. He led Israel into idolatry by setting up golden calves for worship.

## Jezebel

- The wife of King Ahab of Israel, notorious for promoting the worship of Baal and persecuting the prophets of Yahweh. She became a symbol of wickedness and idolatry.

## Judah

- The Southern Kingdom after the division of the United Kingdom of Israel, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Jerusalem was its capital, and it was often more faithful to Yahweh than Israel, though not without its own periods of idolatry.

## Mount Carmel

- The site of Elijah's famous confrontation with the prophets of Baal, where God demonstrated His power by sending fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice.

## Omri

- The sixth king of Israel and the father of Ahab. He founded the city of Samaria and established it as the capital of Israel. Omri's reign was marked by political strength but spiritual decline.

## Prophet

- A messenger chosen by God to deliver His words and will to the people. In 1 Kings, prophets like Elijah and Elisha play a crucial role in calling Israel and Judah back to faithfulness.

## Rehoboam

- The son of Solomon and the first king of Judah after the division of the United Kingdom. His harsh policies led to the secession of the northern tribes and the formation of the Kingdom of Israel.

## Samaria

- The capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, founded by King Omri. It became a significant center of political and religious activity in Israel.

## Solomon

- The son of David and Bathsheba, and the third king of Israel. Solomon is known for his wisdom, the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, and his eventual fall into idolatry, which led to the division of the kingdom after his death.

## Temple in Jerusalem

- The central place of worship for the people of Judah and all Israel before the kingdom split. Built by King Solomon, it became the symbol of God's presence among His people.

## Zarephath

- A town in Sidon where Elijah was sent during the drought. There, he performed a miracle for a widow, providing her with an endless supply of flour and oil.

## Glossary of Key Terms for 2 Kings

### Ahaz

- King of Judah known for his idolatry and alliance with Assyria.

### Amaziah

- King of Judah who initially followed God but later turned away.

### Anointing

- The act of setting someone apart for a special role, such as kingship or priesthood.

### Baal

- Canaanite god worshiped by some of the kings of Israel, often opposed by the prophets.

### Babylon

- The empire that conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and exiled the people.

### Covenant

- The binding agreement between God and His people, requiring obedience to His laws.

### Exile

- The forced removal and relocation of a people from their homeland, notably the Babylonian exile.

### Hezekiah

- King of Judah who implemented significant religious reforms and trusted God during the Assyrian siege.

### Idolatry

- The worship of idols or other gods, which led to the downfall of Israel and Judah.

### High Places

- Elevated sites used for worshipping gods, often involving sacrifices and condemned by God.

### Josiah

- King of Judah who led major religious reforms and rediscovered the Book of the Law.

### Kingdom of Israel

- The northern kingdom composed of ten tribes, which fell to Assyria.

### Kingdom of Judah

- The southern kingdom composed of Judah and Benjamin, which was conquered by Babylon.

### Manasseh

- King of Judah known for his extreme idolatry, leading to divine judgment.

### Remnant

- The small remaining group of faithful people after widespread apostasy and judgment.

### Reforms

- Actions taken by kings like Hezekiah and Josiah to restore true worship and remove idolatry.

### Siege

- A military blockade and assault on a city, including the sieges of Jerusalem by Assyrians and Babylonians.

### Temple

- The central place of worship in Jerusalem, destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

### Yahweh

- The personal name of God used in the Hebrew Bible, central to Israel's worship and covenant.



## **Original Language**

The books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings were originally written in Hebrew. There are also some portions with Aramaic influence, particularly in later Old Testament writings, but the primary language is classical Biblical Hebrew.

## **Primary Audience**

The intended audience for 1 Kings and 2 Kings was the Israelites.

## **Period Covered**

The narrative of 1 Kings and 2 Kings spans approximately 400 years, beginning with the death of King David and the reign of Solomon (around 970 BC) and continuing through the division of the kingdom into Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom). It ends with the Babylonian exile (around 586 BC).

