

**GOD'S MESSAGES
BIBLE
COMMENTARY
SERIES**

VOLUME 7

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8).

**COMMENTARY
ON
THE BOOKS
OF
1 & 2 KINGS**

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**The Book Of  
1 Kings**



# Introduction To 1 and 2 Kings

## The Author:

The author of First and Second Kings is not identified beyond question. There are two suggestions which are more probable. One is that Ezra is the author. The other is that Jeremiah is the author. Nor is it true that we can use the term "author." It is more accurate to speak of a compiler than an author. It is beyond doubt that whoever compiled these two books used a number of sources. Among these sources is the "Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah, the "Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, and the "Book of Jasher."

Ezra has been suggested as the compiler. Adam Clarke gives the following reasons for supporting this view.

1. The uniformity of style indicates a single author.
2. The compiler had access to ancient documents, which he often used.
3. The books were written during or after the Babylonian captivity.
4. The writer was not contemporary with the facts which he relates.
5. The writer was either a priest or a prophet.
6. The Jews consider Ezra to have been the one who collected, and arranged the books of the entire Old Testament.

Jeremiah has been suggested because there are several chapters in his work which are similar to some found in First and Second Kings.

There are still others who hold that there were multiple compilers. I will not take the time to present the numerous arguments for multiple versus single compilers.

### **The Date:**

Just as the compiler is not certain, the date of the compilation is also not exact. The books do record the release of Jehoiachin from prison. This took place in 561 or 562 B.C. The books could not have been written before that time. Since the return from Babylonian captivity is not recorded, it is almost positive that it was written before 536 B.C. since that is the date of the return, and that event would surely have been included.

It is also true that certain facts concerning the temple are stated in I Kings 8:8. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem occurred in 587 B.C. This might lead one to believe the book could have been written as early as that date. However, the compiler may have simply written what was recorded in the source which he used. Putting the above facts together we conclude that both the author and the date of compiling are only probabilities. We dare not make a certain identification of the compiler, or make more than a fairly certain range of possible dates.

### **Nature of the Books:**

The books of I and II Kings were originally a single book. This is also true of I and II Samuel as well as I and II Chronicles. The division of these books into





two was probably the result of the difference in the space required for the writing of the Hebrew and the Greek languages. The written Hebrew did not contain vowels. The Greek did contain vowels. This meant that the Greek consumed considerably more space than the Hebrew. When the Greek Septuagint Version was made from the Hebrew, the scrolls would have become less manageable. By dividing them, the scrolls were easier to handle.

At first the books of I and II Samuel were known as First and Second Kings while those we refer to as I and II Kings were known as III and IV Kings. The books of Kings cover the history of Israel from the reign of Solomon until the release of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon about 561 B.C. Thus the time period covered is about four hundred years, from 970 to 561 B.C.

The books are intended to demonstrate the fact that Jehovah is the Ruler of the universe He created. He is a jealous God and will reward those who serve Him faithfully, while He will punish those who ignore Him, or who worship false gods. Both Israel and the surrounding nations felt the sting of His anger when idolatry commanded their adoration.

In addition, we find that lessons are presented as to God's faithfulness in His promises. When He prophesies the downfall of a king or a nation, that king or nation will fall. If He prophesies that the seed of David will rule forever, that promise will be kept.

## **Conditions in Israel and surrounding Nations:**

During the period of time covered by I and II Kings, Israel moved to the heights of glory under the reign of

Solomon. David had desired to build a temple for God. He was told he was not to build it. His son would be the builder. David laid up much treasure which Solomon then used to construct that magnificent wonder of the world.

God had granted Solomon great wisdom. He made fine decisions in the early portion of his reign. To this very day that temple is known as Solomon's temple. His name has been etched in history. In his latter days, he failed to make use of the wisdom he had been granted. He married many foreign wives, multiplied horses and chariots, and amassed a tremendous treasure house of silver and gold. God had forbidden all three of these actions.

From the last part of Solomon's reign the nation began to deteriorate. It became idolatrous. It became morally corrupt. It became politically divided and finally divided, splitting into two nations, one in the north and another in the south. It was taken into Assyrian captivity and also into Babylonian captivity. God brought back only a remnant of the once glorious nation when it returned from the captivities.

The nations surrounding Israel were often bitter foes. Egypt had long harbored an attitude of hatred from the time of the escape from bondage under the leadership of Moses. Edom and Moab had stood in the way of entrance into the promised land. This attitude also lingered for centuries.

The Philistines were defeated when Israel took control of the land. They shared in the bitter feelings. The Ammonites and the Syrians attacked Israel when they felt there was an opportunity to vanquish them. All of these animosities can be seen boiling up time after time, especially when Israel weakened themselves

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by directing their own ways rather than allowing the Lord to rule them.

A Brief Outline of I and II Kings:

- I. Solomon becomes King (I Kings Ch. 1-2).
- II. The reign of Solomon (I Kings Ch. 3-11).
- III. The kingdom Divided (I Kings Ch. 12-16).
- IV. The Work of Elijah (I Kings Ch. 17-22).
- V. The Work of Elisha (II Kings Ch. 1-13).
- VI. The Fall of Israel (II Kings Ch. 14-17).
- VII. The Fall of Judah (II Kings Ch. 18-25).



Chapter 1

Some feel that this chapter fits better with the material in 2 Samuel than it does with that of I Kings. It closes out the life of King David and relates the difficulties in the transfer of the rulership of God's people from David to Solomon.

This is a sorry tale of the hunger for power that some persons display. It is not limited to the time of David and Solomon. It is just as real thousands of years later as it was then. Dear reader, these are not just fairy tales. Take heed and cast your lot with the God of heaven. Let us have just as little of conflict as possible.

1 Kings 1:1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

David was not old in comparison with those of the patriarchal age. Neither was he as old as others who reigned in times closer to his own. He had gone through much tribulation and was aged in body more than in years. He had begun to reign at the age of thirty. He reigned for forty years, which would mean he was about seventy years of age at the time. According to the book of Psalms he suffered from physical ailments.

By this time he had deteriorated until he was near death and was unable to maintain his body temperature. His attendants covered him with bed clothing, but it was not sufficient.

1 Kings 1:2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a

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**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.**

Those who were tending to him suggested a means of overcoming the problem. If anything could remedy his condition a beautiful young virgin could do it. Bathsheba was now many years older than at the time David saw her bathing on a rooftop. There was a need for a replacement. Perhaps if the right damsel was found, she could light a fire in his body.

**1 Kings 1:3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.**

This would require one of the most beautiful young women who could be found in the entire kingdom. They searched diligently until they found Abishag, then brought her to the bed of David.

**1 Kings 1:4 And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.**

Abishag was extremely attractive. If anyone could stimulate the king, she should have been able. She did everything possible, but David did not respond. When the verse tells us David knew her not, it is not saying he had mentally deteriorated until he did not know who she was. It is saying his physical condition had deteriorated until he was unable to have intimate sexual relations with her.



**1 Kings 1:5 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.**

Adonijah was the oldest living son of David. Seeing that his father was near death, he decided to take the throne of the kingdom and begin ruling even before David died. Normally the oldest son of a king would assume the throne upon his father's death.

Adonijah decided to make an impression on his countrymen by putting on a display of his importance. He commanded chariots and horsemen to go before him, along with fifty men running on foot. Many in the kingdom would have been highly impressed with this parade.

**1 Kings 1:6 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.**

Adonijah did not feel that his father would object to what he was doing. He was a spoiled child who had gotten his way consistently in the past. Why would it be different now? All he had to do was let his will be made known and all should go well.

Amnon and Absalom had both met death before this. They were no longer a part of the picture. Solomon was younger than he. Adonijah was also a very handsome man. His sick father could hardly object. Adonijah could rule as a co-regent until David passed away. Then the kingdom would be his alone.

**1 Kings 1:7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.**

Joab had been commander of the military forces under David. Adonijah was shrewd enough to know he needed the power Joab could add to his claim.

He also recognized the importance of having a priest of high authority on his side. Therefore he enlisted Abiathar to help him. With a general and a priest, plus his own advantages of age and good looks, how could his plan to usurp the throne fail?

**1 Kings 1:8 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.**

Though Adonijah had enlisted some very prestigious men, he did not persuade all of them to follow him in the uprising. Zadok did not follow him. Nathan the prophet, who had been very much concerned with David's welfare, did not accept Adonijah. There were also military men who rejected him. This could lead to serious division if he did succeed in taking the throne.

**1 Kings 1:9 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:**

Adonijah decided to plan a banquet and make a general announcement of his plan during the feast. Many

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have recognized this as an effective way of presenting a major political decision. Adonijah was not a fool. He made a special point of inviting David's sons and the servants of the king. This was quite an array of prestige and power. There was reason to believe it had excellent chances to secure the throne for this greedy man.

1 Kings 1:10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

Adonijah was careful not to invite those who could have caused resistance by declining his invitation. He knew very well that there was a strong possibility Nathan, Benaiah and Solomon would not be in favor with him. It was best that he not take the chance of having them reject him.

1 Kings 1:11 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?

Nathan the prophet was wise enough to recognize the movement for what it was, a plot to take the throne. He may have known of a promise David had made to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon that her son would be appointed king after his death. He made contact with Bathsheba and informed her that Adonijah was already acting as if he was king. Nathan knew David was unaware of what was going on.

Any promise David had made to Bathsheba is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. There is a possibility that Nathan was doing some guesswork. Then again,

he may have known of such a promise because of his closeness to David.

1 Kings 1:12 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.

Nathan realized the almost certain fate which awaited both Bathsheba and Solomon if Adonijah was successful in gaining control. He requested that Bathsheba follow his instructions in order to protect their own lives.

1 Kings 1:13 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?

Nathan told Bathsheba to go into David's bedroom and ask David if he did not remember a promise he had made that Solomon would be his successor. If Solomon was to be the replacement for his father, why was it that Adonijah was already acting as if he was king?

This would prepare the way for Nathan to enter immediately after Bathsheba had left and support the truth of what she was saying.

1 Kings 1:14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

David was apparently still in control of his senses and was capable of remembering any promise he had

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made, but just to make certain Nathan wished to add his own testimony to that of Bathsheba. The reader will remember that “In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be confirmed.”

**1 Kings 1:15 And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.**

Bathsheba took Nathan’s advice and went in to see David. Abishag had not been dismissed as a result of her failure to excite David’s passion and thus give him heat. She was still serving him as a maidservant. We cannot help but wonder what went through the mind of Bathsheba as she saw the beautiful young Abishag taking care of the one whom she had attracted with her body when she was young.

**1 Kings 1:16 And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou?**

Bowing was a means of expressing subjection. Bathsheba was acting as any loyal subject of the king would behave upon coming into his presence.

David knew she had something on her mind and therefore asked her what it was that she desired.

**1 Kings 1:17 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.**

There are some who doubt the promise to Bathsheba had ever been made. We do not agree. David still seems to have been alert enough to recall such an important agreement. Bathsheba did precisely what Nathan had suggested. The king was reminded of his promise that Solomon, Bathsheba's son would be the next king of Israel.

**1 Kings 1:18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not:**

Since David had been confined to his bed for some time, he was unaware of the major activities which were happening, Adonijah's actions were news to him.

**1 Kings 1:19 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.**

Bathsheba laid out the events in clear terms. Kings very often held banquets in which they killed large numbers of livestock and invited prominent persons to feast together. That was precisely what Adonijah had done. He had invited a very important priest to bring a religious tone to his movement. He had invited the captain of Israel's military forces to his feast. But, very significantly, he had not invited Solomon. This should tell David something!

**1 Kings 1:20 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.**

Bathsheba concluded that David had need to tell the people whom he had chosen to reign after his death. The people knew he was very sick. They were waiting for an announcement from him. There was a need to act rapidly.

**1 Kings 1:21 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.**

She made it plain that unless David did pronounce Solomon to be his successor, Adonijah would succeed in his efforts to take the throne. Then Bathsheba and Solomon would be considered as rebels. They would be considered guilty of the very thing Adonijah was planning.

**1 Kings 1:22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.**

Even while Bathsheba was still talking with David, Nathan the prophet entered the room. From verse twenty-eight it appears that as soon as Nathan appeared, Bathsheba left David's presence..

**1 Kings 1:23 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.**

Nathan added his words of support to that which Bathsheba had told David. As Bathsheba had done, Nathan showed his subjection and loyalty to the king by bowing down before him.

**1 Kings 1:24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?**

Nathan gave David the same information which Bathsheba had just related.

**1 Kings 1:25 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.**

Nathan added that the people were already calling out "God save king Adonijah." The matter needed to be attended to quickly.

**1 Kings 1:26 But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.**

**1 Kings 1:27 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's question here is what is called a rhetorical question. He knew the answer. He knew David had not agreed to Adonijah's succession to the throne of the

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kingdom. With the words of Nathan added to those of Bathsheba, David was persuaded he must act.

1 Kings 1:28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

David commanded that Bathsheba be brought back into the room where he lay. She had wisely allowed Nathan to state his case separately from her own.

1 Kings 1:29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

David declared before God that he was grateful for all the providential care he had received at the hand of the Lord. Just as surely as God had attended to his needs in the past, he was calling upon Him to give him further support now.

1 Kings 1:30 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.

David assured Bathsheba that the promise he had made that her son Solomon would sit upon the throne after he was unable to continue would be honored. Solomon would be announced as the next king.

Nor would the announcement wait until it was too late. It would be made that very day, even while Adonijah's feast was still continuing.

1 Kings 1:31 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.

Bathsheba was very appreciative. She bowed before David and called out God's blessings upon him. She desired that he live forever. Of course this was only a common saying among the subjects of a king. Bathsheba knew David did not have but a short time to live. She was telling him of her appreciation for his response to the information she and Nathan had presented to him.

1 Kings 1:32 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 did not waste time. He followed the same path that Adonijah had taken. He made certain that what he was about to do had the support of a priest, a prophet and a military leader. These men appeared before him at his call and awaited instructions.

1 Kings 1:33 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:

The three were told to call upon the king's servants to prepare a parade in honor of Solomon. They were to bring the king's mule for Solomon to ride in the parade. Only royalty was allowed to ride upon mules. Horses were for horsemen to ride in the time of war. By riding



upon the king's own mule, Solomon would have proof of the approval of David.

The Gihon mentioned here was not the river Gihon. It was a spring which was associated with anointings of priests, prophets and kings.

1 Kings 1:34 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.

Zadok and Nathan were to show their loyalty to Solomon by anointing him as king. They were to call the attention of the people to the announcement by the blowing of trumpets and a shout, "God save king Solomon."

1 Kings 1:35 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.

Solomon was then to lead the group to the throne from which he would be ruling. It was to be made absolutely certain that David had chosen Solomon to succeed him as ruler of Israel and Judah.

1 Kings 1:36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too.

1 Kings 1:37 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.

Benaiah gave a hearty amen to the words of David. The word “amen” means “be it so.” Benaiah assured David that the three of them would be with Solomon, and they prayed that the Lord would be with him also.

Some would not take well to the wish for their successor to become greater than they had been. This did not seem to bother David at all. What did happen was that with respect to riches and power, Solomon did outdo his father. But in loyalty to the will of God, he fell short.

1 Kings 1:38 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.

The Cherethites and the Pelethites were guardians of the king’s safety. Along with Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah, this group made it certain that this was not a movement unknown to the king. Solomon was placed upon the mule which David had ridden and the procession moved toward the tabernacle.

1 Kings 1:39 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.

When they reached the tabernacle Zadok took a horn filled with anointing oil and anointed Solomon as coregent with his father David. This was not uncommon. When one in authority was no longer able to tend to



the affairs for which he was responsible, a coregent assumed the responsibilities until the death of the former individual and then became the sole ruler at the death of the former.

As Solomon was anointed, a blast of the trumpets was made. Those who were in support of Solomon called upon the Lord to save king Solomon.

1 Kings 1:40 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.

Adonijah's feast suddenly became a deserted area. The people were convinced that he was not to be ruler, but that Solomon was. The sound of instruments such as the flute were added to the blast of the trumpet. There was a great rejoicing among the people. The sound was so great that it was described as disturbing the earth itself.

1 Kings 1:41 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?

When Adonijah and his guests heard the sound of the ceremony which was taking place at the anointing of Solomon, it created quite a disturbance in their activities. They were just about to end their feast when they heard the sound of the trumpet.

Joab was a military man. He immediately wondered what was going on. Was there some kind of an uprising?

Much of the city seemed to be in an uproar. It would be his responsibility to quell any riotous behavior.

1 Kings 1:42 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.

Even while Joab was asking the question about the commotion, Abiathar's son Jonathan came to them. Adonijah trusted Jonathan and felt that he must be bringing good news. He was in for quite a surprise.

1 Kings 1:43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

1 Kings 1:44 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:

1 Kings 1:45 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.

1 Kings 1:46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

The verses above are only a repetition of that which has already been noted. There is no need for further comment upon them.

1 Kings 1:47 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.

Abiathar informed Adonijah that David knew all about the proceedings. Those who were faithful to him had reported matters. The king had been told that his servants desired the new king to be even greater than David had been. This had pleased David to the extent that he had offered thanks to God.

1 Kings 1:48 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.

In fact, David was so pleased that he had honored God for having provided Solomon to follow him on the throne. He was particularly happy that he had lived long enough to see what was to take place with his own eyes.

1 Kings 1:49 And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

Adonijah's guests figure out very quickly that they were in the wrong company. They could lose their lives for having supported Adonijah in his drive to become king. They wasted no time in dispersing and going on their separate ways.

1 Kings 1:50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

Adonijah was terrified. He went to the altar of sacrifice and caught hold of the horns of the altar. This was an action which sometimes saved the lives of those who were guilty of serious crimes.

See Exodus 21:12-14.

Exo 21:12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

Exo 21:13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

Exo 21:14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

Adonijah was fearful for his very life. He fully expected that David or Solomon would command that he be executed.

1 Kings 1:51 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.

Adonijah sent men to plead with Solomon that his life not be taken. Solomon was to be told that Adonijah was ready to be subject to him if he would only spare his life.

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**1 Kings 1:52 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 was much more merciful than many another would have been in his position. He replied that if Adonijah would act according to his promise and proved himself to be loyal, he had nothing to fear. If the contrary proved to be true, he would be sentenced to death.

**1 Kings 1:53 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.**

Solomon is now referred to in this verse as king. He sent word to Adonijah to present himself before Solomon. When he did so, Solomon commanded him to go to his own house. Some writers have pointed out that this had two possible meanings. First, it could mean that he was free to go his way. Second, it could also mean that he was to remain in his house and cease any further plotting.

## *Chapter 2*

In this chapter we find David charging Solomon with certain responsibilities related to those who had acted in opposition to the king during his reign. Solomon is placed on the throne and replacements are found for the priesthood and the military.

The chapter is most gory. It is difficult to admit that these are supposed to be the leaders of the people of the Living God.

**1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,**

David was now seventy years of age. Life had been far from easy. While most of the prominent men of his time and earlier had lived to be much older than this, David's body was worn out. His mind seems to have been in better shape than his body, yet he had also lived with the fact that he had committed two very serious sins in taking Bathsheba from her husband Uriah and then sending Uriah to his death on the battlefield.

**1 Kings 2:2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;**

It is said that there are only two sure things in life. They are death and taxes. The first part of the saying is quite true. Death is certain. See Romans 5:12 and Heb. 9:27.

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

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Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

David charged Solomon to be strong and show himself to be a man. This brings on the question of God's definition of a man. David had acted at times as a man should act. At other times he acted a bit more like an animal.

Man was created in the image of God. This means he is expected to love the good and hate the evil. He has been given a mind capable of making wise choices between the two. God defines good and evil. Man is to choose the good.

The thrust of David's charge to Solomon does recognize these truths. This becomes clear in the following verse.

1 Kings 2:3 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:

There were four responsibilities placed upon man by his Maker in order that he walk in God's ways.

1. He is to keep God's statutes. Statutes are laws. These laws are God's own, not those of man.
2. He is to keep God's commandments. God had given positive commands indicating what man is to do, and negative commands telling man what he is not to do.
3. He is to honor God's judgments. Judgments are decisions God has made as to man's having

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kept or ignored the commands.

4. Man is to respect the testimonies of God. The testimonies are those truths God has seen fit to pass down through time to explain what happens when men do right or wrong.

**1 Kings 2:4 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.**

God had assured David that He would cause his descendants to sit upon the throne of Israel forever, as long as they walked before Him in truth. Jesus Christ is called the Son of God, but he is also called the son of David. Christ shall reign forever.

**1 Kings 2:5 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.**

The mood of David changes right here. He sees being a man as standing tall in the face of those who would intimidate him. David had not forgotten the efforts various men had made to kill him or destroy his influence.



One of those who tried was Joab. Joab was responsible for the murder of two of his competitors for the top military position. One was Abner. The other was Amasa. This was not done during battle. It was done in time of peace. There was no excuse for his bloodthirsty actions. As a result, he carried the guilt of those deeds with him.

**1 Kings 2:6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.**

It was up to Solomon to see that Joab die a death of violence himself. Solomon must make up his own mind as to how and when this was to be done.

**1 Kings 2:7 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.**

When Absalom, David's own son, rose up against him Barzillai and his sons came to David's aid when he was being pursued by Absalom's men. The sons of Barzillai were to receive special favor because of their past friendship.

**1 Kings 2:8 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.**

David then turned his attention to Shimei. This man had cursed him and thrown stones at him. David had told Shemei he would not kill him by way of the sword. But he had not extended that promise beyond his own death. Solomon was to hold Shimei responsible for those past actions.

**1 Kings 2:9 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.**

Again, Solomon was credited with having enough judgment to determine just what action was to be taken. But David did expect Solomon to see that Shemei died a bloody death.

**1 Kings 2:10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.**

Thus we come to the end of the life of David. To sleep with his fathers probably means no more than that he joined them in the grave. The question as to the nature of the soul's existence between death and the judgment must be considered from a host of passages. It is a difficult question.

