

# The First Book of the Kings

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by

By Maurice A. West  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There will also be various translations of the Scriptures used in our study. If we deviate from the King James Version (which will be our standard), the other versions will be noted as follows (with all the legal disclaimers):

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At various times in this study, you will also find the following designations referring to reference material that was used to assist in putting together this study:

- {AC} Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible
- {JF&B} The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary
- {MH} Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume
- {Dake} Dake's Annotated Reference Bible
- {MacArthur} The MacArthur Study Bible
- {Thompson} The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible.
- {McGee} Thru the Bible Commentary Series by Dr. J. Vernon McGee

If other references or Bible translations are used they will be called out at the time of their usage.

**PREFACE**

**WRITER:** {Dake} “It seems that Isaiah and Jeremiah were the authors or final compilers using the public records of the kings of Israel. Jewish tradition says that Jeremiah was the author but 2 Chronicles 32:32 says that Isaiah was the writer; so it could be that Isaiah wrote the book of Kings up to the time of Hezekiah, and Jeremiah completed it, telling of the happenings from then on to the captivity.” On the other hand, Thompson disagrees and says that the authorship of the book is unknown. Dr. McGee also weighs in on this subject, “Although the writer is unknown, 1 and 2 Kings were written while the first temple was still standing (1 Kings 8:8). Jeremiah is considered to be the traditional writer, while modern scholarship assigns the authorship to ‘the prophets.’” The general consensus of the commentators seems to be that there were so many writers that one or two specific individuals could not take credit for the book. Also, Dake’s reference to 2 Chronicles 32:32 does not make a strong case for Isaiah’s involvement in this book but it could refer to two different books – **2 Chronicles 32:32** *Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.* In this case, we must agree that there is no clear consensus, however, in this book, the authorship does not play a significant role in understanding the Word of the Lord.

**DATE:** The information in this book was compiled by a number of scribes over a period of nearly 500 years. The dates of its writing extend from 1046 B.C. to 616 B.C. according to Dake.

**STATISTICS:** {Dake} 11<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible; 22 chapters; 816 verses; 24,524 words.

**INTRODUCTION:** In older Bibles, especially the King James Version, the title of this book is “The First Book of the Kings commonly called The Third Book of the Kings”. The reason for this is because there was an evolution of the structure of the books of First Samuel through Second Kings. At one time, they were all one book. Then they were divided into two books. The first two, now known as First and Second Samuel, were one book of Kings and dealt with the establishment of the monarchy in Israel. The second book, now known as First and Second Kings, dealt with the “glory days” of the kingdom under Solomon, to the division of the kingdom, and, finally, to the destruction of the kingdom. According to *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, the Greek version of the Old Testament, known as the **Septuagint**, changed the division of these two books into four books under a single name of First to Fourth Kings. At some later point in history, the titles were changed to what we have now. What follows is additional information from various commentators on the introduction of this book and further insight into the evolution of its title.

{Dake} “The one scroll of Kings, as in the ancient Hebrew Bibles, was divided into two books or scrolls by the Septuagint translators in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C. The books are named for their contents – the history of the kings of Israel and Judah from Solomon to the Babylonian captivity, a period of

## *The First Book of the Kings*

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*413 years. They begin with a record concerning King David and end with one regarding the king of Babylon. They open with an account of the building of the temple and close with its destruction. The characters of all the kings of Israel and Judah are tested by the standard of David.”*

{MH} *“The two books of Samuel are introductions to the books of the Kings, as they relate the origin of the royal government in Saul and of the royal family in David. These two books give us an account of David’s successor, Solomon, the division of his kingdom, and the succession of the several kings both of Judah and Israel, with an abstract of their history down to the captivity. And as from the book of Genesis we may collect excellent rules of economics, for the good governing of families, so from these books we may collect rules of politics, for the directing of public affairs.”*

{Ray C. Stedman} *“First Kings is the gripping story of how to lose a kingdom. As we read these Old Testament books, the key to making them live and be vital in our lives is to see that they are visual aids by which God is showing us what is going on in our own lives. The whole purpose of the Lord Jesus coming into our lives, which is the theme of the book of Romans, is that we might learn how to reign over the kingdom of our lives in God---given authority and victory. It is this that makes human life full and complete and fascinating when we learn to walk in God’s power. The book of 1 Kings holds the secret of success in reigning over the kingdom of your life. It is the secret of learning to be submissive to the authority and dominion of God in your own life. In other words, man can never exercise dominion over his life unless he first subjects himself to the dominion of God. If you yield to God’s dominion, you are given reign over the areas in your own life. On the other hand, if you refuse the dominion of God in your own life, you cannot under any circumstances or by any means fulfill your desire to be in authority over your life. It is impossible! This is what these books teach us.”*

{McGee} *“In 1 Kings we have the record of the division of the kingdom and 2 Kings records the collapse of the kingdom. Considering the two books as a unit, they open with King David, and they close with the king of Babylon. They are the book of man’s rule over God’s kingdom—and the results are not good, of course. The throne on earth must be in tune with the throne in heaven, if blessings are to come and benefits are to accrue to God’s people. Yet man’s plan cannot overthrow God’s purposes, as we shall see. First and Second Kings are actually a continuation of the narrative that was begun in 1 and 2 Samuel. These four books can be considered as a whole since they trace the history of the nation from the time of its greatest extension, influence, and prosperity under David and Solomon to the division, then captivity and exile of both kingdoms. The moral teaching of these books is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world.”*

These two Books of Kings are fascinating accounts of the people of God sinking from the true glory days of Israel under David, when the influence of God was at its greatest, to the idolatry that will be seen later on that caused the end of the kingdom. The following table, from the Thru the Bible Commentary, will be useful in understanding the character of the kings after Solomon, the years of their reign, and how the various prophets fit in as far as their timetable. This book is categorized as

*The First Book of the Kings*

one of the twelve “historical” books of the Old Testament but remember the Bible’s intent has never been focused on history as much as it is about understanding the ways of God.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM									
JUDAH					ISRAEL				
King	Reign	Character	Prophet		King	Reign	Character	Prophet	
1. Rehoboam	931–913 B.C.	(17 yrs.)	Bad	Shemaiah	1. Jeroboam I	931–910 B.C.	(22 yrs.)	Bad	Ahijah
2. Abijah	913–911	(3 yrs.)	Bad		2. Nadab	910–909	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
3. Asa	911–870	(41 yrs.)	Good		3. Baasha	909–886	(24 yrs.)	Bad	
					4. Elah	886–885	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
					5. Zimri	885	(7 days)	Bad	
4. Jehoshaphat	870–848*	(25 yrs.)	Good		6. Omri	885–874*	(12 yrs.)	Bad	
					7. Ahab	874–853	(22 yrs.)	Bad	Elijah, Micaiah
5. Jehoram	848–841*	(8 yrs.)	Bad		8. Ahaziah	853–852	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
6. Ahaziah	841	(1 yr.)	Bad		9. Joram	852–841	(12 yrs.)	Bad	Elisha
7. Athaliah	841–835	(6 yrs.)	Bad		10. Jehu	841–814	(28 yrs.)	Bad	
8. Joash	835–796	(40 yrs.)	Good	Joel	11. Jehoahaz	814–798	(17 yrs.)	Bad	
9. Amaziah	796–767	(29 yrs.)	Good		12. Jehoash	798–782	(16 yrs.)	Bad	
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767–740*	(52 yrs.)	Good	Isaiah	13. Jeroboam II	782–753*	(41 yrs.)	Bad	Jonah, Amos, Hosea
					14. Zechariah	753–752	(6 mo.)	Bad	
					15. Shallum	752	(1 mo.)	Bad	
					16. Menahem	752–742	(10 yrs.)	Bad	
					17. Pekahiah	742–740	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
11. Jotham	740–732*	(16 yrs.)	Good	Micah	18. Pekah	740–732*	(20 yrs.)	Bad	
12. Ahaz	732–716	(16 yrs.)	Bad		19. Hoshea	732–721	(9 yrs.)	Bad	
					<i>(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)</i>				
13. Hezekiah	716–687	(29 yrs.)	Good		* Co-regency				
14. Manasseh	687–642*	(55 yrs.)	Bad	Nahum					
15. Amon	642–640	(2 yrs.)	Bad						
16. Josiah	640–608	(31 yrs.)	Good	Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah					
17. Jehoahaz	608	(3 mo.)	Bad						
18. Jehoiakim	608–597	(11 yrs.)	Bad						
19. Jehoiachin	597	(3 mo.)	Bad						
20. Zedekiah	597–586	(11 yrs.)	Bad						
<i>(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)</i>									
* Co-regency									

## Chapter 1

This chapter is a transition chapter from the beginning of the true “royalty” of Israel, under the reign of David to actually seeing it work with royal succession. David is old and ambition has gripped one of his sons – he wants to be king and has made himself king. This chapter shows the translation of the kingdom from David to Solomon.

Introduction to First Kings – This book picks up at the end of the reign of David. Second Samuel gives us the “glory days” of the kingdom under David. First Samuel gives us the beginning of the Israeli monarchy under Saul and the rejection, by the people, of God. This book begins with the kingdom in transition. Who will be the next king? Transition planning has taken place, according to the Book of First Chronicles 22, but it doesn’t appear that it has been communicated within the royal household. I believe this chapter occurred somewhere after 1 Chronicles 22.

The key to this chapter is this: **Leadership transition is never an easy task and it is made even harder when ambition and pride enter in.**

*1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. 2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. 3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4 And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not. **New Life Version** The girl was very beautiful. She became the king’s nurse and helped him. But the king did not have sex with her.* We begin this book with King David as an old man, a shell of what he used to be because of the ravages of life. We’re at a transition point in the kingdom but the people are making every effort to preserve the life of their beloved king as long as possible. {JF&B} “He was in the seventieth year of his age (2Sa 5:4,5). But the wear and tear of a military life, bodily fatigue, and mental care, had prematurely exhausted the energies of David’s strong constitution (1Sa 16:12). In modern Palestine and Egypt the people, owing to the heat of the climate, sleep each in a ‘separate’ bed. They only depart from this practice for medical reasons (Ec 4:11). The expedient recommended by David’s physicians is the regimen still prescribed in similar cases in the East, particularly among the Arab population, not simply to give heat, but ‘to cherish,’ as they are aware that the inhalation of young breath will give new life and vigor to the worn-out frame. The fact of the health of the young and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly is well established among the medical faculty. And hence the prescription for the aged king was made in a hygienic point of view for the prolongation of his valuable life, and not merely for the comfort to be derived from the natural warmth imparted to his withered frame. The polygamy of the age and country may account for the introduction of this practice; and it is evident that Abishag was made a concubine or secondary wife to David.”

*5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.* David, the spiritual leader of Israel is at

death's door and his lack of influence is being felt in his own household. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: **Luke 14:11** *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* In the same way, celebrities and sports figures ruin themselves when they prepare for themselves an entourage to proclaim how wonderful they are. The principles of God work whether you believe them or not. In the case of David's son, he is about to see this principle in action. No prophet came to him and said, "You will be king". No, he said it to himself. Sounds very much like the devil's ambition, doesn't it? **Isaiah 14:13** *For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ascend into heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.* **SAINT'S PRINCIPLE:** Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).

*6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. NLT Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, "What are you doing?" Adonijah was a very handsome man and had been born next after Absalom.* David's one huge shortcoming was that he was a poor father. He allowed confusion to reign in his household, which caused the death of two of his sons, Amnon and Absalom. Now he has another son, a good-looking son that he has **never** rebuked (*Isn't that amazing?*) and he is bearing the fruit of that. Notice that the text makes it appear that his mother was also the mother of Absalom. This was not true. First Chronicles the third chapter brings this out more clearly: *1 Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess: 2 The third, Absalom the son of Maachah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur: the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith.* Adonijah was the fourth son of David right after Absalom who was the third.

*7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.* Joab was David's General of the Army and Abiathar was the priest that David set in place. Not only was Joab David's general, he was his nephew, since Zeruiah was David's sister (1 Chronicles 2:16). You would think for loyalty to the king, Joab and Abiathar would have at least consulted David. Dr. McGee takes a different approach in looking at this verse and it makes sense since Joab was always a selfish man in the Scriptures. *"Joab, who had been loyal to David for many years, now gives his allegiance to Adonijah. You can see his position; he is feathering his nest and preparing for the future. David is old, and in a short time he will be gone. Joab wants to be on the winning side. The only one on the scene who is making any move toward the throne is Adonijah. Joab has had tremendous influence in the palace and court of David. He has been David's right-hand man from the very beginning, and I am confident that he was loyal to David. I do not believe he would have permitted Adonijah to touch a hair of David's head, but he does want someone to come to the throne at this time. No other son of David seems to be a likely*

candidate. That is interesting because it implies that Joab would not have chosen Solomon to be king.”

**8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.** These key people did not stand with Adonijah. Most notably, the mighty men were not with him so the most skilled, loyal fighters did not go along with this because David never mentioned it to them. {JF&B} “**Benaiah**--Distinguished for his bravery (1Sa 23:20), he had been appointed captain of the king’s bodyguard (2Sa 8:18 20:23 1Ch 18:17), and was regarded by Joab as a rival. **Nathan the prophet**--He was held in high estimation by David, and stood on the most intimate relations with the royal family (2Sa 12:25).”

We need to know more about this man, Benaiah, because he figures prominently in this book. His name is pronounced **beh NIE yuh** which means *the Lord has built*. According to Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, “*Benaiah was one of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23:30; 1 Chr. 27:14). He was also a loyal supporter of David and Solomon (1 Kin. 1:8; 4:4; 1 Chr. 27:5). Benaiah commanded the Cherethites and the Pelethites (we’ll talk about these in verse 44), David’s bodyguard (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23; 1 Chr. 18:17; 27:5–6). A Levite, Benaiah remained loyal to David when David’s son Absalom rebelled. He was famous for three courageous deeds: (1) climbing down into a pit and killing a lion; (2) killing two lion-like warriors of Moab; and (3) killing an Egyptian giant with the giant’s own weapon (2 Sam. 23:20–22; 1 Chr. 11:22–24).*”

**9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants: 10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.** He didn’t call ALL his brothers. He left out Solomon. I believe he did this because he knew that Solomon was the one that David had promised the throne to and he wanted to seize his position.

**11 Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not?** David didn’t know this but he was old and feeble and couldn’t do much about it. However, as we’ll soon see, the wisdom of God was still present with him.

**12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.** This situation was critical. As one who was promised the throne, if it were taken from him, Solomon could be viewed as a traitor or at least a rival and he and his mother would be executed. But more importantly, Nathan was the prophet to the nation and he knew that the Lord’s will was for Solomon to be king. Of all of David’s children, only Solomon received this word at his birth: **2 Samuel 12:24-25** **And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and**

*the LORD loved him. 25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.* The name Jedidiah means “beloved of the Lord”.

*13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? 14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.* This may seem like treachery to the old king like the treachery that Rebekah concocted on Isaac to allow Jacob to be blessed. In this case, some say that part of the scheme was to not shock the old, frail king with the news but to break it to him gradually and then confirm it through Nathan, whom David trusted greatly.

*15 And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.* Try to paint this scene today and you’ll find it very difficult. The old wife, Bathsheba, goes to her husband’s bedroom and sees the latest wife, Abishag. Even the best saints would have to pray down jealousy and envy but then, polygamy was never in the will of God. The statement Dr. McGee makes about the next verse seems to make this a scene with an added level of tension.

*16 And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldst thou?* {McGee} “It seems as though David had not seen Bathsheba for a long time.” David said to Bathsheba, “What do you want?” How would you accept this question under such conditions?

*17 And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. 18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: 19 And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. 20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.* Bathsheba follows the instructions of Nathan and adds this key point – the eyes of all Israel are upon you. Leadership transition is difficult but it is made more difficult when it is not communicated prior to the death of the leader. Bathsheba wants to fix that and the nation desires for it to be done.

*22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.* Just like it was planned.

*23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. 24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? 25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and*

*hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. 26 But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. 27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?* Nathan knew the will of God and David did also. Dr. McGee feels that David wasn't so excited about Solomon. He wasn't of the same rugged exterior as he was and Adonijah may have better fit that role. But David, being pressed, now knows what he must do – he **must** obey God. One thing that excited David was the will of God because he knows the terror of disobedience and being out of the will of God.

*28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.* Every verse in this chapter prior to this point shows us King David as a feeble old man. In fact, some of the commentators say he was senile by this time. However, the will of God is at stake and his mind has cleared and he has renewed vigor. **SAINTS'**

**PRINCIPLE:** The will of God must be what drives and sustains us.

*29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, 30 Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.* He sounds like the David of old. He speaks of his love for God, which is still strong, and he speaks as the psalmist of Israel as well as the king of Israel. He confirms what Bathsheba has said – he *did* make an oath that Solomon would be king. {JF&B} “*He renews to her the solemn pledge he had given, in terms of solemnity and impressiveness which show that the aged monarch had roused himself to the duty the emergency called for.*”

*31 Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.* {MH} “*Bathsheba receives these assurances with hearty good wishes for the king's health; ‘Let him live’. So far was she from thinking that he lived too long that she prayed he might live for ever, if it were possible, to adorn the crown he wore and to be a blessing to his people. We should earnestly desire the prolonging of useful lives, however it may be the postponing of any advantages of our own.*”

*32 And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.* David had been patiently waiting for death, enjoying in the company of his new wife. Now, however, his renewed strength has him put this aside because the will of God is at stake and his own word is at stake.

*33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:* {McGee} “*The mule was the animal kings rode upon, while the horse was the animal of warfare. You will find in the Book of Revelation that the riding of the four horses speaks of turmoil and warfare. Also the Lord Jesus*

*Christ will come again to his earth riding on a white horse, which speaks of warfare. He will come to put down rebellion on the earth; and before Him every knee shall bow. When the Lord came to earth the first time, He did not come to make war; He came to offer Himself as Israel's Messiah, and as such He rode a little donkey into Jerusalem."*

**34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.** According to JF&B, this public anointing of the new king was done to publicly display, when there was some dispute, who the successor would be.

**35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.** {MH} *"They must then bring him in state to the city of David, and he must sit upon the throne of his father, as his substitute now, or viceroy, to dispatch public business during his weakness and be his successor after his death: He shall be king in my stead. It would be a great satisfaction to David himself, and to all parties concerned, to have this done immediately, that upon the demise of the king there might be no dispute, or agitation, in the public affairs."*

**36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too. 37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. 38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.** {McGee} *"Now there is no question as to whom David has chosen to be his successor. Solomon is to be the next king."*

**40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.** The people were happy because the will of the king whom they loved was fulfilled.

**41 And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?** Notice the speed with which this was done. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Slow obedience is often NO obedience.** David knew this had to happen quickly before the seeds of rebellion had a chance to spread. He had learned a difficult lesson under the rebellion of his other son, Absalom.

**42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.** {MH} *"Usurpers flatter themselves with the hopes of success, and those are commonly least [fearful] whose condition is most dangerous. But how can those who do evil deeds expect to have good tidings? No, the worthiest man will bring them the worst news, as the priest's son did here to Adonijah."* Matthew

Henry has made a powerful statement here – those involved in rebellion often are so self-deceived that they expect everything to go their way. But notice the principle we laid out early in this chapter beginning to come to pass. **SAINT'S PRINCIPLE: Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).**

*43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.* Though Jonathan was at least touched by the conspiracy, as the son of Abiathar the priest, notice the respect he gives to the name of David. Actually, it's hard to tell where his allegiance lied because he was obviously at the anointing of Solomon and now comes to the camp of the conspirators.

*44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:* Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary:

- **CHERETHITES [KER ih thites]** (Cretans) — a tribe inhabiting the Negeb (or southern area) of Philistia (1 Sam. 30:14; Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5). The tribe probably emigrated from the island of Crete. Along with the Pelethites, the Cherethites formed the basis of David's mercenary army.
- **PELETHITES [PEE leth ights]** — a select company of soldiers who, along with the Cherethites, formed David's bodyguard (2 Sam. 8:18; 15:18). Some scholars believe the Pelethites and the Cherethites refer to Philistines and Cretans, respectively.

It sounds like these two groups formed the Secret Service to the king at that time. This is a key point because they are transferring their bodyguard duties from David to Solomon demonstrating who is to be king.

*45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. 46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.* Not only was Solomon anointed; he took over as interim king in David's stead. While David was wasting away, the country basically had no king so this was an important move.

*47 And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. 48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.* Abiathar's son must have been an eyewitness – he had too many details to not have been there. He ended with the fact that David sanctioned the elevation of Solomon which was enough to crush the hopes of Adonijah.

**49** *And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.* {MH} “The effectual crush which this gave to Adonijah’s attempt. It spoiled the sport of his party, dispersed the company, and obliged every man to [flee] for his own safety. The triumphing of the wicked is short. They were building a castle in the air, which, having no foundation, would soon fall and crush them. They were afraid of being taken in the fact, while they were together hatching their treason, and therefore each one made the best of his way.”

**50** *And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.* Adonijah was afraid because he feared that Solomon would do to him what was typically done at a time of transition – eliminate all current and future threats. Therefore, he went to the Tabernacle to make a public appeal for mercy.

**51** *And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let KING Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his SERVANT with the sword.* {MH} “He owns Solomon for his prince, and himself his servant, dares not justify himself, but makes supplication to his judge. It was a great change with him. He that in the morning was grasping at a crown is before night begging for his life. Then Adonijah reigned, now Adonijah trembles, and cannot think himself safe unless Solomon promise, with an oath, not to put him to death.”

Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary gives us the following information about the term, “the horns of the altar”. “The altar in both the Tabernacle and the Temple had four projections, or horns—one at each corner—on which the blood of the sacrificed animals was sprinkled (Ex. 29:12). But if a person was guilty of murder, he could not be saved [by this appeal]. If [a murderer] were to flee to the tabernacle (or Temple) and take ‘hold of the horns of the altar’ (1 Kin. 1:50–51; 2:28)—both an appeal for mercy and a claim to the protection of the sanctuary—he could [still] be put to death by the avenger (1 Kin. 2:25, 34).” {JF&B} “Adonijah, having acted in opposition to the will of the reigning king, was guilty of rebellion, and stood self-condemned. Solomon spared his life on the express condition of his good behavior--living in strict privacy, leading a quiet, peaceable life, and meddling with the affairs of neither the court nor the kingdom.”

**52** *And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.* Solomon has not yet prayed his famous prayer, which gained for him the wisdom of God, but already wisdom shows itself in him.

**LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** Who God calls, He qualifies, or empowers, to be able to perform the work they have been called to do.

**53** *So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.* {MH} “Adonijah is sent for, and told upon what terms he stands, which he signifies his grateful submission to, and then is told to go to his house and live retired there. Solomon not only gave him his life, but his estate, thus establishing his throne by mercy.”



## Chapter 2

In this chapter we have the death of David and the beginning of the establishment of the kingdom under Solomon. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Benaiah will play a prominent role in the establishment of the kingdom. The events of this chapter are brought out in more detail in First Chronicles 28-29.