## **Possible Contributors**

Some scholars speculate that earlier sections of these books could have been based on royal annals, prophetic records, and other historical documents that were later compiled by the Deuteronomistic Historian(s). Prophets like Jeremiah have been suggested as possible contributors, though this remains speculative.

# 1 Kings and 2 Kings Geographical Overview

## Jerusalem

- Jerusalem is the capital city of the Kingdom of Judah and the central location for worship, especially after the construction of the Temple by King Solomon. It is where the Davidic dynasty ruled and where many key events, such as Hezekiah's reforms and the Babylonian siege, took place.
- Today: Jerusalem remains a central and contested city in modern-day Israel. It is a significant religious and political center for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

## Samaria

- Samaria is the capital city of the Kingdom of Israel (the northern kingdom), established by King Omri. It serves as a political and religious center, especially during the reigns of Ahab and his successors. The city is eventually captured and destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC.
- Today: Samaria refers to the central region of the modern-day West Bank. The ancient city ruins are located near the modern village of Sebastia in the Palestinian territories.

## Bethel and Dan

- These two cities were designated by Jeroboam I as alternative worship centers for the northern kingdom of Israel, with golden calves set up to prevent people from going to Jerusalem. They were centers of idolatry and rival worship against the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Today: Bethel is located near the modern-day Palestinian village of Beitin, north of Jerusalem in the West Bank. Dan is located near the modern-day kibbutz of Tel Dan in northern Israel, close to the border with Lebanon.

## Shechem

- Shechem is an ancient city in the northern kingdom of Israel, where Jeroboam I initially established his rule. It is also significant in earlier biblical narratives as a city of covenant renewal.
- Today: Shechem is identified with modern-day Nablus in the West Bank. It remains an important city in the region.

# 1 Kings and 2 Kings Geographical Overview

## **Megiddo**

- Megiddo was a strategic military city in the northern kingdom of Israel, known for its chariot forces. It was the site of several important battles, including the death of King Josiah at the hands of Pharaoh Necho.
- Today: Megiddo is an archaeological site known as Tel Megiddo in northern Israel. It is part of the Megiddo National Park and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## **Mount Carmel**

- Mount Carmel is the site of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18), a dramatic event demonstrating Yahweh's power over Baal.
- Today: Mount Carmel is located in modern-day Israel, near the city of Haifa. It is a range that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and is known for its natural beauty.

## **Babylon**

- Babylon is the capital of the Babylonian Empire, which conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and led the people into exile (586 BC). It represents the place of exile for the Jews.
- Today: The ancient city of Babylon is located near the modern city of Hillah in Iraq, south of Baghdad.

## **Assyria (Nineveh)**

- Assyria is the empire that conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and took its people into exile. Nineveh, its capital, was one of the most powerful cities of the ancient world.
- Today: The ruins of Nineveh are near the modern city of Mosul in Iraq.

# 1 Kings 19 Geographical Overview

## Mount Carmel

- Mount Carmel is the site of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18), a dramatic event demonstrating Yahweh's power over Baal.
- Today: Mount Carmel is located in modern-day Israel, near the city of Haifa. It is a range that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and is known for its natural beauty.

## Beersheba

- After receiving a death threat from Jezebel, Elijah flees to Beersheba, located in the southern part of Judah. Beersheba is where Elijah leaves his servant before journeying alone into the wilderness.
- Today: Beersheba is a modern city in southern Israel, often considered the gateway to the Negev desert. It is an important urban center with historical ruins, including the ancient tel (archaeological mound) that dates back to biblical times.

## Wilderness of Beersheba

- Elijah travels a day's journey into the wilderness after departing from Beersheba. He sits under a broom tree (a type of desert shrub) and prays for death, feeling overwhelmed and despondent. An angel provides him with food and water, strengthening him for the journey ahead.
- Today: The wilderness referred to in the Bible is part of the Negev Desert in modern-day Israel. It is characterized by its arid conditions, rocky terrain, and sparse vegetation. The wilderness is still known for its extreme climate, making it a challenging environment for travelers.