**1 Kings 2:11 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.**

Saul, David and Solomon all reigned for the same number of years. David had ruled in Hebron for seven



years, then reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem, making a total of forty.

**1 Kings 2:12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.**

The amount of time passing between David's death and the events of the following verses is not available. It is likely that there was a space of time between.

During that time Solomon's rule was consolidated. Nations which had been bold in attacking Israel during David's time became much more hesitant to do the same during Solomon's time. He grew both rich and powerful. He extended the territory to the greatest acreage Israel had yet dominated.

**1 Kings 2:13 And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.**

Adonijah should have learned his lesson by this time. Apparently he had not! He made another bold attempt to play for power. He came to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother and informed her that he had something he needed to say to her. When she asked if he had some type of grievance, he answered that he did not. He had come with peaceful motives.

**1 Kings 2:14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.**

Bathsheba should have known there was an ulterior motive in the mind of Adonijah. But believing he was

telling her the truth, she invited him to state his case.

**1 Kings 2:15 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.**

Adonijah reminded Bathsheba that there was a time when he had made a few decisions as if he sat upon the throne. Also, he was the oldest living descendant of David. Many of the people had been willing to accept him as the successor to David as king. Bathsheba knew how matters had changed and God had indicated Solomon was His choice as king.

**1 Kings 2:16 And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.**

Adonijah attempted to make Bathsheba believe that he was willing to accept being deprived of the throne. But there was just one thing he hoped she would help him to obtain. She believed him and told him to explain what it was.

**1 Kings 2:17 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.**

All Adonijah wanted was to have Abishag for his wife. If only Bathsheba would put in a word for him with her son Solomon, surely he would not deny him this one favor.

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The queen mother in this time and in this part of the world did exert a sizable influence in the affairs of the country. It was hardly as much as Adonijah reckoned. Adonijah had made a terrible mistake.

1 Kings 2:18 And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

Bathsheba saw no reason to deny Adonijah's request. She promised to speak to her son the king.

1 Kings 2:19 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.

Solomon was pleased to see his mother when she arrived in his presence. He respectfully bowed to her and invited her to take a seat at his right hand in order that they might converse with each other.

1 Kings 2:20 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.

Adonijah had told Bathsheba his request was not a major one. She now used nearly the same words as she relayed the request to the king. David had even told her he would see that she got a yes answer to her wish.

1 Kings 2:21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

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Bathsheba had no hint of the explosion this statement would bring about in the mind of her son. She had only asked Abishag's hand for Adonijah, David's half brother.

**1 Kings 2:22 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.**

Solomon quickly informed his mother that she was quite wrong about this being a small petition. What she was asking was that Adonijah be given permission to reach out for the throne again. This would not be just a simple request for Abishag as the wife of Adonijah. It would work to the advantage of Abiathar the priest and Joab the military man. What Adonijah had in mind was to turn the kingdom upside down and replace Solomon and his leaders with these old rivals.

**1 Kings 2:23 Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.**

Then with a passionate outburst and an oath before the God of heaven, Solomon promised to defeat the intentions of Adonijah and see that he was killed. He called upon Jehovah to punish him if he did not do just that.

**1 Kings 2:24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the**  
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throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

Solomon did not intend to delay his intention to see Adonijah dead. It was to take place that very day. God had promised him the kingdom. He was not about to turn it over to Adonijah.

1 Kings 2:25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

Benaiah had the same relationship with Solomon that Joab had held in the past. David sent Benaiah to kill Adonijah. One major political enemy was removed from the scene.

1 Kings 2:26 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.

David was not minded to kill Abiathar the priest. Abiathar had been high priest during David's reign. He had suffered some of the same trials David had suffered. Solomon decided he would only send Abiathar to his home in Anathoth where he could be watched. He had been entirely too close to Adonijah and must be restricted, though not killed.

1 Kings 2:27 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.

See First Samuel 2:27-36 for the prophecy delivered by Samuel against the descendants of Eli. Abiathar was a descendant of Eli.

1 Kings 2:28 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.

It did not take long for news of the death of Adonijah and the restriction of Abiathar to reach the ears of Joab. He was in panic that he was next in line for punishment. He did the best thing he knew to do as a defense. He ran to the altar and caught hold of its horns. Under certain conditions a criminal could save his life by placing it in God's hands at the altar. This was not true of the most serious of crimes, such as cold blooded murder.

1 Kings 2:29 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.

When Solomon was told of Joab's clinging to the altar he replied that Benaiah should fall upon him even if he was seeking refuge at that place.

1 Kings 2:30 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.

When Benaiah came to the altar where Joab was seeking protection, he told Joab to come forth. Joab refused to leave the altar. He was ready to die right beside the altar if the king demanded it.

1 Kings 2:31 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.

When Joab's words were taken to Solomon, the king said, Kill him. Bury him that the innocent blood of those whom Joab had killed be removed from the king and the nation.

1 Kings 2:32 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.

Solomon argued that he was justified in causing Joab to be put to death. He was a murderer of two men. He could justly be taken from the altar and killed. He had killed both Abner and Amasa who were rivals to his rise to power.

1 Kings 2:33 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.

Now the three most powerful antagonists to Solomon's rule were eliminated. Adonijah was dead. Abiathar was confined to Anathoth, and Joab was dead.

This should bring an end to organized opposition to the reign of the new king.

1 Kings 2:34 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.

It was done as David commanded.

1 Kings 2:35 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.

Benaiah was now the replacement for Joab. Zadok was the replacement for Abiathar. David, and not Adonijah was king. The military, the priesthood and the throne were all subject to Solomon.

1 Kings 2:36 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.

One last antagonist remained. This was Shemei. Solomon called for him to present himself. Shemei

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was instructed to build himself a dwelling place in Jerusalem and not be found outside that city. His life would be safe if he honored that command.

**1 Kings 2:37 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.**

If ever Shemei decided to ignore the command and leave the city, he would be killed. Solomon would not be guilty of his blood. It would be upon his own head. He could remain in Jerusalem and live. or he could leave the city and die.

**1 Kings 2:38 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.**

Shimei agreed to these conditions. He promised to do just as Solomon had commanded. For some time he did as he promised. For that time period he was not injured.

**1 Kings 2:39 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.**

It did not last. After three years two of Shimei's servants ran away from Jerusalem and went to the city of Gath. Shimei was told of their departure and was ready to capture them.

**1 Kings 2:40 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.**

Shimei saddled his ass and set out to find his servants. He did so and then returned with them to Jerusalem.

It is curious that Shimei rode upon an ass. This was normally the privilege of royalty. Jesus rode upon a colt, the foal of an ass, when he entered Jerusalem shortly before his crucifixion.

**1 Kings 2:41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.**

**1 Kings 2:42 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.**

The word was passed to Solomon that Shimei had broken his oath which he had made before the Lord. It was not just a promise to Solomon. It was a promise to God.

Solomon made certain that Shimei knew he had no excuse for what he had done. He had been told that by leaving the city, he was inviting his execution. Whether the action was deliberate, or impetuous, it spelled d-e-a-t-h.

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1 Kings 2:43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

1 Kings 2:44 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;

Solomon also reminded Shimei of the sins he had committed in cursing David. He deserved to die. It had only been through grace that he had lived to that time. Now he must pay for his wicked ways.

1 Kings 2:45 And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

This falls in line with the promise that the seed of David would occupy the throne of Israel forever. Jesus Christ sits on God's right hand today ruling over the spiritual kingdom of Israel. He will continue that rule until time has come to an end.

1 Kings 2:46 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.

As the reader can well see, the entire chapter is the record of the transmission of the rulership of Israel from David to Solomon. Saul had reigned forty years. David had ruled forty years. Solomon would do the same.

Chapter 3

Solomon realized his shortcomings with respect to ruling over Israel. He prayed to God that he might have wisdom to govern the people. God answered his prayer. He then offered sacrifices to show his gratitude. As an example of the wisdom he was given, he was able to determine which of two women was the mother of a baby when both claimed it to be their own.

1 Kings 3:1 And Solomon made affinity 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.

Israel had reached a point of power and influence it had not reached before the time of Solomon. Even the land of Egypt was impressed. Solomon was able to bring the two nations into alliance by marrying one of Pharaoh's daughters. He brought the woman to Jerusalem and she remained there while he was in the process of building both the temple of God and his own house. This amounted to seven years for the temple and fourteen years for his own house. During this time he also supervised the construction of the wall surrounding the city.

1 Kings 3:2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

The meaning of this verse is a bit difficult. Later on the high places were centers of idolatry. At this

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time they may have been only hills where the people could feel closer to Jehovah. The ark had been resting at Gibeon before it could be taken to the temple. The people may have been doing the best they could under the circumstances.

**1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.**

As he began his reign Solomon was faithful to the Lord. He also respected the laws which his earthly father, David, had established while he was ruling.

The word “only” brings on the first hint that Solomon was wavering. It appears that he began to burn incense on the high places. Incense was burned to the Lord at times, but this leaves us with the unsettled feeling that Solomon could have been offering to idols in addition to worshipping Jehovah.

**1 Kings 3:4 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.**

Solomon was grateful to the Lord for having made it possible for him to rule Israel. He offered a massive sacrifice of one thousand burnt offerings to show that gratitude. Gibeon was the most important of the high places.

**1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.**

Apparently the great sacrifice caused the Lord to be pleased with the attitude displayed. He appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked what He could give the young man. This was not unheard of at that time. God had appeared to others in a similar manner.

**1 Kings 3:6 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.**

In his reply to the Lord, Solomon showed an unusual degree of humility. He reviewed the mercy and grace God had shown to his Father David, as long as David walked uprightly. God had even allowed David to bring the kingdom to a place of recognition among the surrounding nations, and had favored David with Solomon's birth that he might follow his father on the throne.

**1 Kings 3:7 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.**

**1 Kings 3:8 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.**

David admitted that he was young and inexperienced as he faced the gigantic task of rulership. He was not

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able to direct his own paths and needed the wisdom of Jehovah to empower him.

1 Kings 3:9 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?

Amazingly, Solomon did not ask for the things most people might mention. He said nothing about wealth, honor or long life. He only desired the wisdom to rule the nation of Israel properly and in accord with the purposes of God.

1 Kings 3:10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

1 Kings 3:11 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;

1 Kings 3:12 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.

1 Kings 3:13 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.

God was extremely pleased with Solomon's answer. He was quite willing to honor Solomon's wish for wisdom. He promised him the wisdom for which he had

asked. In fact, the amount of wisdom Solomon would receive would be greater than that of any other man, either before or after him.

Then he added that since Solomon had not asked selfishly the man would be granted great riches and influence greater than the other kings of his age. Today we can see that God's promise came true. Solomon is known all these centuries later as having been rich, powerful and very wise.

May I suggest that the attitude Solomon presented to God could well be copied by God's people today. We also ought to realize our inability to direct our own steps. We are citizens of the kingdom of God, which is the greatest kingdom that ever existed. We are called priests and kings. If we ask for God's will to be done in our own lives, no doubt He will see that all things work together for good as He did in the case of Solomon.

1 Kings 3:14 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.

However, take notice of that great big two letter word "if." God's promises were laid on the foundation of Solomon's manner of life. If he walked in righteousness, he would be favored. If he failed to live uprightly, he would lose those promises.

1 Kings 3:15 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.



Although he awoke and understood he had been dreaming, he knew the dream was more than just a result of what he had eaten before he went to bed. He was ready to dedicate his life to the keeping of the commandments of his Lord.

This verse indicates that the events here took place after the building of the temple in Jerusalem. The ark had been located at Gibeon in the past. At this time it was in Jerusalem. Solomon went there to offer dedicatory sacrifices.

1 Kings 3:16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

Now we come to the evidence that God had granted Solomon the wisdom he had requested. Two women who are called harlots came to him for a decision. It was not the kind of decision which men would ordinarily class as simple.

There is sharp difference of opinion as to whether these two women were harlots as we know the word in modern times. Some claim they would not have given birth to children, nor would have been interested in the welfare of the children, if they were women of the street. Others say there is really no way around the word as it is used in the Hebrew and that those who think they would have rejected their own children have underestimated the maternal instinct of a natural mother.

1 Kings 3:17 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.

1 Kings 3:18 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.

Both women claimed the living child. Both lived together in the same house. Both agreed that two babes had been born. There were no other witnesses who could verify or deny their claims as to what happened after the birth of the two.

1 Kings 3:19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

The first woman claimed that the other woman's child had been smothered during the night when she carelessly laid on top of it.

1 Kings 3:20 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.

She went on with her claim. According to her, the woman woke up and took the living child of the first woman and claimed it for her own.

1 Kings 3:21 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.

1 Kings 3:22 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.

The second woman was just as forceful as the first in claiming the living child. She denied that the dead child was hers. The one still alive was hers! How would the present reader like to have been in Solomon's place? This would not be the type of case humans could solve without help from above.

1 Kings 3:23 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.

1 Kings 3:24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

With the wisdom Solomon had been given, he was able to solve the differences beyond doubt. He first called for a sword. No doubt everyone wondered how a sword would be able to aid in determining who the real mother of the child was.

1 Kings 3:25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

Solomon proposed that the baby be cut in two pieces, with one half being given to each of the women. At this point we can imagine the reaction of those who were present at the scene of the disagreement. A gasp of horror must have arisen.

1 Kings 3:26 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.

It did not take long for the truth to come out. The babes' real mother cried out for the baby to be given to the other woman rather than to destroy it's life. Is it possible that she could have been wrong in suggesting the baby be placed in the care of the other woman. What chance would the child have when raised in a home with a woman who as a harlot and who was willing to allow a baby to die rather than be given to it's own mother?

1 Kings 3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

Solomon did not hesitate. He commanded that the baby be awarded to the woman who was willing to allow the other woman to have it rather than see it killed.

1 Kings 3:28 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.

The word soon got around that this difficult case had been solved. Solomon's reputation for wisdom spread rapidly. The people understood that this decision had divine assistance. The report continues to be passed on until the day these present words are written. Men and



women from around the globe have read of the results of this impressive case.

Dear reader, God has offered you His wisdom today. He had caused it to be written down on the pages of Holy Scripture. If you reach out for it by prayer and study, you may be surprised how much it can help in times of difficult choices.

Chapter 4

We have seen Israel tested and blessed over the centuries. Abraham was promised a land. Moses led the people through the wilderness to that land. Joshua led the Israelites into the land. Under David the land was conquered. Under Solomon the government was established.

Israel had pleaded for territory and a king such as the other nations had. God had granted them their wish. In the chapter before us we will observe this nation at its peak. They now had a choice to make. Were they going to place the emphasis from here on upon wealth, human wisdom, fertile land and military power? Or would they place their fate in the hands of Jehovah and live in obedience to His will?

Let us look at this people when they are a nation among the nations.

1 Kings 4:1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel.

Israel controlled territory from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt. Other nations were afraid to mount a major attack on them. Solomon had even taken a wife from the daughters of Pharaoh.

1 Kings 4:2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest,

The word “princes” is not used in reference to the sons of the king. These were men who held positions of power at a level less than that of Solomon but above that of others. They were in charge of a variety of

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matters. Citizens of the United States would think of such positions as Secretary of Treasury and Secretary of War.

**1 Kings 4:3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.**

Scribes would be responsible for maintaining collecting data about governmental actions. The Recorder would be assigned the responsibility to see that such information was carefully filed that it might be accessible when needed.

**1 Kings 4:4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:**

The host was the military organization. Abiathar and Zadok were the top ranked persons in the priesthood. Abiathar had served under David.

**1 Kings 4:5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:**

The men mentioned here were expected to link Solomon with the people. They advised Solomon of the peoples' needs and feelings. They relayed his orders to the public.

**1 Kings 4:6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.**

The household was far more than the immediate family of Solomon. It was in charge of the activities of

the palace and surroundings.

The tribute was taxes and other valuables received from the people to operate the government.

**1 Kings 4:7 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.**

We are not told that these twelve men were over the twelve tribes. What we are told is that each of them was to see that supplies were collected to provide for the maintenance of the governmental operations for one of the twelve months of the year.

We have a list of these officers in verses eight through nineteen below. I will not list specific information about each of them. There is a great deal of speculation concerning them. It is best just to notice the complex organization which Solomon put into place to aid in the governing of the people.

**1 Kings 4:8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:**

**1 Kings 4:9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan:**

**1 Kings 4:10 The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher:**

**1 Kings 4:11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:**

**1 Kings 4:12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all**

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Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

1 Kings 4:13 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:

1 Kings 4:14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim:

1 Kings 4:15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

1 Kings 4:16 Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth:

1 Kings 4:17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar:

1 Kings 4:18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin:

1 Kings 4:19 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.

1 Kings 4:20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

After having lost vast numbers of soldiers in the conflicts with the several nations which had to be defeated in order to take control of the land, the numbers of the people were most impressive. There are many grains of sand on the seashore. There were a lot of people under the rule of Solomon.

One wonders if the statement in this verse about

eating, drinking and making merry led to the common use of that same statement today. If so, the way was being laid for catastrophe. God seems to have held less respect in the hearts and minds of Israel than did feasting and revelry.

1 Kings 4:21 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.

Israel had their king, like that of the other nations. They had control over land which had been promised to their forefathers. They had the respect of the nations surrounding them. Would that lead to increased devotion to the Lord, or would it result in spiritual decay?

1 Kings 4:22 And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

We are not talking about Solomon's immediate family. These are provisions for the operation of the central government. It is difficult to determine just how much flour and meal are included in the verse. The measures are not defined. Estimates are usually far more than what would be required for Solomon's own family.

1 Kings 4:23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.



The number of animals listed is imaginable, but very doubtful for the necessities of a single day, if it supplied a limited number of individuals.

1 Kings 4:24 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.

We need to establish the meaning of “this side of the river.” What river is this? Which side is “this side?” There is little doubt that the river spoken of was the Euphrates. The territory of Israel extended far beyond the Jordan river.

The kings on this side of the river would be those who attempted to prevent the people from passing through their territory when they finished their wanderings and were ready to cross over the Jordan and enter into Palestine proper.

1 Kings 4:25 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.

The tribute was high, but so was the level of prosperity. Vines and fig trees symbolize the degree of peace which were being enjoyed. The Israelites did not need to worry over who might overrun them and take their property.

Dan was in the far north. Beersheba was in the extreme south of the land. There was peace through the entire land.

1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

The reader should make his own comparison here between this verse and the one found in Second Chronicles 9:25.

2Ch 9:25 And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

Most commentators agree that there was some carelessness in the transmission of data here. It is very difficult to explain the difference in numbers. Were there four thousand stalls for horses, or were there forty thousand? The main point is the very large number.

1 Kings 4:27 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.

This verse does not imply that all of the provisions collected by the officers was set upon the king's own dining table. They did see that his immediate household had abundance.

1 Kings 4:28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.



The people were expected to bring feed for the animals used by the government. Since the people were happy and prosperous they did not rebel against the tribute they paid.

1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

This was not just any king God placed in authority over Israel. This king had an excess of both understanding and wisdom. Solomon had been gifted with both the capacity for understanding truth and also a supply of wisdom which would allow him to properly apply that knowledge.

1 Kings 4:30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

1 Kings 4:31 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.

The reader will recall that the three wise men mentioned in the gospel records were from the east. There were a number of recognized wise men at the time of Solomon. He was wiser than any of them. His fame spread widely at that time, and he is still called the "wise man" to the present day.

1 Kings 4:32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

The proverbs listed in the Bible do not reach the number above. We can safely assume that those which the Lord arranged to be included were the ones necessary for our instruction in righteousness.

The situation with the songs of Solomon is even more drastic. We have one song; the Song of Solomon. The main point to be noticed is that Israel had all they could have asked for. They had peace. They had a good land. They had a government with a high degree of organization.

There was one serious ingredient missing. Can the reader identify it??

1 Kings 4:33 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.

Not only did Solomon have political knowledge; he had knowledge of zoology, botany and no doubt matters dealing with astronomy and geology.

1 Kings 4:34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

This king's knowledge of earthly things was respected by all those who knew of it. Other kings and men of dignity admitted his proficiency by visiting him to see if that which they had heard was correct.

One thing remains to be mentioned. There is a difference between understanding and wisdom. There are also different kinds of wisdom. Wisdom is the

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proper application of knowledge. The New Testament statement that though one understands all mysteries and does not have love, he is foolish is a very perceptive statement.

One could have a vast knowledge of weaponry, and then proceed to use that knowledge to destroy both self and others. One could have a high degree of political wisdom and still be almost completely lacking in spiritual wisdom. The fool will say in his heart that there is no God. He will then proceed to order his life around selfish ends. The truly wise man will choose to learn the most uplifting facts and will then see that these facts are used to prepare for eternal life!

## *Chapter 5*

Israel had grown drastically in power and influence. Hiram, King of Tyre thought it wise to develop an alliance with Israel which would give his own kingdom security, and would provide Israel with easy access to the Mediterranean Sea. It was to the mutual advantage of both kingdoms to cooperate.

**1 Kings 5:1 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.**

Hiram and David had enjoyed friendly relationships for some time. Hiram felt that it would be helpful to continue the friendship during the reign of Solomon. To insure a continuation of the partnership Hiram took the initiative and sent representatives to Solomon in hope of continuation of the cooperation.

**1 Kings 5:2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,**

**1 Kings 5:3 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.**

Solomon was happy to reply positively to Hiram's invitation. He pointed out that his father David had found it necessary to spend Israel's energies in fighting wars with their neighbors. He was grateful to God that peace had replaced the heavy fighting of the past.



**1 Kings 5:4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.**

What a wonderful feeling it was not to be forced to defend one's country time after time. At present the energy which had been used in military conflict could be used in more constructive ventures. God had been good to Israel. Now it was time for Israel to respond with an expression of gratitude and hope for the spiritual future of the people.