*1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and SHEW THYSELF A MAN; {McGee} “Solomon was not quite like his father. David was a man. Solomon was not much of a man. David was rugged. Solomon had been brought up in the palaces—in fact, he had been brought up in the women’s palaces. Why did Solomon have a thousand women around him? My friend, the answer is quite obvious. All Solomon knew about was women. He was a sissy if there ever was one. I don’t think he and David had much in common. So David says to him, ‘I have made you king. I want you to play the man. I don’t think you are one, but do the best that you can.’”* At first it seemed that Dr. McGee was being overly harsh on Solomon until you compare this verse with **1 Chronicles 29:1** *Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet YOUNG AND TENDER, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God.* To understand what is meant by this, **Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** says, “According to the chronology in 1 Kings 11:42, Solomon was about 20 years old when he was crowned. He assumed leadership of Israel at a time of great material and spiritual prosperity.” His age would agree with the “young” of this verse. The word “tender” would probably agree with the words of Dr. McGee.

*3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: 4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.* David begins some final instructions to Solomon before he dies. The first is the most important and the one, which we’ll see later, that Solomon violated. **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** **if you want to be successful in the work of the Lord and in ALL that you do, you MUST be COMPLETELY faithful to God. NOTHING THAT HE IS ABOUT TO SAY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THIS.** Solomon, the wisest man that lived, obviously did not understand the importance of this instruction or was blinded by the lust of the flesh. The key point that David makes in this is that obedience to this instruction will insure future prosperity for his children, grandchildren, and beyond.

*5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. 6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.* David turns his attention away

from the prime directive to some “housecleaning” duties that Solomon needs to take care of to have continued peace in his kingdom.

David targeted Joab for execution. Joab was David’s nephew and Solomon’s first cousin. (Zeruiah was David’s sister.) However, Joab had committed much treachery during his time as General of the Army and had done many things in direct opposition to the will of the king. Joab murdered the two men that David specifically mentioned because David had placed them over the army in place of Joab. David made no distinction because of family relationship because Joab did not either. Amasa was his first cousin. To understand the treachery of Joab, the following two passages tell of his murderous deeds:

1. **2 Samuel 3:21, 26-28** *And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in PEACE. 26 And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew it not. 27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. 28 And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD forever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner.*
2. According to **Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary**, “*Amasa was David’s nephew, the son of Jether and Abigail (1 Chr. 2:17). He was also the cousin of Joab, a captain in David’s army (2 Sam. 17:25). When Absalom rebelled against his father David, he appointed Amasa commander of the rebel army. After Absalom was defeated and killed by Joab (2 Sam. 18:14), David forgave Amasa and appointed him commander of the royal army in place of Joab (2 Samuel 19:13).*” This next passage refers to the murder of Amasa: **2 Samuel 20:9-10** *And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. 10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab’s hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.*

*7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, “BARZILLAI [bar ZILL ay eye] – A member of the tribe of Gilead from Rogelim who brought provisions to David and his army at Mahanaim, where they had fled*

from Absalom (2 Sam. 17:27-29). On his deathbed, David remembered Barzillai's kindness and reminded Solomon to care for his children (1 Kin. 2:7)." Barzillai's name means "made of iron" and he showed this in the face of the rebellion against David.

**8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. 9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.** {McGee} "David is revealing here what seems like a vengeful spirit, but it actually is not. Although Shimei had demonstrated that he was a traitor, because David had made an oath not to touch him, Shimei was still alive. David was a man of his word. Now, however, he tells Solomon to keep his watchful eye on him and if he reveals any of his treachery, Solomon is to deal with him accordingly. The time does come, by the way, when Solomon deals with Shimei, but only after he disobeys and reveals that he is indeed a traitor."

**10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. 11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.** JF&B says that David died about six months after this. It is said that David lived longer than any of the Hebrew kings even though he died at seventy years old.

**12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.** This is actually part of the SECOND coronation of Solomon as king. Remember that in chapter 1, he sat on the throne at the instruction of David to put down the self-exaltation of Adonijah. Now we have the "official" coronation. This is brought out in **1 Chronicles 29:22** **And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king THE SECOND TIME, and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest.**

**13 And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.** Adonijah gave some impressive words at the end of chapter 1 in his quest to save his own life. Who wouldn't? However, he has not given up his quest for the throne. He hatches a clever plot...or so he thinks... and begins that plot with a visit to the mother of Solomon. Notice that she is concerned about the reason for his visit.

**14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.** {McGee} "She says, 'Say on'—in other words, 'I'm listening.'"

**15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD.** This verse reveals the true nature of the treachery of this man. First, he says that the kingdom was his and that the people wanted him to be king. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:**

What people want means **nothing** if it does not align with the will of God. Second, he says that things have changed and it now belongs to his brother. Third, which is most important, he says that the kingdom was given to Solomon by the Lord! Now you would think that this statement would be enough for him to give up his claims. Not only is he an evil man, he is a stupid man – he has chosen to fight with God. **Luke 12:47** *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* Adonijah is preparing himself for a beating.

*16 And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. 17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.* Adonijah was trying to do the same thing his brother Absalom did when he rebelled against David. At that time, he laid with the king's wives showing that he had taken everything from David. Now Adonijah wants to do the same thing but with the late king's wife. Also, to have the reigning king give her would have confused the people and caused division in the kingdom. He was counting on enough confusion to take the kingdom from Solomon.

*18 And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.* Bathsheba doesn't get it. This all seems innocent to her.

*19 Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.* {JF&B} “*The filial reverence and the particular act of respect, which Solomon rendered, were quite in accordance with the sentiments and customs of the East. The right hand is the place of honor; and as it expressly said to have been assigned to ‘the king's mother,’ it is necessary to remark that, when a husband dies, his widow acquires a higher dignity and power, as a mother over her son, than she ever possessed before. Besides, the dignity of ‘king's mother’ is a state office, to which certain revenues are attached. The holder has a separate palace or court, as well as possesses great influence in public affairs; and as the dignity is held for life, it sometimes happens, in consequence of deaths, that the person enjoying it may not be related to the reigning sovereign by natural maternity. Bath-sheba had evidently been invested with this honorable office.*”

*20 Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.* Solomon may have said that he wouldn't say, “No” out of courtesy but he did not allow himself to be bound by an oath before he heard the request.

*21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. 22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.* {McGee} “*What Adonijah was*

actually doing was making a move toward the throne. He was doing a dangerous thing, but he was being very clever about it all. Adonijah was Solomon's elder brother, and Solomon, of course, had been aware of his brother's move to seize the throne before David named a successor. Although Bathsheba, in her simplicity, felt that Adonijah's request for Abishag was reasonable, Solomon's keen mind instantly penetrated the plot." Notice that he also mentions Abiathar the priest and Joab. He sees all of them as equally involved in this treachery.

**23 Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. 24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. 25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.** Solomon had Benaiah execute his brother to remove controversy from the throne. This may seem bloody today but it was a common occurrence in that day. Now he must also deal with the co-conspirators.

{MH} "Abiathar and Joab were both aiding and abetting in Adonijah's rebellious attempt, and it is probable were at the bottom of this new motion made of Adonijah for Abishag, and it should seem Solomon knew it. This was, in both, an intolerable affront both to God and to the government, and the worse because of their high station and the great influence their examples might have upon many. They therefore come next to be reckoned with. They are both equally guilty of the treason, but, in the judgment passed upon them, a difference is made and with good reason."

**26 And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.** Solomon respected the legacy that Abiathar had left behind with his work, and suffering, with King David and because he brought the Ark of the Covenant back. Matthew Henry gives us our **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE** **Those that show kindness to God's people shall have it remembered to their advantage one time or other.**

**27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.** By being exiled to his home, Abiathar could not perform the function of the high priest. As a descendent of Eli, this fulfilled the Word of the Lord spoken in 1 Samuel 2:30. (Note: Zadok was now the high priest. He was a descendent of Eleazar.)

**28 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.** Joab found out about the death of Adonijah and the fact that his name was mentioned with Abiathar in the pronouncement of judgment upon Adonijah. Now fear strikes him and he runs to the horns of the altar as a public cry for mercy.

**29** *And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.* Remember that a murderer could receive no mercy by holding on to the horns of the altar. The murders he had committed under David now must be dealt with and there will be no mercy given.

**30** *And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. 31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. 32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. 33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. 34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.* Joab had served the kingdom many years but with treachery and ambition. He never had the mind of his leader but did many things in opposition to him including killing Absalom, David's son, against his direct order. Now his deeds have fallen upon him and he has died and been buried without all of the ceremony that should go along with his military career. {JF&B} “*The execution of these sentences respectively on Adonijah and Abiathar prepared Joab for his fate. Death, due to his great crimes (Nu 35:33), would long ago have been inflicted, had not his power and popularity with the army been too formidable for the old king. He now fled to the altar, which, though a recognized asylum, afforded no sanctuary to the rebel and murderer (Ex 21:14). And, as he refused to leave it, he seems to have cherished some faint hope that a religious scruple would have been felt at the thought of violating the sanctity of the place by bloodshed. Benaiah, not liking to assume any responsibility, referred the matter to Solomon, who determined that the law should take its course (De 19:13).*” **GOD’S PRINCIPLE: Numbers**

**32:23b Be sure your sin will find you out.**

**35** *And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.* With these two treacherous men out of the picture, someone had to take their places because their positions were important in the kingdom. Benaiah and Zadok had been faithful and loyal to David and Solomon and were the likely choices. **Proverbs 28:20** *A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.* All four of these men proved this verse. The two discussed here, Benaiah and Zadok, were faithful while Joab and Abiathar were hasty to be rich because they saw position and power in being with the king...but they chose the wrong one.

**36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. 37 For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. 38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.** First, let's understand this man Shimei [SHIM ih uh]. 2 Samuel 16:5-13 tells the brief story of this man. David was in the process of fleeing Jerusalem after the rebellion of his son, Absalom. Let's introduce Shimei from the Scriptures at this point: **2 Samuel 16:5-6 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. 6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.** Shimei met David, upon his return to Jerusalem when the rebellion was put down, and asked forgiveness for his actions. David allowed him to live but, in my opinion, marked him as one that was yet hostile and disloyal because of the loss of the kingdom from the house of Saul. Therefore, he was a dangerous man.

{McGee} “Solomon wanted Shimei to be where he could keep his eye on him. Wherever Shimei went, he sowed seeds of rebellion. Solomon wanted to watch his every move.” The conditions presented to him by the king were “good” to him and he agreed to them and followed them...for a while.

**39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. 40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. 41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.** After three years, Shimei forgot what he had promised and obviously counted on the slackness of Solomon. However, Solomon did not forget nor was he slack. David had warned him about Shimei and Solomon did not forget his warning.

**42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. 43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? 44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; 45 And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. 46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom**

*was established in the hand of Solomon. {JF&B} “Now, by the death of Shimei, all the leaders of the rival factions had been cut off.”*

## Chapter 3

Now that the enemies of the kingdom have been eliminated, the kingdom begins to grow under Solomon. However, Solomon starts out with some terrible mistakes that will haunt him throughout his reign.

*1 And Solomon made affinity (kinship) with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. NKJV Now Solomon made a TREATY with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem.* One of the early points made about Solomon was that he was NOT like his father David. David, for all of his flaws, was still a great man of God and a great king. There are three points about this marriage, which show the error of this move:

1. As a Gentile, even a converted Gentile, she was not able to participate in all the religious services of the Jews. {JF&B} *"She was not admissible into the stronghold of Zion, the building where the ark was (De 23:7,8). She seems to have been lodged at first in his mother's apartments (So 3:4 8:2), as a suitable residence was not yet provided for her in the new palace."* Solomon had to compromise the principles of his father in this marriage.
2. As a former idol worshipper, there was always a link back to idolatrous past. In the New Testament, this is not a problem because Jesus Christ changes the nature of man. In the Old Testament, this change of heart was not available. {MH} *"We will suppose she was [converted to Judaism], otherwise the marriage would not have been lawful; yet, if so, surely it was not advisable. Unequal matches of the sons of God with the daughters of men have often been of [harmful] consequence; yet some think that he did this with the advice of his friends, that she was a sincere convert (for the gods of the Egyptians are not reckoned among the strange gods which his strange wives drew him in to the worship of)."*
3. Egypt is always shown, in the Scriptures, as a symbol of the world. Solomon made a treaty with Egypt with this marriage. Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33) but Solomon compromised. David made war against those he viewed as a threat but Solomon made treaties.

*2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.* {McGee} *"After David's reign there was a period of relaxation. The people began to offer sacrifices in high places which was actually heathen, pagan worship. It was a return to idolatry."* Solomon didn't have the heart for God like David did. The things that he suffered and the hardships he endured had strengthened David's heart. Solomon's life was one of ease. **Hebrews 5:8** *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **Our pursuit after God must be steadfast and vigorous lest we allow the things of the world to come in and overtake us. If Jesus suffered in showing us our perfect example, so must we.**

**IMPORTANT DEFINITION:** {JF&B} *“The high places were altars erected on natural or artificial [high structures], probably from the idea that men were brought nearer to the Deity. They had been used by the patriarchs, and had become so universal among the heathen that they were almost identified with idolatry. They were prohibited in the Law (Le 17:3,4 De 12:13,14 Jer 7:31 Eze 6:3,4 Ho 10:8). But, so long as the Tabernacle was [roving] and the means for the national worship were merely [makeshift], the worship on those high places was tolerated.”*

**3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.** {McGee} *“Solomon was perfectly willing to offer sacrifices on heathen altars—something that David never would have done. Although Solomon loved the Lord, he was not the kind of a man David was. Solomon was walking in the statutes of David, but he had that little flaw that we have already seen makes second-rate material.”* Worshipping at the high places was an accepted practice at this time but it wasn't the perfect will of God. As Dr. McGee says, this is something that was never mentioned under the reign of David but we see it very early in the reign of Solomon.

The opening three verses of this chapter set the stage for the reign of Solomon and cannot be left so quickly. Let us add to our thoughts the words of Ray C. Stedman, February 1965, (© Discovery Publishing, a Ministry of Peninsula Bible Church). His words are very powerful so please don't skip over them!

*Now here is a man who loves God. He loves him with all his heart. Solomon begins his reign with a wonderful expression of yieldedness and a desire for God's rule and authority in his life. He follows in the footsteps of his father, David. Nevertheless, he does two little things---which seem to be very small, trivial matters---that ultimately overthrow his kingdom. He makes an alliance with the daughter of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, (which always pictures the world) and brings her into the central life of the nation of Israel. Here an alliance is made with the world. Then he also worships at the high places. In the pagan religions of that day all the worship and rites were conducted up on the mountaintops. The pagan tribes had erected altars, many of which were the center of very idolatrous and licentious worship. Frequently, the altar was the place where the fertility of sex gods was worshiped in a sexual display. But the altars were also taken over by the people of Israel and used for the sacrifices to Jehovah. The ark of God was now in the city of Jerusalem in the tabernacle, where David placed it. But Solomon did not present his offerings at the altar in the tabernacle; instead he was offering in these high places. He was offering sacrifices to God, but on pagan altars. Outwardly there was much that was beautiful and admirable in this young man's rule, and in general his heart was set in the right direction. Nevertheless, there was an area that was not fully committed to God. There was a weakness in his fellowship. There was a lack of understanding that the*

*secret of God's love lay in that inner yieldedness to his will, represented by a worship before the Ark of the Covenant. In many, many a life, here is often much outward yieldedness and commitment to the will of God, but in the private inner life there is a lack of warmth and a hunger after God. It was here that the strength of David so vividly lay. Even though David fell into the black sins of murder and adultery, nevertheless, in the inner sanctum of his heart there was a deep and abiding commitment to the will of God and a hungering after the person of God. You see it breaking through in all the psalms of David. But this is lacking in Solomon, and this is the first indication that something is wrong in his life.*

**4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.** The writer calls Gibeon “the great high place” but actually this was the place where sacrifice was to take place at that time prior to the Temple being built. According to **2 Chronicles 1:3** *So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.* On this altar, Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings.

**5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.** Isn't this exciting! What would YOU ask of God if you were given this same opportunity? Solomon made the right choice.

**6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?** Solomon, by comparison, was indeed a child as he was about 20 years old at this time. However, even in his youth, he understands the importance of knowing how to perform his duty as king in a wise manner.

**10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; 12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast NOT asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my**

*commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.* There are a number of things in these verses that we need to look at because God blessed Solomon beyond his wildest imagination in these verses.

First, Solomon's humility pleased the Lord. There are a number of things that he could have asked for. David had a long life – longer than any other Hebrew king. He could have asked for that. David was rich beyond anyone's imagination. What he gave to the work of the temple in 1 Chronicles 22 (over \$1 BILLION) and then what he added in 1 Chronicles 29 show that wealth was not an issue. He could have asked for the lives of his enemies. Of course he had some. It comes with the position. Instead, he humbled himself before God and asked for what he would need to be of **SERVICE** to the people. This is the opposite spirit of his brother, Adonijah, in chapter 1.

Second, God gave Solomon his request. Notice how that the word of the Lord is past tense. This is because it's already done! Not only was his request honored, God made him the wisest man that ever lived.

Third, God employed a New Testament principle prior to it being paid for by the blood of Jesus. He blessed Solomon **EXCEEDINGLY, ABUNDANTLY, ABOVE ALL THAT HE COULD ASK OR THINK!** He also gave him riches and honor so that he would be one of the wonders of the world. In these verses, we see this principle in action: **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: He that humbles himself shall be exalted!**

*15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.* Solomon realized that God had spoken to him, left Gibeon, and went in the steps of his father, David. David did not offer sacrifice at Gibeon, though the Tabernacle was there. David came before the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem because it represented the visible presence of God among the people. How different Solomon's life might have been had he continued to walk in the footsteps of David! {MH} *“We must give God praise for his gifts in the promise, though not yet fully performed. David used to praise God's word, as well as his works (Ps. 56:10, and particularly, 2 Sa. 7:18), and Solomon trod in his steps. He made a great feast upon the sacrifice, that those about him might rejoice with him in the grace of God.”*

*16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. 17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. 18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. 19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. 20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. 21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not*

*my son, which I did bear. 22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. 23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. 24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. 25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. 26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. 27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.* This account is one that is often used to demonstrate the wisdom of Solomon. At this time, even a prostitute could appeal her case to the king for judgment, as was done here.

*28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. **Amplified Bible** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had made, and they stood in awe of him, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.* The wisdom of God in Solomon helped to establish him as king over Israel.

## Chapter 4

In this chapter we begin to see the kingdom being established under Solomon, people being put into positions, and the general climate of the time. There will also be more discussion on the wisdom of Solomon – important points to ponder now as we prepare for what will occur later in his life.

**1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel. 2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, {JF&B} “rather, ‘the prince,’ as the Hebrew word frequently signifies (Ge 41:45 Ex 2:16 2Sa 8:18); so that from the [preeminence] given to his person in the list, he seems to have been prime minister, the highest in office next the king.”** In the coming list of key officers of the kingdom, two things should be noted: (1) many of these men also worked in these positions for David – a testimony of Solomon’s continuing respect for the legacy of his father; (2) others on this list were the sons of David’s key men – a testimony of Solomon’s gratitude for what their fathers had done in supporting his father.

**3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. 4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: 5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king’s friend (NIV personal adviser to the king): 6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.**

**7 And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.** {JF&B} “The royal revenues were raised according to the ancient, and still, in many parts, existing usage of the East, not in money payments, but in the produce of the soil. There would be always a considerable difficulty in the collection and transmission of these tithes (1Sa 8:15). Therefore, to facilitate the work, Solomon appointed twelve officers, who had each the charge of a tribe or particular district of country, from which, in monthly rotation, the supplies for the maintenance of the king’s household were drawn, having first been deposited in ‘the store cities’ which were erected for their reception.” Solomon, in his wisdom, divided up the country so that tribute (taxes) could be received for the running of the kingdom each month. The trust that Solomon placed in these men is evident when you look at the fact that he entrusted two of them (verses 11 and 15) with his daughters.

**8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: 9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan: 10 The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hepher: 11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: 12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: 13 The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: 14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim: 15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: 16 Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in**

*Alloth: 17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: 18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: 19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.*

*20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry (NIV they were happy).* This verse is a key statement of the mood and atmosphere present at the time of the reign of Solomon. Matthew Henry brings out some key points about this verse: “(1) [The people] were numerous and [the] country was exceedingly populous: Judah and Israel were many, and that good land was sufficient to maintain them all. (2) They were easy, they dwelt safely, or with confidence and assurance (v. 25), not jealous of their king or of his officers, not disaffected either to him or one to another, nor under any apprehension or danger from enemies foreign or domestic. They were happy and knew it, safe and willing to think themselves so. (3) They were cheerful in the use of their plenty, eating and drinking, and making merry. Solomon did not only keep a good table himself, but enabled all his subjects, according to their rank, to do so too, and taught them that God gave them their abundance that they might use it soberly and pleasantly, not that they might hoard it up.” This was the time promised by God going back to the time of Moses but the disobedience of the people kept them from this. David had been a strong spiritual leader and had moved the people away from idolatry. Now God rewards their diligent service to Him under Solomon’s reign and the people were happy. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: The key to our happiness in this life is our continued obedience and trust in God.**

*21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. NIV And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon’s subjects all his life.* Solomon’s kingdom was the largest of all of the Jewish kingdoms. It went well into Syria (“the river” mentioned above was Euphrates which was far north of Damascus) and south into Sinai.

*22 And Solomon’s provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, 23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.* {JF&B} “[This was] not for the king’s table only, but for all connected with the court, including, besides the royal establishment, those of his royal consorts, his principal officers, his bodyguards, his foreign visitors, etc. The quantity of fine flour used is estimated at two hundred forty bushels; that of meal or common flour at four hundred eighty. The number of cattle required for consumption, besides poultry and several kinds of game (which were abundant on the mountains) did not exceed in proportion what is needed in other courts of the East.” Matthew Henry says that all of this food was used to feed the 3,000 to 5,000 people which daily came into the court of Solomon. Most of these were probably visitors who came to hear his wisdom.

**24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. 25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.** {JF&B} “This is a common and beautiful metaphor for peace and security (Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10), founded on the practice, still common in modern Syria, of training these fruit trees up the walls and stairs of houses, so as to make a shady arbor, beneath which the people sit and relax.”

**26 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.** {MacArthur} “Though the Hebrew text reads 40,000, this was probably a copyists error in transcribing the text, and it should read 4,000 as in 2 Chronicles 9:25.”

**27 And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon’s table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. NIV The district officers, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king’s table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking.** These men were faithful in the completion of their duties. They were the right men for the job. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Be faithful in whatever job you have in supporting the Body of Christ. Why? Is there a blessing promised for this? Yes, but if there was none, it’s what is expected of the people of God. (Ecclesiastes 9:10) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.**

**28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.** They not only took care of Solomon, they took care of his horses and dromedaries (a species of camel found in Arabia and Northern Africa with one hump).

**29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.** {MH} “He had great knowledge of distant countries and the histories of former times, a quickness of thought, strength of memory, and clearness of judgment, such as never any man had. It is called largeness of heart; for the heart is often put for the intellectual powers. He had a vast compass of knowledge, could take things entire, and had an admirable faculty of laying things together. Some, by his largeness of heart, understand his courage and boldness, and that great assurance with which he delivered his dictates and determinations. Or it may be meant of his disposition to do good with his knowledge. He was very free and communicative, had the gift of utterance as well as wisdom, was as free of his learning as he was of his meat, and grudged neither to any that were about him.” What a powerful statement of Solomon!