## 1 Kings 19 Geographical Overview

### Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai)

- Elijah travels 40 days and nights to reach Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai, where he takes refuge in a cave. At Mount Horeb, Elijah has a profound encounter with God, who appears not in a powerful wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11-13). This mountain is a significant location, as it is where Moses received the Ten Commandments.
- Today: Mount Horeb is traditionally identified with Jebel Musa in the Sinai Peninsula of modern-day Egypt. It is a major pilgrimage site for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The exact location of Mount Sinai is still debated among scholars, but Jebel Musa is the most commonly accepted site.

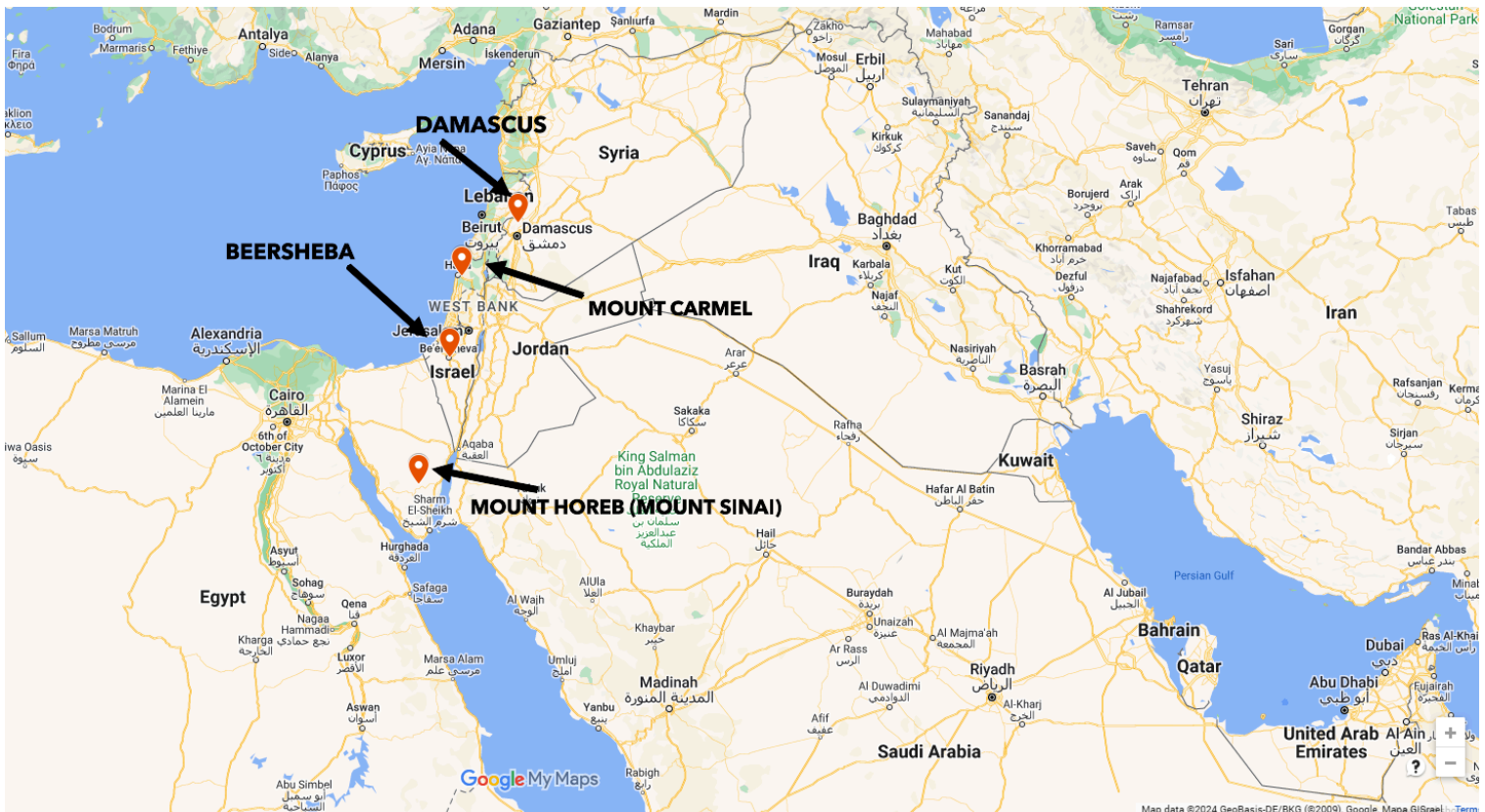
### Damascus

- Context in 1 Kings 19: After his encounter with God on Mount Horeb, Elijah is instructed to go to Damascus, the capital of Aram (Syria), to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor.
- Today: Damascus is the capital of modern-day Syria. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and remains a significant political and cultural center in the Middle East.

# 1 Kings and 2 Kings Locations



# 1 Kings 19 Locations



## 1 Kings Overview

1 Kings is a historical book in the Old Testament that recounts the history of Israel and Judah from the end of King David's reign to the reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah and Ahaziah in Israel. The book covers a period of approximately 120 years, detailing the transition from a united kingdom under Solomon to the divided kingdoms of Israel (northern kingdom) and Judah (southern kingdom).

### Key Themes:

- **Leadership and Kingship:** The book emphasizes the importance of righteous leadership and its impact on the nation. The success or failure of a king often determines the spiritual and political fate of the nation.
- **The Temple:** The construction of the Temple in Jerusalem under Solomon's reign is a central event, symbolizing God's presence among His people.