**1 Kings 5:5 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.**

Solomon informed Hiram that he planned to build a house of worship which would be dedicated to the Lord. David had been promised that his son would follow him upon the throne of Israel. Solomon intended to see that preparations were made for that promise to come true. The tabernacle would be replaced by a splendid temple.

**1 Kings 5:6 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.**

Since Hiram had demonstrated a spirit of cooperation, Solomon was requesting that the servants of the two kings work together to cut cedar trees and transport them from Lebanon in Hiram's territory to Jerusalem where Solomon would then use the fine timber to help in the construction of the new temple.

Solomon added that it was very well known that the Sidonians in Hiram's land were excellent in carpentry. This, of course, would not hurt the hope for mutual benefit.

**1 Kings 5:7 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.**

Things were looking up. The two rulers were agreed on the plan. Hiram spoke in admiration of Jehovah, Solomon's God. Solomon had reason to look forward to easy access to the nations bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. Commerce would be stimulated.

**1 Kings 5:8 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.**

Hiram expressed his willingness to send fir and cedar timber to Solomon to be used in the construction of the proposed place of worship. It almost seems as if Hiram felt a certain pride in helping build the structure.

**1 Kings 5:9 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.**

Hiram proposed that his own servants cut the timber and transport it to the sea. Solomon's servants would then receive the timber which was bound together in floats. It would then be floated by the servants of Solomon to a site where it could be turned over to other servants of Solomon who would move it over land to Jerusalem.

In return, Hiram proposed that Solomon return the favor by sending food supplies to Hiram and his subjects. The agreement would work to the benefit of both Hiram and Solomon.

**1 Kings 5:10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.**

Hiram fulfilled his part of the agreement. He sent the cedar and fir timber to Solomon.

**1 Kings 5:11 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.**

Solomon also kept his part of the contract. He sent large quantities of wheat and oil to Lebanon to increase their food supplies. Without doing arithmetic based upon doubtful units of measure, we will simply state

that both Hiram and Solomon were delighted with the arrangement. This venture was not a one year agreement. It lasted over several years while the temple was under construction.

**1 Kings 5:12 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.**

We have an interesting statement in verse twelve. Just how is it possible for the Lord to give a man wisdom. Does this wisdom move into the person's brain without study and effort on his own part? Your present writer believes God implanted this wisdom by supernatural means. Certainly Solomon was a dedicated servant, but facing the situation as honestly as possible, the wisdom God granted was apparently more than Solomon would have gained by his own human application.

Whatever the case, Hiram and Solomon were both happy with the cooperative venture. God also seems to have been pleased.

**1 Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.**

This was no small venture. It was necessary to secure a very large number of men to transport the food and timber. Thirty thousand men would be able to move large quantities, even if the transportation vehicles were primitive.

**1 Kings 5:14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they**  
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were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

The servants did not leave home for long extended periods of time. They worked near their homes in Israel for two months, then left their home territory to work in Lebanon for one month. Thus they were working steadily, but were close to their homes for two months out of every three while the temple was being built. Apparently the ten thousand whom Solomon sent worked alongside the servants of Hiram in cutting and moving the fir and cedar lumber to the seashore.

1 Kings 5:15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

Out of Solomon's forces, seventy thousand transported goods and eighty thousand were hewers of stone, in the mountains. Following the numbers throughout this chapter is a challenge. The present writer is not saying there are contradictions. He is only stating that it requires some mental gymnastics to decide how many thousand men are assigned to a given task, and for how long, in which places.

1 Kings 5:16 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.

Large numbers of men do not work efficiently without supervision. Solomon appointed over three thousand supervisors to oversee the project.

1 Kings 5:17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

If the reader is not careful the workers on stone and those on timber will become confused. Timber is “cut.” Stone is “hewed.” The fir and cedar had to be cut in Lebanon and floated to where it could unloaded near Jerusalem. Then it had to be moved across land to the site of the temple. The stones had to be hewed out of the mountainsides and also moved to the site where the temple was being constructed. This might not be an astounding operation with modern equipment. It was so with the methods available to Hiram and Solomon.

1 Kings 5:18 And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

With a tremendous spirit of cooperation, the men of Hiram and those of Solomon collected the materials for building one of the wonders of the world.

One last question. Would Jehovah have been satisfied with the splendor of the temple if that was the ultimate purpose of the work, or was it the love and obedience Israel demonstrated which caused the Creator of heaven and earth to be pleased?

Chapter 6

This sixth chapter and the seventh of First Kings discuss the construction of the temple built under the supervision of Solomon. The student of the Bible must be somewhat cautious in making more application of the details to the Christian age than was intended when the material was written. It is certainly true that there are certain symbolic features. At the same time, these are easier to identify after the symbolism has been fulfilled later by the intended antitype.

The major impact of this description of the temple is the majestic and glorious appearance of it. It was to be a house in which God would dwell close to his people. It must be as beautiful and as valuable as men could make it. Unnecessary friction has developed between those who would like to be known as scholars. God dwelt among His people in more primitive manner during the patriarchal age. In the period of wilderness wanderings He associated Himself with the tabernacle, which could be moved from place to place readily. When His people settled in the land of Canaan He made Himself available through the temple of Solomon. In the Christian age, He dwells in the church, which is now his temple.

1 Kings 6:1 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.

The efforts to make a precise calculation of the exact year of our Lord, based on such references as this has



resulted in much disagreement. There are a number of Bible students who feel the date was approximately 1450 B.C. There is another group who place it about two hundred years later. This is unfortunate. The most important fact involved is that it was begun in the very early years of the reign of Solomon. Later in the chapter we find that it required between seven and eight years to erect the temple.

1 Kings 6:2 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.

There were varying definitions for the standard cubit. The most common suggestion is that a cubit was the distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. But, was this Solomon's finger or that of some other man? Eighteen inches is the length which is most accepted, but when all the facts are in we must admit that standards at that time were far less exact than at present. In the present discussion we shall assume that the cubit was approximately eighteen inches. This would mean that the temple was ninety feet in length and was thirty feet in width, with a height equal to it's width.

1 Kings 6:3 And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

There was a porch extending across the front of the building. It reached across the full width of the temple.



It was fifteen feet in depth. Although not mentioned at this point, there were two large pillars standing on the porch.

1 Kings 6:4 And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

The original Hebrew here does not suggest glass paned windows. It seems that the windows could let in some light and those inside could view events taking place outside, but could not be easily seen by someone from the outside.

1 Kings 6:5 And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

The porch was located on the east entrance of the building. There were three stories of small chambers on the other three sides. These chambers provided dwelling places for the priests and storage for supplies necessary during the worship services.

1 Kings 6:6 The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

The chambers were of different sizes. Some were about seven and one half feet broad. Others were about nine feet broad, and still others were about ten and

one half feet. They were arranged in such manner that there was no need to fasten them to the actual walls of the temple.

1 Kings 6:7 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 ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

The stones which were used in the foundation of the house were carefully hewn and polished before they were even brought into the area where they were to be laid. This avoided the loud noises which would have been produced in normal construction. This temple was to be a place of solemn worship. It was to be built in harmony with that ideal.

1 Kings 6:8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

On the right side of the main building there was an entrance door which allowed one to move into a winding stairway from which the individual could pass into the second or third tier of chambers. When we say the right side were are talking about standing on the porch and facing outward.

1 Kings 6:9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.



This verse does not refer to the inner surface of the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place. This is a description of the outside surface of the house of God.

1 Kings 6:10 And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

The chambers surrounding the house were about seven feet and six inches in height. They were supported by the house but were not fastened to it.

1 Kings 6:11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

1 Kings 6:12 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:

1 Kings 6:13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

God then communicated with Solomon and approved of that which was taking place. We are not informed as to the means used to transmit God's message. It could have been audible. It could have been by dream or vision. It could have been through a prophet.

We have here a little more explanation of the difference between statutes, judgments and commandments. All three, however, spell out God's expectations for the behavior of His people. If His words are heeded, He will be with them and will never forsake them. It is implied that if they do not hear and obey, He will be under no

obligation to bless and protect them.

These solemn words proved to be true. When Israel was true to God, He blessed them and they enjoyed the chance to worship Him at this wonderful house. When they abandoned His statutes, judgments and commandments, He allowed them to be taken into captivity and His Spirit departed from the temple.

1 Kings 6:14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

We now have a further description of the appearance and structure of the house of God.

1 Kings 6:15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

One must be careful not to be confused by the pattern of presentation here. The beams of the house, including both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, or Oracle, were first made of cedar. These beams were then covered with boards. Following this, the boards were plated with gold plate. The latter will be described in verses twenty-one and twenty-two. The floors of both the Holy Place and the Most Holy were covered with fir planks. But, just as the walls were covered with gold, so was the fir planking. See verse thirty!

1 Kings 6:16 And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it

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**within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.**

The walls of both the Holy Place and the Most Holy were twenty cubits high. The Most Holy was a perfect cube. It was twenty cubits high, twenty cubits wide and twenty cubits deep.

**1 Kings 6:17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long.**

The Holy Place was twice the depth of the Most Holy. Thus the length of the total of the Holy and the Most Holy was twenty plus forty, or sixty cubits. This would be approximately ninety feet. The entire building was not a monstrous structure.

**1 Kings 6:18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.**

The cedar boards which covered the cedar beams were carved with ornamental flowers and other figures. The stone of the walls was completely covered by the cedar boards with their carvings.

**1 Kings 6:19 And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.**

**1 Kings 6:20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.**

The ark of God was to be placed in the Most Holy. Only the High Priest would be allowed to enter that room, and then only once a year on the day of Atonement. Both walls of the Most Holy and the altar itself were to be plated with gold.

The reader may envision a difficulty at this point. If the cedar boards were carved with ornamental flowers and knobs, why were these carvings covered up with gold plate? The answer is that the gold plate was thin enough that it could be molded around the carvings in the cedar boards and it would appear as if the gold itself was carved.

**1 Kings 6:21 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.**

Neither stone nor wood could be seen by those standing within the house. Everything was covered with gold plate. Nothing is said here about the veil of the temple which separated the Most Holy from the Holy Place. The chains of gold must have been associated with the veil in some manner since both the chains and the veil are to mark the division between the two rooms.

**1 Kings 6:22 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.**

The writer of the book of First Kings desired that we understand the glory and the value of our relationship



with Jehovah. Gold is valuable. Gold is beautiful. This is the best way God had of presenting the desirability of His presence to mankind.

**1 Kings 6:23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.**

The cherubim were the guardians of the Garden of Eden after man was driven out of the Garden following his sin. The wings of the two cherubim extended completely across the twenty cubit width of the Most Holy. Each of them was ten cubits in height, reaching half way to the ceiling. We have a third wood mentioned. Previously we saw cedar and fir. Now we find olive wood for the material of the cherubim.

**1 Kings 6:24 And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.**

**1 Kings 6:25 And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.**

Since each cherub covered a width of ten cubits, the two of them extended from one side of the Most Holy to the other side. The two cherubs were of identical size.

**1 Kings 6:26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.**

**1 Kings 6:27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one**

**touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.**

The repetition we see in these descriptions is intended for reinforcement of the main thoughts. No believer in the Holy Scriptures can read the material presented in this chapter and the next without realizing what God is saying. He is to be praised, and He is to be cherished for His value.

**1 Kings 6:28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.**

**1 Kings 6:29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.**

**1 Kings 6:30 And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.**

One who was standing within either the Holy Place or the Most Holy would have seen nothing but gold. Every surface was overlaid with that precious metal.

**1 Kings 6:31 And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.**

**1 Kings 6:32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.**

The doors from the Holy Place into the Most Holy



were made of olive wood, covered with carving and overlaid with gold.

**1 Kings 6:33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.**

**1 Kings 6:34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.**

**1 Kings 6:35 And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.**

There were cherubim in the Most Holy. There were cherubim carved on the doors of the separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. There were cherubim on the folding doors leading from the outside into the Holy Place.

**1 Kings 6:36 And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.**

We are not told the dimensions of this inner court. It is best not to speculate where there is silence after so much detail.

The wall of this court was composed of a layer of three stones, carefully hewn to fit smoothly together. A row of cedar beams topped the entire wall. This would have added to the impressiveness of the area from the outside view.

**1 Kings 6:37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:**

This is the fourth year of Solomon's reign. From the the fourth year to the eleventh year would have been seven years. Then the difference between the month of Zif and the month of Bul would be added to the seven years. The total time of construction would have been between seven and eight years.

**1 Kings 6:38 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.**

The figure of seven years is rounded off, as are certain other numbers in the Old Testament. When finished, this structure was one of the most impressive ever built with the hands of men. The value of the completed temple area, both from the number of man hours of labor, and the quantity of gold and other materials used, added up to a mind staggering total figure.

But this might be anticipated. God's eternal reward to those who remain faithful unto the end is being typified. No earthly value may be placed upon this experience.



## *Chapter 7*

In chapter seven we have an account of the building of the palace grounds. The temple was nearly complete as of chapter six. There were several other buildings associated with the temple although not a part of it.

We have the house of the forest of Lebanon. There was Solomon's own palace. A special structure was built for the wife who was the daughter of Pharaoh. There were many objects created for the priests cleansing and for the offering of the sacrifices, etc.

**1 Kings 7:1 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.**

The first reaction to this verse is to condemn Solomon for spending nearly twice as much time in building his own palace as in constructing the temple of Jehovah. Several have pointed out that this may not be quite fair to Solomon. After putting very concentrated effort into getting the temple ready, he may have taken a little more leisurely approach to the other buildings in the complex.

We do have to admit, however, that all three of Israel's first kings fell short of what we might have expected. Saul failed to kill Agag. David committed both adultery and murder. Now Solomon appears to be prideful and self centered.

**1 Kings 7:2 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**

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of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

We are informed that this building was not called by the name above because it was located in the forest of Lebanon, but because much of the materials used in construction were from that forest.

Since this building is not a central piece in the story of salvation, one wonders why as much attention is given to the materials and other details of it's construction. It seems that God is allowing us to see the heavy emphasis Solomon placed on that which is visible and which appealed to the senses. This, of course falls in line with the major theme of the book of Ecclesiastes, which concludes with the statement that much of what is done in this world is vanity and vexation of spirit.

The present writer does not intend to go into elaborate detail with respect to much of what is recorded in the remainder of the chapter. It may well be that these facts are better appreciated by the average three chapter a day reading when one tries to cover the Bible in a year than by an attempt to analyze every word. Some of what is said is nearly impossible to visualize in the mind, though it is easy to appreciate the labor involved and the resulting impressiveness.

1 Kings 7:3 And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row.

1 Kings 7:4 And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

1 Kings 7:5 And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

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**1 Kings 7:6 And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.**

We gain a picture of durability and stability in the description of this house. It was one hundred cubits in length and fifty cubits in width. It was supported by many pillars upon which thick cedar beams were laid.

**1 Kings 7:7 Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.**

Solomon sat in judgment on a porch associated with this house of the forest of Lebanon. He became famous for the decisions which he made such as suggesting that an infant be cut in two pieces and divided between two women who were both claiming the babe as their own. The true mother was ready to give up the infant rather than to have it divided.

**1 Kings 7:8 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.**

Here we have the structure made especially for his wife who was the daughter of Pharaoh. Either this wife was a personal favorite, or Solomon was using his

famed wisdom to cement relationships with his wife's father.

**1 Kings 7:9 All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.**

We are not speaking of gems here. These costly stones were costly because of the labor involved in hewing them out and transporting them to the location where they were to be laid.

**1 Kings 7:10 And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.**

**1 Kings 7:11 And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.**

**1 Kings 7:12 And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house.**

Stones of ten cubits would be stones somewhere near fifteen feet in length. This present writer has stood with amazement in modern times looking at the massiveness of certain foundation stones of buildings, wondering how these stones were gotten into position in that foundation. This would have been even more amazing when methods were as limited as they would have been in the time of Solomon.

**1 Kings 7:13 And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.**

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In addition to the foundations, walls and sealing of the buildings, there were many metal objects to be used in connection with them. Solomon decided to send for an expert in metal works. This person was named Hiram. He was from Tyre. This was not the same person who was king of Tyre.

1 Kings 7:14 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.

This man had a strong background in his art. His father was also a worker in brass. He was extremely gifted and supervised all of the brass work of the palace grounds.

1 Kings 7:15 For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

These two pillars were not supports for any part of the building. They stood alone and reached about twenty-seven feet in height. They were about eighteen feet in circumference, which means they were about six feet in diameter. They would have been hard to overlook!

1 Kings 7:16 And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits:

A chapter is an ornamental cap placed on the top of the pillar. Each of the two chapters was some seven and one half feet in height.

1 Kings 7:17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.

1 Kings 7:18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

1 Kings 7:19 And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

1 Kings 7:20 And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.

Let us be satisfied with saying there were nets and wreaths adorning the chapters of each of the pillars. Pomegranite fruits were a part of the carving. Anyone who tried to imitate these works would have a most difficult time. The specifics are not intended for imitation. They are given to show the grandeur of the project.

1 Kings 7:21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof



Boaz.

1 Kings 7:22 And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

The two pillars were erected upon the porch of the temple itself and each was given a name. One would normally pass between the two pillars upon entering the temple. One pillar was named Jachin. The second was named Boaz. Jachin means He will establish. Boaz means In Him is strength. It has been suggested that both of these names refer to the Lord's promise to David that a descendant of David would rule over God's people until this heaven and earth are replaced by a new creation.

1 Kings 7:23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

This molten sea was an immense container for water used in the washing of the priests who offered the sacrifices. It was called a sea because of the amount of water it could contain. It was some fifteen feet from brim to brim. It was seven and one half feet deep and would have been capable of holding well over ten thousand gallons of water.

1 Kings 7:24 And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

1 Kings 7:25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking

toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

It rested upon twelve oxen, three of which faced each of the four directions of the compass. It is possible that the twelve oxen represented the twelve tribes of Israel, though this is not stated.

1 Kings 7:26 And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

The metal of the sea was a hand breadth thick. This would amount to some three or four inches. The weight of this sea would have been enormous.

Hiram's talent in metal working would have been put to the test in creating the ornamentation. Gourds and lilies adorned the outer surface.

1 Kings 7:27 And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

Next we have a description of ten smaller portable lavers. These lavers were for the purpose of washing the bodies of the animals which were to be used as burnt offerings. (See 2 Chronicles 4:6.)

2 Chron. 4:6 He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

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**1 Kings 7:28 And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges:**

The bases of the ten lavers are discussed first. The lavers were to be set upon each of the ten bases.

**1 Kings 7:29 And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work.**

The outer surfaces of each of the ten bases were adorned with various living creatures. It is interesting that cherubim are listed along with lions and oxen, though they were angelic beings rather than natural specimens.

**1 Kings 7:30 And every base had four brassen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.**

The molten sea was not intended to be moved from place to place. It was not so with the ten lavers. These bases were equipped with four wheels, allowing them to be moved to where they were needed.

**1 Kings 7:31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above was a cubit: but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round.**

**1 Kings 7:32** And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit.

**1 Kings 7:33** And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten.

The wheels of the bases were not just wheels with wooden spokes. They were elaborate and constructed of metal rather than wood.

**1 Kings 7:34** And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the undersetters were of the very base itself.

**1 Kings 7:35** And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same.

**1 Kings 7:36** For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

Hiram was a conscientious and proud artist. He was clearly trying to please Solomon by the effort he put into the work. Commentators are at a loss to put into word pictures in their own languages just what the appearance of these devices was.

**1 Kings 7:37** After this manner he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure,





**and one size.**

**1 Kings 7:38 Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver.**

The lavers were then prepared for placement upon the ten bases. Each of the lavers held more than two hundred gallons of water.

**1 Kings 7:39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.**

**1 Kings 7:40 And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD:**

Five of the lavers were placed on one side of the house and five on the other. With the completion of the lavers, the shovels and the basins Hiram's part of the effort was concluded. We now have a summary of the objects which he created for Solomon.

**1 Kings 7:41 The two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars;**

**1 Kings 7:42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars;**

**1 Kings 7:43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;**

**1 Kings 7:44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;**

**1 Kings 7:45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of bright brass.**

Brass and bronze are alloys of copper with either tin or zinc. Brass combines copper and zinc. Bronze combines copper and tin. There is some discussion as to which of these alloys was actually referred to in the present case.

**1 Kings 7:46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.**

The clay in the area mentioned made a suitable mold for the casting of the instruments listed.

**1 Kings 7:47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.**

This verse is intended to point out the magnitude of the entire project. Even in a day when such totals were thought to be important, Solomon did not bother to obtain them.

**1 Kings 7:48 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,**

**1 Kings 7:49 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,**

**1 Kings 7:50 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.**

**1 Kings 7:51 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.**

What a sight this must have been! It must have been one of the greatest of all time. Yet we must pause for a moment to ask ourselves what the reaction of the Lord Jehovah was to all of this glitter. Did it honor Him, or did it honor Solomon and Hiram?

We do know that after the work was completed God made it clear He would accept the temple as a place where His people could approach Him in worship. He must have ignored the graven images found on every side and looked into the heart of those who made use of these buildings and objects to praise and glorify Him.

## *Chapter 8*

The chapter before us this time is one of the high points of the books of First and Second Kings. The ark of the covenant is moved to the completed temple. Solomon calls upon God in an extended prayer to continue His providential care and blessings. He speaks of a number of situations in which the people might need very much to turn their faces toward the temple and ask God for forgiveness when they were facing difficulties brought on by their sins.

A massive number of sacrifices were offered over a period of fourteen days. The purpose of the entire set of activities was to plant their faith solidly upon the God who had made this joyous occasion possible.

**1 Kings 8:1 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.**

The elders and the heads of the tribes would not necessarily be the same group. Both groups, however, would be looked up to by the Israelites as worthy of decision making.

The king called for these elders and heads of the tribes to accompany the moving of the ark of the covenant from the city of David to the temple mount.