Our principal for this verse also comes from Matthew Henry: **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: It is very desirable that those who have large gifts of any kind should have large hearts to use them for the good of others; and this is from the hand of God, Eccl. 2:24.**

**30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.** {Amplified Bible Footnote} “ ‘Wiser than all other men,’ until Christ came. Jesus said, ‘Someone more and greater than Solomon is here’ (Matt. 12:42).”

**32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.** Only hundreds of his proverbs were preserved in the Book of Proverbs. {JF&B} “Psalm 72, 127, 132, and the Song of Songs are his.”

**33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.** {McGee} “Solomon was a **dendrologist**—‘He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.’ The hyssop is a humble little plant that grows on rocks. Solomon was also a **zoologist**—‘he spake also of beasts’—and an **ornithologist** since he spoke of birds. He was an **entomologist**: he spoke of creeping things, or insects. He was an **ichthyologist**: he spoke of fishes. He spoke of these things because he had studied them and was an authority in these particular realms. This, apparently, is the beginning of the sciences. Solomon was interested in these things.”

## Chapter 5

Now that the kingdom has been established, it is time for Solomon to fulfill his destiny – that which he was sent into the world to do, build the Temple of God.

**1 And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. NIV When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father David, he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David.**

Hiram was excited about the fact that Solomon was king, not for his sake, but because he looked at KING Solomon as David's blessing. {McGee} *“Whatever King Hiram of Tyre is going to do will not be because of Solomon but because of his love, esteem, and respect for King David.”*

**2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, 3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. 4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.** God gave the kingdom peace under the reign of Solomon so that they could carry on this building project without fear of invasion by outside forces or rebellion internally. Because this is a work of the Lord, they will have enough trouble with the enemy of our souls without having to fight his henchmen in the flesh as well.

**5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.** {McGee} *“It was in David's heart to build the temple. The pattern for the building was given to David, not Solomon. First Chronicles 28:19 tells us, ‘All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.’ In other words, David was given the blueprint of the temple even though God did not permit him to build it. David gave this pattern or blueprint to Solomon. ‘Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things’ (1 Chron. 28:10–12). David also gathered the material: ‘Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance’ (1 Chron. 29:2). The conception of the temple, you see, was in the heart of David. Solomon merely executed the construction of it.”* Even though this temple, which will become one of the wonders of the world,

will be known as “Solomon’s Temple”, the reality is that the design of the temple and the funding for it came from David. Solomon may have taken the basic design and made it more elaborate.

**6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.** {JF&B} “Nowhere else could Solomon have procured materials for the woodwork of his contemplated building. The forests of Lebanon, adjoining the seas in Solomon’s time, belonged to the Phoenicians, and the timber being a lucrative branch of their exports, immense numbers of workmen were constantly employed in the felling of trees as well as the transportation and preparation of the wood... The operations were to be on so extensive a scale that the Tyrians alone would be insufficient. A division of labor was necessary, and while the former would do the work that required skilful artisans, Solomon engaged to supply the laborers.”

**7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.** {MH} “[Hiram rejoiced because] Solomon trod in his father’s steps, and carried on his designs, and was likely to be so great a blessing to his kingdom.” As we saw earlier in this chapter, Hiram loved David and, therefore, loved his family. He’s happy, not because of this business arrangement, but because his friend has been blessed and the people that his friend loved have been blessed with a good king. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Let us learn to be genuinely happy when we see the blessing of God in others lives...regardless of the state that we are currently in.

**8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. 9 My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.** **NLT** Then he sent this reply to Solomon: “I have received your message, and I will do as you have asked concerning the timber. I can supply you with both cedar and cypress. **9 My servants will bring the logs from the Lebanon mountains to the Mediterranean Sea and build them into rafts. We will float them along the coast to whatever place you choose. Then we will break the rafts apart and deliver the timber to you. You can pay me with food for my household.**”{JF&B} “The contract was drawn out formally in a written document (2Ch 2:11), which, according to Josephus, was preserved both in the Jewish and Tyrian records.” The contract with Hiram was very basic and didn’t involve a lot of details in the arrangement. Hiram would cut the wood and ship it by sea to the location that Solomon established. In return, Solomon would pay him with food for the king’s court.

**10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire. 11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures**

*of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. NLT In return Solomon sent him an annual payment of 100,000 bushels of wheat for his household and 110,000 gallons of olive oil.*

*12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. {MH} “God gave Solomon wisdom, which was more and better than any thing Hiram did or could give him; but this made Hiram love him, and enabled Solomon to improve his kindness, so that they were both willing to ripen their mutual love into a mutual league, that it might be lasting.”* There was peace between the two countries because of the love of these two men for each other. However, the wisdom of God in Solomon saw prudence in legalizing this peace so that others in the two kingdoms would not find occasion to break it.

*13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.* Adoniram was mentioned in 1 Kings 4:6 as being over the king’s tribute (taxes). A levy was also a tax even though, in this case, it did not involve actual money. {JF&B} *“The renewed notice of Solomon’s divine gift of wisdom (1Kings 5:12) is evidently introduced to prepare for this record of the strong but prudent measures he took towards the accomplishment of his work. So great a stretch of arbitrary power as is implied in this compulsory levy would have raised great discontent, if not opposition, had not his wise arrangement of letting the laborers remain at home two months out of three, added to the sacredness of the work, reconciled the people to this forced labor. The carrying of burdens and the irksome work of excavating the quarries was assigned to the remnant of the Canaanites (1Kings 9:20 2Ch 8:7-9) and war prisoners made by David--amounting to 153,600.”*

*15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; NIV Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills,*

*16 Beside the chief of Solomon’s officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. NIV as well as thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen.*

*17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. NIV At the king’s command they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple.*

*18 And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.*

## Chapter 6

Now Solomon begins to fulfill his destiny – he begins to build the Temple. This chapter provides an overview of the building of the Temple while the next chapter goes into more detail. First Kings provides more detail into what went into the building of the Temple than Chronicles provides. Perhaps this was because this book was intended as a public record of the actions of the kings. **In studying this chapter, we will not touch every verse but only the high points to help us understand the magnificence of the Temple.**

**1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. NLT It was in midspring, during the fourth year of Solomon's reign, that he began the construction of the Temple of the LORD. This was 480 years after the people of Israel were delivered from their slavery in the land of Egypt.** Notice that, as a public record, this book is very precise in pinpointing the date of the start of the building of the Temple. The building of the Temple was one of the key milestones of Jewish history along with the Exodus. In both cases, the Word of God gives precise dates of when they occurred (**Exodus 12:40-41** *Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*). It's interesting that the three periods of Jewish history were broken up almost evenly. It was 430 years that the people were in bondage in Egypt. It was 480 years from the Exodus to the start of the Temple. Matthew Henry says it was 430 years from this date to the destruction of the Temple. {MH} *"It was just 480 years after the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt. Allowing forty years to Moses, seventeen to Joshua, 299 to the Judges, forty to Eli, forty to Samuel and Saul, forty to David, and four to Solomon before he began the work, we have just the sum of 480. So long it was after that holy state was founded before that holy house was built, which, in less than 430 years, was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar."*

**2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits. NLT The Temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high.** {MacArthur} *"Normally the cubit was about 18 inches. This would make the temple structure proper 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high. However, 2 Chron. 3:3 may indicate that the longer royal cubit of approximately 21 inches was used in the construction of the temple. On this measurement, the temple structure proper would have been 105 feet long, 35 feet wide, and 52½ feet high."* For all of its splendor, which we shall soon see, the Temple was relatively small especially by today's standards whether you use the standard cubit or the royal cubit. By comparison, our church is 76 feet from the back of the pulpit to the front of the vestibule.

**7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.** Solomon wanted to impress upon the people the sanctity of the building and this attitude began while it was being built. If you're building a place of worship or a sanctuary for the

presence of the Lord, you can't wait until it's complete for a level of dignity and sacredness to be brought in. If the workers view it with dignity ahead of time, they will treat it with dignity and respect while working on it. {MH} *"It was to be the temple of [the] God of peace, and therefore no iron tool must be heard in it. Quietness and silence both become and befriend religious exercises: God's work should be done with as much care and as little noise as may be."*

**11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, 12 Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: 13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.**

{JF&B} *"[The Word came] probably by a prophet. It was very seasonable, being designed: first, to encourage him to go on with the building, by confirming anew the promise made to his father David (2Sa 7:12-16); and secondly, to warn him against the pride and presumption of supposing that after the erection of so magnificent a temple, he and his people would always be sure of the presence and favor of God. The condition on which that blessing could alone be expected was expressly stated. The dwelling of God among the children of Israel refers to those symbols of His presence in the temple, which were the visible tokens of His spiritual relation to that people."* As the commentator says, this was a conditional blessing. No matter how sacred the Temple might be, it was only as holy as the presence of God in it. And if God's presence left, it was just a building.

**14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.** This verse seems out of place since it is repeated in a different format in verses 37-38. However, Matthew Henry is of the opinion that this verse means that Solomon went forward more determined to complete the work based on the Word he had just received. {MH} *"Solomon built and finished, he went on with the work, and God went along with him till it was completed. It is spoken both to God's praise and his: he grew not weary of the work, met not with any obstructions, did not out-build his property, nor do it by halves, but, having begun to build, was both able and willing to finish; for he was a wise builder."* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** {Matthew Henry} **"The strictness of God's government will never drive a good man from his service, but quicken (accelerate) him in it."**

**21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. 22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold. 30 And the floors of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.** These verses were left in so that we could see the majesty of this magnificent building. {JF&B} *"The walls were [paneled] with cedar-wood [and] the floor, paved with cypress planks. The cedar-wood was beautifully embellished with figures representing clusters of foliage, open flowers, cherubims, and palm trees. The whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood nor stone was seen; nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain or richly [embossed]."*

**37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif: 38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. NLT 37 The foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid in mid-spring of the fourth year of Solomon's reign. 38 The entire building was completed in every detail by mid-autumn of the eleventh year of his reign. So it took seven years to build the Temple.** These last two verses of this chapter give the accounting of the time it took to build the Temple – seven years. This actually was rather quick for this time considering that all the detail work was completed, all the gold was overlaid, and the Temple was completely functional.

However, during this time, men were drafted (pressed into service) to build the Temple. They spent a lot of time away from home and their crops (the number one business of that time) in order to build it. This statement needs to be put away for consideration later because this will haunt Solomon's son not because of the work but because Solomon did not stay true to God.

Final thought: Look at the attitude of the people in cooperating with Solomon. They could have easily grumbled when it came time to spend 13 years building his house and could have grumbled even more when it came time to build the house for Pharaoh's daughter. In spite of that, we hear of no grumbling or complaint. What kind of attitude do we take when asked by leadership to cooperate?

## Chapter 7

In this chapter the accounts of Solomon's building programs are given. There are also many details given on the building of the Temple.

**1 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.** {JF&B} *“The time occupied in building his palace was nearly double that spent in the erection of the temple, because neither had there been the same previous preparations for it, nor was there the same urgency as in providing a place of worship, on which the national well-being so much depended.”*

**2 He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. NLT One of Solomon's buildings was called the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. It was 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The great cedar ceiling beams rested on four rows of cedar pillars.** {MH} *“He built the house of the forest at Lebanon, supposed to be a country seat near Jerusalem, so called from the pleasantness of its situation and the trees that encompassed it.”* The commentators had a lot of difficulty in figuring out where this house was – whether it actually was in Lebanon or just called that because of the great number of cedar trees used in building it. This was Solomon's vacation home. The verses after this give more details about this house, which we will move past.

**8 And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch. NLT Solomon's living quarters surrounded a courtyard behind this hall; they were built the same way. He also built similar living quarters for Pharaoh's daughter, one of his wives.** {McGee} *“He built a house for Pharaoh's daughter—he seems to have put her in a favored position.”*

**13 And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. 14 He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.** {MH} *“The brasier whom Solomon employed to preside in this part of the work was Hiram, or Hiram (2 Chr. 4:11), who was by his mother's side an Israelite, of the tribe of Naphtali, by his father's side a man of Tyre, v. 14. If he had the ingenuity of a Tyrian, and the affection of an Israelite to the house of God (the head of a Tyrian and the heart of an Israelite), it was happy that the blood of the two nations mixed in him, for thereby he was qualified for the work to which he was designed.”* King Hiram, in Second Chronicles, had promised to send a man who was skillful in all types of trades who was the son of a Jewish woman and a Gentile father. However, only Hiram is mentioned here. Even Josephus, the Jewish historian, goes on to say that Hiram did all the craftsman work for the temple. However, as I meditated on an answer, I realized that it was not that important and will not make a difference in our souls. (Perhaps this is why the commentators did not even address this.)

**47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.** Brass was not considered a “precious” metal but one that was of some value even as it is today. However, so much was used that Solomon didn’t bother to provide a weight (monetary value) for it. This also points to the prosperity of the kingdom under Solomon.

**48 And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was,** There is now a change in the type of material that was to be used. All of the gold work seems to have been done last in the building plans.

**49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, 50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple. {MH}** “Even the hinges of the door were of gold, that every thing might be alike magnificent, and bespeak Solomon’s generosity.”

**51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.**

## Chapter 8

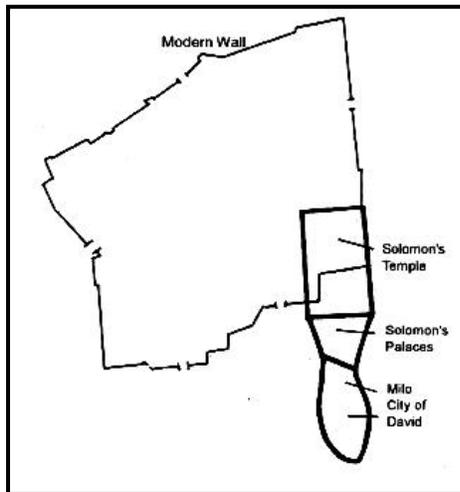
The Temple is now complete and the final items are moved in from the Tabernacle. It is now time to dedicate the Temple and all of the Children of Israel are gathered at Jerusalem for that purpose.

***1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.*** Before going further, we need to understand what's happening here. This verse says that the Ark of the Covenant was brought up out of Zion to the Temple. However, isn't Zion the same as Jerusalem and wasn't the Temple in Jerusalem? What, then, is happening here? There are many thoughts on these words. One writer said that "Zion" could be used interchangeably with "Jerusalem." That sounded good at first until you realize that Jerusalem was an open city to the Jewish people before David invaded the part held by the Jebusites. As a child, David came to the city bringing with him the head of Goliath. (***And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent. 1 Samuel 17:54***) The best explanation that I've found comes from a writer named Ed Form. He brings out that Jerusalem was composed of the main city as well as a fortress called "Zion" within that city. (Apparently it was on one of the peaks of the mountain range that Jerusalem rests on with the same name. On another one of the peaks, Mount Moriah, is where Solomon built the Temple.) The fortress was occupied by the Jebusites and was considered almost invincible. This part of the city was what Joab, David's nephew, and the army's of David took when they took "the castle of Zion." There's another area mentioned in these verses called "Millo." Ed Form goes on to say about Millo:

The word 'Millo' is not a place as such, since it means 'the filling up', and refers to filling the valley between Moriah to the north and Jebus to the south. The verse appears to say that David filled in the ground between the two hills, and built a wall round the filled site. The conventional idea that this entire area was "the city of David" is incorrect, since the passage tells us clearly that "***And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it (the castle) the city of David.***"

From this point on the use of the term "the city of David" is never descriptive of the whole of Jerusalem, and the proper conclusion is that the fort became the royal grounds, with palaces and offices of state, and, as particularly described, the tombs of the kings of David's house.

The picture below gives an illustration of how Zion compared to the location of the Temple. They brought the Ark of the Covenant out of the City of David (Zion) and brought it through Millo and Solomon's palace area all the way to the Temple.



*2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. **NLT** They all assembled before the king at the annual Festival of Shelters in early autumn.*

*10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. **GLORY** – This term refers to the manifestation of God’s divine attributes and perfection or such a visible glow as to indicate the possession and presence of these. We now use the term, popularly, “*Shechinah Glory*” to speak of the presence of God (see below for a definition of this term that we often use). We use it incorrectly because few saints have truly experienced it. In addition to the use of this word as it applies to God, it is used many times in the New Testament to express human boasting. This type of glory is completely of the flesh. When this glory (boasting) is present in any form, God’s glory will not be.*

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**Shechinah** (dwelling). This term is not found in the Bible. It was used by the later Jews, and borrowed by Christians from them, TO EXPRESS THE VISIBLE MAJESTY OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE, especially when resting or dwelling between the cherubim on the mercy seat in the tabernacle and in the temple of Solomon, but not in the second temple. The idea, which the different accounts in Scripture convey, is that of a most brilliant and glorious light, enveloped in a cloud, and usually concealed by the cloud, so that the cloud itself was for the most part alone visible; but on particular occasions the glory appeared. The allusions in the New Testament to the shechinah are not infrequent: Luke 2:9; John 1:14; Romans 9:4. (This definition came from William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet, *Smith’s Bible dictionary* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.)

**SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** The glory of the Lord stops our program. It makes our offerings, our announcements, our choir singing, even our preaching unnecessary and trivial by comparison. **CAUTION:** If we try to do these things while the presence of His glory is manifest, we will grieve the Spirit of God and we may not see this glory again.

*22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:* The remainder of the verses (until verse 54) are Solomon’s prayer of dedication for the Temple. Many of the words he prayed were prophetic words pointing to the time when the people of God would turn from God to idols. (Even he was not exempt from this.)

*54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, 56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.* Notice the great Word in verse 56 regarding the faithfulness of God: “*There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** The Lord is yet faithful to His Word and will not let His Word return to Him void (unfulfilled).

*65 And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. 66 On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.* {JF&B} “*The first seven [days] were occupied with the dedication, and the other seven [days] devoted to the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Ch. 7:9). The particular form of expression indicates that the fourteen days were not continuous. Some interval occurred in consequence of the great day of atonement falling on the tenth of the seventh month (1Ki 8:2), and the last day of the feast of tabernacles was on the twenty-third (2Ch 7:10), when the people returned to their homes with feelings of the greatest joy and gratitude ‘for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.’”*

## Chapter 9

In this chapter we have the answer, which God, in a vision, gave to Solomon's prayer and accounts of what went on in his kingdom in the early years of his reign.

*1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, 2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. 3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. 4 And **IF** thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: 5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. 6 But if ye shall **AT ALL** turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: 7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: 8 And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? 9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.*

The writer gives us only part of what the Lord said to Solomon in answering him after the dedication of the Temple. This chapter lines up with 2 Chronicles 7 where that notable verse 2 Chronicles 7:14 is found. This passage begins with a great Word from the Lord – *I have heard your prayer!* How many have lived their entire life without hearing those words or at least feeling within themselves that this is true? These words signify the end of whatever you've been going through. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **When God hears your prayer, the battle is won, the answer is on the way. It may not come tomorrow, the next day, next week, next month, or even this year but, because of these words, you know it's coming and should live in expectation of its appearance!** Solomon heard those words from the Lord. Not only had He heard Solomon's prayer from the last chapter, but also He went on to say that He had chosen the Temple to be a place where He would accept sacrifice – the answer to Solomon's prayer.

Within the Lord's response, He also gives Solomon a great promise with a great condition. If Solomon would walk in integrity and uprightness and keep God's commandments like David did, God would establish the house of David upon the throne of Israel forever. In the prior chapter, Solomon had prayed for mercy if the people turned from God. But now God says that if he or the people turn toward other gods **AT ALL**, He would cast them and the Temple out of His sight. Solomon appeared to be trying to make a pact with God that backfired. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **God**

wants complete allegiance to Him and expects us to not turn at all. If we do turn, the results, even in the New Testament, can be devastating.

*10 And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,* The twenty year span of time mentioned here represents seven years to build the Temple and thirteen years for Solomon to build his own house. If it took Solomon almost twice as long to build his house as it did to build the house of the Lord, it would appear that either he put more effort into it or he didn't get as much help to do it. The latter was mostly likely true since the people had already sacrificed so much in building the temple.

*11 (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. 13 And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. 14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.* {JF&B} “According to Josephus, they were situated on the northwest of Galilee, adjacent to Tyre. Though lying within the boundaries of the Promised Land, they had never been conquered till then, and were inhabited by Canaanite heathens. They were probably given to Hiram, whose dominions were small, as remuneration for his important services in furnishing workmen, materials, and an immense quantity of wrought gold (1Ki 9:14) for the temple and other buildings. The gold, however, as others think, may have been the amount of forfeits (bets paid off) paid to Solomon by Hiram for not being able to answer the riddles and apothegms, with which, according to Josephus, in their private correspondence, the two sovereigns amused themselves. Hiram having refused these cities, probably on account of their inland situation making them unsuitable to his maritime and commercial people, Solomon satisfied his ally in some other way; and, taking these cities into his own hands, he first repaired their shattered walls, then filled them with a colony of Hebrews (2Ch 8:2).” Matthew Henry goes on to say, “The Tyrians were merchants, trading men, that lived in fine houses, and became rich by navigation, but knew not how to value a country that was fit for corn and pasture (that was business that lay out of their way); and therefore Hiram desired Solomon to take them again, he knew not what to do with them.”

Solomon was not fair in the gift he gave to Hiram so Hiram gave him the cities back. The writer of Chronicles says that Hiram “restored” them to Solomon but that’s a very kind way to describe a gift thrown back in your face. The word “Cabul” that Hiram used means “dirty” or “displeasing.” Solomon intended for this to be a kind gesture but this is an example of the proverb that applies to gift giving, “It’s the thought that counts.” I’ve always felt like the gift also tells a lot about what was on your mind.

*15 And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and*

**Gezer.** {JF&B} “A levy refers both to men and money, and the necessity for Solomon making it arose from the many gigantic works he undertook to erect.”

**20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, 21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. 22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.** Though Solomon tallied a levy upon the people, the majority of the people who did the work on the Temple were actually the heathen people who continued to dwell among them. Their labor was a forced labor but the people of God served in more prominent positions in Solomon’s kingdom.

**24 But Pharaoh’s daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo.** This verse is better understood by bringing in the companion verse

from **2 Chronicles 8:11** *And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.* Solomon built a special house for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, because, even he had to admit, she was not holy and she was living in a holy area. That’s quite an indictment against his actions! {JF&B} “On his marriage with the Egyptian princess at the beginning of his reign, he assigned her a temporary abode in the city of David, that is, Jerusalem, until a suitable palace for his wife had been erected. While that palace was in progress, he himself lodged in the palace of David, but he did not allow her to occupy it, because he felt that she being a heathen proselyte, and having brought from her own country an establishment of heathen maid-servants, there would have been an impropriety in her being domiciled in a mansion which was or had been hallowed by the reception of the ark.”

**26 And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. 27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. 28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.** This is the first and only mention of a navy in the country of Israel in the Scriptures and, naturally, it occurred during Solomon’s reign. The navy was not really Israel’s because the sailors and the ships belonged to Hiram but they were under Solomon’s control and for his use. These ships brought back 450 talents of gold from Ophir. If you’ll recall from our study in First Chronicles, a talent of gold, according to Thompson, was said to be worth about **\$8,215**. This means that this gold was worth **\$3,696,750**. On the other hand, JF&B disagrees and says the amount was closer to **\$12,350,000**. Either way, notice the prosperity of Solomon’s reign – everything happened in millions!