- **Prophecy:** The role of prophets is crucial, particularly in calling kings and the nation to repentance. Elijah is a central prophetic figure in 1 Kings.

# 1 Kings Overview

## Major Sections:

- The End of David's Reign (1 Kings 1-2):
  - Context: The book opens with the aging King David and the struggle for succession. Solomon is eventually crowned king.
- The Reign of Solomon (1 Kings 3-11):
  - Context: Solomon is known for his wisdom, wealth, and the construction of the Temple. However, his later years are marked by idolatry and political alliances that lead to the kingdom's division.
- The Division of the Kingdom (1 Kings 12-14):
  - Context: After Solomon's death, the kingdom is divided into Israel (north) and Judah (south) under Rehoboam and Jeroboam, respectively.
- The Kings of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 15-22):
  - Context: The book alternates between the histories of the kings of Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom quickly falls into idolatry, while the southern kingdom has periods of both faithfulness and apostasy.
  - The prophetic ministry of Elijah, particularly his confrontations with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, is a significant focus in these chapters.



## 2 Kings Overview

2 Kings continues the historical narrative begun in 1 Kings, covering the history of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the fall of both. The book spans approximately 300 years, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile.

### Key Themes:

- **Decline and Fall:** The gradual decline of Israel and Judah is traced, showing the consequences of idolatry and disobedience to God.
- **Prophecy and Judgment:** Prophets play a critical role in warning the kings and people of impending judgment. The ministry of Elisha, Elijah's successor, is prominent.
- **God's Sovereignty:** Despite the chaos and decline, God's sovereignty is evident as He fulfills His promises and judgments.