**1 Kings 8:2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.**

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The month of Ethanim was the same as the month of Tishri. It came in the fall of the year corresponding to September and October. The temple had been completed on the eighth month. Since this is the seventh month it seems that nearly a year had passed before the dedication came about. This may have been from a desire to have the activities coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles which came in the seventh month. In that way, the dedication of the temple could be celebrated in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles.

1 Kings 8:3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

1 Kings 8:4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

This must have been a major sight. Not only was the ark moved. The utensils associated with it were also brought along with it.

1 Kings 8:5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

When the ark was brought to Jerusalem, David had caused the sacrifice of many animals as the procession moved forward. Solomon followed the same procedure now as the ark was being moved to the temple. Numbers of oxen, sheep and goats are mentioned later, though the numbers here are said too numerous to be counted.

1 Kings 8:6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

The oracle of the house was the Most Holy Place. The ark was set into position. It sat directly beneath the outstretched wings of the two cherubim which stretched from one side of the room to the other. The outer wing of each touched a wall. The inner wing of one touched the inner wing of the other. We are reminded of angels round the throne of the Lord.

1 Kings 8:7 For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

1 Kings 8:8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

The ark had been carried by long staves which passed through rings on it's sides. When it was placed in position, the staves are said to have been drawn out. This would appear to be a change from the case in the tabernacle. There the staves were not removed. If we are correct in our picture of what happened, the staves were withdrawn from the rings this time and were placed near the ark in the Most Holy Place, where only the ends of them could be seen from the Holy Place.

1 Kings 8:9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with

the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

This statement that there was nothing in the ark other than the two tables of stone which Moses had put there at Mount Horeb has been puzzling. Most Bible students have been led to believe that there were three items placed in the ark; Aaron's rod which budded, the pot of manna from the wilderness wanderings, and the two tables of stone with the covenant written on them.

The reader is invited to examine and compare the following references.

First Numbers 17:10.

Num 17:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.

Next Exodus 16:33

Exo 16:33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

Exo 16:34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.

The references just above do not say the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were placed in the ark of the covenant. They say these two objects were placed before the testimony. This might explain how the tables of stone were retained while the pot of manna and the rod which budded were missing when the ark is being moved

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to the temple location. There is no information given in the Scripture as to the cause of the disappearance of the two.

**1 Kings 8:10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,**

The pillar and the cloud accompanied the movement of the Israelites as they moved through the wilderness. The brightness of the cloud settled over the ark when it rested in the tabernacle. Now the same cloud filled the house or temple of God here.

**1 Kings 8:11 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.**

The cloud of glory was evidence that Jehovah was to establish His special presence with His people in association with the Most Holy Place in the temple and the ark of the covenant.

**1 Kings 8:12 Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.**

**1 Kings 8:13 I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.**

Now we have another puzzle. If the Lord had said he would dwell in the thick darkness, how is it that His cloud of glory is so bright that the priests were unable to go about their duties because of the glory? What is the thick darkness in which the Lord dwells?

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May I suggest that man has lived in a world of spiritual darkness since he fell to the temptations of Satan in the Garden of Eden. God is light and truth. Satan is lies and darkness. When God's presence enters into the world where Satan's lies and darkness prevent men from seeing truth, it can be said that God has come to dwell in the thick darkness.

The house which Solomon caused to be built was a place where God's presence could be manifested in the midst of a world confused by Satan's deception. The ark had been transported from place to place in days gone by. Now it was to be settled in the temple which Solomon had built.

1 Kings 8:14 And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;)

Solomon was overjoyed at the moment. The temple was built. The ark was settled. The kingdom of Israel was relatively secure. Solomon proceeded to call for God's continued blessings upon His people. The entire assembly stood in respect for the majesty of the Lord their God.

1 Kings 8:15 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying,

Solomon then turned his blessing from the congregation to God. The only way a man can bless God is to give Him the honor, glory and praise that is due to Him.

Solomon recalls that God made a promise to his father David. Solomon is about to remind the assembly that the promise God made to his father has been fulfilled.

1 Kings 8:16 Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

1 Kings 8:17 And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

For a very long time God had not arranged for Israel to become settled in a land where a permanent place of worship could be built. David had purposed to build such a permanent structure. This was a noble purpose and the Lord appreciated David's intentions.

1 Kings 8:18 And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

1 Kings 8:19 Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

But God pointed out to David that he was not the one who would build the house. One of his children would be given that privilege.

1 Kings 8:20 And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room

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**of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.**

The time had arrived when God's promise to David had been brought to reality. Solomon was the one who had been used to build the temple which had been erected in the city of Jerusalem.

We must remember that this prophecy had a dual application. Yes, it is true that Solomon was of the seed of David and Solomon did build a house of worship where God dwelt in a special way in the Most Holy Place. But in a far greater sense, Christ was the Seed of David who would build the spiritual house of God. That is the Church of Jesus Christ which is the temple of God on earth today.

**1 Kings 8:21 And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.**

Solomon was grateful from the depths of his heart for the opportunity to have helped God's promise to David to make it's first step. Jesus would take it the next step.

**1 Kings 8:22 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:**

Solomon reached toward heaven and began an extended prayer of appreciation to God for allowing the building of the temple, and for continued blessings in the future.

The parallel account in the books of Chronicles tells of Solomon kneeling at times during this dedication ceremony. This was in order. The greatest kings on earth should bow both the knee and the heart before the King of kings.

The posture of the heart is more critical in bringing about God's approval of our prayer than is the posture of our body.

**1 Kings 8:23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:**

**1 Kings 8:24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.**

**1 Kings 8:25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.**

Solomon pours out his heart in gratitude to Jehovah. So much had been done in fulfilment of the promises God had already made. But there was more to the promise. God had promised that the kingdom which was to be established would always have a man sitting upon the throne leading the people to walk in harmony with the commandments, statutes and judgments which He wills.

Solomon had no means of knowing the specifics of  
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what he was asking. The man who would come from the loins of David and sit on the throne ruling spiritual Israel as long as time lasted would also be the Son of the Living God.

1 Kings 8:26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

Solomon had reached the end of his ability to comprehend space, time and matter. He was asking in his own mind if it truly was possible that the all powerful, all knowing, omnipresent and perfectly righteous God would indeed allow Himself to be manifested in such a physical house, or temple, as he had caused to be built.

Note the statement “heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.” Man has absolutely no way to know the extent of the entire physical and spiritual makeup of reality. Physical scientists have played around with numbers for many centuries trying to see the whole of reality. Let me suggest one of the puzzles facing them. If light travels at 186,282 miles per second and we live in an expanding universe caused by a gigantic explosion, the parts of the universe which are the farthest from the central point of the explosion would be the ones which were traveling the fastest. Somewhere out there should be a place where the particles are traveling faster than the speed of electromagnetic radiation and therefore neither radio nor light waves would be able to reach us.

We could never see nor hear any communications from such objects. God is able to transcend such obstacles. Man is not!

1 Kings 8:28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:

Solomon begged that this incomprehensible Lord would bend to hear the prayer of one so insignificant as the one who was praying to Him at the time. What a fantastic conception this is! As magnificent as God is, He hears and responds to the prayer of His humblest follower.

1 Kings 8:29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

If God's eye is on the sparrow, Solomon was properly praying that His eye might also rest on the temple which had been built for His glory. God never sleeps. Day and night He cares for His people and oversees their desire to communicate with Him. This temple was to be a location from which His people could pray and He would hear and respond.

1 Kings 8:30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and



when thou hearest, forgive.

1 Kings 8:31 If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house:

The temple was to be a house of judgment. When differences arose between the people, they were to be presented in the temple. God was called upon to hear the case and see that things worked out to justify the righteous and see that punishment was administered to the guilty.

1 Kings 8:32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

1 Kings 8:33 When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:

1 Kings 8:34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

Numerous times the people of Israel sinned and found themselves oppressed by their enemies. When those people repented of their sins and came to the temple, asking forgiveness, Solomon's plea was that Jehovah would hear and forgive.

1 Kings 8:35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:

Other times the sins of the people could result in severe drought and lack of food supplies. When they came to their senses and realized their condition was the result of their sin, they would need divine help.

1 Kings 8:36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

1 Kings 8:37 If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

A host of matters could arise, all connected with lack of obedience on the part of Israel. Diseases of crops, as well as diseases in humans might well result from sin. God has the power to intervene. He had promised to turn the cursings into blessings if His people would repent and turn to righteous ways.

1 Kings 8:38 What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:

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**1 Kings 8:39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)**

If the sins be those of individuals, the penitent individual needed to be heard and helped. If the sins were those of the nation as a whole, the nation needed to be given relief. Nevertheless, help was to be dependent upon penitent hearts and a willingness to draw nigh to the Creator.

**1 Kings 8:40 That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.**

The fear of God which is under consideration here is not a paralyzing fear which merely causes shudders and inaction. This fear is the type which leads to respect and obedience.

**1 Kings 8:41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake;**

**1 Kings 8:42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house;**

It was also to be expected that men and women who were not of the tribes of Israel would hear of the greatness of Israel's God, and would come from distant areas to make a home in the land. When such persons

adopted the Creator of heaven and earth as the only True and Living God, they also had a right to be heard when they prayed facing the temple.

**1 Kings 8:43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.**

God is the God of all the earth. The purpose of the Lord from the very beginning was that all men on the face of the earth recognize Him as Lord. It is sometimes stated that God did not want other nations to combine with His own. This is proven incorrect by the mention of proselytes. More emphasis is given on missionary efforts under the Christian system, but at no time did God refuse those who wished to come to Him through His own invitation, and on His own terms.

**1 Kings 8:44 If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:**

**1 Kings 8:45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.**

Jerusalem and the temple area was to be very special. When war broke out between Israel and the surrounding nations, the people of the Lord were to have the privilege of turning their faces toward Jerusalem and



the temple and giving voice to their needs which only God could attend to.

**1 Kings 8:46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;**

All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sometimes those sins are less serious than other times. There comes a time when God decides the best way to respond is to allow the sinners to be taken captive and suffer punishment. On occasion they may be captivated near their homeland. Other times they may be carried far away, as in the case of the Babylonian captivity.

**1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;**

**1 Kings 8:48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:**

When under the affliction of their captors, the people realize their sinfulness and pray for God to relieve their

oppression, the prayer is that those who have repented and confessed will have their petition heard. The temple would be the “clearing house.”

**1 Kings 8:49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,**

**1 Kings 8:50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:**

**1 Kings 8:51 For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron:**

**1 Kings 8:52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.**

**1 Kings 8:53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.**

Solomon’s request of the Lord is that Israel is His own very special people. He has separated them from other nations to accomplish wonderful things in the lives of all who will give themselves to Him. Surely God will not abandon those upon whom He has visited His affection for so long. Surely He did not bring them out of Egypt and then leave them alone.



**1 Kings 8:54 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.**

When Solomon began his prayer it is mentioned that he stood. Now it is said that he arose from before the altar of the Lord from kneeling. It must be that during the course of his prayer he dropped from an erect position to one of kneeling. Does this mean intense prayer must be accompanied by dropping to the knees? This writer believes that Solomon's change of posture was so automatic that he hardly gave a thought to whether he should be standing or kneeling. He only did that which he felt deep within his heart was right at the moment. Has the reader ever prayed lying flat on his back in bed at night? Has he or she ever prayed while sitting in a car that was sliding across wet pavement? Meaningful prayer comes about when the heart is properly tuned. It might be in almost any conceivable position.

**1 Kings 8:55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,**

**1 Kings 8:56 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.**

The Lord does not forget his promises to His people. Solomon called upon Him to continue his wondrous grace. He had not failed them in the past. Every promise

had been kept. The present temple was a perfect example of His dependability.

**1 Kings 8:57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:**

**1 Kings 8:58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.**

We are reminded of Solomon's father David, who prayed to the Lord to be his Shepherd. Men are not capable of directing their own paths. We are to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and He will then direct our ways.

**1 Kings 8:59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:**

**1 Kings 8:60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.**

The prayer was being made on behalf of all men everywhere on earth. He knows what the needs of mankind are. He can tend to those needs as the needs arise. When those who are not His people see what happens to those who accept Him as their God, they may also be persuaded to follow His will. Only Jehovah can know and care for His followers as they have need.



**1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.**

Only the fool would say in his heart that there is no God. It is man's duty to search out the way which has been made available to him. "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

**1 Kings 8:62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.**

**1 Kings 8:63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.**

An enormous sacrifice was offered in honor of the Lord. The king took the lead and the people followed that lead. Peace offerings are intended to solidify spiritual peace between the Lord and His subjects. On this occasion, twenty-two thousand oxen were offered. One hundred and twenty thousand sheep were also sacrificed. This massive sacrifice was intended to show the appreciation of the people for the blessings of God.

We can only wonder at the amount of blood which must have flowed in the area of the slaughter. All of this blood pointed toward the even greater sacrifice of the Very Son of God upon the cross centuries later.

**1 Kings 8:64 The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the**

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house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

The brazen altar which would normally have been used for the sacrifices was not sufficient to hold all of the offerings. Solomon pronounced the entire court of the temple to be hallowed and fit for offering the large numbers of animals which were brought as burnt offerings, meat offerings and peace offerings.

1 Kings 8:65 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.

It is understandable that there was a great feast. The first fourteen days were probably those which took place in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles. The second were the related to the dedication of the temple. Many of the sacrifices were offered on the altar and then those offering them consumed them in a festive celebration. In addition, the people from one end of the land to the other joined in the activities. Hamath was even farther north than Dan. The river of Egypt was farther south than Beersheba. Nearly everyone in the congregation of Israel shared in the joy.

1 Kings 8:66 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
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**goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.**

If only the joy that filled the hearts of the people here at the dedication of the temple could have continued forever! God had been very gracious to them. There was good reason for gratitude and rejoicing.

The sad part of this record is that Solomon himself later departed from his loyalty to Jehovah, and the people followed him into apostasy.

## *Chapter 9*

We have now reached peak of Solomon's days of glory. The temple has been completed. He has added the daughter of Pharaoh to his harem and has built a palace in addition to the temple. He has established working relations with both Egypt and Tyre.

He will be warned in this chapter of the danger of apostasy. If he remains true to the Lord all will be well. If he does not remain true all will be brought to ruins.

**1 Kings 9:1 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,**

**1 Kings 9:2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.**

God had appeared to Solomon some twenty years before this in a dream at Gibeon. Solomon had been encouraged to lead his people faithfully in the service of the Lord. Now Solomon is reminded of the conditional nature of the prosperity of Israel. He could look with considerable pride at all the accomplishments which had been made. At the same time, he must use great caution lest all come down in ruins for lack of faithful behavior.

**1 Kings 9:3 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**

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ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

Solomon was assured that God had heard his prayer that the temple be accepted as a place of worship. We are not certain as to when this statement of the Lord was heard. It seems strange that Solomon would have waited some thirteen years after building the temple, when he had finished his own palace before presenting his prayer that God accept the temple. What we can say for certain is that a prayer was offered and God answered the prayer positively. He would accept the temple and anticipate the prayers and offerings of the king and his people as they rose to him from that structure.

1 Kings 9:4 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:

1 Kings 9:5 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.

But, there is a great big “IF” attached to the promise. Solomon must remain faithful and sincere to his Lord. As long as this was true the nation would be blessed. The descendants of Solomon would be allowed to rule just as God had promised David before this time.

The word “forever” should be taken in view of what was later to happen in the Christian age. Christ is of the seed of David, and also of that of Solomon. Christ shall reign until this earth is replaced by a new heaven and a new earth.

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**1 Kings 9:6 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:**

**1 Kings 9:7 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:**

Just as surely as God would bless the nation while it remained faithful, He would cut those blessings off if the people ceased to keep His commandments. If that took place, the temple and all the wonders which had been seen would turn to ashes.

**1 Kings 9:8 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?**

The change would be so great that all the amazement of those glory days would be replaced by grief at the ruins left behind. The Jew and his nation would be derided by those who observed that which was left.

Anyone who has visited the area of Jerusalem in the twentieth century will certainly realize the truth of the words. The temple area is a center of conversation to those who visit it today. It is not a source of wonder at its elegance. Nor are the Jews today recognized as a great and glorious nation. They have become a hissing and a byword. Some have made a name as business

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men, but Israel is a far cry from what it was in the days of Solomon.

1 Kings 9:9 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.

When the stranger looks at what has happened he does ask just what God said would be asked. Why has God allowed this to deteriorate as it has? The answer is given beforehand. It was because of failure to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

1 Kings 9:10 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,

1 Kings 9:11 (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.

Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre were cooperating. Hiram had furnished Solomon with cedar lumber for the temple and the palace. He had provided gold as Solomon needed it. Afterward, Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in return.

We do not know for certain whether the cities actually became the property of Hiram, or whether the proceeds from these cities was used to pay off the debt for that which Hiram had loaned to Solomon.

1 Kings 9:12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not.

1 Kings 9:13 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.

Hiram was not well pleased with the cities Solomon gave to him. He called them the “land of Cabal.” The Hebrew translated as “land of Cabal” means “worthless.” It is somewhat strange that this did not produce a severe rift in the relationship between the two.

1 Kings 9:14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

1 Kings 9:15 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.

In spite of the displeasure of Hiram over the “worthless” cities, he still loaned Solomon sixty talents of gold for his construction projects. It is possible that this latter statement refers to the time before Hiram received the twenty cities.

Solomon placed a tax on Israel to help finance the impressive building program. The program was not limited to the temple and the palace. It was extended to building up the walls of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

1 Kings 9:16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city,

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**and given it for a present unto his daughter,  
Solomon's wife.**

Gezer was in ruins because the Egyptian Pharoah had attacked the city and burned it. He had then given it to his daughter as a dowry. The reader may wonder along with the present writer, just what kind of a present this was!

**1 Kings 9:17 And Solomon built Gezer, and  
Bethhoron the nether,**

**1 Kings 9:18 And Baalath, and Tadmor in the  
wilderness, in the land,**

**1 Kings 9:19 And all the cities of store that  
Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities  
for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired  
to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all  
the land of his dominion.**

What a building effort. City after city had money and labor poured into it. Solomon made use of some of these cities to care for the horses and chariots he amassed for his military strength. This was one of the areas in which Solomon abused the instructions of Jehovah. He had been told not to collect horses and chariots. For that matter, he had also been told not to collect gold and silver, nor wives.

**1 Kings 9:20 And all the people that were left  
of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites,  
and Jebusites, which were not of the children of  
Israel,**

**1 Kings 9:21 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.**

Israel had been told to destroy the people of the land when Joshua led the invasion of Canaan. They had not done so. There were many of the Canaanites remaining. Solomon decided to use these people as forced labor to man the building efforts. He did also use some of the Israelites, but did not force them into the work.

**1 Kings 9:22 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.**

**1 Kings 9:23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.**

These two verses might lead one to think that no Israelite helped in the construction, and that they served only as slave drivers. The reader may wish to compare I Kings 5:13 with the present verses to get the true picture. Apparently the Israelites were used to supervise the force laborers.

**1 Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.**

**1 Kings 9:24 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.**





Multiple wives were sometimes a way of cementing relations with neighboring nations. Pharaoh's daughter may have been given special preference because of the prominence of Egypt in that part of the world at that time. At any rate, Pharaoh's daughter was moved into the palace. We are not told that others of his harem were treated similarly.

**1 Kings 9:25 And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.**

Burnt offerings were for the most part consumed upon the altar. Peace offerings were shared by the people as feast items. The three times at which burnt offerings and peace offerings were offered were (1) The Feast of Tabernacles (2) The Feast of Pentacost (3) The Passover.

**1 Kings 9:26 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.**

Edom was under the control of Israel at this time. Solomon was able to use Ezion Geber in the land of Edom as a port for ships sailing the Red Sea.

**1 Kings 9:27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.**

Even though Hiram had been disappointed in the cities Solomon had given him previously, it does not

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seem to have ruined the cooperation between the two. Hiram's sailors worked side by side with the servants of Solomon.

1 Kings 9:28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

Ophir was famous for production of gold. The ships of Solomon's navy were able to bring an enormous amount of gold into his treasury. Israel had become one of the most prominent nations of the world under the rule of king Solomon. This would be dissolved in the days to come as God's warnings about fidelity to Him were ignored.



Chapter 10

Chapter ten follows the same pattern as did chapter nine. God has kept His promises to David that the kingdom will become prosperous and famous. Solomon is ruling and is rolling in luxury. His wisdom and the power of the kingdom of Israel have become famous throughout the known world.

Much of this present chapter is devoted to a visit to Solomon by the queen of Sheba. She is amazed at what she finds and the two of them exchange expensive gifts as a means of showing their mutual respect.

The author of I Kings is clearly intent on showing the eminent position of Solomon before he departs from the way of Jehovah. The contrast which is shown later becomes sharper as a result of the picture drawn in chapters nine and ten.

1 Kings 10:1 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.

The wisdom and riches of Solomon were becoming known far and wide. Jesus spoke of the visit of this “queen of the south” when he chastised some of the Jews for their lack of interest. She had come for a great distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon. They were not even interested when the Word of God was at hand.

It was not uncommon for intellectually able persons to test their own wits in comparison with others who had gained reputations. This, of course, is little different than the situation today. Conversation between the well educated sometimes becomes a “battle of wits”



to see who can outdo the other. The queen of Sheba wished to find out whether the gossip she had heard was actually true.

The region from which she came is debated. Some contend that it was Arabia. Others feel that it was Saba and that she was queen of the Sabeans. This would not have been either Arabia or Ethiopia, but would have been a separate people.

1 Kings 10:2 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.

The queen did not come bare handed. She went to some trouble to prove to Solomon that she was no ordinary visitor. Persons of dignity often gave gifts to those whom they visited; these gifts being of value corresponding to their financial worth. This woman presented Solomon with some very valuable offerings. In return, she expected his attention to the riddles or hard questions which she placed before him.