## Chapter 10

This is the final chapter to deal with the prosperity of the reign of Solomon and his awesome wisdom. Unfortunately, we will see in the next chapter that his wisdom did not extend far enough.

***1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.*** There is some difference of opinion about who this “queen of Sheba” or, as Jesus calls her, “the queen of the south” is. One opinion is that the queen of Sheba was the queen of Ethiopia. (According to Genesis 10:7, Seba, or Sheba, was the son of Cush, the originator of Ethiopia.) Ethiopia was known, at that time, to have female leaders. The other opinion is that she is the queen of Saba, in southern Arabia, which is translated as “south.” The Ethiopians are convinced one way while others are convinced another way but here’s another point of controversy that won’t get us closer to God.

***2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.*** According to JF&B, the Oriental people delight in riddles, problems, intellectual exercises, and tests of wisdom. Consider the blessing of God upon this man who answered EVERY riddle, problem, intellectual exercise, and test of wisdom!

***4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built, 5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.*** If you’ll read these verses carefully, you’ll begin to understand the magnificence of Solomon’s reign. She was awed even at the apparel worn by his servants! Dr. McGee, however, goes even further: “*The visit of the queen of Sheba reveals that Solomon had succeeded in witnessing for God to the world of that day. Solomon’s fame had spread, and obviously multitudes were coming to Jerusalem to worship the living and true God.*”

***11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.*** The commentators don’t have a definitive answer on what an algum tree is but they all agree that it must have been precious, aromatic wood (like teak) that was not available in the Middle East.

***12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king’s house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.*** This wood was used for musical instruments (it must have been hard and water resistant, yet easy to work with) and stairs and banisters for the Temple.

**13 And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.** This verse seems out of place. It appears that it should have been before verse 11 to conclude the account of the queen of Sheba.

**14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,** This amounts to **\$5,668,992** of gold that came into Solomon's kingdom every year.

**15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. 16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.** These shields were only for decoration but each one contained over 15 POUNDS of gold.

**17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.** Again, these were also for decoration. He placed these in the home he built in the forest of Lebanon. They were smaller but they yet contained 3 POUNDS of gold in each shield.

**18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. 20 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.** {JF&B} "It seems to have been made not of solid ivory, but veneered. It was in the form of an armchair, with a carved back. The ascent to it was by six steps, on each of which stood lions, in place of a railing--while a lion, probably of gilt metal, stood at each side, which, we may suppose from the analogy of other Oriental thrones, supported a canopy. A golden footstool is mentioned (2Ch 9:18) as attached to this throne, whose magnificence is described as unrivalled."

**21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.** In this time of great prosperity, silver was not counted as anything – everything was of GOLD even to Solomon's drinking glasses.

**22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.** {JF&B} "Without the mariner's compass they had to coast along the shore. The ivory, apes, and peacocks might have been purchased, on the outward or homeward voyage, on the north coast of Africa, where the animals were to be found." {McGee} "All of these are luxury items: apes for entertainment (these were Solomon's zoo); peacocks for beauty; and gold, silver, and ivory for magnificent decorations. There is a frivolous and tragic note here, which is symptomatic of the condition of Solomon's kingdom. He is called to give a witness to the world—the world is coming to his door—and what does he do? He spends his time and energy with apes and peacocks simply to satisfy a whim."

*23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.* This was in fulfillment of **1 Kings 3:13** *And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.*

*24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.* This verse reads a little differently in Second Chronicles: **2 Chronicles 9:23** *And all the KINGS OF THE EARTH sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.* God made Solomon to not only one sought out by the masses but other kings came to him to hear what God had put in his heart. Where it was typical for other kings to be jealous and aggressive to take over the wealth of a king, these greatly respected Solomon and came to him for counsel.

*25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. 26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.* Silver, a precious metal, was looked upon as nothing more than stones and cedar trees, a precious building material especially for its ability to withstand wood rot, were in abundance like sycamore trees, a common shade tree of that region.

*28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.* Though this is added as part of the prosperity of Solomon, this was a violation of the Scripture: **NIV Deuteronomy 17:16** *The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."* Solomon had no problem with Egypt. He married a wife from there and bought horses from there. However, God had a problem with Egypt. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: God's problem must be our problem also.** Egypt is always considered symbolic of the world and the bondage of the world. (This is really brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Also, in the Book of the Revelation, Egypt is aligned with Sodom and spiritual Babylon.) **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: God delivered us from the world so that we would NEVER go back. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27).** Because Solomon never dealt with this, it eventually ruined him before God, as we'll see in the next chapter.

*29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means. NLT At that time, Egyptian chariots delivered to Jerusalem could be purchased for 600 pieces of silver, and horses could be bought for 150 pieces of silver. Many of these were then resold to the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.* Even though Solomon was a man of extreme prosperity, he was able to purchase chariots and horses from Egypt, the land of his father in law, for the going rate of that day. These were then resold to the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram. Since everything Solomon did was to

secure more wealth in the kingdom, they were probably sold for a much higher price than what they were purchased for.

## Chapter 11

This chapter gives the final words on Solomon – words that are not flattering because the wisest man in the world, at that time, did not understand the tragedy of sin. This effected the last days of his kingdom but will especially effect his son.

***1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;*** We have gone through many positive chapters in the life of Solomon back to chapter 2. This chapter, though, begins with a word (“but”) that spells out trouble in the relationship with Solomon and God. Solomon, in spite of his wisdom, in spite of his prosperity, in his spite of his leadership ability, and in spite of his heritage as the son of David, did not deal with an issue that will spell long term trouble in the kingdom – he loved women that didn’t love God. They were called “strange” because they were strangers to the ways of God and embraced idols.

{MH} “Here his revolt began. (1.) He gave himself to women, which his mother had particularly cautioned him against. Prov. 31:3, Give not thy strength unto women (perhaps alluding to Samson, who lost his strength by giving information of it to a woman), for it is that which, as much as any thing, destroys kings. His father David’s fall began with the lusts of the flesh, which he should have taken warning by. The love of women has cast down many wounded (Prov. 7:26) and many (says Bishop Hall) have had their head broken by their own rib. (2.) He took many women, so many that, at last, they amounted to 700 wives and 300 concubines, 1000 in all, and not one good one among them, as he himself owns in his penitential sermon (Eccl. 7:28), for no woman of established virtue would be one of such a set. God had, by his law, particularly forbidden the kings to multiply either horses or wives, Deu. 17:16, 17. How he broke the former law, in multiplying horses, and having them out of Egypt too (which was expressly prohibited in that law) we read ch. 10:29, and here we are told how he broke the latter (which proved of more fatal consequence) in multiplying wives.”

***2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. NLT The LORD had clearly instructed his people not to intermarry with those nations, because the women they married would lead them to worship their gods. Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway.*** Notice how the New Living Translation puts this verse – God gave CLEAR instructions not to intermarry with other nations but Solomon INSISTED on doing this anyway. This is an indication of nothing less than rebellion on the part of Solomon – rebellion against God.

***3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*** His heart was “turned away” by not just the seven hundred but by all of them. The three hundred concubines were also considered wives but of a lesser stature. {JF&B} “A love of the world, a ceaseless round of pleasure, had insensibly corrupted his heart, and produced, for a while at least, a state of mental darkness. The grace of God deserted him; and the son of the pious David--the religiously trained child of Bathsheba (Prov. 31:1-3), and pupil of Nathan, instead

*of showing the stability of sound principle and mature experience became at last an old and foolish king (Ec 4:13). His fall is traced to his 'love of many strange women.' ”*

{Ray Stedman} This is the same man who in the book of Proverbs wrote “**He who finds a wife finds a good thing.**” (Proverbs 19:22) This is the greatest example I know of, of a good thing carried to an extreme. One thousand wives! Somebody has said that he was amply punished by having one thousand mothers-in-law! But this also marks the weakness and the failure of Solomon as his heart was turned away from God. Now notice where it first began. This man enjoyed all the magnificence of his rule, with the greatest glory of the kingdom committed to him. The outward magnificence here was evidence of God’s blessing upon his life. But his downfall began when his heart became captured by something that God had prohibited. This is exactly in line with the warning that Jesus gives in the Sermon on the Mount when he says “**Watch out where your heart goes, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**” (Luke 12:34) The first step in moral decline always begins with your emotions. What do you allow your emotions to center upon? What captures the central place of emotion in your life? That is where the decline begins.

**4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.**

{JF&B} “*He could not have been more than fifty.*” Before you pity Solomon for becoming a feeble old man who didn’t know better, understand that the Scripture is speaking of “old” relative to the number of years he would eventually live. The end of this chapter says that Solomon reigned forty years. Earlier, we said that he became king around age 22. Using this, “old” could mean he was above fifty or around sixty but certainly not “old” by our standards or even by the standards of David, his father. David lived to be seventy but his feebleness was hastened by the rigors of war. Solomon did not know anything about the rigors of war living his whole life in comfort. I believe his feebleness of age and ultimate death were hastened by sin.

**5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.**

{Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} **Ashtoreth** - *First Samuel 31:10 connects her with the Philistines, and 1 Kings 11:5 connects her with the Sidonians. She was often considered the companion or partner of the male god Baal (Judges 2:13). Along with the Baalim (the plural of Baal), Ashtoreth was thought by the Philistines to be responsible for fertility and the growth of crops and herds. Ashtoreth was worshiped by other peoples under such names as Astarte (Phoenicians), Inanna (Sumerians), Ishtar (Babylonians), Aphrodite (Greeks), and Venus (Romans). All these were goddesses of sensual love and fertility.*

{Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} **Milcom** - Molech was the national deity of the Ammonites (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 32:35), whose worship was accompanied by the burning of children offered as a sacrifice by their own parents. The god Molech also appears in the Old Testament as Milcom (2 Kin. 23:13; Zeph. 1:5; Malcham, KJV) and in the New Testament as Moloch (Acts 7:43).

**6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** The New Living Translation uses the word "completely" for "fully" but it is clear that God wants EVERY part of our life and to not give Him everything is EVIL.

**7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. NLT On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he even built a shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites.**

{Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} **Chemosh** - the national god of the Moabites. This deity was apparently compounded with Athtar, the Venus star, and so is thought to be a pagan god associated with the heavenly bodies. Chemosh has been identified with Baal of Peor, Baal-Zebub, Mars, and Saturn, as the star of ill-omen. Dibon (Num. 21:30), a town in Moab north of the River Arnon, was the chief seat of its worship. Like Molech, Chemosh was worshiped by the sacrifice of children as burnt offerings. Solomon sanctified Chemosh as a part of his tolerance of pagan gods (1 Kin. 11:7), but Josiah abolished its worship (2 Kin. 23:13). Human sacrifice was made to Chemosh, according to 2 Kings 3:27, which reports that Mesha, king of Moab, offered his oldest son as a burnt offering on the wall of Kir Hareseth, the ancient capital of Moab. Solomon was a great builder, gifted by God for such tasks. However, he has now taken the gift of God and used it to turn from God!

**8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.** The Scripture only points out three false gods that were worshipped by Solomon but this verse adds an ominous testimony to the rebellion of Solomon – He made places of idol worship for ALL his wives.

**9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen. NLT 9 The LORD was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 He had**

**warned Solomon specifically about worshipping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the LORD's command. 11 So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my laws, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. 12 But for the sake of your father, David, I will not do this while you are still alive. I will take the kingdom away from your son. 13 And even so, I will let him be king of one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, my chosen city."**

{JF&B} "The divine appearance, first at Gibeon [1Ki 3:5], and then at Jerusalem [1Ki 9:2], after the dedication of the temple, with the warnings given him on both occasions [1Ki 3:11-14 9:3-9], had left Solomon inexcusable; and it was proper and necessary that on one who had been so signally favored with the gifts of Heaven, but who had grossly abused them, a terrible judgment should fall. The divine sentence was announced to him probably by Ahijah; but there was mercy mingled with judgment, in the circumstance, that it should not be inflicted on Solomon personally. and that a remnant of the kingdom should be spared." It is a significant thing for God to appear to a person. The Scripture points out this type of event RARELY but Solomon had this happen to him TWICE. God knew how important this was and points out that this should have been a motivating factor in Solomon staying right before Him. For this reason, God was ANGRY with Solomon and not only was He angry, the New Living Translation says He was VERY angry.

**14 And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.** When you read a verse like this, ask yourself a question to make sure you get it – Who stirred up the adversary? The Lord did it. Why was it done? Because of sin. Why did God "stir up" these adversaries? I believe He wanted to wake up this arrogant comfortable king to realize that it was only by the goodness of God that he was in the position he was in and he needed to repent. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: We must never forget that the blessings we enjoy ALL come from the Lord. Therefore, we must remain faithful to Him.**

**15 For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; 16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:) 17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child. 18 And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. 19 And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. 20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. 21 And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. 22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.** I always found it interesting how that

Solomon had gone to Egypt to get his first wife while his father-in-law harbored a potential enemy of Israel. You can't put your confidence in those that don't pray! Hadad later became a significant figure in Syria. The later kings of Syria used the title "Ben-Hadad" in homage to him. {JF&B} "Hadad seems to have offered his services to Rezon, another of Solomon's adversaries (1Ki 11:23-25). This man, who had been general of Hadadezer and, on the defeat of that great king, had successfully withdrawn a large force, went into the wilderness, led a predatory life, like Jephthah, David, and others, on the borders of the Syrian and Arabian deserts. Then, having acquired great power, he at length became king in Damascus, threw off the yoke, and was 'the adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.' He was succeeded by Hadad, whose successors took the official title of Ben-hadad from him, the illustrious founder of the powerful kingdom of Damascene-Syria."

***23 And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: 24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. 25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.***

***26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. 27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. 28 And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. 29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: 30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: 31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) 33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. 34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. 36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. 37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. 38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my***

*statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. 39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.* Jeroboam received a great promise from God IF he would just do the commandments of God, walk in His ways, and do that which was right in God's sight.

***40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.*** According to JF&B, Shishak was not Solomon's father-in-law but was of a different dynasty that hated Israel. {JF&B} "*The story, and the prediction connected with it, probably reached the king's ears; and Jeroboam became a marked man [1Ki 11:40]. His aspiring ambition, impatient for the death of Solomon, led him to form plots and conspiracies, in consequence of which he was compelled to flee to Egypt. Though chosen of God, he would not wait the course of God's providence, and therefore incurred the penalty of death by his criminal rebellion. The heavy exactions and compulsory labor (1Ki 11:28) which Solomon latterly imposed upon his subjects, when his foreign resources began to fail, had prepared the greater part of the kingdom for a revolt under so popular a demagogue as Jeroboam.*"

***41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.*** Notice the abrupt end to the reign of Solomon. The Scripture points out his sin and after that, there was no more said of him. Tradition says that he later repented of his sin and wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes to tell of the vanity of life. Unfortunately, he had already led Israel into great sins, which could not be changed and must yet suffer the punishment for his actions. Remember that David repented after his sin with Bathsheba was uncovered but the punishment was still imposed because (according to 2 Samuel 12:14) the deed he had done had given the enemies of God to blaspheme. Solomon's sin had caused the people of God to blaspheme and the wheels are already in motion to bring the punishment upon his son.

## Chapter 12

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, comes to the throne. He makes a foolish decision without the counsel of prayer and loses most of the kingdom. This is a key chapter in the knowledge of the saint because it points to the division of the kingdom which continued to plague the country even unto the time of Jesus.

**1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.** {MH} “Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines, yet we read but of one son he had to bear up his name, and he a fool. Rehoboam was the son of the wisest of men, yet did not inherit his father’s wisdom, and then it stood him in little stead to inherit his father’s throne. Neither wisdom nor grace runs in the blood. Solomon came to the crown very young, yet he was then a wise man. Rehoboam came to the crown at forty years old, when men will be wise if ever they will, yet he was then foolish.”

**2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) 3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,** One writer said that the people were tired due to the severe taxation under Solomon and wanted some relief. They did not look to the splendor of the kingdom. Solomon’s sins helped in this for God had already set the process in motion to bring judgment to pass. God is working quickly for we’re just now at the coronation of the new king.

**4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.** What a simple request! Any politician would know the right answer to this request without seeking counsel but God was moving behind the scenes to punish the family of Solomon because of his sins. {MH} “They complain not of his father’s idolatry and revolt from God; that which was the greatest grievance of all was none to them, so careless and indifferent were they in the matters of religion, as if God or Moloch were all one, so they might but live at ease and pay no taxes. Yet the complaint was groundless and unjust. Never did people live more at ease than they did, nor in great plenty. Did they pay taxes? It was to advance the strength and magnificence of their kingdom. If Solomon’s buildings cost them money, they cost them no blood, as war would do. Were many servile hands employed about them? They were not the hands of the Israelites. Were the taxes a burden? How could that be, when Solomon imported bullion in such plenty that silver was, in a manner, as common as the stones?”

**5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.** Matthew Henry said that it was prudent to have time to deliberate on their request but it also gave time for the rebellion to stir further. Their request was very simple. Why would it take three days? The seeds of rebellion are really stirring now.

**6 And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? 7 And they spake unto him,**

*saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. 8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:* Matthew Henry said that Rehoboam had a “weak head.” Truly he demonstrates that in forsaking the counsel of those who knew the plight of the people best – the current politicians. Instead, he turns to the “young men”, who were actually men of his age (early forties) who probably wanted their time of prominence and prosperity.

*9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.* The problem with the counsel of the young men was not their youth but their lack of experience. Remember that the older men had worked with Solomon. The “claim to fame” of these men was only that they were “brought up with him.” This could mean that they didn’t understand the work involved in building a kingdom or the agony of making ends meet when you’ve got to pay heavy taxes. All they knew was that if they didn’t keep the taxes coming in, they might have to change their lifestyle. They may have looked at this as their time in the spotlight. However, the real key is in verse 15 – this thing was the Lord’s doing.

*12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men’s counsel that they gave him; 14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.* Now the king had three days to PRAY about what to do but he didn’t. This brings to mind a principle from our study in First Chronicles, which we’ll begin to see over and over in this book: **LEADERSHIP AND SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Awful things happen when people don’t pray!** {MacArthur} “*Rehoboam followed foolish and bad advice from novices rather than the good counsel of wise, seasoned men. The result was the division of the nation. Amazingly, with all the strength of Solomon’s reign, unity was fragile and one fool in the place of leadership ended it.*”

*15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.* God was intent on performing His Word and look how quickly it came to pass! {MH} “[God] left Rehoboam to his own folly, and hid from his eyes the things which belonged to his peace, that the kingdom might be rent from him. Note, God serves his own wise and righteous purposes by

*the imprudences and iniquities of men, and snares sinners in the work of their own hands. Those that lose the kingdom of heaven throw it away, as Rehoboam did his, by their own willfulness and folly.”*

**16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. NLT When all Israel realized that the king had rejected their request, they shouted, “Down with David and his dynasty! We have no share in Jesse’s son! Let’s go home, Israel! Look out for your own house, O David!” So the people of Israel returned home. **This is an important verse****

**because it points to the separation of the kingdom.** This is Bible history that every saint should know: how the separation happened, when it happened, and why it happened. The reason that this is so important is not the fact that it happened but the reason that it happened. It was caused by the rebellion and disobedience of Solomon that was punished in the hands of his son.

**17 But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.** Rehoboam actually reigned over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin while the rest of the tribes, except for the priests, went with the Northern Kingdom of Israel. How ironic that the Lord put these two tribes back together in the midst of division since David was of Judah and Saul was of Benjamin.

**18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.** As wise as Solomon was, is how foolish Rehoboam was. Rehoboam had NO CLUE as to what just happened in verse 16. He didn’t understand that he had just lost the kingdom. He kept on ruling a few cities in Judah until it was time to get money to keep the kingdom running. {JF&B} “*The revolt was accomplished, and yet so quietly, that Rehoboam remained in Shechem, fancying himself the sovereign of a united kingdom, until his chief tax gatherer, who had been most [carelessly] sent to treat with the people, had been stoned to death. This opened his eyes, and he fled for security to Jerusalem.*” The issue was money and the people were sick of the taxes. Would you send a tax collector into that environment? Dr. McGee states “*King Rehoboam sent a tax gatherer to gather taxes and the people stoned him to death. Rehoboam just hadn’t realized how incensed these people were.*” Once again I repeat that principle: **LEADERSHIP AND SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Awful things happen when people don’t pray!**

**19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.** “Unto this day” - unto the writing of the book.

**20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.** Actually the tribe of Benjamin was also with the house of David but only a portion of it. According to Dr. MacArthur, the tribe of Benjamin was situated right on the boundary and some of the towns went to the Northern Kingdom of Israel

and some went to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. From this point on, when the Book of First Kings speaks of “Israel”, it is referring to the Northern Kingdom, which broke away. Jeroboam now becomes the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

**21 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.** Rehoboam is like a wounded animal. He finally wakes up and realizes that these people are serious – **THEY AREN’T COMING BACK!** We can only conclude that he came to this conclusion after his tax collector was stoned because he made no attempt to fix the situation when the people first left. Perhaps he continued to listen to bad advice.

**22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23 Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, 24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.** The language of the Old Testament King James Version is very powerful. It speaks of the reality of the Word as a person in the Godhead. The Word came to Shemaiah and told him what to tell the king. {JF&B} “Rehoboam [was] determined to assert his authority by leading a large force into the disaffected provinces. But the revolt of the ten tribes was completed when the prophet Shemaiah ordered, in the Lord’s name, an abandonment of any hostile measures against the revolutionists. The army, overawed by the divine prohibition, dispersed, and the king was obliged to submit.” The Word of God brought clarity to the situation but it has also taken the wind out of Rehoboam. He has been king but a few days and he has lost everything his father and grandfather fought for. **LEADERSHIP AND SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Awful things happen when people don’t pray!**

**This chapter is about to take a very sinister and dark turn. The facts that are about to be conveyed represent additional facts that every saint should know. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, will be mentioned throughout the Books of First and Second Kings for the sin he is about to commit. Pay close attention to this.**

**25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.** Remember that Jeroboam distinguished himself with Solomon so much that Solomon put him over his public works programs. Now he continues that skill in building up Shechem (SHEK uhm) making it the capital of Israel and building up Penuel. {Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} “[Penuel is a] place north of the River Jabbok where Jacob wrestled with ‘a Man’ until daybreak. Hosea 12:4 calls the ‘man’ an ‘Angel.’ Jacob called the place Penuel, ‘For I have seen God face to face’ (Gen. 32:30). A city was built there later, not far to the east of

*Succoth. When Gideon and his band of 300 men pursued the Midianites, the people of Succoth and Penuel insulted Gideon, refusing to give supplies to his army. Gideon later killed the men of the city (Judg. 8:17). Penuel is about 65 kilometers (40 miles) northeast of Jerusalem.”*

**26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:** This is a key verse. Jeroboam’s trouble began with what was brewing in his heart. This statement, “said in his heart”, is used ten times in the King James Version and ALWAYS refers to deep-seated feelings (see Genesis 8:21, 17:17, 27:41, and 1 Samuel 27:1 among others). When David said, **Psalm 14:1a The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God**, he was speaking of deep feelings where he could readily attest that this person is indeed a fool. Down in the heart of Jeroboam, the seeds of unbelief are brewing. He, no doubt, remembers the Word of the Lord given to him but he doesn’t believe that it will happen. Perhaps his years in Egypt (which is always symbolic of the world) have made his heart hard toward the things of God. Regardless, he is about to make a decision that sets the course for this kingdom until its end. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In ALL thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct thy paths.**

**27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.** Jeroboam is thinking as foolish as Rehoboam. He received the kingdom based on the Word of God. He was given requirements to do to keep the kingdom. He has chosen to focus on doing what he can to keep what he has. This attitude is ripe for destruction.