## 2 Kings Overview

### Major Sections:

- The Reign of Ahaziah and the Ministry of Elisha (2 Kings 1-8):
  - Context: The book begins with the death of Ahaziah and the prophetic ministry of Elisha, who performs miracles and continues Elijah's work.
- The Decline of Israel (2 Kings 9-17):
  - Context: The northern kingdom of Israel experiences a series of increasingly wicked kings, leading to its downfall. In 722 B.C., Israel is conquered by Assyria, and the people are taken into exile.
  - The rise of Jehu, who eliminates the house of Ahab and the Baal worshipers, is a notable event.
- The Decline of Judah (2 Kings 18-25):
  - Context: The southern kingdom of Judah fares slightly better, with some godly kings like Hezekiah and Josiah who attempt reforms. However, idolatry and disobedience persist, leading to Judah's eventual destruction.
  - In 586 B.C., Jerusalem is captured by Babylon, the Temple is destroyed, and the people are exiled.

# Elijah's Purpose

Elijah was a prophet of God during a time of deep spiritual and moral decline in Israel. His primary purpose was to call the people of Israel back to the worship of Yahweh, the one true God, and to confront the rampant idolatry and corruption promoted by the leadership of the northern kingdom, particularly under King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

## Key Aspects of Elijah's Purpose:

- **Confronting Idolatry:**

- Context: Israel had largely turned away from the worship of Yahweh and embraced the worship of Baal, a Canaanite fertility god, due to the influence of Jezebel, Ahab's wife. Elijah's purpose was to challenge this idolatry and demonstrate that Yahweh alone is God.
- Example: Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40) is a vivid illustration of this. By calling down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, Elijah proved Yahweh's supremacy over Baal.

- **Calling the Nation to Repentance:**

- Context: Elijah was sent to turn the hearts of the Israelites back to God. The people had strayed far from their covenant with God, and Elijah's mission was to remind them of their obligations and encourage repentance.
- Example: After the victory on Mount Carmel, Elijah urged the people to seize the false prophets and reaffirmed their commitment to God, showing his role in leading the nation back to righteousness.

- **Proclaiming God's Judgment:**

- Context: Elijah was a voice of God's judgment against the sin of Israel's leaders and people. He foretold the consequences of their idolatry and wickedness, often delivering stern messages directly from God.
- Example: Elijah pronounced a drought over Israel as a direct punishment for their idolatry (1 Kings 17:1). He also condemned King Ahab and Queen Jezebel for their evil actions, such as the murder of Naboth (1 Kings 21:17-24).

## Elijah's Purpose

- **Performing Miracles to Affirm God's Power:**

- Context: Elijah's ministry was marked by miraculous events that underscored God's power and presence. These miracles were meant to confirm his prophetic authority and encourage faith in God among the Israelites.
- Example: Elijah performed several miracles, including raising the widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24) and calling down fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:38). These acts served to validate his message and demonstrate God's active involvement in Israel's affairs.

- **Mentoring the Next Generation of Prophets:**

- Context: Elijah's purpose also included preparing the next generation of prophetic leadership. This is most clearly seen in his relationship with Elisha, whom he mentored and who succeeded him as a prophet.
- Example: Before being taken up to heaven, Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha, symbolizing the transfer of prophetic authority and ensuring the continuation of his mission (2 Kings 2:9-15).

- **Symbolizing the Call for Righteousness:**

- Context: Elijah's life and ministry symbolized the broader call for righteousness and faithfulness to God's covenant. He is often remembered as a figure who stood alone against widespread corruption and idolatry, embodying the role of a true prophet.
- Example: Elijah's role as a forerunner to John the Baptist (as suggested in Malachi 4:5-6 and fulfilled in the New Testament) further emphasizes his purpose in calling people to repentance and preparing the way for God's work.

## Further Study of 1 Kings and 2 Kings

Further study can be found in the 1 Kings & 2 Kings Workbook. This workbook is a comprehensive study to include:

- Summary of the histories of the Nations of Israel and Judah
- Chapter by Chapter summary of 1 Kings and 2 Kings
- Summary of Elijah's purpose and ministry
- 7-Day devotional to include scripture reading, prayer, and worship songs to add to your playlist
- Journal prompts and additional pages for writing

The workbook can be found on my website: [www.vernettawood.com/shop](http://www.vernettawood.com/shop)