1 Kings 10:3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

Solomon obliged her. He was able to solve her riddles and answer her questions. She was able to see that he possessed extreme wisdom. The word she had been given had not been exaggerated.

1 Kings 10:4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

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**1 Kings 10:5 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.**

Not only did she have opportunity to test his wisdom. She also observed a number of impressive conditions surrounding him. He had built an imposing palace. He caused a most bountiful table to be set with delicious meals. Those who served him were clothed magnificently. When he made his way to the temple of God, the procession could hardly be forgotten.

She was so amazed by what she saw that it took her breath. She realized this was far greater than what she had even heard before her arrival.

**1 Kings 10:6 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.**

**1 Kings 10:7 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.**

What she had heard about the wisdom, the riches and the actions of this man had been hard to believe. Nevertheless, they were true and had even been understated. The reality was twice that which she had heard. She had needed to see it to believe it.

**1 Kings 10:8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.**

She pronounced those who had the privilege of attending on Solomon and experiencing his wisdom first hand a very fortunate people. She had traveled much distance to see and hear. They had access to it constantly.

**1 Kings 10:9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.**

When she said “Blessed be the Lord thy God” she was admitting that the God which Solomon worshipped must be one of immense power and glory. The feats and actions of Solomon could not have been possible without the help of a Divine Hand. This does not mean she understood the nature of the One True God. It is more likely that she felt the national god of Israel was a superior god among many others.

**1 Kings 10:10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.**

The amount of gold and other valuables which the queen gave to Solomon was enough to enhance his treasury even more than had been the case before this. The wealth of the kingdom of Israel was expanding enormously.

**1 Kings 10:11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from**  
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Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

Hiram, the king of Tyre worked in cooperation with Solomon to increase the industrial power of both. Hiram had ships which were able to bring goods of many sorts to Solomon. Hiram, in turn gained from his association with Solomon.

1 Kings 10:12 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.

The almug trees are thought to have been of very beautiful wood. From this wood, Solomon erected great pillars which were placed in the front of both the temple and his own palace. The colonial mansions of the southern United States would have had no advantage on the beauty of the temple and the palace.

1 Kings 10:13 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.

The gifts which the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon were not one sided. Solomon had even more available to offer her than she had to offer him. Anything she asked for, he gave her.

Right here there have been some interesting discussions. Just what were these desires the queen

requested of Solomon. There has been a widespread report that one of those desires was to have a child by Solomon. One of the rulers of Ethiopia claimed that his ancestor was a product of the union of Solomon and the queen of Sheba.

1 Kings 10:14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

The weight of a talent is often given as ninety-six pounds. Six hundred sixty-six talents of pure gold would be a fantastic fortune. Gold is presently worth over \$300 per ounce. The reader can do his own calculations from these figures. This was not all from the queen of Sheba. It was the total of all the tribute which the king received in the course of a year.

1 Kings 10:15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

One statement is laid on top of another until the reader, like the queen of Sheba, has his breath taken.

1 Kings 10:16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

These targets were thought to be defensive weapons which protected the vital organs of a soldier. The ones Solomon had made were simply a way of storing the large amounts of gold which came into his possession.

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**1 Kings 10:17 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.**

The shields would have been larger objects which protected the entire body of a warrior. The value of each of these can be seen by multiplying the price of an ounce of gold by the number of ounces in three pounds. These objects were stored in a central location. They were not used by the military.

**1 Kings 10:18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.**

**1 Kings 10:19 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.**

The king caused a magnificent throne to be constructed. It was made of ivory, which is not the least expensive material known! It was then overlaid with the purest gold. It was elevated to the extent that one must ascend six steps to arrive at the seat. There were armrests on both side of the seat and a carved lion was placed beside each of the arms.

**1 Kings 10:20 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.**

Each step had a carved lion at both ends. No other king in any land had a throne equal to this one. God had

favored Solomon with advantages which could be used for great good, or could be turned toward selfish ends. Which would be the case? Solomon will be tested sharply to see if his attention will be drawn from Jehovah to other interests.

**1 Kings 10:21 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.**

The glitter of yellow gold must have dominated the entire scene. Even the drinking vessels were of gold. Gold was so abundant that silver seemed like it was worthless. Even if this is hyperbole one cannot help but be amazed at the reality behind it.

**1 Kings 10:22 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.**

Tharshish is the same as Tarshish. Hiram's navy was employed to bring tribute from numerous places. Obviously these items were those of luxury. One does not normally use gold, silver and ivory for common purposes. Apes and peacocks are not taken for utilitarian goals. They were for decoration and for entertainment.

**1 Kings 10:23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.**

**1 Kings 10:24 And all the earth sought to**



**Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.**

Notice that these riches and the wisdom which Solomon possessed were not all the result of his human potential. The Lord had blessed him far beyond other humans. His fame reached every part of the known world of his time and has also transcended his own time in that those of us who live thousands of years later join with his own day in our astonishment.

**1 Kings 10:25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.**

What was the motivation for all of these presents? Was this a matter of pressure on his part, or were these individuals courting his favor in hope that he would return their presents in some way that would enhance their own strength and fame?

**1 Kings 10:26 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.**

Solomon's respect for the instructions and commands of Jehovah began to decay with all of this recognition. This is not an unknown pattern of thought among men. Nations that are blessed with fertile soil and wealth very often become self centered. Religion soon becomes habitual rather than sincere and devoted. Israel was

in trouble when led by a king who ignored the will of God.

**1 Kings 10:27 And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.**

God had commanded that those who ruled his people were not to collect women, silver and gold, or chariots and horses. (See Deut. 17:16-17.)

Deu. 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Deu. 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

**1 Kings 10:28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.**

Solomon was guilty of collecting all three of these forbidden things. However, as we read on through the scriptures we find that the wives, the riches and the armies contributed to his downfall rather than his continued growth of service to the Lord.

The linen yarn does not seem to fit with the rest of the items listed. Yet it is known that linen cloth has been an evidence of quality throughout the centuries. Linen clothing and linen table cloths are prized by women.

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1 Kings 10:29 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.

This verse may indicate that the merchandising of horses and chariots in and out of Egypt were controlled by the officers of Solomon. Each chariot was worth six hundred shekels of silver. Each horse of the Hittites and the Syrians would bring one hundred fifty shekels of silver. The material aspects of life were about to completely dominate the thought of Israel's leaders. Such thinking was a prelude to disaster, as we shall soon see.

Chapter 11

This chapter is a pivotal chapter in the history of the relationship between Jehovah and His people. A number of promises had been made to such persons as Abraham, Moses and David. At this time many of those promises had been at least partially fulfilled.

God had warned Israel that it was unwise for them to appoint a human king to rule over them. He was their King. There was no need for another. Saul had failed to obey God's command to kill all of the Amalekites. David had committed both adultery and murder. Solomon had multiplied horses and chariots, married a multiplicity of wives, amassed much silver and gold, and developed a military force of horses and chariots. God had been exactly right. Human kings are fallible. He is not.

In the chapter at hand we find the beginning of the deterioration of the united kingdom. Sexuality and idolatry become corrupting forces which rot the nation from the inside. We have seen the good side of Solomon up to this point. Now we will see the bad side.

1 Kings 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites:

Solomon had a deadly attraction for women. Some say these women were only political pawns which cemented peaceful relationships with the nations listed. The next verse does not allow this explanation. It is not talking about social mixing. It is talking about sexual connections. The word "love" is used here in more than just the sense of affection.

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It is true that the daughter of Pharoah was special in his sight. This may have been a combination of sex and politics. But, each of the five nations mentioned worshipped false gods through idolatry. These were strange women in the sense that they were not a part of the nation of Israel.

**1 Kings 11:2 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.**

The Lord knew in His infinite wisdom that marrying these strange women would result in dividing the attentions of His people between Himself and those which were no gods.

Although normally men have the more dominant personality in a marriage relationship, women exert a strong influence in a quite different manner. The women have a more intimate connection with their growing children than do the men. Very often a mother will have more input into the religious convictions of her children, even after they are grown. Israel ignored this truth when they insisted on appointing a king like the nations around them.

**1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.**

Seven hundred plus three hundred is easy arithmetic which adds up to one thousand. Abraham was a piker when compared to Solomon. Abraham had one wife,

Sarah, and one concubine, Hagar. One writer said Solomon actually had one wife and nine hundred ninety-nine mistresses.

Can the reader not hear one wife after another saying, “Honey, you could make me very very happy if you would build a little altar where I could worship the god I worshipped while I was growing up. Surely it will not injure your God for me to burn a little incense to worship mine!” With one thousand of these sweet little pleas, any man might have a problem. Solomon did.

**1 Kings 11:4 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.**

Solomon did not live to be an old man in terms of Methusaleh and others of the early patriarchs. He died before reaching the age of sixty. Thus he was still not past the age where the bedroom was a temptation.

This is a terrible statement which we read here. When we consider the dedication to Jehovah which Solomon demonstrated in his prayer asking for wisdom to govern God’s people. What a drastic change we see in his thinking from the time when he stated that the “Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.”

This writer has difficulty with the statement that the heart of David was perfect with the Lord his God. Perhaps the difference is that Solomon did not repent of his sins while his father David did.

**1 Kings 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.**

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Ashtoreth was a sex goddess. Milcom is thought to be the same as Molech, the god to whom the people sacrificed their sons by having them pass through the fire.

1 Kings 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

1 Kings 11:7 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.

Chemosh was also a false god to whom human sacrifices were offered. One statement which the idolators made was that one sacrificed “the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.”

1 Kings 11:8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Solomon had pleased a great many of his strange wives through building altars and burning incense and other sacrifices.

1 Kings 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

However, he had not pleased the God of heaven and earth. The Lord was angry with him. More than once Solomon had been warned not to seek out false gods and worship them.

1 Kings 11:10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

The command to worship the Lord, and Him only shalt thou serve, was the great commandment. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, he replied that it was this very truth. Love God and keep His commandments.

1 Kings 11:11 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.

It was now too late for Solomon to evade the consequences of his folly. He had not kept his covenant with Jehovah. It would be necessary to strip him of the rulership of the kingdom. That role would be removed from him and would be given to someone who was presently serving under him.

1 Kings 11:12 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.

In spite of David's serious lapses at times, The Lord held him in high regard. David was now dead, but God promised that He would not remove the kingdom from Solomon until his son had succeeded him on the throne. It is difficult to see how this would show respect to David



since he was not in the land of the living at the time. But, God saw a reason and we will honor it.

1 Kings 11:13 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.

In addition, God informed Solomon that one of the twelve tribes would remain under the rulership of David's descendants. This would not only be for the sake of David, but also because God had chosen Jerusalem as a city in which His name would be placed in the future.

1 Kings 11:14 And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.

The punishment of Solomon would not wait until he had been replaced by his son. Even before that time, the Lord arranged for an adversary or an opponent to arise against him. This was Hadad, who was of the royal seed in Edom. Edom had been conquered by David but Hadad had remained alive.

1 Kings 11:15 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;

At the time that Edom was defeated, Joab was the captain of the Israeli forces. He set out to destroy every male in the land of Edom.

1 Kings 11:16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:)

1 Kings 11:17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child.

Some of the Edomites escaped and fled into the land of Egypt. Hadad was among them. He was but a lad when this took place, but was probably old enough to resent what had happened.

1 Kings 11:18 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.

When Hadad and his companions arrived in Egypt, Pharaoh received them warmly. He apparently saw a need to ally himself with these refugees from David and Joab. Hadad was given a house, food and land.

1 Kings 11:19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

After a period of time, Hadad had so worked his way into the favor of Pharaoh that he was given Pharaoh's wife's sister as his wife. All of this was working into the plan of the Lord to punish Solomon when the time was ripe.



1 Kings 11:20 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.

So close were Pharaoh and Hadad that the son of Hadad was raised in the palace of Pharaoh and played with Pharaoh's own sons. Thus, Hadad had gained a sizable amount of prestige in the land where the Israelites had been in bondage for such a long period of time. There were no doubt many in Egypt who looked down upon the Jews. And there were no doubt many of the Jews who frowned upon the land where they had been slaves.

1 Kings 11:21 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.

Word got around that both David and Joab were dead, Hadad saw this as an opportunity to assert himself. He went to Pharaoh and requested permission to leave Egypt and return to the territory of Edom. No reason is reported as being given for wishing to make the change.

1 Kings 11:22 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.

Pharoah wished to know why Hadad was impatient to return to his own country. Surely he had been well treated while in Egypt. Hadad wisely kept his secret to himself. He replied that he had wanted for nothing, but he still wished to return. The truth was that he still held animosity in his heart and sought a way to even matters.

1 Kings 11:23 And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:

The word translated as adversary is the same word which is rendered as “Satan” in many other places. God was not responsible for the existence of these evil workers, but in His providential workings He allowed them to arise without hindrance.

Rezon was the son of a man who had been at odds with his king in Zobah. It had been necessary for them to exit that place. They were well acquainted with conflict.

1 Kings 11:24 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.

Rezon gathered a number of men who had the same sort of background that he had. When David conquered Zobah Rezon and his men fled to Damascus in Syria to the north of Israel. This man and his band were quite successful in Damascus and rose to positions of power.



1 Kings 11:25 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.

Now Solomon had opposition in both the south and in the north. Hadad was a plague in the south. Rezon was the same from the north. From a position of peace and prosperity, Solomon's reign had become one of friction and adversity. He still ruled over all twelve tribes, but the rule was rapidly losing its efficiency due to his attention to strange wives and idolatry.

1 Kings 11:26 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.

Even more trouble loomed just ahead. Jeroboam, who was of Jewish descent, and who was serving Solomon as an influential official, noted the weakness of Solomon and decided to challenge the king from within the nation. There was trouble from the north, from the south, and from within.

1 Kings 11:27 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.

The series of events which led up to Jeroboam's opposition is given. Solomon had set out to rebuild the city of Millo which was associated with his father David. This apparently required the use of military power.

1 Kings 11:28 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.

Jeroboam had been outstanding in the effort to rebuild Millo. Solomon noted both his courage and his diligence. As a reward, he placed Jeroboam in a position of authority over the house of Joseph. The house of Joseph would have been the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. These tribes were in the northern portion of Israel. Solomon had made a major error. He had given Jeroboam a center of power which would lead to effective rebellion later.

1 Kings 11:29 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:

A very important prophecy is presented now. Ahijah, a prophet met Jeroboam as he was leaving the city of Jerusalem and was wearing a new garment. They met in a field with no one else near.

1 Kings 11:30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

Ahijah then proceeded to take the new garment and tear it into twelve pieces. The twelve pieces were to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

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**1 Kings 11:31 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:**

Ahijah invited Jeroboam to take ten of the twelve pieces of the garment. God had forecast that ten of the tribes of Israel would be removed from the family of Solomon and placed under the charge of Jeroboam.

**1 Kings 11:32 (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:)**

Ahijah reported that God would leave one tribe under the rule of David's descendants. This would be partly because of His respect for David, and partly because of His choice of Jerusalem as a special chosen city. This earthly Jerusalem would be typical of the New Jerusalem which would never be destroyed.

There is a problem here. Can the inspired men of God not do arithmetic. There were twelve tribes. Ten were to be taken from the family of Solomon and put under the rule of Jeroboam. One was to be retained and not given over to Jeroboam. This gives us a total of eleven. What happened to the missing tribe? It becomes clear later that the tribe of Judah was the one tribe Ahijah had said would not be given to Jeroboam. The other tribe was Benjamin. It may be that the reason for this seeming error in arithmetic has to do with the attitude of the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe can sometimes be found supporting the ten northern tribes, and at other times giving it's allegiance to the tribe of Judah.

**1 Kings 11:33 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.**

Ahijah then made it crystal clear as to why this division was to occur. God would not put up with the idolatry into which the nation had plunged itself. The people had not walked according to His commandments. They had divided their attentions between Himself and the false gods of the Zidonians, the Moabites, the Ammonites and others. They had ignored the covenant which said He would be their God if they would be His people.

**1 Kings 11:34 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:**

If a human had been in God's position the kingdom would have been removed from Solomon while he was still alive. Jehovah did not see it that way. He would not take the whole kingdom of Israel away from Solomon, nor would he take even the ten tribes away during Solomon's lifetime. This was in deference to His love for David who had for the most part kept His commandments and followed His will.

**1 Kings 11:35 But I will take the kingdom out**



**of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.**

There were no “ifs ands or buts” about the declaration. The idolatry of the land would cause the major portion of it to be taken from Solomon's son and given to Jeroboam.

**1 Kings 11:36 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.**

Only one of the twelve tribes would be left under the rule of Solomon's son Rehoboam. That tribe would be Judah. This would insure that David would have a lasting influence through the city of Jerusalem. God had chosen Jerusalem as a special city which was to be associated with His name. That influence would continue.

**1 Kings 11:37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.**

The Lord had chosen to make Jeroboam ruler over the major portion of the chosen nation. He was to be in complete control of the ten tribes in the north which came to take the name “Israel.”

**1 Kings 11:38 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.**

The promise was to go even farther. If Jeroboam would walk the same path that David did, the Lord would reward him with a lasting rule over those ten tribes and make a great nation of them, just as He had done for David.

**1 Kings 11:39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.**

The reader is to remember that Jesus Christ is known as the son of David. Though there would be severe punishment for David's wayward descendants who became idolators, The affliction would not last forever. Those living today should know that the Christ is David's faithful son. He rules over spiritual Israel from now on and into eternity.

**1 Kings 11:40 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.**

Solomon heard of the prophecy of Ahijah. Since only Jeroboam and Ahijah were present when the prophecy was declared, it seems that one of the two revealed it. It is not unlikely that it was Jeroboam himself.

Solomon was infuriated. He attempted to oppose the will of God by killing Jeroboam. He still had sufficient power to force Jeroboam out of the land of Israel. Jeroboam fled to Egypt where he was given sanctuary

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by Shishak who was king of Egypt. He remained there until Solomon died.

1 Kings 11:41 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?

There were many more things which Solomon did that are not written in the Biblical record. It is mentioned that they were written in a record known as the “book of the acts of Solomon.” We may ask why this record was not included in the Bible. The answer is that God did not consider those actions as critical to the story of salvation and redemption of sinners.

1 Kings 11:42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

Solomon was but eighteen years of age when he took the throne. Adding these forty years calculates his death at the age of fifty-eight. His lack of dedication in neglecting the use of the great wisdom which he was granted had shortened his life. Fifty-eight years was not a long life in his time.

1 Kings 11:43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

And so Solomon “slept” with his fathers. Does this mean the soul of the man slept? Does it mean the body slept and the soul continued in consciousness? We know

one thing. When the trump of the Lord shall sound in the morning of the resurrection, Solomon will have to give a final answer for his life of folly while in the possession of great wisdom which he had been granted as a result of his prayer that he was but a child and needed such help to rule God's people.

It is very wise to examine our own patten of life. The present writer is glad that the Lord Jehovah is the Judge. He will do that which is right.



Chapter 12

Under the rule of Saul, David and Solomon we have what we usually call the days of the United Kingdom. That title should be applied with a great deal of caution. It was united in the sense that one king ruled rather than two. It was certainly not united in spirit. Power struggles kept the people in a state of chaos for the majority of the time.

In the present chapter we find the friction among God's people turning into internal warfare and resulting in the division of the one kingdom into two monarchies, one under Jeroboam and the other ruled by Rehoboam.

Power struggles cause just as much chaos in the Christian age as they did in the days of Solomon and his successors. Rather than urging people to seek the truth which makes men free, power hungry leaders attempt to line up others in support of their personal doctrinal positions. One of the reasons Christianity does not grow more rapidly is that the men and women on the street can see through these private conflicts and accuse all Christians of being hypocrites. The individual who truly sets out to follow the Word of the Lord is all too often a very lonely person.

1 Kings 12:1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon who is mentioned in the Bible. Here we have a man with one thousand women and almost no sons with the characteristics necessary to follow him on the throne.



Rehoboam was ready to try taking the rule. He went to Shechem, which was located in what would later be known as the northern kingdom of Israel. He anticipated that he would be crowned by the nation as a whole, since his father Solomon had gone to the grave.

He had the opportunity to bring his plans to fruition. Large numbers of the people of Israel gathered at Shechem for the occasion. If he had demonstrated leadership qualities, he might have enjoyed a long and successful reign.

1 Kings 12:2 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;)

Jeroboam I, the one who is known as the son of Nebat, and who caused Israel to sin, had been forced to leave Israel because he had unsuccessfully led a rebellion against Solomon. He had found refuge in Egypt. Now word came to him that Solomon was dead and his son Rehoboam was about to be named king of the entire nation.

1 Kings 12:3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

1 Kings 12:4 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.

Some of the Israelites who were unhappy with the rule of Solomon sent to Jeroboam with an invitation to
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come back to his own land.

In the meantime, the people of the land made contact with Rehoboam and tried to determine what his rulership would mean. Would he require them to work like slaves for his own profit and comfort, and would he lay heavy tax burdens on them to pay for the exorbitant spending projects such as the temple and Solomon's own palace?

If Rehoboam would lighten the yoke his father Solomon had placed on their necks, they would be ready to serve him as king. Although not stated, the opposite was certainly obvious. If he did not lighten the yoke, he could expect opposition to his rule.

**1 Kings 12:5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.**

Rehoboam used common sense just this once. He told the people he needed three days to consider what the nature of his government would be. If he had used those three days wisely, he could have been a happy man ruling over a happy people. He did not!

**1 Kings 12:6 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?**

**1 Kings 12:7 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.**

Rehoboam first went to the men who had advised

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Solomon for many years. They knew the history of the present situation. They knew the hearts of the people. They were capable of giving Rehoboam the advice needed to succeed. He asked them for their advice.

They replied that a wise king should be a servant of the people. He should find out their needs. He should be friendly with them and be ready to plan for the benefit of all the people. If he would do that he need not worry about his own security or that of the people. They would love and serve him if he would do the same for them.