The next verses deal with the response of Jeroboam to his unbelief. Based on these next few verses, he became a proverb for failure for the Northern Kingdom. Many times, in First and Second Kings, a statement will be made, like the following, and will be applied to kings who failed in similar manners: **1 Kings 22:52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.**

**28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.**

**29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.** Under the deception of compassion for the people, Jeroboam led them into sin. In the next few verses, we have Jeroboam’s sin:

**(1) He reinstated the golden calf worship which angered God so greatly when the children of Israel sinned in the wilderness.** Worshipping a calf was an Egyptian style of worship. He put one in Dan, the northernmost tribe, and one in Bethel, the southernmost city, to keep the people from returning to Jerusalem. He sinned the way Aaron sinned but without repentance. Aaron quickly

turned toward idolatry within months after leaving Egypt. Jeroboam quickly turned toward idolatry after receiving the kingdom from God. Notice the words that Aaron used and the words that Jeroboam used: **Exodus 32:4** *And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* Some say that Jeroboam violated the second commandment in making an image of God. I say he went after the sin of Aaron and violated the first commandment: **Exodus 20:2-3** *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

*30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.*

**(2) He made the people go to worship before the calves and they went so far as Dan to do this.**

**LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** God holds YOU responsible when you lead others into sin or fail to rebuke them for it.

*31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. NLT Jeroboam built shrines at the pagan high places and ordained priests from the rank and file of the people—those who were not from the priestly tribe of Levi.*

**(3) He returned the people to worshipping in the high places, which Solomon had stopped.**

**(4) He had no regard for the law of God setting up priests from anyone among the people.** The King James Version seems to speak to this more clearly. These were not just the rank and file but these were among the lowest of the people. Matthew Henry says that part of his scheme was to disperse these “priests” throughout the land to teach his idolatrous doctrine. He goes on to say that Jeroboam took the power, which belongs to God, to make priests.

*32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.*

**(5) To keep the people away from Jerusalem, Jeroboam concocted a “feast” to replace the Feast of Tabernacles, a very popular festival.** {JF&B} *“The real reason [for this feast] was to eradicate the old association with this, the most welcome and joyous festival of the year.”*

*33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.* What a sad chapter but it points to the tragedy of sin. Sin destroyed the kingdom under Rehoboam and corrupted the people under Jeroboam.

## Chapter 13

{MH} “In the close of the [previous] chapter we left Jeroboam attending his altar at Beth-el, and there we find him in the beginning of this, when he received a testimony from God against his idolatry and apostasy. This was sent to him by a prophet, a man of God that lived in Judah, who is the principal subject of the story of this chapter.”

**In this chapter we have one of the most fascinating and one of the saddest stories in the Scriptures. God, in the prior chapter, refused to allow the king of Judah, Rehoboam, to fight against Israel to bring the nation back together. However, in this chapter, God sends ONE MAN to bring the king of Israel back to Him. God is never as concerned about our petty politics as He is about the hearts of man. But while we pursue after God, we must follow Him completely. This ONE MAN, sent from God, found out in the worst way the consequence of disobedience and giving in to the lust of the flesh.**

*1 And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. {JF&B} “It was at one of the annual festivals. The king, to give interest to the new ritual, was himself the officiating priest. The altar and its accompaniments would, of course, exhibit all the splendor of a new and gorgeously decorated temple. But the prophet foretold its utter destruction.”* Let’s set the stage for this chapter. The man of God that came out of Judah came from the Southern Kingdom to the city of Bethel, where Jeroboam had set up one of the two golden calves and had established his main temple. We don’t know how far the man of God had to travel in Judah to get to Bethel but we do know that Bethel was just 5 miles across the border from Judah, the Southern Kingdom. This is a bit of information that will be important later in this chapter. There are three main characters in this chapter: an unnamed man of God from Judah, an unnamed old prophet from Israel, and the king of Israel, Jeroboam.

*2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.* The man of God interrupted Jeroboam’s service but did not speak to Jeroboam. This Word came to the altar. Since God could not get the attention of the king, He spoke to this inanimate object so that the king might also hear. (He did this before with the backslidden prophet, Balaam. Numbers 22:27-28. In the New Testament, He used a rooster to get the attention of the disciple Peter who, being so full of himself, refused to hear the Word from Jesus.) The Word given by the man of God is important for the future of the kingdom:

1. **A child shall be born unto the house of David by the name of Josiah.** When looking at the table provided earlier in this study, you’ll see that Josiah was the 16<sup>th</sup> king after Rehoboam. He reigned over 300 years (Matthew Henry says 356; JF&B says 360) after Rehoboam began his reign. This prophecy is for FAR into the future. {MH} “*Nothing future is hidden from God.*”
2. **Josiah will kill idolatrous priests upon this altar and burn the bones of the dead priests that worshipped at this altar.** Unfortunately, this means that this altar will still be around

300 years into the future because Josiah will not fulfill this Word until 2 Kings 23:15-20. By that time, the Northern Kingdom will have ceased to exist because they will have been taken into captivity because of their sins. However, the people of God that remain in the Southern Kingdom will continue to offer idolatrous sacrifices upon this same altar.

**3** *And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. NLT That same day the man of God gave a sign to prove his message, and he said, "The LORD has promised to give this sign: This altar will split apart, and its ashes will be poured out on the ground."* Because the prophecy was so far in the future, an immediate sign needed to be given to these unbelievers. (If they believed God, would they worship a golden calf?) That same day, the altar that Jeroboam worshipped upon had a large fissure appear on it and the ashes fell upon the ground. {JF&B} *"This is one of the most remarkable prophecies recorded in the Scriptures; and, in its clearness, circumstantial minuteness, and exact prediction of an event that took place three hundred sixty years later, it stands in striking contrast to the obscure and ambiguous oracles of the heathen. Being publicly uttered, it must have been well known to the people; and every Jew who lived at the accomplishment of the event must have been convinced of the truth of a religion connected with such a prophecy as this. A present sign was given of the remote event predicted, in a visible fissure being miraculously made on the altar."*

**4** *And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. NLT King Jeroboam was very angry with the man of God for speaking against the altar. So he pointed at the man and shouted, "Seize that man!" But instantly the king's hand became paralyzed in that position, and he couldn't pull it back.* Is it no wonder that one wise man (Lord Acton, in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, 1887) said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Just as others before him, Jeroboam has forgotten what it means to humble himself. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **When you won't humble yourself, you put yourself in position to be humbled (or humiliated).**

**5** *The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. NLT At the same time a wide crack appeared in the altar, and the ashes poured out, just as the man of God had predicted in his message from the LORD.* This rendering of the King James Version by the New Living Translation helps us to understand that the altar wasn't broken completely up, just marred so that the current sacrifice was desecrated.

**6** *And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.* Notice the

change in this arrogant king! He humbles himself but only after God humiliated him. Look at how the NLT puts this verse. **The king cried out to the man of God, “Please ask the LORD your God to restore my hand again!” So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king’s hand became normal again.** What a difference a paralyzed hand can make! If I were to preach a message from this verse, I would use the thought, “**WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR YOU TO CHANGE YOUR TUNE?**” He not only asked the man of God but he cried out. There are two words that are very sad in this verse, “your God”. Jeroboam is the king, the captain of the Lord’s inheritance, but he doesn’t know God for himself. Because of that, he needs the man of God to be his mediator so that his hand can be restored. {MH} *“The time may come when those that hate the preaching would be glad of the prayers of faithful ministers. ‘Pray to the Lord thy God,’ says Jeroboam; ‘thou hast an interest in him; improve it for me.’ But observe, He did not desire the prophet to pray that his sin might be pardoned, and his heart changed, only that his hand might be restored; thus Pharaoh would have Moses to pray that God would take away this death only (Ex. 10:17), not this sin.”*

**7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.** Jeroboam continues to humble himself at least before the man of God but was there another motive in mind? {JF&B} *“Jeroboam was [crafty], and invited the prophet to the royal table, not to do him honor or show his gratitude for the restoration of his hand, but to win, by his courtesy and liberal hospitality, a person whom he could not crush by his power.”* I believe that Jeroboam may have wanted to also win the friendship of this man of power with God. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **This man had a Word from God to govern his actions. We must govern ourselves to avoid compromising with the world for gain.**

We need to jump off the main path at this point and go down a little side road for a while. This will help us with the rest of this chapter. The man of God encountered three temptations to sin while on his journey for the Word of the Lord. They were not three unique temptations as the Lord Jesus went through because each one had the same concentration but came at different times. Why is this? The answer is found in the Word of God: **James 1:14-15** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [the devil doesn’t dream up things – he uses what’s already in us], and enticed* [the key to a temptation is the “enticement factor” or the fact that it has to be something that we’re attracted to. If we remove the attraction within us, we remove the temptation.]. **15 Then when lust hath conceived** [lust “conceives” when we begin the process to do what we are tempted to do], **it bringeth forth sin:** [the “bringing forth” occurs when we actually DO what we were tempted to DO] **and sin, when it is finished,** [sin is “finished” when it remains upon us being unconfessed and unforgiven] **bringeth forth death** [eternal damnation].

**FIRST TEMPTATION** The first temptation is found in this verse and came by Jeroboam. The man of God had received clear instructions from God, which he shares in the next verse. He conquered this first one. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **Just because God is using you does not mean**

that the opportunity for sin is not around. The devil wants you to fail! In his mind, if you fail, the Word of God fails!

*8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: 9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.* {MH} “God forbade his messenger to eat or drink in Beth-el, to show his [hatred] of their [shameful] idolatry and apostasy from God, and to teach us not to have fellowship with the works of darkness, lest we have infection from them or give encouragement to them.” We have here the instructions given to the man of God when he left Judah for Israel. He is bold and courageous as he stands before this king whom he has seen violate the first and greatest commandment. However, be careful to recognize that the obvious things are not where the enemy always appears because there are two more temptations coming.

*10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.* This ends part one of this chapter. We end this part with victory. However, the saint must be cautious. The manner of the devil is plainly seen in **Luke 4:13** *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season.* After the resounding victory by the Lord Jesus over the devil, the devil only left “for a season” or, as stated in the New King James Version, “*he departed from Him until an opportune time.*” The devil was not finished with the man of God. The victory would not be complete until he arrived back home in Judah, returning a different way than the way he came without having eaten. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **Be cautious! The devil will try all he can to take the victory and discredit the Word.** Now we move into another part of this chapter that will not be as victorious.

*11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.* In beginning the second part of this chapter, we are introduced to another unnamed man. He has been put “on the shelf” by God being no longer useful. In such a condition he lives his life dangerously as he tries to retain his former standing as God’s man.

**Saints of God, BEWARE!** We can just as easily be put aside if we refuse to obey. **1 Corinthians 9:27** *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

Let’s look at the character of the old prophet. First, he was a man of compromise. This compromise may have been brought on by his desire to live in comfort for we find later that he was also a homeowner (v. 18). {MacArthur} “Here was a spokesman for the Lord who had compromised his ministry by his willingness to live at the very center of the false system of worship without speaking out against it.” The old prophet lived in Bethel, the center of the Jeroboam’s false worship. He is a picture of Lot, who lived among the filth in Sodom, without the testimony that Lot had of being

righteous (2 Peter 2:7). Instead of this old prophet being used by God to cry out against the altar, God sent for an unnamed, and probably unknown, man of God in Judah because one who was used to receiving the Word of God could no longer be used. JF&B goes so far as to call him “a bad man.”

Matthew Henry also describes the picture of this prophet and gives his legacy. {MH} “*Perhaps he was trained up among the sons of the prophets, in one of Samuel’s colleges not far off, whence he retained the name of a prophet, but, growing worldly and profane, the spirit of prophecy had departed from him. If he had been a good prophet he would have reproved Jeroboam’s idolatry, and not have suffered his sons to attend his altars, as, it should seem, they did.*”

The second part of his character is seen in his sons and in the words we just read from Matthew Henry. He had lost control of his children. Dr. MacArthur speculates that his sons may have been priests at the altar. At a minimum, they were worshippers there because they came back with a full account (even to the words that were spoken) of what went on with the man of God. No faithful Jewish person would have made themselves unclean, even for the sake of curiosity, by being among such idolatry. God judged Eli the priest (1 Samuel 3:13) because “*his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not*”. Eli’s judgment was severe. To this old prophet, the judgment may have been equally as severe because the Word of the Lord left him. Perhaps he lives in comfort because of the sin of his sons. This is still compromise. Some religious people today justify their wickedness by either giving of the money they have earned wickedly to the church or by excusing it because of their responsibility to their household. God is well able to take care of His people.

***12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.*** Look how quickly this old prophet has devised a scheme in his mind and he has made up his mind to go after the man of God!

***13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, 14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.*** {Dake} “*This slow traveling of the man of God no doubt cost him his life. If he had gone right back Judah, which was only a few miles, he would have been out of danger of disobedience.*” We have already figured out that it was only a short distance from Israel back to Judah but the man of God decides to rest under a tree. Why is he resting? He should be driven by a passion for obedience to God. His lack of passion for the Word of God and lack of passion for obedience to the Word of God will cost him dearly. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Slow obedience is often disobedience.**

***15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.*** **SECOND TEMPTATION**

Remember that the man of God will go through three temptations to sin before this chapter ends. This is the second one. The areas that the temptation is working on remain the same: (1) Stay in this land for a while and (2) eat while you’re here. These are things that are in the spirit of the man

of God that the devil is working on otherwise, why would he be sitting under a tree...still in the land?

*16 And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: 17 For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.* If the old prophet retained any speck of righteousness, his response should have been, “Then why are you sitting here under this tree? Obey God!”

*18 He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.* **THIRD TEMPTATION** {MacArthur} “*Why the old prophet deceived the man of God the text does not state. Accustomed to receiving direct revelations, the [man of God] should have regarded the supposed angelic message with suspicion and sought divine verification of this revised order.*” The prophet LIED to him! What a statement. Saint of God, you have got to know God for yourself! The purpose of the temptation remains the same – disobey God. The means of doing that also remains the same – stay in the land and eat here. If preachers lied 3,000 years ago, they will lie today. The devil still works in the same manner. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **You must have your OWN Word from God and then stand on it!**

*19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.* The lust in the man of God has brought forth sin! How can I say that? The Word of God is right no matter what the circumstance and we see plainly in this chapter how the devil works to get us on the path to sin. **James 1:14-16** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 DO NOT ERR, MY BELOVED BRETHREN.* Let us learn from the tragic mistake of this man.

*20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:* {MacArthur} “*The lie arose from his own imagination but the true prophecy came from the Lord.*” This is the deception of sin. God has used him and by doing so, made his name great. But he has failed God. Now the VERY one that the devil used to deceive him is the one that God uses to rebuke him. Don’t you hear the devil laughing in this situation? **James 1:16** *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

*21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, 22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.* The Word of the Lord said to the man of God, you will not leave this land alive. God gave him over to what he desired – to stay in the land.

How tragic! How ironic also that the sin of Jeroboam will not be judged for 300 years but the sin of the man of God will be judged the same day. We must not question but remember the Word of God:

**Psalm 75:7** *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

*23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.* In between the time that the old prophet spoke the Word of God and the time that the man of God left the house was the time for repentance. In the book of Revelation, Jesus tells of a woman in a congregation with a spirit of Jezebel.

**Revelation 2:21** states *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*

Likewise, the man of God was given this space from the time the Word of God went forth to this time. Instead, he used this time to finish eating and drinking in the land as if to fully complete his disobedience. God is so merciful and gracious. Even Ahab, the wicked king, whom we'll study later in this book, changed the timetable of God when he humbled himself. Who can tell how the events of the next part of this chapter would have changed if the man of God would have done like Jeroboam and humbled himself. He becomes the second man in this chapter who needs to humble himself. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **When you won't humble yourself, you put yourself in position to be humbled (or humiliated).**

**This now ends the second part of this chapter and it ends in failure and defeat. This defeat, however, does not overcome the earlier victory. It discredits the MAN but the Word of our God stands forever.**

*24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass.* {MH} "God is displeased at the sins of his own people, and no man shall be protected in disobedience by the sanctity of his profession, the dignity of his office, his nearness to God, or any good services he has done for him."

JF&B says that there was a wood near Beth-el infested with lions. As the man of God went by, he is attacked and killed. Look at the amazing scene.

- First, the man of God is killed but not eaten. Every nature program says that lions, unlike man, kill only to eat. If they are full, they are, for the most part, harmless (within reason, of course).
- Second, the donkey also is not eaten nor does he run off in fear of the lion. The donkey knows he is usually dinner for the lion and does not have the reasoning to just stay around but he obeys God.
- Third, the lion does not leave the scene. This is a very odd picture of a slain man, a peaceful lion, and a fearless donkey and every one that saw it was attracted to this scene.

*25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.* This scene had the

desired effect. {JF&B} “*All the circumstances of this tragic occurrence (the [uneaten] carcass, the untouched ass, the passengers unmolested by the lion, though standing there) were calculated to produce an irresistible impression that the hand of God was in it.*” God discredited the man of God so that His Word could stand. What if the news had gotten back to Jeroboam that the man of God, who so forcefully announced that God had given him instructions to NOT stay in the land, had indeed done so? This would have made everything he said suspect.

**26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.** The statement is true. The flesh wants to say, “No, this is the man of God that YOU deceived!” but the lying prophet is now telling the truth. How ironic! Saints, we must not let ourselves be deceived even by others in the church! Look how that the very one that deceived the man of God was used to condemn him and now he later pronounces him as a disobedient prophet. How tragic! {MH} “*The case was indeed very lamentable that so good a man, a prophet so faithful, and so bold in God’s cause, should, for one offence, die as a criminal, while an old lying prophet lives at ease and an idolatrous prince in pomp and power.*”

**27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. 28 And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass.** The old prophet found the scene still as reported in the city.

**29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. 30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! 31 And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: 32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.** The disobedience of the man of God and the judgment he has experienced has worked to “stir up the gift” in the old prophet. He pronounces to his idolatrous sons the truth of the Word of God and the certainty of it coming to pass.

**33 After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.** After the events of the man of God, Jeroboam’s heart was hardened and he went back to doing what he was doing. One small sin! Could the events of this verse have been different if the man of God had been completely faithful to God?

**34 And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth. NLT This became a great sin and resulted in the destruction of Jeroboam's kingdom and the death of all his family.** Jeroboam had been warned. The events of that day were unusual all around. The hand of God was visible even in the judgment of sin. Now the sin of Jeroboam has become such a stink to God that his entire family must bear the burden for his sin. He has made God his adversary. He will lose.

## Chapter 14

In this chapter we have the conclusion of the reign of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel and the conclusion of the reign of Rehoboam, the first king of the newly founded country of Judah.

**1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.** {JF&B} *“This domestic incident in the family of Jeroboam probably occurred towards the end of his reign; his son Abijah was of age and considered by the people the heir to the throne.”* Matthew Henry also agrees that though Abijah was spoken of as a child, he was not an infant or one of a tender age. {MH} *“It is probable that he was his eldest son, and heir-apparent to the crown; for at his death all the kingdom went into mourning for him.”*

**2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people.** Don't fool yourself; people know when they are wrong! We won't go through another list of his sIns but, to put it simply, Jeroboam has done EVERYTHING that the prophet told him NOT to do. Now he's in a fix and he knows that the answer is in God, not in his golden calf. Isn't it amazing how people waste their lives on things that can't help them and then when they need help, they turn to God? Why not give Him your life BEFORE things go bad? Also remember that this whole idolatrous system of worship had been set up by Jeroboam. What if the people knew that he didn't go to the calf but to the true God when he needed help? He's really allowed the devil to paint him into a corner. {JF&B} *“The reason of this extreme caution was an unwillingness to acknowledge that he looked for information as to the future, not to his idols, but to the true God; and a fear that this step, if publicly known, might endanger the stability of his whole political system; and a strong impression that Ahijah, who was greatly offended with him, would, if consulted openly by his queen, either insult or refuse to receive her.”*

**3 And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.** Jeroboam had more confidence in God's prophet than God Himself. {JF&B} *“This was a present in unison with the peasant character she assumed. Cracknels are a kind of sweet seed-cake.”*

**4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.** Ahijah was an old man now but he retained his position with God unlike the prophet of the previous chapter.

**5 And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.** Isn't it exciting to serve the Lord? Though Ahijah was blind, God gave him understanding in everything that was about to come to pass. He did not let his natural blindness diminish his spiritual sensitivity.

*6 And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.* Ahijah does not address her as the queen of Israel or even as the wife of the king. She was just the wife of Jeroboam. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **God is not moved by positions or titles especially when they are held by those that have no interest in Him.** Before Jeroboam's wife had a chance to offer her gift or make her request, the prophet invited her in to receive bad news.

*7 Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, 8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; 9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: 10 Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. 11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it. 12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. 13 And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 14 Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. 15 For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. 16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.* (The phrase "pisseth against the wall" is used a number of times especially in Kings. The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge says, "This seems to have been a proverbial expression among the Israelites; and may with the utmost propriety be read 'any male'.") Matthew Henry gives a powerful summary of this prophecy:

1. *He upbraids Jeroboam with the great favor he had bestowed upon him, in making him king, exalting him from among the people, the common people, to be prince over God's chosen Israel, and taking the kingdom from the house of David, to bestow it upon him.*
2. *He charges him with his impiety and apostasy, and his idolatry particularly: Thou hast done evil above all that were before thee, v. 9. Saul, that was rejected, never worshipped idols; Solomon did it but occasionally, in his dotage, and never made Israel to sin.*

*(1.) In doing this, he had not set David before him (v. 8): Thou hast not been as my*

*servant David, who, though he had his faults and some bad ones, yet never forsook the worship of God nor grew loose nor cold to that.*

*(2.) He had not set God before him, but (v. 9), “Thou hast cast me behind thy back, my law, my fear; thou hast neglected me, forgotten me, and preferred thy policies before my precepts.”*

3. *He foretells the utter ruin of Jeroboam’s house, v. 10, 11.*

*(1.) Shameful destruction. They shall be taken away as dung, which is loathsome and which men are glad to be rid of.*

*(2.) Unusual destruction. Their very dead bodies should be meat for the dogs in the street, or the birds of prey in the field, v. 11. See this fulfilled, ch. 15:29.*

4. *He foretells the immediate death of the sick child, v. 12, 13.*

*(1.) In mercy to him, lest, if he live, he be infected with the sin, and so involved in the ruin, of his father’s house.*

*(2.) In wrath to the family.*

5. *He foretells the setting up of another family to rule over Israel, v. 14. This was fulfilled in Baasha.*

6. *He foretells the judgments which should come upon the people of Israel for conforming to the worship which Jeroboam had established*

***17 And Jeroboam’s wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died; God’s Word is absolutely sure.***

***18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.*** {JF&B} *“The reason for the profound regret shown at his death arose, according to Jewish writers, from his being opposed to the erection of the golden calves, and using his influence with his father to allow his subjects the free privilege of going to worship in Jerusalem.”* Isn’t it interesting that this child, raised in a household where God was forgotten, could have such a heart?

***19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab [NAY dab] his son reigned in his stead.*** This ends the reign of the first king of Israel. He reigned 22 years and every year was bad. His son, Nadab, reigned in his stead.

***21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother’s name was Naamah an Ammonitess.*** Now the writer picks up from Chapter 12 and returns to Rehoboam.

There are some key points in this verse that tell us a lot about Rehoboam: (1) He was 41 when he started to reign – you would think one of that age would have had better worldly wisdom but God was in the division of the kingdom. (2) He reigned 17 years, which means he only lived to be 58. Long life belongs to those that love God. (3) His mother was an Ammonite, a heathen of those that the Lord said they were NOT to intermarry. Part of his stupidity to the things of God has to fall at the feet of Solomon, his father, who “loved many strange women.” His mother was one of them.

**22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. NLT During Rehoboam’s reign, the people of Judah did what was evil in the Lord’s sight, arousing his anger with their sin, for it was even worse than that of their ancestors.** This is the worst time in the history of God’s people – they have sinned above all the sins that their fathers committed. How quickly things have changed since the time of David!

**23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.** The high places and groves were wooded areas where altars were set up to worship pagan gods. The children of Israel used these to worship their idols and to worship God, which He hated.

**24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.** {MH} “They were given up to vile affections (as those idolaters Rom. 1:26, 27), for there were sodomites in the land, men with men working that which is unseemly, and not to be thought of, much less mentioned, without abhorrence and indignation. They dishonored God by one sin and then God left them to dishonor themselves by another.”

**25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:** Shishak was not the Pharaoh that was the father in law of Solomon. He was a new Pharaoh that didn’t have any regard for Israel.

**26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.** Five years after the death of Solomon, his legacy has been ruined by his sins and the sins of his son. Just five years! **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** {MH} Sin exposes, impoverishes, and weakens any people.

**27 And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king’s house.** Remember all of those gold shields that Solomon made and put in the Temple and in his vacation home? In place of those, Rehoboam makes brass shields. Brass wasn’t even counted in Solomon’s day but it became important under Rehoboam.

*28 And it was so, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber. NLT Whenever the king went to the Temple of the LORD, the guards would carry them along and then return them to the guardroom.* NOW he goes to the Temple! Not only does he go, but he had his body guard bring the shields with him. Was he afraid of losing those also?

*29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. 31 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.*

## Chapter 15

As will often happen so often in the books of Kings, this chapter tells us more of the changing of the kings. Some receive little mention because their lives were unmentionable. About this section of the book, Dr. McGee said this, "I feel that we need a double portion of the Spirit of God as we go through this section." Amen!

**1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam [a BUY jam] over Judah.** {JF&B} "His name was at first Abijah (2Ch 12:16); 'Jah,' the name of God, according to an ancient fashion, being conjoined with it. But afterwards, when he was found 'walking in all the sins of his father' [IKi 15:3], that honorable addition was withdrawn, and his name in sacred history changed into Abijam."

**2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah [MAY ah kah], the daughter of Abishalom. NLT He reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.** Abijam was born of a rebellious father and he continues these ways as he rebels against God.

**3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.** {McGee} "David had become the standard for these kings. It is true that David was a human standard, but it was a standard that God accepted."

**4 Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: 5 Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.** This sin will always be on David's testimony. It's not that he wasn't forgiven but this matter must never be forgotten.

**6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.** This is a repeat of verse 30 of the previous chapter. Perhaps it was done for emphasis.

**7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.** Abijam reigned three years and had nothing to show for it except for sin and war.

**9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. 10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.** Actually, the NLT gives us a better rendering of this verse. Asa was not the brother of Abijam but the son. **NLT He reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.** Maachah was his grandmother and held the position of "queen mother" in the kingdom.

"Asa must have been very young at the time of his accession in 911 B.C., for his grandfather had died at the age of 58, just three years before. This may help to explain his better character, since

during his youth he would govern under the influence of the high priest, and would be spared the example and influence of a godless father.” (W. T. Purkiser, Ed., Exploring The Old Testament. Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, MO, 1955, 307).

**11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.** Finally we have a king that looks back to the days of David.

**12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.** According to the commentators, this was the start of one of the great revivals in Judah during the time of the kings. {McGee} “Asa did not go for the idea that we should be soft on homosexuals. He was opposed to homosexuality. It is not a mark of being civilized when any nation drops to the low level that we have today. God gives up any people who have a permissive society, openly allowing homosexuality. It is a mark of gross degradation—we are going down as a nation. Someone needs to speak out against this today. We need to recognize it as a sin—it is as corrupt, depraved, and degraded as any sin a person can commit. Man cannot sink any lower than this. When a person sinks this low, God gives him up. Our society is moving in that direction. Asa dealt with the problem, and he is called a good king. God has not changed His mind on this issue at all.” Dr. McGee went home to be with the Lord in 1988. How important his words still are!

**13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.** Maachah was actually the queen mother or grandmother of Asa. Asa did not compromise. He knew that only with God on his side would he accomplish what he needed to and she was in the way of that with her sinful ways. Therefore, he pulled her down and destroyed her idols. **SAINTS & LEADERS QUESTION: How far are we willing to go to stay right with God?**

**14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect with the LORD all his days. 15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.** Second Chronicles tells of Asa’s war with the Ethiopians and his father’s war with Jeroboam. These were items that were won as the spoils of war and had been dedicated (given) to God.

**16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.** We have not gotten into the details of Baasha yet.

**17 And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad [ben HAY dad], the son of Tabrimon [tab RIM uhn], the son of Hezion [HEE zih ahn], king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, 19 There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with**

*Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.* Asa went to the blessing that he received in his wars and his father's wars and gave it away. This money was the result of much loss of life and many injured and maimed soldiers. How can he so casually just take this money (**WHICH HAD BEEN DEDICATED TO GOD SO IT WASN'T HIS MONEY ANYWAY**) and use it in a cause where he has not even prayed? Here we must repeat the principle that we have used throughout this study because it is so pertinent here. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Awful things happen when people don't pray!** Where was Asa's prayer before doing this?

Asa developed his own plan for dealing with the situation. In the process he hurts his country by reducing the treasury and he hurts himself by making league with the heathen and by not trusting God. There's also a little obscure point that has not been brought out before – Abijah, Asa's father, had obviously also made some treaty with the Syrians. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Christians must not pattern their actions after the unrighteous regardless of who they are.**

*20 So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah [A bell beth MAY uh kah], and all Cinneroth [SIN uh roth], with all the land of Naphtali.* The Syrians were known mercenaries and they were glad to go off to war for pay.

*21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.* Asa's scheme worked - Baasha had to go take care of his northern borders and let the work cease. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Just because something works doesn't mean that God is in it, but if God's in it, it will always work.**

*22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. 23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.* Second Chronicles 16 tells of the later failure of Asa which all stemmed around the pact he made with Syria. This was part of the reason that he was diseased in his feet. He had a problem with asking God what to do and he stayed sick because he refused to ask God for help.

*24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.* Jehoshaphat was another good king. In fact, he was even better than his father, Asa. Second Chronicles provides more accounts of his life.

*25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.* This is all that's written about Nadab – he walked in the sins of his father, reigned two years, and died.

**27 And Baasha [BAY uh shah] the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.** While Nadab was involved in a siege (an act of war) against the Philistines, Baasha used this opportunity to conspire against him and kill him. Once he did this, he took over the kingdom.

**29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: 30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. 31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?** The Word of the Lord is sure. EVERY member of the house of Jeroboam is killed by Baasha to make sure that there is no opposition from his family to his conspiracy.

**32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.** {McGee} “The continual civil war depleted the energy and resources of both the kingdoms. It also made both kingdoms subject to the powers round about them. They were invaded again and again by Egypt in the south, by Syria, and finally by Assyria in the north. These people simply would not change their ways.”

**33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. 34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.** God through Baasha punished Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, but he does the exact same thing. Wouldn't you think he would learn?

## Chapter 16

In this chapter we have more treachery in the name of personal ambition among the kings of Israel. This country, born of rebellion, continues in rebellion to God and to the king.

**1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu [JEE hyoo] the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, {MH}** “The warning was sent by Jehu the son of Hanani. The father was a seer, or prophet, at the same time (2 Chr. 16:7), and was sent to Asa king of Judah; but the son, who was young and more active, was sent on this longer and more dangerous expedition to Baasha king of Israel. This Jehu was a prophet and the son of a prophet. This Jehu continued long in his usefulness, for we find him reproving Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 19:2) above forty years after, and writing the annals of that prince, 2 Chr. 20:34. The message which this prophet brought to Baasha is much the same with that which Ahijah sent to Jeroboam by his wife.”

**2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; 3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.** Baasha walked in all of the sins of Jeroboam and will suffer the same fate even to the point of having the corpses of his family members scavenged by dogs and birds.

**5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.** Because of Baasha’s sin, there’s not much else that need be said about him.

**7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him. {JF&B}** “This is not another prophecy, but merely an addition by the sacred historian, explanatory of the death of Baasha and the extinction of his family. The doom pronounced against Jeroboam (1Ki 14:9), did not entitle him to take the execution of the sentence into his own hands; but from his following the same calf-worship, he had evidently plotted the conspiracy and murder of that king in furtherance of his own ambitious designs; and hence, in his own assassination, he met the just reward of his deeds.”

**8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.** Now we have Elah the son of Baasha. If he’s paid attention to anything, he would know that his reign is destined for doom. However, he has not and only reigns two years.

**9 And his servant Zimri [ZIMM rye], captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah. NLT**

**Then Zimri, who commanded half of the royal chariots, made plans to kill him. One day in Tirzah, Elah was getting drunk at the home of Arza, the supervisor of the palace.** When you read all of this behavior, remember that these people are the people of God. Just a few years earlier their ancestors were in the Temple experiencing the glory of God. Now they conspire and kill and worship pagan idols just like the world. Proverbs 31 is so often thought of as the proverb for the virtuous woman. However, it begins with a warning that this king should have listened to: **Proverbs 31:4-6** *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: 5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.* Obviously Elah was ready to perish for he drank himself drunk and then to death.

**10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.** Zimri took over by rebellion.

**11 And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.** Even the friends of Baasha were destroyed by Zimri. It took two years to bring the judgment to pass but it was executed in seven days. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **Be careful of your associations lest you be caught up with their judgment when it occurs.**

**12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. 14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 15 In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.** Once again, Israel is warring against Gibbethon when there is a change in the kingdom. (Remember that Baasha killed Nadab when they were under siege at this same city about 26 years earlier.)

**16 And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri [UM rih], the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.** Once the people found out what Zimri had done, they made Omri the king over Israel.

**17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.** Tirzah, at that time, was the royal city of Israel. Omri saw the situation and immediately had the army march on the city, which was soon taken.

**18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, 19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.** {JF&B} *“His walking in the ways of Jeroboam might have been*

*manifested either by the previous course of his life, or by his decrees published on his ascension, when he made a strong effort to gain popularity by announcing his continued support of the calf worship.”*

**20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?** Though Zimri was used to execute judgment upon the house of Baasha, his actions are still called treason. The prophecy did not force the actions but merely foretold the actions. The house of Baasha put themselves in a position where they were no longer under the grace and mercy of God.

**21 Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. 22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.** Tibni was, no doubt, executed. This confusion of kings lasted four years (compare verses 15 and 23 to come to this conclusion.)

**23 In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.** The commentators say that the twelve years of Omri’s reign began during the contested time with Tibni.

**24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.** {JF&B} “The palace of Tirzah being in ruins, Omri, in selecting the site of his royal residence, was naturally influenced by considerations both of pleasure and advantage. In the center of a wide amphitheatre of mountains, about six miles from Shechem, rises an oblong hill with steep, yet accessible sides, and a long flat top extending east and west, and rising five hundred or six hundred feet above the valley. What Omri in all probability built as a mere palatial residence, became the capital of the kingdom instead of Shechem.” Samaria became the capital city of Israel. Often, in the Old Testament, Israel is called “Samaria” to distinguish it from the whole country of Israel.

**25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and DID WORSE THAN ALL THAT WERE BEFORE HIM. 26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.** Jeroboam was the measuring stick for evil of the kings of Israel. David was the measuring stick for good for the kings of Judah. Omri manages to excel all of those before him in doing evil.

**27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead. 29 And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.** We are now introduced to the worst king of all, Ahab. Notice what the next verse says of him.

**30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.**

**31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.** {McGee} “Jezebel was the daughter of a king who was also a priest of Baal and who murdered his brother. It is interesting to note that the name Jezebel means ‘unmarried’ or ‘without cohabitation.’ In other words, the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel was not a romance—it was not a love match. Rather than a true marriage, it was just a wedding. Apparently there had never been a real meeting of these two people in a love relationship. She was a masculine woman with strong intellectual powers and a fierce passion for evil. She was strong-willed and possessed a dominant personality, but she had no moral sense. She was hardened into insensibility. She was unscrupulous and the most wicked person in history—bar none.”

*c*

**33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. NLT Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.** What foolishness in provoking God! How many do the same things today?

**34 In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun. NLT It was during his reign that Hiel, a man from Bethel, rebuilt Jericho. When he laid the foundations, his oldest son, Abiram, died. And when he finally completed it by setting up the gates, his youngest son, Segub, died. This all happened according to the message from the LORD concerning Jericho spoken by Joshua son of Nun.** To understand this verse, we need to go back to the book of Joshua. **Joshua 6:26** *And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.* {MH} “He built for his children, but God wrote him childless; his eldest son died when he began, the youngest when he finished, and all the rest (it is supposed) between. Note, Those whom God curses are cursed indeed; none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. God keep us back from presumptuous sins, those great transgressions!”

## Chapter 17

This chapter introduces us to the most extraordinary prophet of the Old Testament, Elijah. He is representative of all the Old Testament prophets just as Moses is representative of the Law. The rest of the First Book of Kings deals with his ministry as it impacted King Ahab.

**1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.** {Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} “Gilead [GILL ee ad] — the name of three men, two mountains, and one city in the Old Testament. In our case, it is a mountain region east of the Jordan River 3,000 feet above sea level. Extending about 97 kilometers (60 miles) from near the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the north end of the Dead Sea, Gilead is about 32 kilometers (20 miles) wide. It is bounded on the west by the Jordan River, on the south by the land of Moab, on the north by the Yarmuk River, and on the east by the desert. This lush region receives an annual rainfall of from 71 to 81 centimeters (28 to 32 inches). Thus, much of it is thickly wooded today, as it was in Absalom’s day (2 Sam. 18:6–9). Many fugitives fled to this region for safety. Jacob fled to Gilead from Laban his father-in-law (Gen. 31:21). The Israelites who feared the Philistines in King Saul’s day fled here (1 Sam. 13:7), as did Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8–9) and David (2 Sam. 17:22, 26) during Absalom’s revolt. Gilead also contains rich grazing land (1 Chr. 5:9–10).” This is quite an awesome scene. An unknown character from the land of Gilead shows up at King Ahab’s court and says, “By the Word of the Lord, there won’t be dew or rain except by my word”, and walks out. Can you imagine the sport that Ahab made with him after he left? However, as time went on, the laughter subsided. Why a drought? {MacArthur} “The drought proved that Baal, the god of the rains and fertility, was [powerless] before the Lord.”

**2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.** {Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} “Cherith [KEE rith] (gorge, trench) — a dry riverbed of Gilead, east of the Jordan River, where the prophet Elijah hid from King Ahab and was fed by ravens.” The Word of the Lord had Elijah to hide himself for He knew that once Ahab began to feel the effects of the drought, he’d come looking for him.

**4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.** God always uses the unusual things to confound the wise. God used a nasty, scavenging bird to feed his prophet and the prophet said, “Yes, Lord!”

**5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.** God knew the brook would dry up. He’s testing Elijah’s faith. This is his first real public assignment and he’ll need great faith for the task ahead.

*8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.* {Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} "Zarephath [ZAR eh fath] — a Phoenician coastal city situated between Tyre and Sidon." Zarephath was in the country controlled by Jezebel's father, Ahab's father-in-law. Truly the Word of God is right. **Psalm 23:5a** *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*

*10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. 12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.* {JF&B} "Meeting, at his entrance into the town, the very woman who was appointed by divine providence to support him, his faith was severely tested by learning from her that her supplies were exhausted and that she was preparing her last meal for herself and son." But God had already told Elijah that He had "commanded" the woman to sustain him. Therefore, he has to believe the Word of God and not the woman's circumstances.

*13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.* So many preachers today have misused their office that it would be hard to imagine anyone doing this today. However, God had already conditioned the woman's heart to obey His servant.

*14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.* Wow! There was no argument, nor discussion. She went and did as Elijah said. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Obey His prophets, so shall you prosper.**

*16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.* Once again, God proves His Word.

*17 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. 18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* The Gentile woman was superstitious and thought that the evil that had come upon the land had come upon her. Actually, though, God sent Elijah for just this day. Her faithfulness will restore her son.

*19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. 20 And he cried unto the LORD, and*

*said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? 21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. 22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.* Who can tell why the Lord chose to slay this child except to further strengthen Elijah's faith? He is on the verge of a great test and needs to know that there is nothing too hard for God.

*23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. 24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.* Not only was Elijah's faith strengthened, but the woman's also.

## Chapter 18

The previous chapter introduced us to Elijah where he burst on the scene by promising a drought in the land that would not be broken except by his word. In this chapter, the drought is broken only after the famous face-off of God's man versus the prophets of Baal.

**1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.** James 5:17 says that the drought lasted 3 ½ years. JFB explains the minor difference – “*The early rain fell in our March, the latter rain in our October. Though Ahab might have at first ridiculed Elijah’s announcement, yet when neither of these rains fell in their season, he was incensed against the prophet as the cause of the national judgment, and compelled him, with God’s direction, to consult his safety in flight. This was six months after the king was told there would be neither dew nor rain, and from this period the three years in this passage are computed.*” Elijah has received the command by God to “show himself to Ahab” and then God would restore the rain to the land. This was not a simple task. Elijah was a wanted man. The superstitious king viewed Elijah as the reason for the drought and wanted him to undo the curse, at any cost. Rewards would be given for his whereabouts. “Bounty hunters” may not have seen the importance of a live Elijah to Ahab. In spite of this, Elijah shows no fear.

**2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.** The drought was especially severe in the capital city of Samaria because the drought was sent for judgment against the head of this city, Ahab.

**3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: 4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)** This man, Obadiah, is not the same man that wrote the small prophetic book of the same name. Well-meaning saints sometimes ridicule him because he was a “secret saint”. He had to be. If he took any other approach, he would not have been able to be a blessing to other true worshippers and he may have been killed. He had a great position in the kingdom, which helped him to warn the true worshippers of things to come in the kingdom. While reading in these verses about this man, notice the depravity of Jezebel. The New Living Translation makes this verse plain in saying that Jezebel tried to kill all the Lord’s prophets. In spite of the ferocity of this woman, Obadiah boldly went out to hide 100 prophets and feed them during this time. This was no small accomplishment considering that the land was in famine. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **The fear of the Lord should make you go beyond yourself.**

**5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.**

People were dying from starvation but Ahab shows no sign of repentance. He is concerned about his animals.

**6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.** Wow! God had made the time so desperate that the king

had to walk through the land BY HIMSELF searching for water. The judgment of God takes away the pride and pomp of royalty and replaces it with shame.

**7 And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? NLT As Obadiah was walking along, he saw Elijah coming toward him. Obadiah recognized him at once and fell to the ground before him. “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?” he asked.**

**8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. 9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldst deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? 10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. 11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. 12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. 13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD’s prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. 15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.** As was true of many in the Old Testament, Obadiah was a courageous man for the Lord but not a man familiar with the ways of God. He viewed the words of Elijah as a death sentence upon his life because he knew that once he told Ahab about Elijah, and Ahab could not find Elijah, then Ahab would have executed Obadiah. Obadiah had no concept of how long the drought would last and expected God to take Elijah away. He viewed himself as a pawn in the battle between God/Elijah and Ahab.

While we’re on these verses, notice the phrase at the end of verse 10. Ahab had searched everywhere for Elijah going into neighboring kingdoms. (Isn’t it almost humorous that God was hiding Elijah in the kingdom of Jezebel’s father? (See 1 Kings 17:9 – Jezebel’s father was the king of Sidon)) {MH} “*Ahab had made diligent search for [Elijah], had offered rewards to any one that would discover him, sent spies into every tribe and lordship of his own dominions, as some understand it, or, as others, into all the neighboring nations and kingdoms that were in alliance with him; and, when they denied that they knew any thing of him, he would not believe them unless they swore it, and, as should seem, promised likewise upon oath that, if ever they found him among them, they would discover him and deliver him up.*”

**16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.** {JF&B} “*Ahab, bent on revenge, or impatient for the appearance of rain, went himself to meet Elijah.*”

**17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.**

Ahab came to Elijah with a mind to intimidate him with an accusation but Elijah would not be intimidated. He boldly throws the accusation back in the face of the king. Elijah has proven to have the Lord of Glory on his side. The king has chosen the false god, Baalim.

**19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.**

Elijah gives the king his orders, “Gather ALL Israel to Mount Carmel with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 hundred prophets of the grove which are being fed by the royal bounty.”

**20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.** {MH} *“Ahab issued out [invitations] accordingly, for the convening of this great assembly, either because he feared Elijah and durst not oppose him (Saul stood in awe of Samuel more than of God), or because he hoped Elijah would bless the land, and speak the word that they might have rain, and upon those terms they would be all at his [call].”*

**21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.**

[We don't know how many days or weeks passed between verse 19 and verse 21 but this had to be some period of time for the word to get out and for the people to travel to Mount Carmel.]

Elijah is in control of this assembly. Ahab is here but not acting as king. Matthew Henry says, *“Ahab and the people expected that Elijah would, in this solemn assembly, bless the land, and pray for rain.”* No doubt, Ahab thought to take care of Elijah AFTER he got what he wanted – rain.

Elijah begins with a bold pronouncement: **Stop trying to mix the worship of God with Baal. Choose one of the two but you can't choose both!** (This is why it is so important for the people of God to not compromise the things of God by adding in worldly measures. We think to win the world in this manner but we only offend God.) {JF&B} *“They had long been attempting to conjoin the service of God with that of Baal. It was an impracticable union and the people were so struck with a sense of their own folly, or dread of the king's displeasure, that they ‘answered not a word.’”*

This was a problem that had existed with the people of God from the time they had become a nation. Now, many hundreds of years later under the reign of wicked Ahab, God has had enough.

**22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.** File this verse away in your mind. We're beginning to see Elijah's “issue” come out in this verse – “I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord”. Maybe Elijah felt abandoned. Maybe he was lonely for a confidant that loved the Lord. Maybe there was pride. This is not revealed but this is the first of three times he will use this expression over this chapter and the next. {McGee} *“Elijah had what I am pleased to call an Elijah complex—some of us develop that even today. Many times in my ministry I feel that I am the only one left. Then I find*

*out that there is a preacher in a hollow in Tennessee, or on the side of a hill in Georgia, or down around a lake in Florida, or up in the mountains of California, or in the suburban areas of Chicago who is standing for God and paying a bigger price than I have ever paid. Then I just get rid of my Elijah complex and thank God that there are men standing for God and His Word in these days in which we are living.”*

**23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:** I love the way Elijah put this whole scene together. He had the king send out the invitations. Now he has the false prophets bring the bulls. All Elijah has to do is show up and watch God work!