1 Kings 12:8 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:

1 Kings 12:9 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?

Rehoboam was not in sympathy with the counsel of the older men. He rejected it and turned to the younger men who were far less experienced and much more ambitious for power than the older men. He cupped his ear to hear what he wanted in his heart to hear. Did they really think it was wise to lighten the yoke which his father had put upon the people?

Is it not strange that men and women hear so much more readily that which they wish to hear than than which would turn things in another direction. This is true of congressmen, of mayors and of heads of families. Power and profit are strong movers in decision making.

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**1 Kings 12:10 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.**

**1 Kings 12:11 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 young men advised just what Rehoboam wanted to hear. They also told him it should be stated in no uncertain terms. If he became king, he was to tell them the yoke his father had placed upon them would be insignificant compare with that with which he would burden them.

The loins or thighs are far thicker than the little finger. Rehoboam planned to increase their burdens many time over what they had been through under Solomon.

A whip was the type of lash which was used to inflict pain upon a worker who did not put as much energy into his labors as the supervisor felt he should. That was what had been done under Solomon's government. The scorpion was not an insect at that time. It was a whip which had sharp pieces of metal embedded into the leather. When the scorpion fell across the back of the victim, it was capable of leaving the flesh cut all the way to the bone.

It may be the proper moment to ask the present reader if he had been one of those involved in the replacing of Solomon as king, whether he would have

made a decision in favor of Rehoboam. Most of the Israelites had no difficulty at all in deciding Rehoboam was not their man. They needed less pain, not more. They needed less taxation, not more.

**1 Kings 12:12 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.**

**1 Kings 12:13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;**

**1 Kings 12:14 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.**

These three verses are a repetition of the material just before them. No discussion is needed. They are only added to give emphasis.

**1 Kings 12:15 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.**

The Lord knew well ahead of time just what would take place here. He did not force it to happen. He knows the future as well as the past. He knew what Rehoboam would reply to the people and He had revealed to Jeroboam what was going to take place. This had been told to Jeroboam by God's prophet Ahijah.



**1 Kings 12:16** 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.

The people from the ten tribes to the north were furious. They saw no future for themselves in a government ruled by Rehoboam. God had indicated there would be an inheritance for all of the tribes through the descendants of David. They felt that they had been ignored in the past. They did not intend to honor a continuation of partiality, to say nothing of an increase of their tribute.

Thus the people of the ten northern tribes returned to their homes determined to find another solution than accepting Rehoboam as their king.

**1 Kings 12:17** But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

It is almost unbelievable that the Israelites who lived in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin accepted the rule of Rehoboam. They must have felt that their situation under Solomon was much less grievous than did the people of the northern tribes.

**1 Kings 12:18** 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.

Rehoboam was not ready to see the northern tribes declare their independence from him. He decided to send Adoram, who was in charge of collecting the tribute, into the northern tribes to enforce his demands.

It did not work. The people stoned Adoram to death and Rehoboam barely escaped with his own life. He made quick tracks to his chariot and left for Jerusalem.

**1 Kings 12:19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.**

“Unto this day” means until the time of the writing of this record. It was a long enough time to be impressive to the author of I Kings.

**1 Kings 12:20 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.**

Jeroboam believed it was safe for him to return to the land of Canaan. When the people of the northern tribes found he had returned, they invited him to meet with them in an assembly to be appointed as their king. When this passage talks about “all Israel”, it is indication that Ahijah’s prophecy to Jeroboam that ten tribes would be stripped from Solomon’s son and would become a separate people was in progress.

**1 Kings 12:21 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred**

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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 was still not ready to quit. He gathered the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and found that he had one hundred eighty thousand men capable of fighting a war. He was ready to make an attack and force the ten tribes to surrender.

1 Kings 12:22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

1 Kings 12:23 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,

God had other plans! He sent Shemaiah, a prophet, to give a message to Rehoboam.

1 Kings 12:24 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.

Through the prophet, God commanded Rehoboam to disband the military forces he had gathered and send them back to their homes. The removal of the northern tribes from the rule of the house of David was not to be opposed.

We must give some degree of credit to Rehoboam, in that he saw fit to obey the word of the Lord. If he had not obeyed, we can surmise that he and many thousands of his warriors would have lost their lives and the northern tribes would still have been free from a rule centered in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

Jeroboam began to make plans to solidify the government of the northern tribes. He added to the city of Shechem in mount Ephraim. It was not that there was no city before this time. Shechem had played a role in more than one event before this. He must, however, have added to its prestige.

He also did similarly to the city of Penuel or Peniel. He felt that he needed cities which could be used as administrative centers. Jerusalem was no longer available to him.

1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

Jeroboam was concerned that if the people of the north were to go to Jerusalem to observe the major feasts and other activities, they would ultimately forsake him and turn their loyalty back to the government centered in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:27 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.

He was knowledgeable enough to foresee danger to his own life if the people's hearts turned back to Jehovah. He therefore began preparations to appoint places of worship in the north where people could worship rather than going back to the temple area in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:28 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.

Jeroboam met with his advisors and determined to set up two golden calves which would give the people something visible to worship. This was a far cry from the temple with its ark of the covenant. But perhaps it would satisfy them in order that they would not hunger to go south.

He tried to persuade them it was too much trouble to go all the way to Jerusalem. He told them the two golden calves were the gods which had delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh in the times of Moses.

There has been much discussion about what Jeroboam actually meant by having these calves made, making the statement he made here. Was he truly stating that they were idols which had supernatural power and should be worshipped as gods? Or was he only saying they were bases upon which their invisible Lord was standing?

This present writer believes Jeroboam intended the two golden calves to be of the same nature as the golden calf which Aaron had made while Moses was on mount Sinai. The wording is very similar and Jeroboam had spent some time in Egypt before returning to rule over the northern tribes.

1 Kings 12:29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

One of the two golden calves was set up in the extreme northern portion of the northern kingdom in the city of Dan. The other was set up in the extreme southern end of the northern tribes at the city of Bethel. Supposedly this made it convenient to reach one of the two places, rather than going to Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

It seems that the people preferred to worship at Dan in the north rather than in Bethel in the south.

1 Kings 12:31 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.

Jeroboam realized he needed impressive places to center the worship, and also needed priests to lead in the making of the sacrifices. He therefore made high places which could be easily seen from a distance. He appointed priests from tribes other than the Levites. The verse implies that many of these appointees

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were not qualified to fill the roles to which they were appointed. God had specified that the priests be taken from the tribe of Levi only.

**1 Kings 12:32 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.**

God had given instructions for the Feast of Tabernacles to be observed on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Jeroboam saw fit to set a similar feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. We think the statement in this verse that he sacrificed to the calves a sufficient proof that he was supporting idolatry and not the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**1 Kings 12:33 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.**

Jeroboam changed four major instructions which had been given by Jehovah.

1. He changed the place of worship from Jerusalem to Dan and Bethel.
2. He changed the time of the feast from the seventh to the eighth month.
3. He appointed priests who were not from the tribe of Levi.

4. He changed the object of worship from Jehovah to golden calves.

These changes would finally lead to captivity of the northern tribes in the land of Assyria. If one wishes to ignore the basic commands of the true God, he will be given the chance to keep company with those who are also unbelievers. This can be a hideous experience.



## Chapter 13

The kingdom of Israel is now divided. We have Jereboam ruling over ten tribes, plus a portion of Benjamin in the north. We have Rehoboam ruling over Judah and a part of Benjamin in the south.

There will be a number of problems arising. War between the north and the south is one of those problems. Idolatry among the people is another. A general decline of morality will be evident. Jehovah will allow these things to exist. He will let His opposition to them be known over and over. But, He will not cause the extinction of His people. It is through them that He will bring Jesus Christ, a descendant of king David, to become the Spiritual Light of all nations.

**1 Kings 13:1 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.**

The term “man of God” is sometimes used to speak of prophets whose name is known. At other times it is used of men whose name is not known. This time the name of the person is not certain. A number of guesses have been made, but none of them are certain.

This man was acting as a spokesman for the Lord since he is said to come by His word. He came to Bethel, which was one of the two locations of the golden calves that Jeroboam had caused to be set up. At the time the prophet came, Jeroboam was at the altar and was ready to burn incense upon it.

**1 Kings 13:2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar,**

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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 was not timid in stating the divine message. He first said a child would be born among the descendants of David. This child would be named Josiah. This was not the work of a human mind. Josiah was not born until about three hundred years later. No human could make a statement this specific and have it become fact three centuries afterward.

The man of God seems to be speaking directly to the altar. His words are meant for the ears of Jeroboam and any others who might hear of it. The fate of the altar and any others of like nature is made clear. After an extended period of time such altars would be destroyed. The bones of the priests who offered to idols would be replace the incense which was then being offered to them.

The fulfilment of this prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings chapter twenty-three.

1 Kings 13:3 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.

No one who was alive at the time would be present when the actual fulfilment took place. As a confirmation of the truth of what he had said, the man of God announced that a sign would be given to them. The sign would be that the altar at which Jeroboam stood



would be torn apart and the ashes which were upon it would be poured out.

Note that the passage does not say the altar would be utterly destroyed. It say it would be rent. If the reader wonders why it appears that it is the same altar which is destroyed in the fulfilment, this may be the answer. At this time the altar may have only been split, allowing the ashes to fall from it.

1 Kings 13:4 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.

To say the least, Jeroboam was not happy when he heard the word of the Lord from the man of God. He reached out his arm to point at the man and order that he be restrained. He immediately found out he had made a mistake. His arm dried up and became paralyzed so completely that he could not even bring it back to its normal position.

Friends, it is not the greatest idea in the world to stretch out your hand in opposition to the will of God. His arm is infinitely more powerful than your own.

1 Kings 13:5 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.

It was not three hundred years from the time Jerobaom stretched out his hand until the altar was

split and the ashes pour out from it. It may have been repaired by the time of Josiah, or it may have been replaced by another. Whichever is true, Jeroboam got the point! God was with the prophet who had chastised him.

1 Kings 13:6 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.

Oh how quickly the attitudes of men can change when disaster strikes. Sometimes men who have been true to God turn from Him when they feel God has let them down. Other times, as in the case here, those who have been wicked call out to God to help them. Jeroboam pleaded with the man of God to pray for him that his hand might become whole and useful again. The man did offer the prayer. The arm of the king was healed. There could be no doubt whatsoever that the prophecy would be fulfilled concerning Josiah.

We add right here that those who would like to throw out some of the statements of the Bible because they sound like magic or fables, and yet cling to other parts, must face a critical decision in connection with the use of the name Josiah. If this prophecy is to be spurned because the name was used centuries before the child was born, the one who would reject it must also reject the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the use of the name Cyrus before he was born. The unbeliever can not have it both ways.



1 Kings 13:7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

Jereboam was mightily impressed with the power of the man of God; so much so that he asked him to come home with him and refresh himself. He would reward him for having healed him. It makes one suspicious that Jeroboam wanted a man who could do the things this prophet had done on his side and not against him.

1 Kings 13:8 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:

The prophet made his answer to Jeroboam just as definite as he had made his statements at the altar. He would not go to the house of Jeroboam and eat and drink with him if he offered him half of all he owned. We can assume Jeroboam was not a pauper.

1 Kings 13:9 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.

There was an excellent reason for the rejection of Jeroboam's offer. The Lord had given the prophet strict instructions that he was not to eat or drink while on his way to state the prophecy of God. Nor was he to delay on his return. He had no other business in hand but to deliver the message and come back home. Friendly association with those who are foes of God can make the man of God to also be a foe.

1 Kings 13:10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

The prophet did not return on the same way that he had come. He took another route. This would keep him from any association with those who had heard of his sign. Such persons might yield to any temptation to make personal gain by delaying in the midst of idolatry.

1 Kings 13:11 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.

Just as we do not know the name of the prophet who is called a “man of God”, we do not know the name of this old prophet who dwelt in the land where the altar was located. This man’s sons had heard of the things which had happened and the things which had been said. They came to their father and passed on the information to him.

We do not know the specifics of the old prophet’s faith at the time. We can imagine that living in the very community where the idolatrous altar was worshipped, he had lost his loyalty to Jehovah and was puzzled over what position he should take.

1 Kings 13:12 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.



When the father heard what they had to say about the man of God, he wished to know which way he should go to catch up with him.

1 Kings 13:13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon,

He commanded his sons to saddle an ass and bring it to him. They did so and he mounted the animals and set out.

1 Kings 13:14 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 comest from Judah? And he said, I am.

It would have been wiser for the younger prophet to have continued on his way rather than to sit down under a tree. His instructions appear to have been extremely clear. Deliver the message and get home without delay.

When the older man found him he wished to know if he had found the one he was seeking. The younger prophet admitted that he was the one.

1 Kings 13:15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

If I am correct about the mental state of the old prophet, it would make sense for him to desire a conversation with the younger man. Any doubts as to the reliability of Jehovah could have been eased by talking with one who could perform such signs as this

man had done. He invited the younger prophet to come to his home and have a meal with him. This must have been an enticement. We do not know how long it had been since he had enjoyed a meal. He had been told not to eat or drink while on his journey.

1 Kings 13:16 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:

The young prophet gave the same answer he had given to Jeroboam. He could not accept the invitation. He could not go to his home. He could not eat or drink with him.

1 Kings 13:17 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.

He gave his reasons why he was not to join the older man in a friendly association. God had told him he could not form any such associations while he was gone from the land of Judah.

1 Kings 13:18 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.

The older prophet was persistent. He explained that he also was a prophet. He added that he had received a message from an angel who had relayed a message



from God telling him to invite the younger man to his house to eat and drink with him.

The statement was a lie. If he saw an angel, it was not an angel of the Lord and he had been deceived by a wicked angel. If there was no angel, it was an out and out lie which he made up. Since the verse does not say the angel lied, but that the prophet lied, it seems reasonable to conclude that there was no angel and that it was a deliberate lie.

The question comes up as to what the motive was for lying. It may be that he wished to know information which he believed the younger prophet possessed that would help him to deal with his own doubts while living in the midst of an idolatrous place.

1 Kings 13:19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

The younger man of God was persuaded to go to the house of the older prophet and eat and drink with him. The king had not been able to accept his invitation, but the false prophet had managed to do it.

The younger man should have known that when God speaks and gives a message of His will, one does not take the word of anyone other than God when there is to be change in God's expectations. God had not reversed his message. The younger prophet should have refused the message from the lips of the older man.

1 Kings 13:20 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:

While the two sat at the table eating and drinking, the real word of the Lord came to the older prophet.

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This time it was no lie. God had spoken. It is quite possible that even the voice of the older man took on a different character and that he could not even control his own tongue.

**1 Kings 13:21 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,**

As the older man cried out to the young prophet, it was not an angel which spoke. It was a “thus saith the Lord.” The younger man was told that he had rejected the word of the Lord and had not kept the commandment that he was given not to eat or drink while he was on his journey.

It is the present writer’s belief that there were two shocked men. The older man must have been surprised at the message which came out of his mouth from the Lord. The younger man must have been just as surprised to find that he had believed a lie.

What a strong lesson there is for God’s people in any age. We can be led astray by those outside of the Christian family, but we can also be led astray by those with a reputation of godly service. Either way we will have to answer to the Lord for having disobeyed.

**1 Kings 13:22 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.**

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God had said to eat no bread, nor drink no water in the place he had been sent. The young prophet had done both. As a result he would not be buried in the same location as were his fathers.

1 Kings 13:23 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.

After the meal was concluded, the older prophet saddled an ass for him to ride on his way back home to Judah.

1 Kings 13:24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

On his way home, a lion met him and killed him. His body was left lying in the pathway. Both the lion and the ass stood beside the body. This in itself was quite surprising. A lion would have to be very hungry to attack a man on an ass. Why would he then stand by the body rather than feasting upon it?

1 Kings 13:25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

There were men who passed by the site and saw what was happening. They came into the city and told the older prophet what had been seen. What would the older man's reaction be when he heard?

1 Kings 13:26 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.

He guessed who it was right away. He also knew the younger prophet had been slain because of his disobedience to the Lord. It was the Lord's hand which had brought this death about.

1 Kings 13:27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.

Did the older prophet not care that his deception had led to the death of the young prophet? It appears that he did care. He told his sons to saddle an ass and he prepared to investigate things.

1 Kings 13:28 And he went and found his carcasse cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcasse: the lion had not eaten the carcasse, nor torn the ass.

Not only had the lion not eaten the body of the young prophet. He had also ignored the ass which he could also have overcome. If the older man had any real faith, he must have wondered why it was that he was still living and the one he had deceived into disobeying the Lord was dead. What happened next does seem to speak of some regret on his part, as well as a genuine attempt to do what he could after the fact.

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**1 Kings 13:29 And the prophet took up the carcase 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.**

He took up the body of the younger prophet and placed it upon his own ass. Then he brought it back to the city where he lived to give the young prophet a decent and respectable burial.

**1 Kings 13:30 And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!**

He took the body and placed it in his own grave where he expected to be buried at his death. He expressed great regret over the younger man and called him, "My brother." It was too late to undo the damage he had done.

**1 Kings 13:31 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:**

He then instructed his sons to see that his own body was buried in that same grave. He wanted his bones to be side by side with those of the younger man. The next verse gives more information as to why the older man made the odd request.

**1 Kings 13:32 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 older man was thoroughly convinced that the prophecy which the young man had spoken about the destruction of the altar and the bones of the priests who sacrificed upon that idolatrous altar being burned upon it was just as sure to happen as when the altar had rent and poured out its ashes as a sign of God's ability to bring the prophecy to pass.

**1 Kings 13:33 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 all of these supernatural signs, one would think Jeroboam would turn from his evil, sinful ways. It was a wonder that God had allowed either him or the false prophet to go on living, while the one they had deceived had lost his life. It did not have that effect upon him. He went right on with his promotion of idolatry. He appointed priests who were not qualified. He even appointed himself as one of the priests of the high places. It is little wonder that he is known as "the man who made Israel to sin."

**1 Kings 13:34 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.**

Jeroboam did not escaped unscathed. It resulted in his entire household being removed from the land of the living.

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Chapter 14

The passages just in front of us tell the story of the rapid deterioration of both of the divided kingdoms. Jeroboam reigned in the north over the ten tribes. Rehoboam ruled in the south over the tribe of Judah and the very important city of Jerusalem.

The two kingdoms were rivals, with neither of them attending to the will of Jehovah as they should have done. As the kingdoms embraced idolatry and other serious sins, the prophets began to take on more importance and the kings lost much of their respect.

1 Kings 14:1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

“At that time” may mean no more than during the rule of Jeroboam.

Abijah was the son of Jeroboam who would have succeeded him on the throne if all had gone well spiritually. All did not go well. Abijah may have suffered the loss of his life as a result of his father’s folly. God was determined to remove the throne from Jeroboam’s descendants.

The reader should be careful to distinguish between the name Abijah and the name of the prophet named Ahijah who prophesied his death.

1 Kings 14:2 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.



Jeroboam faced an extremely puzzling problem. He had been encouraging his people to worship golden calves. He was doing so himself. Now he came to the realization that he needed much more help than the golden calves could offer. He needed to ask for the help of the True and Living God whom he had insulted.

He thought perhaps he had found the answer by sending his wife to the prophet Ahijah to get an answer to the question as to what was going to happen to his sick son. He knew full well that if he went he would be recognized. It might be that if his wife disguised herself so that she would not be known as the queen, he could get the information he desired without suffering the humiliation of admitting the failure of his confidence in his calves.

He felt certain the Ahijah could respond correctly to the question. He was the prophet who had foretold his rise to the throne and the stripping of the ten tribes from the family of Solomon. We wonder why, if he was so sure of Ahijah's abilities, Jeroboam would have forsaken Jehovah in the recent past.

What happened to Jeroboam has happened to many persons both yesterday and today. They forsake the Lord to pursue the pleasures and the pride of life. Then, when they realize those idols do not have the ability to carry over into eternity, they pray with all their might.

1 Kings 14:3 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 knew that it was not customary to ask for the help of a prophet without offering him a gift. This was not necessarily a bribe. The prophet needed food,

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clothing, etc. This would allow him a living.

Jeroboam would probably have liked to send a far more valuable gift than he did. But, if he did so, the prophet would be able to guess that he was the king. Thus, he send ten loaves of bread, some cracknels, and a small amount of honey. These were the kind of gifts a commoner might be able to send. Along with the fact that his wife was disguised, the prophet might never guess it was Jerobaom who had sent for help.

His wife was instructed to ask what would happen to his son, Abijah. Would he recover, or would he die?

**1 Kings 14:4 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.**

Jeroboam's wife did as he asked. She went to Shiloh where the house of Ahijah was located. In addition to the fact that she was disguised, Ahijah was either partially or wholly blind. In saying his eyes were set we may conclude either that he was no longer able to focus them, or else they no longer functioned at all. Did this insure her security?

**1 Kings 14:5 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.**

If the prophet had found it necessary to depend upon his human resources alone, she would very likely deceived him. He did not have to depend solely upon

his own abilities. God stepped in.

The Lord gave the prophet a complete picture of what was about to occur. He instructed Ahijah just what he should say to Jeroboam's wife. It would not be pleasant news.

**1 Kings 14:6 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.**

As soon as Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps coming through the door, he did not wait for her to open her mouth. Before she could tell him her business, he identified her as the wife of the king. He asked her why she had pretended to be someone else.

Then the prophet told her he had been sent to her with heavy, or distressing information. This introduces a question. Verse four tells us the woman had come to the house of Ahijah. Why then did he tell her he had been sent to her? I believe the answer lies in the nature of prophecy. God had given a message to Ahijah. He intended for him to relay the information to the woman. In this sense, he had been sent to her even if he had not left his own house.

**1 Kings 14:7 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,**

What were these distressing tidings which the woman was to hear? They will consist of a brief review of Jeroboam's sins, and then a statement of God's  
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intended actions in response to the king's manner of life and rule.