**24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.** Today many Christians jump from church to church looking for a “word”. Elijah was not going to be satisfied until he saw God answer by FIRE. If I were there, perhaps I would also agree. After all, He’s God. Shouldn’t God answer by fire? Man can answer by voice.

**25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.** {McGee} “It was Dr. Wilfred Funk who said that the most bitter word in the English language is ‘alone.’ Elijah stood alone. He did not voice public opinion, friend. He was no echo—he was no parrot. He was not promoting anyone else. He was no politician. He was more concerned about pleasing God than courting the popularity of the crowd. He sought divine approval rather than public applause. He was not a clown in a public parade. He was a fool for God’s sake. He was a solo voice in the wilderness of the world. He carried on an all-out war against Satan and his hosts. He stood alone, arrayed against the prophets of Baal.”

**26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. 27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. 28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.** What a scene! ALL DAY LONG they worked to get Baal to do something. How is he going to do something? He’s been concocted in the minds of men! Elijah uses this time build in the minds of the people the correct response to false gods – ridicule. His actions are comical but well placed. If he could make them laugh at their god, they wouldn’t be so quick to call on him in time of trouble. No one has ever laughed at the true and living God.

**30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.** At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah told the people to come over to his altar. It's time to stop all of this foolishness and prepare to come near to God. {MH} *“He would not make use of theirs, which had been polluted with their prayers to Baal, but, finding the ruins of an altar there, which had formerly been used in the service of the Lord, he chose to repair that.”*

**31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.** It is curious that Elijah dug this trench around the altar but it will soon be obvious that he is working based on divine instructions.

**33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.** I can see the false prophets now laughing with glee. One writer said that because Mount Carmel is close to the Mediterranean Sea and the country was in a drought, the water was probably seawater. This was done to make this absolutely a miracle. No one could say that Elijah had worked some trick.

**34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.** One writer called these barrels jars. If they were “jars” they must have been large. I don't think 12 jars of water, as we understand “jars” today, would cover the sacrifice and fill up the trench around it. Remember that it hasn't rained for 3 ½ years. The ground is parched and eager for water. This had to be a LOT of water to fill up the trench and soak into the earth.

**36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.**

**37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.** Elijah prayed a 63-word prayer. Compare this to the even shorter prayer that Jesus prayed when He raised Lazarus. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Don't use public prayers as a time to demonstrate your dedication to God. If God is going to work, it's going to be based on your faith and your private time of consecration.**

**38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.** What an amazing scene! God utterly and completely answered by fire and consumed EVERYTHING.

**39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.**

**40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.** {MH} “If Jehovah be the true God, Baal is a false God, to whom these Israelites had revolted, and seduced others to the worship of him; and therefore, by the express law of God, they were to be put to death, Deut. 13:1-11. There needed no proof of the fact; all Israel were witnesses of it: and therefore Elijah (acting still by an extraordinary commission, which is not to be drawn into a precedent) orders them all to be slain immediately as the troublers of the land, and Ahab himself is so terrified, for the present, with the fire from heaven, that he dares not oppose it.” This may seem brutal but the point is that sin must be completely eradicated.

**41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.** Ahab had been, for the most part, completely ignored throughout the contest between God and Baal. Now Elijah gives him respect, as the king, and encourages him to move swiftly so that the rain would not hinder him since they are out in an open place.

**42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,** This verse provides an interesting contrast if we’ll look with spiritual eyes. The man of the world, Ahab, went to eat and drink. He was totally unaffected by what he had just seen. The failure of Baal didn’t move him. The awesome power of God didn’t move him. Even the slaying of the prophets didn’t move him. He’s a man of the flesh and his flesh craves refreshment. Elijah, the man of God, on the other hand, went into prayer.

**43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. 44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down that the rain stop thee not. 45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.** {McGee} “Elijah was a great man! And so that the people might realize that the drought was not just an accident of nature but was a disciplinary measure, it ended the same way that it had begun—by the command of God’s man, Elijah. Elijah said that rain was coming, but at first nothing could be seen but blue water and blue sky. When his servant looked for the seventh time, however, a cloud as small as a man’s hand could be seen. The cloud rapidly increased in size until the heavens were black and rain flooded the parched earth.”

**46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.** Dake says the distance that was covered was thirty miles. Elijah, with the hand of the Lord upon him, outran the chariot of Ahab to the city. This chapter, after the victory, ends on a bittersweet note. I sense in Elijah the anticipation that the kingdom would now be turned back toward God. I see excitement in him as he prepares to go into the city. However, the next chapter will also be a different chapter in his life.

## Chapter 19

If the previous chapter could be called VICTORY, this one may be called DEFEAT. This chapter shows us very clearly that the enemy will not rest just because of one set back. We must be ever vigilant! Just because you have wrought a great victory does not mean that you're not subject to discouragement. David experienced it, in spite of the word he had from God. Now Elijah, RIGHT AFTER THE VICTORY, experiences it.

**1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.** Now that Ahab is full and the rain has come, his focus is no longer on the foolishness of the, now dead, prophets of Baal, but on the fact that Elijah had slain them. Jezebel refused to come to this gathering. Ahab, the weak, yet evil, king poses a picture of a boy telling his mother what has happened and how someone beat him up on the playground. This is not only a woman of great evil but also a domineering woman. Remember the quote from Dr. McGee about her from chapter 16, *“She was a masculine woman with strong intellectual powers and a fierce passion for evil. She was strong-willed and possessed a dominant personality, but she had no moral sense. She was hardened into insensibility. She was unscrupulous and the most wicked person in history—bar none.”*

Ahab had suffered three years of humiliation and he placed the blame for this directly at the feet of Elijah. Look how Ahab *seemed* to be disrespected by Elijah in the prior chapter. Ahab had just witnessed many of his friends, the false prophets, cruelly killed by this same man. Ahab had come to Jezreel to proclaim the end of the drought but Elijah had run ahead of him – the same man. What he told Jezebel about this man can only be speculated but we can guess from the results.

**2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. NLT So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods also kill me if by this time tomorrow I have failed to take your life like those whom you killed.”** Jezebel has promised a death sentence upon Elijah. This should have been expected. She and her husband were grossly evil. They had what they wanted – rain – so they needed to get rid of what they didn't want – Elijah. Elijah was covered by the Lord. The most Jezebel could do was threaten him like this. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: When you do as the Lord says do, you become a marked person to those that don't love the Lord as you do. Everything you do gets on their nerves.**

**3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.** Once you walk in the will of God, the devil works to discourage you (to deprive you of self-confidence in what God has done in your life and God-confidence in what God will continually do to stand up for His Word.) **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: When you are discouraged, your hope is dampened and, if you're not careful, you will move out of the will of God, out of the place of blessing, out of the arc of safety where the devil can freely attack you.** {McGee} *“It is difficult to believe that Elijah is the same man who defied 450 prophets of Baal on the top of Mount Carmel. He seems to be a different man, but there is an explanation for his condition. That was a threatening message Jezebel sent to Elijah. Being before the public*

*defying the false worship in his nation had drained a great deal of his energy and strength. He did a strange thing when he heard Jezebel's message threatening to kill him. Like Simon Peter when he took his eyes off the Lord, looked at those waves, and began to sink, Elijah lost his courage. He began to run. He went to Beer-sheba which is way down south. And friend, take it from someone who has been there, it is way down in the desert. Anyone who got as far away as Beer-sheba could consider himself safe from a ruler in the northern kingdom. But Elijah, when he reached this place in the desert, left his servant there and continued on another day's journey."*

***4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*** (A "day's journey" was the distance one could walk in a day. According to Thompson, that distance was 24 miles. In the New Testament, a "Sabbath's day's journey" was the distance one could walk without violating the Law which was only 0.6 miles.) Elijah left behind his confidant, his servant, and went 24 miles further into the wilderness, sat under a juniper tree, and begged for death. The desertion of loved ones, the removal from familiar places, and the desire to die are all evident signs of not only discouragement but, more dangerously, depression. (Juniper – A dense, twiggy bush, almost leafless, which grew to about 12 feet. It has small white blooms. It was common in the desert regions of Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt.) What has happened to this awesome prophet? It's easy to criticize him but you didn't go through 3 ½ years of walking completely by faith. You didn't raise the widow's son in Zarephath after God sent him to her. You didn't stop the heavens with your word. You didn't publicly challenge the religious institution set up by the king...and win. You didn't slay the prophets of that institution in the eyes of the king. So what happened? Dr. McGee gives some interesting insight:

*Let me suggest several things. There was a physical cause for the way he acted. He was overworked. He was overwrought. He was over-worried. He was physically exhausted. I think he could have dropped in his tracks after that experience at Mount Carmel. He was worn out after the arduous task of standing for God in the face of such opposition.*

*Elijah stood alone. He was a prodigal of his own physical strength. Some dear saint, I am sure, whispered in his ear, "You are doing too much. Take it easy." Elijah would never have run away from Jezebel if he had not been exhausted. I think we need men today who are willing to work for God. I hear a lot of talk about folks being dedicated, but they are as lazy and careless in the Lord's work as they possibly can be. This could never be said of Elijah. He was under the juniper tree because he was exhausted.*

*Perhaps you have misunderstood Elijah. He was rough and rugged. He was a blood-and-thunder man. But that rugged exterior concealed a sensitive soul. He was ruled by his emotions, and he could go from elation to dejection. He possessed the finer*

*sensibilities—he had artistic taste and aesthetic taste. His nature was emotional, and he did things that were emotional.*

**5** *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.* {McGee} “Elijah needed rest. The Lord knew that, so He put him to sleep. Elijah slept like a baby. He also needed some good food—I don’t think he had been eating regularly. He awoke to find some bread being baked. Do you know who I think baked that bread? I believe it was the same One who prepared that breakfast on the shore of Galilee one morning after the Resurrection. It was our Lord who comforted Elijah, fed him, and then put him back to sleep.”

**7** *And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.* {Dake} “Horeb was about 180 miles south of the place where he sat under a juniper tree. His was a slow journey for it took him 40 days to get there. Perhaps this was because of the fast he was on.” Horeb was also the name for Mt. Sinai. God called His prophet in to the “home office” so that He could re-energize him. He is now about 300 miles from his field of ministry – the place where God planted him.

**9** *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?* God brought him here but only after Elijah had deserted his post. Now the Lord wants to know what Elijah is doing outside of the Northern Kingdom. That’s not where He placed him. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** When you are discouraged and out of the will of God, you have the tendency to do things that make the Lord ask you the same question – what are you doing here? Look at yourself: you miss church; you gave up your prayer time; you avoid the saints. All of these are in response to your discouragement – a feeling that says that God will not do for you as He promised.

**10** *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* Elijah was right ... for the most part. Yes, he had been doing an awesome job even though he has deserted his post. Yes, the children of Israel are doing abominable things but if there weren’t something that needed correction, God would not send a prophet. But he’s wrong in one area – he is not the only one left. This is now the second time that Elijah has used the statement, “I, even I only, am left.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** God never leaves Himself without a remnant.

**11** *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD*

*was not in the earthquake: 12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*

**NLT 11** "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. {MacArthur} "The 3 [spectacles], wind, earthquake, and fire, announced the imminent arrival of the Lord. The Lord's self-revelation to Elijah came in a faint, whispering voice. The lesson for Elijah was that Almighty God was quietly, sometimes [invisibly], doing His work in Israel." Notice that Elijah could discern what things were of the Lord and what things were not. In this, he was not fooled. But in the midst of that, he could not discern his own miserable spiritual state.

*13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?* {Dake} "Covering the face was a sign of reverence in the presence of God."

*14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* God asks him the same question again and Elijah answers with the same answer. This is the third, and last, time that he will use this answer. Elijah's complaint about God is about to be answered. Elijah felt abandoned. He felt like God was not paying attention to the depravity of the people. Elijah felt like the famine didn't correct anything – Jezebel is still in power and will just raise up more idols. But God answers Elijah in an unusual way – a way that Elijah would have to figure out in order to see that he was actually answered.

*15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.* Elijah refused to be comforted or corrected by God. Therefore, the Lord moved on and gave him other things to do. Matthew Henry brings out this three-fold assignment very well and speaks to why this was important at this time in spite of the fact that some of these events were far into the future.

*Elijah complained that the wickedness of Israel was unpunished. The judgment of famine was too gentle, and had not reclaimed them; it was removed before they were reformed: "I have been jealous," says he, "for God's name, but he himself has not*

*appeared jealous for it.” “Well,” says God, “be content; it is all in good time; judgments are prepared for those scorers, though they are not yet inflicted; the persons are pitched upon, and shall now be nominated, for they are now in being, who shall do the business.”*

1. *“When Hazael comes to be king of Syria, he shall make bloody work among the people (2 Ki. 8:12) and so correct them for their idolatry.”*
2. *“When Jehu comes to be king of Israel he shall make bloody work with the royal family, and shall utterly destroy the house of Ahab, that set up and maintained idolatry.”*
3. *“Elisha, while thou art on earth, shall strengthen thy hands; and, when thou art gone, shall carry on thy work, and be a remaining witness against the apostasy of Israel, and even he shall slay the children of Bethel, that idolatrous city.”*  
*Note, The wicked are reserved to judgment. Evil pursues sinners, and there is no escaping it; to attempt an escape is but to run from one sword’s point upon another. See **Jer. 48:44** He that flees from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that gets up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare.*

**18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.** {McGee} *“Finally, He told Elijah that there was a remnant of seven thousand people who have not bowed to Baal. God always has a remnant, my friend. He had one in Elijah’s day, and He has one today.”* The only aggravating thing about this, to the one going through, is the wish that some of these, or even one of these, had stood up to give a kind word or support him. However, that’s not how the Lord operates. They had their mission and Elijah had his.

**19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.** The fact that Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen means his family were people of substance in spite of the famine. No doubt, because they feared God, He preserved them. The casting of the mantle was, according to Matthew Henry, a sign of taking Elisha under his care. It was also a sign of the call to the prophetic ministry.

**20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? NLT Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, “First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!” Elijah replied, “Go on back! But consider what I have done to you.”** Elisha readily accepted the call. He left a comfortable life to become the servant of a man who is never said to have a home of his own. The

call of God, though, was more important. Elijah also emphasized this to him – “Don’t forget this call!”

***21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*** Just as Matthew made a great feast when he chose to follow Jesus, Elisha makes a great feast to say good-bye to his family and friends. Once this was finished, he obeyed God and became the servant of Elijah.

## Chapter 20

The focus of the book changes from Elijah back to the history of Ahab. In this chapter, we are once again introduced to the Syrian king, Benhadad. Remember that Benhadad was a title going back to one of the ones that God used to afflict Solomon.

***1 And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.*** It's interesting how that the Scripture abruptly stops talking about Elijah and goes back to discussing the kings. Benhadad, for no apparent reason than the sins of the people of God, decided that he wanted what Israel had. {JF&B} *“This monarch was the son of that Ben-hadad who, in the reign of Baasha, made a raid on the northern towns of Galilee (1Kings 15:20). The thirty-two kings that were confederate with him were probably tributary princes. The ancient kings of Syria and Phoenicia ruled only over a single city, and were independent of each other, except when one great city, as Damascus, acquired the [pre-eminence], and even then they were allied only in time of war. The Syrian army encamped at the gates and besieged the town of Samaria.”* Notice also how he prepared himself. He not only gathered his entire host, he called upon the assistance of 32 kings! He is planning for absolute victory.

The final key point to the start of this chapter is that this is the first invasion by a foreign power since the time of David. This has been caused by sin.

***2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, 3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.*** The terminology used by the Syrian king was his way of saying, “Surrender or else I'll just take it anyway.” Keep this treachery in mind as this story unfolds.

***4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.*** Ahab was the most evil man of the Bible but he was also a timid, weak man. His evil was based on his wife stirring him up. Now he is faced with making a decision and he quickly gives in.

***5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; 6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.*** Benhadad responds, “Since you gave in so easy on a hard request, oops, I changed my mind and I want more.” **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: You cannot negotiate with the devil. You must have an answer from God!**

***7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. 8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.*** Ahab may have had in mind to give in the second time also but the people were offended by what Benhadad has said so he must respond differently.

**9** *Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.* There's an interesting situation going on here, which the commentators bring out. Ahab's timid answer does not match up with the voice of the elders. It's like he's saying, "I'll give you all my gold, silver, wives, and children but I'm held back from honoring your latest request." He further compounds his weakness by calling the heathen invader, "my lord the king."

**10** *And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Once the devil has you backing up, he begins to boast about all of the things he will do to you and the type of failure you will experience. You cannot negotiate with the devil!

**11** *And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.* Many saints are like Ahab – they develop courage too late. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** You must develop faith daily, not when the crisis comes. Now the enemy is confident but thank God for Jesus! In this case, Ahab tells Benhadad, in West Translation, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch."

**12** *And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.* **NIV** *Ben-Hadad heard this message while he and the kings were drinking in their tents, and he ordered his men: "Prepare to attack." So they prepared to attack the city.* Remember that the Syrians are encamped right outside of Samaria so this is an immediate stirring of the forces preparing themselves for the battle.

**13** *And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.* {McGee} *"The promise of God's deliverance in this situation was not based upon Ahab's [faithfulness] but on God's love for His people. God gave this man an opportunity to change."* Ahab was blessed by the heritage of God's people not by his own life. He spoke strong words presumptuously. He was blessed because God chose to deliver His people.

**14** *And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.* Ahab uses the kind of language that David used in trying to get clarity in receiving the voice of the Lord. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** We should be careful to make sure that we have a full understanding of God's Word to us! However, I believe that Ahab is driven more by his timid nature than by trying to fully understand God. He has no appreciation or love for God. He wants to get a full understanding before he puts his life on the limb. But once again, our gracious and faithful God comes through, in spite of Ahab.

**15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.** This sounds like a pitiful number considering that Benhadad is coming against him with 32 kings – 232 princes and 7,000 soldiers. This is just right for God!

**16 And they went out at noon. But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.** Benhadad is confident of victory even though he has no word from God. Oh, that the saints of God would be as confident of God WITH a Word!

**17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Benhadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. 18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.** Again, look at his confidence. He feels like his army is so awesome that no matter what the intentions of the Israelites, they can take them alive.

**19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. 20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.**

{JF&B} “This glorious victory, won so easily, and with such a paltry force opposed to overwhelming numbers, was granted that Ahab and his people might know that God is the Lord. But we do not read of this acknowledgment being made, or of any sacrifices being offered in token of their national gratitude.” What an interesting statement by the commentator! Between this verse and the next, you see nothing stated about any offering of praise or thanksgiving. They KNOW they shouldn’t have won that battle but they yet refuse to praise God. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Be thankful unto Him and bless His name! The people of God are expected to show forth His praises.**

**22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. Amplified Bible The prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, Go, fortify yourself and become strong and give attention to what you must do, for at the first of next year the king of Syria will return against you.** {McGee} “God was telling Ahab, ‘I have given you a victory now, but you be careful that you don’t return to the worship of Baal. I have demonstrated that I am your God—the living God. The king of Syria is going to come against you again at the return of the year.’ It was not the end of the struggle; Ben-hadad was going to renew his effort to defeat Israel.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: When you have received a Word from God, this is what you should do also – strengthen yourself in the Lord and watch what you do.** The Word was given but it was the king’s responsibility to prepare for the fulfillment of the Word. He can’t help it but he can hinder it if he does not do these things.

**23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.**

**24 And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:**

**25 And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.** Though the Syrians worshipped false gods and spoke of God as if He were an idol, they at least acknowledged the presence of God in defeating their army. This is something that the people of God had not publicly done.

**26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.** {JF&B} “[This war began] in spring, when, on the cessation of the rainy season, military campaigns, were begun.” This is in fulfillment of the Word of the Lord by the prophet.

**27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.** This gives an indication of how great the first Syrian army was. Remember that the king was told to replace his former army, horse for horse and soldier for soldier. By comparison, the army of Israel looks pitiful. {JF&B} “Like two little flocks of kids--Goats are never seen in large flocks, or scattered, like sheep; and hence the two small but compact divisions of the Israelite force are compared to goats, not sheep.”

**28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.** The Word of the Lord comes to encourage us at the right time. No doubt, fear may have gone through the camp of the children of Israel but GOD SENT A WORD! But notice that the Word of the Lord also revealed the heart of God – the Syrians had insulted God by saying His power was limited. This is a key to watch later in this chapter.

**29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.** These 7,232 people killed 100,000 Syrian soldiers in that one day. Surely God was in the midst of them!

**30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.** Those that the few soldiers could not destroy, God Himself took care of in one moment by killing 27,000 more by having a wall fall on them. When you think of how many died in those massive

World Trade Center towers and compare that number to how many died when this wall built by primitive people fell on them, once again, the hand of God is so obvious. Meanwhile, the instigator, Benhadad, did as so many do when they come face-to-face with God, he ran and hid.

*31 And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. 32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother.*

{JF&B} “Captives were dragged by ropes round their necks in companies, as is depicted on the monuments of Egypt. Their voluntary attitude and language of submission flattered the pride of Ahab, who, little concerned about the dishonor done to the God of Israel by the Syrian king, and thinking of nothing but victory, paraded his clemency, called the vanquished king “his brother,” invited him to sit in the royal chariot, and dismissed him with a covenant of peace.” **SAINTS’**

**PRINCIPLE:** In ALL our ways, acknowledge God and He will direct our paths. Every decision we make requires direction from God or we may find ourselves under judgment. Because Ahab did not respect God and had no heart for God like David, he was not offended at how this king had offended God. His victory will soon be turned to defeat because of this. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** We must have the heart of God.

*33 Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. NLT The men were quick to grasp at this straw of hope, and they replied, “Yes, your brother Ben-hadad!” “Go and get him,” the king of Israel told them. And when Ben-hadad arrived, Ahab invited him up into his chariot!* There is a time for mercy and a time for judgment. Where did Ahab’s sudden mercy come from? Benhadad had terrorized his people over the last year. He had insulted the name of God. This calls to mind a principle we have repeated many times:

**SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Terrible things happen when people don’t pray!

*34 And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away. {McGee} “Ahab was told to eliminate the enemy, but he did not obey. There can be no compromise, friend, with sin, God never permits that, and that is exactly what Ahab had done.”* Ahab yet tries to negotiate with the enemy even though God had given him clear instructions. This attitude cost King Saul his kingdom and will do the same for Ahab.

*35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbor in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. 36 Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion*

*shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.* {JF&B} “This prophet is supposed to have been Micaiah [mie KAY yah] (who is like the Lord?). The refusal of his neighbor to smite the prophet was manifestly wrong, as it was a withholding of necessary aid to a prophet in the discharge of a duty to which he had been called by God, and it was severely punished, as a beacon to warn others (see on 1Ki 13:2-24).” This is quite an odd incident and may seem confusing now. However, this “neighbor” was a fellow prophet so he understood the importance of the Word of God. {MH} “Because he disobeyed an express command of God (which was so much the worse if he was himself a prophet), like that other disobedient prophet (ch. 13:24), he was presently slain by a lion, v. 36. This was intended, not only to show, in general, how provoking disobedience is (Col. 3:6), but to intimate to Ahab (who no doubt was told the story) that if a good prophet were thus punished for sparing his friend and God’s, when God said, Smite, of much sorer punishment should a wicked king be thought worthy, who spared his enemy and God’s, when God said, Smite. Shall mortal man pretend to be more just than God, more pure or more compassionate than his Maker?”