Jeroboam needed first of all to recall that God had exalted him above the rest of the people of the northern kingdom and had given him an opportunity to serve Him.

1 Kings 14:8 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;

It was not Jeroboam who had lived in such a way that he deserved this chance. It was strictly the power and insight of the Lord which had resulted in his taking the throne.

This did not mean Jeroboam could ignore the will of Jehovah after he became king. He was still a servant. But, he had not performed as a servant. He had failed to keep God's commandments as David had done. For the major part of his life David had tried to do that which was right in the sight of the real King of the universe.

1 Kings 14:9 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:

Rather than showing his gratitude to God by living righteously, Jeroboam had been more evil than God's leaders of the past. It is not correct to refer this only

to the kings. Jeroboam's wickedness was extreme. The main sin was that of turning his back on God and worshipping false gods. He had sacrificed to both the invisible gods, and the ones he had cause to be made with the hands of men.

We must, however, add that the worship of the false gods and molten images involved sexual licentiousness of the most base kind. True religion is the foundation for mutual cooperation, and dedication to high morality. False religion can be as degrading as true religion is uplifting.

God was angry!!

1 Kings 14:10 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.

The punishment which was to be visited upon this evil man was to be fit for the crimes he had committed. Every male in his family would be cut off from him.

Does this verse say every male of the house of Jeroboam would be killed? At first glance it would seem to say just that. The end of the verse seems to verify that by saying the remnant of his house would be taken away until it was all gone.

There is some difficulty in the portion of the verse which talks of him that is shut up and left in Israel. There are those who apply this to slaves and free men. This seems strange in that it is hardly likely that there would be slaves in the house of Jeroboam. We must not miss the main point. That being the completeness of the punishment of the man and his family.

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The Bible sometimes uses what we would think of as crude words, such as those we would find written on restroom walls. The use of these vivid words has a purpose. Jeroboam and his house were as hateful in the sight of God as human excrement. They would be removed.

**1 Kings 14:11 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.**

Most dogs were not pets in the days under consideration here. They ran in packs in the cities and fed upon that which had recently died. That would be the fate of those of the house of Jeroboam who died in the city.

Vultures soar around in the sky searching for dead flesh upon which they can feed. Those of the house of Jeroboam who died in the fields of the countryside would become food for the meat eating birds. This promise was as certain as is the Word of God.

**1 Kings 14:12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.**

Ahijah told the woman to return to her own house. When her feet entered her own city, her child, Abijah would die. She had received the information for which she had come.

A side note is needed here. No man or woman should conclude that God does not see and know of their sinful actions. Men may be deceived. God is never deceived.

Jeroboam's wife was disguised. The prophet Ahijah was blind. Yet God dealt with the deceit and punished the deceiver.

**1 Kings 14:13 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.**

This child would be the only one of the house of Jeroboam who would receive a decent burial. He would be mourned and would escape being eaten by the dogs or the vultures.

The reason he would be treated differently was that God had seen some good thing in the lad. I refer to him as a lad because he was old enough to have been responsible for his actions.

**1 Kings 14:14 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.**

The king spoken of who would cut off the house of Jeroboam appears to have been Baasha, as recorded in the next chapter, verses 28-30.

We are not to conclude that this king would be a righteous king. We are to conclude that he would bring the dynasty of Jeroboam to an end.

What does the last part of the verse mean? But what? even now. Students of the languages are not convinced they know the meaning. I will suggest what seems a possible meaning, but the verse is really

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puzzling. I think we are to understand that even at that time God was raising up the man who would cut off the house of Jeroboam. He would not wait for centuries to accomplish it.

1 Kings 14:15 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.

The people who were so powerful as long as they walked hand in hand with the Lord, now find themselves being buffeted about like a reed swaying around in a stream of swirling currents.

God had rooted them and grounded them in the land of Canaan. He had given them victory over the idolatrous people who had inhabited it. The situation was now to be a sharp contrast. He would uproot them from the land and scatter them beyond the Euphrates River. They had provoked Him to anger with their attention to the idols and false gods, along with their utter disdain of His commands.

The groves were trees on the high places. They provided shade for the immoral worship services they were practicing.

1 Kings 14:16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

The punishment would begin with the death of Jeroboam's son Abijah. It would not cease until his house had been destroyed.

1 Kings 14:17 And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

1 Kings 14:18 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.

A previous verse had said that the child would die as she entered her own city. This verse says the child died when she came to the threshold of the door of her home. It may be that her home was near the outskirts of the city.

Everything took place precisely as God's prophet had predicted it would. Jeroboam's son died. He was given a decent burial which was not to be the case with the rest of his house.

1 Kings 14:19 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.

We find some of the acts of Jeroboam written in the thirteenth chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles. It might be wise not to be completely confident that the book spoken of in this verse is identical with the Bible books of 1 & 2 Chronicles. Those books may be only excerpts from more extensive records which contained these events.

1 Kings 14:20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

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In a period of twenty-two years Jeroboam had led Israel into such abominations that the northern kingdom of Israel was headed in the direction of Assyrian captivity.

Nadab was another of the sons of Jeroboam. He reigned for a period of two years after the death of his father and was then slain by Baasha who replace him on the throne.

**1 Kings 14:21 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.**

Rather than giving us the complete history of the kingdom of Israel, and then giving the complete history of the kingdom of Judah, the books of I & 2 Kings move back and forth from one to the other. This is a bit difficult to follow at times, but we can understand the need for doing it in the way it is presented.

Thus, we now turn to the history of the reign of Rehoboam in the southern kingdom.

**1 Kings 14:22 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.**

Although not under the direct influence of Jeroboam, who cause Israel to sin, Judah followed the same pattern of disloyalty to Jehovah as Israel had. This caused

jealousy on the part of the Lord. There are times to be jealous and times when jealousy is a grievous sin. It is wrong to be jealous of the success of others when that success is the result of honest endeavor.

On the other hand, a man has reason to be jealous if his wife shares her favors with another man. In the same sense, it is just on the part of the Lord to be jealous when His people offer themselves and their sacrifices to idols.

**1 Kings 14:23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.**

The situation became revolting to God when the people of Judah filled the land with shrines for the worship of false gods. The high places were located on elevated areas where they could be seen from a distance and admired. Images and groves were nearly every place where one could look.

**1 Kings 14:24 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.**

Sodomy is the practice of males having sexual relations with other males. The city of Sodom had such activities and the name of that city has been associated with male homosexuality from that time on.

There were both male and female prostitutes in the land at this time. The false gods who were being worshipped were thought to be pleased with such sexual liberties. Males would pay the fees of other males, or of females. It is not possible to tell from the text

whether there were male prostitutes who were offering themselves to females, but such is not impossible.

This writer once wondered why it was that God had displaced the people who dwelt in the land of Canaan and allowed the Israelites to drive them from the land. We can see from this passage why this was justifiable. What a terrible thing it was then that God's own people practiced the very same sins which had caused the Canaanites to be driven out. Could they not comprehend the fact that the same fate could be their own?

**1 Kings 14:25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:**

The people of Israel and Judah were to be plundered and driven out of the promised land for the same sins which the previous inhabitants had committed.

Shishak, the king of Egypt realized he had the opportunity to overpower the city of Jerusalem where the gold which Solomon had gathered was stored.

**1 Kings 14:26 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.**

Estimates have been made of the value of the three hundred shields of gold which Solomon had made. It would rival the gold deposits of most of the nations of the world as I write these words in the twenty-first century. Shishak took not only the golden shields, but other immense treasures of both the temple of Solomon and the kings house.

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1 Kings 14:27 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.

We are made to wonder why Shishak did not simply stake a claim to the entire land and claim himself to be ruler over it. He might as well have done so. Rehoboam was forced to replace the gold shields with brass ones. The brass shields would have been better for combat, but would be most inglorious when compared to the value of those made of gold.

1 Kings 14:28 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.

These shields were used by the royal guard as they ran before the king when he visited the temple. Afterward, they were placed back in their designated places.

1 Kings 14:29 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?

The same remarks which were true of the sources of this record can be made concerning other actions of Rehoboam which are not included in the Biblical account. Some are given in the Bible books of 1 & 2 Chronicles.



1 Kings 14:30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.

There were power struggles between Rehoboam and Jeroboam until both had ended their lives. Neither could overcome the other and reunite the two kingdoms.

1 Kings 14:31 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.

The close of the record of Rehoboam here in I Kings is not as horrible as that of Jeroboam in the northern kingdom. His burial is mentioned in slightly less derogatory words.

The reference to Rehoboam's mother being an Ammoni-tess may be placed there to help us understand the power of a mother to influence the conduct of a grown son. The Ammonites were idolators.

The reader should be careful about confusing the Abijam in the above verse with Jeroboam's son Abijah. There are three names which are very much the same. We have:

1. Abijah, Jeremiah's sick son who died.
2. Ahijah, the prophet who predicted his death.
3. Abijam, who followed his father Rehoboam as king in Judah.

We can already see the major results of the decay of faith in Jehovah in each of the divided kingdoms. The

record will not be reversed soon. It will grow steadily more hideous.



Chapter 15

We continue our back and forth examination of the history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

The time frame of the present chapter is about 913 B.C. and moving into the early 800s B.C. The two kingdoms had separated from one another at the end of Solomon's reign, about 930 B.C.

The emphasis in this chapter will be on the spiritual decline of Israel. We see the beginning of a long series of evil kings who not only tolerated idolatrous worship, they even promoted it and participated in it. The results are a very ugly picture.

1 Kings 15:1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.

Rehoboam, who ruled over Judah, had died before Jeroboam who ruled Israel. At Rehoboam's death Abijam began a short rule.

1 Kings 15:2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

Children were often identified by their mother's name rather than their father because of the practice of polygamy. A man might have numerous children by different wives. By giving the name of the mother, the person was more specifically known.

Just as a grandfather might be called a father, a grandmother might be called a mother. Today we use the term forefather for a male ancestor. They simply

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called a male ancestor a father. Maachah may have been a grandmother of Abishalom.

**1 Kings 15:3 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.**

Abijam was just as evil as his immediate father. His heart was not set on obedience to the Lord Jehovah. The contrast between the lives of Rehoboam and Abijam with that of David was very sharp.

No man is perfect. All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. David sinned, but repented of his sin and tried to make amends for it. God had forgiven him and considered him a just man.

**1 Kings 15:4 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:**

Both Rehoboam and Abijam deserved to be utterly destroyed. This did not happen because God had forecast the seed of David as the source of the Messiah. His descendants would be discernable from his time until the coming of Jesus Christ.

**1 Kings 15:5 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.**

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The matter of Uriah the Hittite was the murder of the man. The murder of Uriah was an effort on the part of David to cover up his adulterous union with Uriah's wife Bathsheba. For some reason the occasion in which David numbered the forces of Israel when command not to do so is not considered in this verse. (See I Chron. 21:1-17, particularly verse seventeen.

1 Chron. 21:17 And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

1 Kings 15:6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

1 Kings 15:7 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.

Just as there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, there was war between Abijah and Rehoboam throughout the three year reign of Abijah. When God's people turn from Him, peace is replaced by division and war.

1 Kings 15:8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

The mention of sleeping with one's fathers implies an end to the process. One day all that are in the

graves will be called forth to face their Lord in the final judgment. Some like Rehoboam and Abijam may not enjoy awakening in the morning of the resurrection.

While Jeroboam was still alive and was reigning in his twentieth year over Israel, Abijam was replaced in Judah by Asa. Asa was one of eight kings who are recognized as good or moderately good in Judah. There were none such kings in the northern kingdom of Israel. Asa joins two others, Josiah and Hezekiah as truly spiritual and making a sincere attempt to turn Judah from idolatry to the worship of the True God.

1 Kings 15:9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

1 Kings 15:10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

Asa ruled over Judah for a period of forty-one years. He was allowed a lengthy period of time to bring his efforts to control idolatry to an end. He was only partially successful.

1 Kings 15:11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

1 Kings 15:12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

Asa's efforts faced a formidable combination of obstacles. When people believe they are worshipping a god, they go about it with a greater devotion than they would other activities. When they are doing something which gives them much sensual pleasure, they are

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drawn to repeat the acts that provide that pleasure. These two were combined in the worship the sodomites offered to their sex gods. It is a mark of Asa's great dermination to be true to Jehovah, that he kept on until the sodomy and idolatry were abolished.

**1 Kings 15:13 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.**

Adam Clarke says concerning the idol which Maachah had made and placed in a grove was of such nature that the learned would already have had it explained to them and those who were not scholars would not profit by his writing comments upon it.

Since the idol was connected with sodomy and idolatry, we do not have much guesswork to do in deciding that it had to do with the male sexual organ.

Because of the corrupt nature of the idol, Asa removed her as queen-mother of the people, and destroyed the idol.

**1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.**

The tone of this verse seems to imply that some traces of the sins committed in the high places still continued, though the idolatrous worship was brought to an end. It is just possible that the high places were actually converted to places of worship to Jehovah, though the word "neverthe-less" would argue against that position.

**1 Kings 15:15 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.**

The king of Egypt had taken vast amounts of treasure from the temple when he invaded not too long before this. It must be that these dedicated things had been given by the people after the removal of temple treasures by the Egyptians.

**1 Kings 15:16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.**

The struggle for power continued between the two kingdoms under these two kings. Asa of Judah and Baasha of Israel as long as the two ruled.

We can imagine that the appetites of the nations nearby were whetted by this constant bickering. They would have sensed that the strength of both Israel and Judah was declining. We will see the proof of this very soon.

**1 Kings 15:17 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.**

When Jeroboam ended his long reign in Israel, Baasha replaced him. Baasha decided to oppose any traffic between the two kingdoms. A part of the reason for this could have been that Jerusalem still had strong attraction for some of the people of Israel. With the temple located there, some of Baasha's subjects could

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have been tempted to leave the northern kingdom and become a part of the south.

Ramah was located on a route which had in the past seen much travel both in and out of Jerusalem. By fortifying Ramah, Baasha could oversee that route and avoid having his people change their loyalties.

1 Kings 15:18 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, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

Asa felt threatened by the actions of Baasha. He prepared to counteract them by making a league with Benhadad, the king of Syria. The capitol of Syria was Damascus. Asa took the treasures which had been dedicated to the temple and the king's palace and gave them to Benhadad to gain his assistance against Baasha. He must have felt that by diverting Baasha's attentions from the border of Judah and Israel to the forces of Benhadad to the north, he could protect the interests of Judah.

For the moment he was right. In the long run, he was wrong. Later Benhadad became a force to contend with in Judah as well as in Israel.

1 Kings 15:19 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 claimed a league had been formed between Judah and Syria. By sending the presents, he was indicating his desire to gain the support from Benhadad that he claimed had been agreed upon between their forefathers. He called upon Benhadad to break any partnership he might have with Israel and cause Baasha to cease his aggressive policies on the Judah/Israel border.

1 Kings 15:20 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, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

Benhadad appreciated the nice little present Asa had sent him. He sent his army against the cities of Ijon and Dan, and invaded the land of the tribe of Naphtali in north Israel. Benhadad's power was thus extended and both Israel and Judah were weakened.

1 Kings 15:21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

Asa's plan did draw off the forces of Baasha. He quit fortifying the city of Ramah and went back to Tirzah, which was apparently serving as the capitol of the northern kingdom at the time.

1 Kings 15:22 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.

The city of Ramah had existed since long before this time, but Baasha had planned on making it a major fortress from which he might launch attacks against Judah.

The actions of Benhadad in the north brought an abrupt halt to the fortifying of the city and allowed Asa to send a command throughout Judah for men to take the materials which Baasha had collected in Ramah and use them to build his own cities.

1 Kings 15:23 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.

The matters reported in the Bible are only a part of the acts of Asa. The records of the daily events of the land of Judah contained other accounts of his deeds.

It seems that he was incapacitated to a very large degree in his last years with some disease affecting his feet. This could have been gout. It has also been suggested that the word feet could have been translated as lower parts, which could apply to the whole lower part of the body in general.

1 Kings 15:24 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.

It is sad to read of the death of any of the few good kings of Judah. Most were not of that class. Asa was buried in the city of David, which is sometimes considered as Jerusalem, but which is more accurately a select portion of that city.

1 Kings 15:25 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.

Now we turn back to focus our attention more completely upon the rulership of the northern kingdom of Israel. Nadab was the son of Jeroboam and he had a very short rule of two years, after his father died.

1 Kings 15:26 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.

Every king of Israel was a bad king. Jeroboam had caused Israel to sin. His son Nadab followed in his footsteps. God was no more pleased with Nadab than he was with the man's father.

1 Kings 15:27 And Baasha 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.

1 Kings 15:28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

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The prophet had stated in I Kings 14:10-11 that Jeroboam's house would be destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled when Baasha slew him at Gibbethon, a Philistine city.

**1 Kings 15:29** 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:

**1 Kings 15:30** 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.

(See 1 Kings 14:10-11.)

1 Kings 14:10 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.

1 Kings 14:11 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.

**1 Kings 15:31** 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?

**1 Kings 15:32** And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

**1 Kings 15:33** 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.**

As pointed out before in this chapter, Baasha used Tirzah as his capitol over Israel during his reign. All Israel does not mean the kingdoms had reunited. It refers only to his ruling over the northern kingdom.

**1 Kings 15:34 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.**

The sin continues. The Lord's anger increases. The future of both Israel and Judah becomes more precarious. If His people wished to live like the nations which had been driven out of the promised land to make room for them, they might very well look forward to being driven out of the land themselves.



## *Chapter 16*

The material we are now considering is extremely difficult to discuss, either in classwork or in commentaries. God's people had made a horrible mistake in thinking that His plan of government was inferior to that of the nations surrounding them. They had insisted upon having a human king. They were allowed to try the experiment and found it to be disastrous.

The kingdom soon split into two. This was followed by a general abandonment of the will of Jehovah. Idolatry became common. Along with the idolatry came sexual perversion of the rawest sort. The spiritual condition of the people declined to a point of utter chaos.

**1 Kings 16:1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,**

Jehu was a prophet of the Lord. God gave him a message to be presented to king Baasha. It was not to be a pleasant one.

**1 Kings 16:2 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;**

God indicated that His providence was a very important part of Baasha's rise to power. God sometimes speaks of those things which he permits to take place as if He actually determined their direction. God never promotes wickedness. He does sometimes

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permit the wicked to demonstrate the folly of ignoring His instruction and advice. That is what took place in the present case.

Just as Jeroboam had done, Baasha had walked in his footsteps. Just as God had been provoked by the sins of Jeroboam, He was at this point provoked by the same type of sins under Baasha.

1 Kings 16:3 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.

The descendants of Baasha would not be allowed to continue as a dynasty in the land. The same fate awaited them as destroyed the house of Jeroboam.

1 Kings 16:4 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.

It mattered not whether these descendants were dwelling in large cities, or in the rural sections of the land. The dogs and the meat eating birds would consume their dead bodies. It is likely that we are to assume Baasha's descendants to be as carnal minded as he was.

1 Kings 16:5 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?

If the reader wishes to pursue this picture farther, the reference can be found 2 Chronicles 16:1

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**1 Kings 16:6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.**

Neither Jeroboam nor Baasha left a very pretty record behind them. Baasha was buried in Tirzah, which was still the capitol of the northern kingdom at that time. It would soon be replaced by the city of Samaria.

The Lord did allow Elah, Baasha's son, to replace him as king for a "day."

**1 Kings 16:7 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.**

The people should have been sufficiently aroused by the wickedness of their kings that they would plead with Jehovah to allow them to return to Him as the Lord of both heaven and earth. The few who may have learned the lesson did not have the influence to reverse the wicked directions in which things were moving.

**1 Kings 16:8 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.**

We have here another anchor point in keeping our eye on both kingdoms at the same time. Asa had ruled for twenty-six years in the southern kingdom when

Elah, a descendant of Baasha began to rule in the north. He managed to rule for just two years.

**1 Kings 16:9 And his servant Zimri, 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.**

It just so happened that Zimri, who was the commander of one half of Elah's military chariots, had his eye upon the throne. When he found that Elah had entered into a drunken spree, he saw his opportunity to seize control. Elah was helpless!

**1 Kings 16:10 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 murdered Elah while the latter was drunk. It sounds as if the arithmetic is incorrect in saying Elah reigned for two years since he came to the throne in the twenty-sixth year of Asa and was killed in the twenty-seventh year. This was a common way of counting regnal years. A part of the year a king came into power was counted as a year of reign.

**1 Kings 16:11 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.**

After Baasha was dead, Zimri killed every male in the household of Baasha that might have a claim on the throne. Even Baasha's friends were eliminated. What

seem to be crude words in discussing the males in the books of Kings would perhaps be slightly less vivid if the word “urate” was used. But the Bible at times chooses words which hit like a hammer.

**1Ki 16:12 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.**

God did not force Jeroboam to sin and cause Israel to sin. Nor did God cause Zimri to cause the death of the descendants of Baasha. But by His foreknowledge, God did know what would happen. He predicted it and the people could watch the prediction fulfilled.

**1 Kings 16:13 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.**

Idols are often spoken of as vanities, or “nothings” in the scriptures. When men turn to the Lord, they are assured that He causes things to work together for their ultimate good. When they turn to vanities, they have appealed to that which has no power whatsoever to respond to their appeals.

**1 Kings 16:14 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?**

We need not look for an enormous amount of data in the chronicles. Two years did not give him much time to accumulate a lengthy record.

**1 Kings 16:15 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.**

If the reign of Elah was too brief to allow accomplishments, that of Zimri was even shorter. He held the throne for but seven days. They were in conflict with the Philistines, just as they were in constant conflict among themselves.

**1 Kings 16:16 And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.**

It did not take long for the news that Zimri had slain Elah to reach the ears of the army which was facing the Philistines. It seems that the army saw this as very undesirable. They immediately chose Omri, who was the captain of the army, to be their new king. This left Zimri in a very precarious position. His life was doomed.