**37 Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.** Notice that the text does not say that this other man was a fellow prophet but he more than fully carried out the Word of God to the point of wounding the prophet.

**SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Sometimes the laity are more eager to obey God than those entrusted to carry His Word.

**38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.** When we look at this account, notice the diligence and carefulness of the prophet to carry out the will of God. Do we have such patience to carry out the will of God?

**39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. 40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.** {MacArthur} “The prophet illustrated that, just as a soldier pays dearly for losing a prisoner in war, Ahab will pay for letting Ben-Hadad, the idolatrous enemy of God, live.” Ahab could quickly discern the problem in someone else’s life but could not see the same problem in his own life. Jesus spoke of this type of attitude – **Matthew 7:3-5** *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.*

*41 And he hastened, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.* He did this hastily before the king had the opportunity to carry out the execution.

*42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.* Wow! After God had so miraculously protected His people, the leader's disobedience caused them to go into judgment. **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** **You're not just living for yourself. All you do effects others.**

*43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria. NLT So the king of Israel went home to Samaria angry and sullen.* {MH} *"We are told how Ahab resented this reproof. He went to his house heavy and displeased (v. 43), not truly penitent, or seeking to undo what he had done amiss, but enraged at the prophet, exasperated against God (as if he had been too severe in the sentence passed upon him), and yet vexed at himself, every way out of humor, notwithstanding his victory."*

## Chapter 21

Step by step, Ahab is doing more and more to enrage the Lord God of the universe. How foolish! This chapter points to one of his last acts of treachery. In this chapter, Elijah reappears to pronounce the final judgment on Ahab.

**1 And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.** Naboth was a man of the city of Jezreel. It was not the capital city but a city where the king had a second palace for when he was not in Samaria. Naboth owned a vineyard that sat next to the palace grounds.

**2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.** This seems like a reasonable offer but Naboth was a man trying to hold on to the law of God.

**3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.** {JF&B} “In persisting in his refusal, Naboth was not [motivated] by any feelings of disloyalty or disrespect to the king, but solely from a conscientious regard to the divine law, which, for important reasons, had prohibited the sale of a paternal inheritance [Le 25:23 Nu 36:7]; or if, through extreme poverty or debt, an assignation of it to another was unavoidable, the conveyance was made on the condition of its being redeemable at any time [Le 25:25-27]; at all events, of its reverting at the jubilee to the owner [Le 25:28]. In short, it could not be alienated from the family, and it was on this ground that Naboth (1Ki 21:3) refused to comply with the king’s demand.” {MH} “[Naboth] seems to have been a conscientious man, who would rather hazard the king’s displeasure than offend God, and probably was one of the 7,000 that had not bowed the knee to Baal, for which, it may be, Ahab owed him a grudge.”

**4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. NLT So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth’s answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!** What a cowardly, spineless, wimp of a man! This is the same attitude we saw out of Ahab at the end of the prior chapter – angry and sullen (brooding). {AC} “Poor soul! He was lord over ten-twelfths of the land, and became miserable because he could not get a poor man’s vineyard added to all that he possessed!”

**5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? NLT “What in the world is the matter?” his wife, Jezebel, asked him. “What has made you so upset that you are not eating?”** This is the only time in the Scripture where you’ll see any type of concern for others from Jezebel. However, this concern is only a mask for the opportunity for sin.

**6** *And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.* A real man would have been ashamed to give such a sniveling answer.

**7** *And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.* **NLT** *“Are you the king of Israel or not?” Jezebel asked. “Get up and eat and don’t worry about it. I’ll get you Naboth’s vineyard!”* Jezebel rebuked Ahab but for the wrong reason. Ahab was coveting Naboth’s vineyard. It was no longer a business transaction; it was the lust of his heart. Because he could not get his lust fulfilled, he was moody and childish in his actions.

**8** *So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.* {MH} *“Nothing but mischief is to be expected when Jezebel enters into the story—that cursed woman.”*

**9** *And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:* {MacArthur} *“To call an assembly for solemn fasting implied that a disaster threatened the people that could be averted only if they would humble themselves before the Lord and remove any person whose sin had brought God’s judgment upon them.”* What a hypocrite! Jezebel doesn’t even believe in God but she uses His tools and His methods. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Saints are sometimes deceived because the devil uses God’s tools and God’s methods against us. We MUST really know God.** She works just like the devil because she is full of the devil. While calling this fast, Naboth was placed in a position of prominence perhaps to call attention to him.

**10** *And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.* **NLT** *Find two scoundrels who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.* Look how she uses the Law of Moses against Naboth! She not only wants to carry out her treachery, she wants to discredit God while doing it.

**11** *And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.*

**12** *They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.* **13** *And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.* {JF&B} *“Cursing God and cursing the king are mentioned in the law (Ex 22:28) as offenses closely connected, the king of Israel being the earthly representative of God in His kingdom.”* The treachery has been carried out and an innocent man is dead. God did not intervene in this situation but God will not let this go unpunished.

**14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.** 2 Kings 9:26 says that his sons were also stoned. Naboth and his posterity were wiped out to satisfy the lust of this sinful man.

**15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.** {JF&B} “Naboth’s execution having been announced, and his family being involved in the same fatal sentence (2Ki 9:26), his property became forfeited to the crown.” The commentators bring out why the sons were killed – now there could be no claim against the property so it became the property of the state. Now Ahab has his vineyard.

**SAINTS’ QUESTION:** What price are you willing to pay to maintain your holiness before God? Will you pay Naboth’s price with his own blood and the blood of his children?

**16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.** The commentators say that Ahab was back in Samaria, the capital city, and left there to go to Jezreel to take possession of Naboth’s vineyard. (Jezreel was about 25 miles northwest of Samaria.)

**17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.** As one commentator said, this must have been an ominous sight for Ahab.

Elijah represented every failure he had experienced in his kingdom. He suffered greatly because of the boldness of this man. He is excited about his ill-gotten gain and there is Elijah waiting for him in the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

**19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.** {McGee} “Remember that God has said, ‘Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’ (Gal. 6:7). If you and I could speak with men from the past—whether they were God’s men or Satan’s—they would tell us that this is an immutable law of God; it cannot be changed. Jacob found out the truth of this law. Pharaoh of Egypt, who killed the little Hebrew boys, thought he got by with his crime, but one day he found that **his** firstborn was dead. David committed an awful sin, but he did not get by with it. The same thing he did came back to him. Saul of Tarsus was a leader in the stoning of Stephen, but there came a day in Asia Minor, at Antioch of Pisidia, when he was stoned and left for dead.”

**20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.** Notice that Elijah did not contradict the words of Ahab. Ahab asked, “Have you found me, my enemy?” and Elijah answered, “Yes, your enemy has found you.” Does not even the New Testament tell us that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Yes, Elijah is his enemy because of his sin. Ahab

was “sold out” to sin. JF&B said that he allowed sin to have the complete mastery over him. He was without restraint.

*21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, 22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. 23 And of 3 also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. NLT The LORD is going to bring disaster to you and sweep you away. He will not let a single one of your male descendants, slave or free alike, survive in Israel! 22 He is going to destroy your family as he did the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and the family of Baasha son of Ahijah, for you have made him very angry and have led all of Israel into sin. 23 The LORD has also told me that the dogs of Jezreel will eat the body of your wife, Jezebel, at the city wall. 24 The members of your family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures.*

The Word of the Lord was plainly given and plainly understood. (I added the emphasis to point out the horror of this prophecy.) Not only was the family of Ahab to be destroyed, they were not to experience the solemnity of funerals but their bodies would become food for scavenging beasts.

*25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. 26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.* Ahab is pronounced as the worst king up to the time of the writing of this passage.

*27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.* Ahab was sorrowful but not completely. He did not restore the vineyard to the heirs of Naboth and we will see him hating a prophet in the next chapter. However, God is so gracious and merciful that a little move toward Him moves Him greatly.

*28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.* God postponed (but did not eliminate) the annihilation of Ahab's family. How much more might He have done if Ahab had fully and completely repented!

## Chapter 22

This chapter brings us to the end of this book and the end of the life of King Ahab. We are introduced, for the first time in this book, to Jehoshaphat. He is discussed in more detail in Chronicles but we can learn a great lesson from his unholy alliance with Ahab.

**1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.** This verse sets the stage for where we are in this chapter. If the book is in chronological order, which one disputes, then this chapter begins three years after chapter 20. In that time, Ahab has caused the death of Naboth and has repented in sackcloth and ashes. The Syrians have no quarrel with Israel; they have learned their lesson. Ahab will start this.

**2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.** {McGee} “What has happened that would cause a good king like Jehoshaphat to make an alliance with a king as wicked as Ahab? At this point it seems strange, but we will find out later that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. This was a case of the ‘sons of God marrying the daughters of men’; that is, a boy with a godly heritage married a girl with a very wicked one. And the wicked influence prevailed. When the believer and the unbeliever get married, my friend, you can always be sure that the believer is going to have trouble.” Jehoshaphat was a great king, as pronounced by the Scriptures. Unfortunately, at this stage in his life, he is weak in his resolve. He loves the Lord but he doesn’t want to “rock the boat.” For this reason, he has allowed his son to marry into this wicked household and now fellowships with a man that not only does not love God, but also, according to the last chapter, has caused Israel to sin. {MH} “But, though he was a godly man, his temper was too easy, which betrayed him into snares and inconveniences.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** “Living right” does not only have to do with how you live, it also has to do with what you stand for and who you associate with.

**3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?** This city, known as Ramoth-Gilead, was one of the chief cities in the tribe of Gad (in the very northern part of the kingdom). Syrian had taken it from Israel many years before. Remember that the Syrian king had promised, because Ahab had spared his life, to restore it. Ahab sinned in sparing the king and the king sinned against Ahab in not fulfilling his pledge. Now Ahab is faced with having to take back what is already his. This was all caused by Ahab’s disobedience.

**4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.** There’s almost no other way to put it than this – **Ahab was a jerk!** Jehoshaphat came to visit, to deal with family matters, and matters of state. Now he’s been “put on the spot” to make a decision about going to war. {McGee} “This was not Jehoshaphat’s fight anyway. Gilead did not belong to him—it belonged to Ahab, and it was Ahab’s quarrel, not his.” The reason that Ramoth-Gilead was not Ahab’s was due to his sin, not Jehoshaphat’s.

*5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.*

**NIV** *But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, “First seek the counsel of the LORD.”*

Jehoshaphat hasn't completely lost his mind. He knows what must be done before such an undertaking. Who knows how things might have turned out if he had done this BEFORE he even came to visit Ahab? {MH} “[Wherever] a good man goes he desires to take God along with him, and will acknowledge him in all his ways, ask leave of him, and look up to him for success.”

*6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.* {MH} “Unity is not always the mark of a true church and a true ministry. Here were 400 men that prophesied with one mind and one mouth, and yet all in an error.”

**SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** After we have asked God what to do, we must have the spiritual discernment necessary to make sure that this is the voice of God. No matter what the flesh desires to do, even for good, we must have the mind of God and we must condition ourselves to pursue this mind regardless of the outcome.

*7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?* {McGee} “Jehoshaphat wants to know the mind of the Lord, and he suspects that they are not getting it through these false prophets. He has a real spiritual discernment, and so he asks, ‘Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?’” The purpose of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is to lead us to ask such questions. But even without the Holy Ghost, the New Testament believer must have at least as much spiritual sensitivity as Jehoshaphat. He lived in the Old Testament before the Holy Ghost was given but the grace of God would not allow him to move forward in this error without tugging at his spirit that something was not right with these prophets.

*8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Amplified Bible [Ahab] king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good for me, but evil. Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say that.* There are a lot of things happening in this seemingly insignificant verse.

First, Ahab's heart is revealed. He has called for the prophets but not ALL the prophets. Where were these men when he killed Naboth? Where were these men when Syria came up against him? Ahab only called the ones that he liked, the ones that had a history of telling him good things.

**SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Beware that you don't pursue after ministries that tell good things about your situation and good things only. There is always room for improvement. Every trouble we end up in is not just because of the devil. Many times, it's because of us.

Second, we get an understanding of what the Scripture has already said: **Genesis 4:7a** *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **The blessings of God and the favor of God are for those that obey God.** Ahab not only had a history of disobedience, the Scripture said this about him: **1 Kings 21:25** *But there was NONE like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.* Should such a man as this expect kindness from the Lord?

Third, we now see what has become of Micaiah. If you recall, the commentators say that this was the prophet of chapter 20 who rebuked Ahab for letting the Syrian king escape with his life. {MH} *“We may suppose that this was he that reproved him for his clemency to Benhadad and for so doing was cast into prison, where he had lain these three years. This was the reason why Ahab knew where to find him so readily. But his imprisonment had not excluded him from divine visits: the spirit of prophecy continued with him there. He was bound, but the word of the Lord was not.”* Micaiah paid quite a price to deliver that Word, not only before but as we see now, after he obeyed also. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **When the righteous rule, the people rejoice.**

Fourth, on a good note, we see part of the heart of Jehoshaphat. He is a good king, one spoken of in the same manner as David (**2 Chronicles 17:3-4** *And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; 4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.*). As a good king, he wants to speak evil of no man. He mildly (too mildly) rebukes Ahab for speaking evil of Micaiah. Even when he recognized these prophets as false, he did not rail against them but simply asked, “Is there another?”

**9** *Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.* {MH} *“Jehoshaphat gave too gentle a reproof to Ahab for expressing his indignation against a faithful prophet. Such sinners as Ahab must be rebuked sharply. However he so far yielded to the reproof that, for fear of provoking Jehoshaphat to break off from his alliance with him, he orders Micaiah to be sent for with all speed.”*

**10** *And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.* This was to be a show, a spectacle, which was started by the kings. They have put on their royal attire to hear from the prophets. Because they have started this show, the prophets oblige with a show of their own.

**11** *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. 12* *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand.* Zedekiah was the ringleader or spokesman of the false prophets. He was

especially expressive in showing forth his “Word from God.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** “Style” has nothing to do with the Word of God.

*13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. 14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.* {McGee} “The messenger that brought forth Micaiah said, ‘I’d just like to put a bug in your ear: all of the prophets are prophesying something good. They are telling the king to fight because he will win. That is what he wants to hear. You should join with them. Then you could get back into the king’s favor. Here’s your chance, Micaiah.’ And, I suppose, this guard thought he was helping Micaiah.” We need men and women of God in this day who will have the character to stand up and say whatever God says, regardless of the outcome.

*15 So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. NLT When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, “Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead or not?” And Micaiah replied, “Go right ahead! The LORD will give the king a glorious victory!”* {McGee} “Notice what Micaiah says to the kings. To him it is a humorous scene, so he joins in just for fun. I think he was as sarcastic as any man could be—just as sarcastic as Elijah could be. Immediately the king saw that he was being ridiculed.” All of the commentators agree that Micaiah was ridiculing Ahab and just giving him back what he wanted to hear.

*16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?* This is quite a revealing verse about Ahab. Though he is a man of great evil, he has enough spiritual sensitivity to know that this is NOT the Word of the Lord. Dr. McGee went so far as to say that Ahab KNEW that these were false prophets and that Micaiah had never been on the side of the false prophets. It also looks as if Micaiah was a continual thorn in Ahab’s side only giving the Word of the Lord to him under threat.

*17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.* {MacArthur} “Micaiah’s point was that Israel’s shepherd, King Ahab, would be killed and his army scattered.” Obviously, according to the next verse, Ahab understood this perfectly.

*18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?* But Ahab pressed him to tell him exactly what the Lord said after he saw that his agreement with the other prophets was not the truth. So many people press for the truth and then when they receive it, they can’t handle it. Because Ahab pressed him, Micaiah will not only tell him the truth but also the whole story behind the truth.

In the next few verses, we are going to receive a marvelous revelation into the working of God, at least at this time. This revelation is particularly fascinating when you consider that Micaiah received this while sitting in prison for a crime he did not commit. In the midst of that, God did not forget him.

*19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.* This conference can be compared to **Job 1:6** *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.* Job is presented here to show that this was not an unusual occurrence but has other Scripture to back it up.

*20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.* Obviously, not only Satan is present but other demons.

*21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. 22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.* I don't believe that God was looking for an answer to the "Ahab problem" but was doing as He does now, keeping demonic spirits in check. God already had Ahab destined for judgment from the word of His prophet. Now the stage is being set to move him toward the place of destruction.

There is some controversy among the commentators regarding the last few verses. Was this a parable, as one said, or was this a dream that Micaiah had after receiving the Word of God? To both of these questions, I can only offer what the Scripture says in verse 19 – *hear thou therefore the word of the Lord*. Micaiah presents this, not as a parable, but as the Word of God. Some also don't believe that God would work with such a spirit but notice this verse: **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12** *And for this cause GOD shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* Let us therefore return our focus to the words of Micaiah, *hear thou therefore the word of the Lord*.

A final thought for those that are "squeamish" about the idea of God causing death is found in the words of the Lord Jesus: **Luke 12:5** *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.* The **NLT** makes it very plain: *But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill people and then throw them into hell.*

*23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.* Micaiah stands up and accuses these 400 men of being lying prophets. This is quite an accusation. **Deuteronomy 18:20** *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that*

*shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.* Micaiah is saying that these 400 men are worthy of death. (Actually, if they had obeyed Elijah and come with the 450 prophets of Baal, they would already be dead by this time. All agree that these “prophets” are really the prophets of the golden calf worship system.)

**24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? NLT Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. “When did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?” he demanded.** Obviously, Zedekiah did not appreciate being called a lying prophet. No one should.

**25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.** In other words, you’ll find out what the truth is when you’re hiding because you’re the one that encouraged the king to go to his death.

**26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king’s son; 27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.** Where is Jehoshaphat during this persecution? He is the one that asked for another word and now he lets this man go to be afflicted without saying a word! **REPEATED SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** “Living right” does not only have to do with how you live, it also has to do with what you stand for and who you associate with.

**28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you. NIV Micaiah declared, “If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” Then he added, “Mark my words, all you people!”** Micaiah wisely added that last part to what he said. Ahab is condemning him to a life sentence because Ahab is not coming back. Micaiah is making an appeal for his future freedom.

**29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.** This is a sad verse especially for Jehoshaphat. He knows better! He asked for a better Word, received a better Word, and now goes out to go against that better Word. This makes no sense at all. If he had just thought a little, he could see that if the leader of this force will not come back, what would become of him?

**30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.** With the prior verse being a sad verse for Jehoshaphat, this has to be a stupid verse related to Jehoshaphat. He just heard that Ahab is going to die but he allows Ahab to convince him to go in his royal attire while Ahab hides out. Wouldn’t the average person think that the prophecy might fall on them instead? But notice how Matthew Henry puts this occasion: “[Ahab] pretended to do honor to Jehoshaphat, and to compliment him with the sole command of the army in this action. He shall

*direct and give orders, and Ahab will serve as a soldier under him. But he intended, 1. To make a liar of a good prophet. Thus he hoped to elude the danger, and so to defeat the threatening, as if, by disguising himself, he could escape the divine [knowledge] and the judgments that pursued him. 2. To make a fool of a good king, whom he did not cordially love, because he was one that adhered to God and so condemned his [sinful state].”*

**31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.** Remember the “kindness” that Ahab showed to this man back in chapter 20? Actually, it was not kindness but disobedience to God. God knew the heart of this man and knew that he would not just go away after a defeat. Notice that he has rebuilt his army to the same strength and has those 32 captains again. This establishes this principle: **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: You cannot negotiate with the devil. You must have an answer from God!**

**32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.** {MH} “Those that associate with evil doers are in danger of sharing in their plagues.”

**33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.** How did they figure out that Jehoshaphat was not the king of Israel? Perhaps one of the men told them but would they believe them? I believe that the grace of God put in their hearts that this was not the man that they were seeking.

**34 And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. Amplified Bible But a certain man drew a bow at a venture and smote [Ahab] the king of Israel between the joints of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn around and carry me out of the army, for I am wounded.** Ahab tried to hide from God’s judgment. Why else would he disguise himself and set up Jehoshaphat to be killed? In spite of that, God saw him and guided a random arrow toward him and hit him at the right spot between his armor striking a fatal wound.

**35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. 36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.** The Word of the Lord through Micaiah has come to pass – Ahab is dead and the sheep are scattered. The Word of the Lord through Elijah is being set up to come to pass as the chariot fills with Ahab’s blood.

**37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. 38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed**

*his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.* The fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy in chapter 21.

*39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

*40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.* Ahab left behind two legacies – an ivory house and a black heart. Which do you think caused him the most grief in eternity?

*41 And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.* Jehoshaphat started out with a spirit of compromise. He yet allowed the people to engage in the lascivious “worship” that went on in the groves. After his encounter with Ahab, according to Second Chronicles, he became more intent on following fully after God.

*44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.* How did he make peace with this awful man? When we compare Scripture to Scripture, we see the answer: **2 Chronicles 18:1** *Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.* There's a key point missing in the King James Version translation that shows up in all of the other translations. **NIV** *Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor, and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage.* Jehoshaphat allowed one of his sons to marry into the family with Ahab. This was probably an arranged marriage for political reasons and caused the peace of this verse. Jehoshaphat sacrificed the soul of his child to make peace with this man! (When you read of his son, Jehoram, you'll find that he walked in the ways of the house of Ahab.)

But why did he make peace with this man? The more I meditated upon it, the more obvious the answer became – Jehoshaphat actually LIKED Ahab and his family. A prophet even rebuked him for this very thing. **2 Chronicles 19:2** *And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and LOVE THEM THAT HATE THE LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Watch your associations!**

*45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* See Second Chronicles 17 – 20.

**46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.** His father, Asa, was also a good man but, like his son, showed a pattern of incomplete obedience. He didn't completely eradicate sin in the land.

**47 There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.** {MH} “[Jehoshaphat] put a deputy, or viceroy, in Edom, so that the kingdom was tributary to him, and therein the prophecy concerning Esau and Jacob was fulfilled, that the elder should serve the younger.”

**48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.** This book does not tell the whole story of what happened here but Second Chronicles brings out more information. **2 Chronicles 20:37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish. NLT Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat. He said, “Because you have allied yourself with King Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy your work.” So the ships met with disaster and never put out to sea.** Time, energy, and money were wasted because Jehoshaphat would not obey. First he made an alliance with wicked Ahab and now he tries an alliance with his wicked son.

**49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.** Finally, he gets it. {McGee} “The son of Ahab who had come to the throne in the northern kingdom wanted Jehoshaphat to join him in a business deal—it would be a peaceful mission this time—but Jehoshaphat would not compromise again. He had learned his lesson.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Our trials not only work patience but they should instruct us in righteousness.**

**50 And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.** Jehoshaphat died and was succeeded by his son Jehoram, the son-in-law of Ahab and Jezebel.

**51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: 53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.** The son of Ahab was just as bad as his father. He will not get away as nicely as his father for God has already prophesied his doom. This will begin in Second Kings.

*May the Lord add a blessing to the reading of His Word!*

*May 14, 2004*