**1 Kings 16:17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.**

Omri called upon the army to leave their conflict with the Philistines and attack the present capitol of the northern kingdom. The military supported Omri in this effort.



**1 Kings 16:18** 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.

The capitol was a complex of buidlings. The palace of the king's house was but one of them. Zimri concluded that the best thing he could do was to burn the palace down while he was inside of it. He did that and ended both his life and his seven day reign. Omri had become ruler of the north.

**1 Kings 16:19** 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.

**1 Kings 16:20** 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?

Jeroboam had a regular parade of wicked rulers who followed in his footsteps. Each one came to a disastrous end and the record does not fail to take note of it.

**1 Kings 16:21** 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.

Even though Omri had the support of those whom he had commanded in the armed forces, a number of the people chose to follow Tibni. Now not only had the north separated from the south, the north found itself divided and wasting their energies. A people who are

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determined to ignore the will of the Lord are destined to find themselves in serious disarray.

1 Kings 16:22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

It would appear that the military had a tendency to follow Omri, and the general population were attracted to Tibni. At any rate Tibni failed to prevail and at his death Omri became sole ruler of the northern kingdom.

1 Kings 16:23 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.

Again we run into some arithmetical complications. The answer seems to be that Omri reigned for six years in Tirzah with Tibni being a competitor for the throne. Then Tibni died and Omri became sole ruler, at which time he decided to move the location of the capitol.

1 Kings 16:24 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.

The reader should be careful to distinguish between the city called Samaria and the general region which was known as Samaria. The city of Samaria was on an elevation about three hundred feet above sea level, and was surrounded by a plain. Trade routes passed
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close by the city. It was named after the man who had owned the hill.

**1 Kings 16:25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.**

If the reader thought the situation had reached a point so low that it had hit rock bottom and could descend no farther, the last part of this present chapter will erase all hope. Omri is said to have been worse than all that preceded him. We think this did not mean all of them added together, but that he was more evil than any one of them. In either case we would certainly not wish to be in his shoes on the day of final judgment

**1 Kings 16:26 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.**

The reader is reminded that the idols which the people were worshipping were referred to as “vanities.” The truth is that those who choose to walk in the ways of Jeroboam will find they would rather be simply erased from existence than to find themselves in the everlasting fire of hell.

**1 Kings 16:27 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?**

Over and over we are told that other information was to be found written in the book of the chronicles

of the kings of Israel. Certainly the record we have in our present books of First and Second Chronicles would have been at least a part of such a book. This presents us with a quandry as to how our present commentary is to address these overlapping matters. At present it does not seem best to duplicate the remarks of First and Second Samuel, plus First and Second Kings in our upcoming discussion of the books of First and Second Chronicles. We will attempt to solve that problem when and if we get closer to it.

**1 Kings 16:28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.**

This present commentator has the distinct feeling that Omri is not sleeping with his fathers as peacefully as he might wish. If he is, his awakening will no doubt prove to be quite a shock.

It would be nice to look forward to a much more righteous nation under the rule of Ahab than had been the case for those who came before him. Sadly, such was not to be the case. Things went from horrible to hideous.

**1 Kings 16:29 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.**

Note the fact that the times of the reigns of the northern kings is pictured by comparison with such and such a year of the reign of Asa in the kingdom of Judah.

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Ahab is said to have begun his reign in the thirty-eighth year of Asa's reign. Asa is a very durable individual.

1 Kings 16:30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

Could the Lord have made the case against His people bypassing Him to choose their own rulers any clearer? It will not be very long before chaos will turn into captivity. The northern kingdom will be taken by the Assyrians. Then the southern kingdom will fall into the hands of the Babylonians. It is highly unwise to ignore the plans of the Allwise Creator and Sustainer of the universe!

1 Kings 16:31 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.

Ahab was a sad enough case without marrying one of the most wicked women who ever lived. She was not an Israelite. She was an idolatress who worshipped Baal. This influence was to be devastating to the people of God. Any persons who would have been true to Jehovah were about to be smothered by the wave of idolatry and lascivious worship which was associated with Baal.

1 Kings 16:32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

The palace of the Lord had been burned down over the head of Zimri in Tirzah. Now we have a house of Baal and an altar to Baal standing within that house. God will not accept this kind of actions on the part of His people. Something was about to be done to demonstrate His anger.

1 Kings 16:33 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.

Most of these kings of the northern kingdom were said to be more provoking to Jehovah than the ones preceding them. When a human parent becomes angry with a misbehaving child, that child may expect difficult times just ahead. It is the same with the Father in heaven. Israel is about to find out the unhappy consequences of turning one's back on God.

1 Kings 16:34 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.

Jericho had been the recipient of a curse by Jehovah. The city was never to be rebuilt because of its opposition to the Israelites as they entered the land of Canaan. The man who led the rebuilding of that city was to suffer the loss of his eldest child when he caused the foundation of the city to be laid. He was to lose his youngest child when the city was rebuilt and the gate of the city was erected.

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See Joshua 6:26.

Josh. 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.

Verse thirty-four of the present chapter assures us that the curse was fulfilled. **Friends, do not make God angry with you!**

## Chapter 17

Up to this point during the time of the kings of Israel, we have not heard much of the activity of prophets. God allowed Israel to find out for themselves that human kings, like those of the nations around them were not the best possible form of government. Things went from bad to worse.

Now we will have the opportunity to observe God's message through the prophets, as He points out to both the kings and the people what corrections must be made to repair the spiritual diseases which have infected the land; idolatry being the worst of these plagues.

**1 Kings 17:1 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.**

Elijah burst upon the scene with no impressive genealogical listing. He is simply said to be a Tishbite from the land of Gilead. We do not even know how he managed to obtain a conversation with king Ahab. With abrupt boldness this rough and rugged man of God warned the king that as certainly as the Lord, God of Israel lived, there would be neither rain nor dew until God reversed the condition through His Word. The word "My" here indicated the word would come through the mouth of Elijah, but would actually be the pronouncement of Jehovah.

**1 Kings 17:2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,**

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1 Kings 17:3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

As soon as the divine message to Ahab had been delivered, God told him to leave Ahab's presence and seclude himself beside the brook Cherith, near the Jordan River. If Elijah had remained in the vicinity where he made the announcement to Ahab, either Elijah would have been killed, or Ahab would have had to be punished for trying to kill him. God was not ready for either of these things to take place yet. There were lessons to be taught.

1 Kings 17:4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

Why would Elijah be told to drink from the brook Cherith rather than from the much larger flow of the Jordan River? The brook would dry up from the drought much sooner than the River. The probable reason is that the Jordan was a muddy river and hardly fit for human consumption.

Elijah was to get his solid food from the ravens of the area who would be caused to bring him that food. They could range far and wide. They also preferred food which would be too stale for Elijah to eat. It is clear that God was protecting Elijah through supernatural intervention.

1 Kings 17:5 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.

1 Kings 17:6 And the ravens brought him bread

and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Elijah did exactly as the Lord told him to do. God did exactly as he had promised He would do.

1 Kings 17:7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

As the drought continued for some three years, the brook began to dry up. Elijah could have noted day by day just how long it might be before his source of water had ended. Would his life be ended?

1 Kings 17:8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

If the Lord had not intervened Elijah would most certainly have died. Here is one of the great lessons of the chapter. God does care for His own. Sometimes it looks as if He does not, but either in this world or the world to come, He will see that those who are faithful unto death will receive a crown of life. Let us note the means which were used in the case of Elijah.

1 Kings 17:9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Elijah was told to leave his place beside the brook and go to Zarephath. There he would be provided with food and drink by a widow whom He had commanded to do so.



This was not the usual pattern. The widows, orphans and poverty stricken were cared for by others. How would a poor widow who was trying to stay alive during a drought possibly have supplies for both herself and another mouth?

1 Kings 17:10 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.

Regardless of what would have seemed a waste of time under natural circumstances, Elijah obeyed the Word of the Lord. When he arrived at the gates of the city, he recognized the widow woman whom he had been told to contact. She was in the process of gathering some sticks to build a fire.

She must have been much amazed at the request of Elijah that she bring him a drink of water. Water was scarce. Did he not realize that she might not even have enough to keep herself alive?

1 Kings 17:11 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.

To add to her amazement Elijah called out to her as she went to get him a drink of water, that he would also like a small amount of bread. This would have been a baked piece of something like corn meal.

1 Kings 17:12 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.

In spite of the fact that the Lord had commanded her to care for Elijah, she could not see how it was possible. She had only a handful of meal in the bottom of an otherwise empty barrel. There was a very small amount of oil which would have been used to mix with the meal. Even that moment she was trying to find enough wood to bake one last meal for herself and her son. Then they would face death.

1 Kings 17:13 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.

Then Elijah gave her an answer which must have opened her eyes as wide as dollars. She was to use that last bit of meal and oil to make a cake and bring it to him. He was a man of God. She was to show her confidence in God's love by entrusting Him to solve the problem facing herself and her son. After she had brought the meal and water for Elijah, God would respond as only He was able to do.

1 Kings 17:14 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.

Elijah added that the Lord had revealed what was about to happen. That handful of meal in the bottom of the barrel would be replaced by the Lord Himself.

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The bit of oil which she intended to use with the meal would also not run out. Until God saw fit to let it rain again, there would be both meal and oil to keep the widow and her son alive.

You see, my friends, none of us could provide one iota of either food or drink for ourselves if God's providential care did not make it possible. Ahab and Jezebel needed to learn just how helpless they could be if God decided to discontinue their food and drink. We are told to pray to Him, "Give us this day our daily bread." Those are not idle words.

**1 Kings 17:15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.**

**1 Kings 17:16 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.**

It took an enormous faith upon the part of this woman to accept the command of God to feed His prophet. But she had such faith! She fed Elijah. Then God returned the favor by feeding her and her son, as well as Elijah, for many days. Since the drought lasted for some three years, this was quite a supply of food. Only God could have made such possible.

**1 Kings 17:17 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.**

The woman's son then became deathly sick. We are not told the nature of the illness. We are told that he

had ceased breathing. For all practical purposes, in that day and time, he was as good as dead.

**1 Kings 17:18 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 woman felt that somehow the sickness of her son had been brought about because of sin which she had committed. It is just as possible that it came about in order that God could teach still another lesson. One who has proven faithful to God is often tested again to determine just how much trust they have. The woman had no doubt sinned. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of the Lord. She wondered if her sins were now to be punished by the loss of her son.

**1 Kings 17:19 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.**

Elijah made it clear that he did not agree with the woman that he had come to punish her sins by causing the death of her son. He called for her to bring the child to him. Then he departed from her presence to the upper room which had been assigned to him for sleeping quarters. He laid the lad in his own bed.

**1 Kings 17:20 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?**



Elijah himself was grieved beyond words over the piteous conditions of the woman and her son. After all they had done to help him, he could not understand why the child had been allowed to die. That was not the normal reaction of the God Elijah loved and served when someone showed such dedication to others and trust in Him as the widow had shown.

**1 Kings 17:21 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.**

The number “three” seems to be particularly meaningful to the Lord. It is used over and over in the Holy Scriptures.

Elijah stretched himself out upon the child and begged that God would bring his soul and body together again. The prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a righteous man. We expect God to hear his prayer.

There is another somewhat unrelated thought here. In this case death meant the separation of the soul from the body. The relationship between the soul and the spirit is of special interest. God is said to be a Spirit. Man was created in the image of God. Did the spirit of the child depart along with the soul? Are the soul and the spirit of man identical?

**1 Kings 17:22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.**

God not only heard Elijah's plea. He answered it by returning the child to life. The soul of the lad came back

into his body. There are three basic parts of a living human. There is body. There is spirit, and there is soul. Body provide the mechanism for the accomplishment of physical actions. Spirit provides the energy to perform those actions. Soul provides the consciousness which reasons, loves, plans and remembers, etc. The child was dead. He lived again.

**1 Kings 17:23 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.**

No reason is given as to why Elijah took the child out of the presence of his mother to plead with the Lord for the return of his life. But, when the boy lived once more, Elijah must have been nearly as joyous as the mother.

**1 Kings 17:24 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.**

At times it takes a great deal of persuasion to prove the existence of God, to prove that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the first and greatest command for men is “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” This widow had seen wondrous things when the food in the barrel and in the cruse did not run out. Even so, she still needed more evidence. The revival of her son met the need.

Dear reader, God knows your needs. Love Him and serve Him. He will not abandon you.

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Chapter 18

Elijah had predicted that it would not rain in the land again until Jehovah indicated through Elijah that it would do so. It had been over three years since that prediction had been made. During that time Elijah had made himself scarce. Now the time had come for the drought to be brought to an end. Elijah would be the one to make the announcement.

1 Kings 18:1 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.

The new testament gives us additional information as to the period of time the drought lasted. (See Luke 4:25 and James 5:17)

But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six monthsk, when the great famine was throughout the land (Luke 4:25.)

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months (James 5:17.)

What looks as if it was a contradiction in the length of the drought is actually due to the method of counting years at the time. The point to be noted is that a drought which lasted more than two years should have been sufficient to catch the attention of every person in the land.

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The Lord then instructed Elijah to go to king Ahab and relay an important message. Rain was about to fall once more upon the earth.

**1 Kings 18:2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.**

Elijah did as he was commanded. This might not have been the most comfortable errand Elijah had ever carried out. Ahab was not especially fond of him after he had pronounced God's punishment of the drought. He had sought for the prophet and would have killed him if he could have found him.

**1 Kings 18:3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:**

In the meantime Ahab had called Obadiah, who was one of the most important men in his service, to help the king search out any deposits of water which could be found. Even the king himself felt the need to take part in the search.

**1 Kings 18:4 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.)**

Obadiah is described as a man who truly feared the Lord, even though he was serving Ahab who had very little respect for Him. Obadiah had risked his very life by secreting two groups of fifty prophets each in a cave,



and then seeing they were provided with food and drink. This would not have been an easy matter to arrange, nor would it have been easy to prevent Ahab from gaining knowledge of what Obadiah had done.

**1 Kings 18:5 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.**

Ahab directed Obadiah to go into one part of the land in search of any water sources which could be found. The king would then move into another portion of the land and do the same. If such water sources were not found, there would soon come a time in which all of the livestock would perish.

**1 Kings 18:6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.**

The two men then separated and each went on his own way. This seems to have been providentially arranged by the Lord. He needed to arrange a meeting between Obadiah and Elijah without king Ahab being present.

**1 Kings 18:7 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?**

As soon as Elijah approached Obadiah, he was recognized as a prophet of the Lord. Obadiah showed his profound respect for Elijah by falling on his face to the ground, and asking for certain if it was truly him. It was most surprising to find him here after those many long months in which the prophet had made himself scarce.

**1 Kings 18:8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.**

How simple Elijah's response to the question was! I am Elijah. Go tell Ahab I am here. If Ahab was looking for water, the one who could end the search had arrived.

**1 Kings 18:9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?**

Obadiah believed it was Elijah, but he was horrified that he was being told to go and tell Ahab he had found him. He wanted to know whether Elijah intended to see him lose his life.

**1 Kings 18:10 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.**

**1 Kings 18:11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.**

Obadiah explained that Ahab had gone all out to find Elijah. He had gone to one nation or kingdom after  
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another without success. He had even caused those people to take an oath that they had not seen Elijah.

Now Obadiah was being told to just walk up to king Ahab and tell him, "Elijah is here." This would place Obadiah in critical danger.

1 Kings 18:12 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.

He was extremely fearful that while he had gone to call Ahab, the Lord would take Elijah away to some place where he could not be found, as had been true for some three years just past. Then when Ahab found Elijah was not there, he would slay Obadiah. That was not right. Obadiah had feared God his whole life. He did not see why he should be cut off now as a result of telling the truth.

1 Kings 18:13 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?

Had Obadiah not heard that Elijah had already endangered his life by hiding one hundred prophets of God and fed them with food and water which were so scarce.

1 Kings 18:14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell

thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

What did Elijah think would happen if he were now to tell Ahab he knew where Elijah was? By putting two and two together, the king would conclude that Obadiah had also helped Elijah to hide from him. Then Obadiah's life would be taken.

1 Kings 18:15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

Elijah gave Obadiah his solemn promise that when Ahab was brought to where they were, Elijah would be present. Obadiah had nothing to worry about. He would be there!

1 Kings 18:16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

1 Kings 18:17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

Obadiah had had no real reason to worry. Elijah had not disappeared when he and Ahab came back together. As soon as Ahab realized it was true that he was seeing Elijah again, he went on the offensive. He demanded to know if Elijah was really the one who had caused the drought and resulting famine in the land. We conclude that if there had been anything Ahab could have done to punish Elijah for the drought, he would have done it.

1 Kings 18:18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house,
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**in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.**

Elijah put the matter straight immediately. It was not he that had caused the troubles Israel was enduring. It was Ahab and the others in Israel who have turned from God's commandments and had become worshippers of the false god Baal.

**1 Kings 18:19 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 informed Ahab that it was time for a showdown between Baal and Jehovah. The odds would be a bit uneven since there was but one of God's prophets present, while there would be four hundred fifty of the prophets of Baal, plus another four hundred false prophets whom Jezebel had been feeding. All were to gather at mount Carmel to witness a very important test.

Carmel was a ridge of several miles in length. From the heights of the ridge one could look out over the Mediterranean Sea. It is one of the most beautiful scenes in the entire territory.

**1 Kings 18:20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.**

Ahab accepted the challenge. He called the prophets of Baal together. This must have been an interesting match. One against four hundred. But, one and the

Lord are far more powerful than four hundred without the Lord.

**1 Kings 18:21 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.**

Elijah wasted no time. He accused the people of not being willing to make up their minds. They had been hopping from one viewpoint to another like a bird hopping from branch to branch in a tree. They needed to make up their mind which was God, was it Baal, or was it Jehovah?

The people were in a state of numbness. They feared to take a stand for either Baal or Jehovah.

**1 Kings 18:22 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.**

**1 Kings 18:23 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:**

Elijah made a proposition that the prophets of Baal could hardly turn down. The worship of Baal was directly connected with the worship of bulls. Elijah called upon them to choose a young bull for a sacrifice. He would take a second one. Baal's prophets could take whichever one they wanted. He would take the other.

Each bullock was to be cut into pieces and laid upon  
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wood. No fire was to be put under the sacrifice. The fire was to be provided by the True God of the universe.

1 Kings 18:24 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.

The prophets of Baal were to call upon Baal and Elijah would call upon Jehovah. Whichever of the two caused fire to consume the sacrifice dedicated to Him would be accepted as God. The people could hardly do anything but agree. Elijah had given all possible advantages to the prophets of Baal. The people agreed, and then waited to see what would take place.

1 Kings 18:25 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.

Elijah confidently called upon the prophets of Baal to go first. They were to pray to their gods and wait for the fire to consume the sacrifice.

1 Kings 18:26 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.

The process began early in the morning and continued until noon. Nothing happened. There was no

voice nor any fire. Finally they began jumping around the altar in a frenzy, waiting for Baal to respond.

The King James Version says they leaped upon the altar. Other versions translate the words “leaped upon” as jumped around. There were no results.

1 Kings 18:27 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.

If the situation had not been so tragic, it would be absolutely comical. Elijah mocked the false prophets by ridiculing their god Baal. He might just be too busy with other more important things. He might have gone hunting. He might have decided to take a vacation. Or maybe he was taking a nap and they would have to dance and yell louder to awaken him.

1 Kings 18:28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

It was not uncommon for the heathen who worshipped false gods to make cuts in their flesh and cause blood to come forth. This was supposed to indicate their tremendous loyalty to their god. Would it work?

1 Kings 18:29 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.



It certainly did not work right away. When the entire morning had passed and noon arrived, there had been absolutely no indication that their false god even had ears. There was no answer.

1 Kings 18:30 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.

While the people had been pouring out their praises to Baal over the years, the altar of Jehovah had been either allowed to crumble, or had been deliberately broken up. Elijah prepared to build it back to a respectable condition.

1 Kings 18:31 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:

Elijah selected twelve stones, each one was to represent one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The reader should note that although the twelve tribes had been split into ten northern tribes and Judah in the south, Elijah did not honor that division.

1 Kings 18:32 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.

He placed the twelve stones in order and made it clear that they were there in honor of Jehovah. Then he dug a trench around the altar. We do not know just

how large the trench was, but the implication is that it was sufficient to prove any fire had not been placed under the altar. Comments on the size of the “measure” mentioned vary.

1 Kings 18:33 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.

Next Elijah took another step to take away any suspicion that he was using trickery. He called for four barrels of water to be poured over the bullock. This would certainly be enough to soak the meat thoroughly.

1 Kings 18:34 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.

1 Kings 18:35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

To make the situation even ludicrous, he called for another four barrels of water. Then it was repeated for a third time. Objects just do not burst into flame when they have been saturated with barrels and barrels of water. If the sacrifice burned, the burning would have to have divine aid.

1 Kings 18:36 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

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**servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.**

Elijah did not even begin to offer the bullock as a sacrifice to Jehovah until the time which was normally given to that activity. When it came time for the evening sacrifice he called upon Jehovah as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel to let it be known that He is God, and Elijah was His servant.

There was no screaming and dancing around. There was only a plain request that Jehovah make it certain that He is God and not Baal.

**1 Kings 18:37 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's prayer did not magnify his own name. It called for the Lord to let all of the people know that what was about to take place was God's way of persuading them to turn back to Him and reject Baal.

**1 Kings 18:38 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.**

We are not told that the fire which appeared was first seen in the wood which had been laid under the bullock. The fire came from above. It fell upon the sacrifice and consumed it. It not only consumed the bullock. It included the wood under the bullock, the stones of the altar, and then licked up the water in the trench around the place where the altar had stood. Fire

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does not usually lick up water. Water usually puts out fire. The people had witnessed a true miracle.

1 Kings 18:39 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.

The people fell to the ground and praised Jehovah as Lord and God. The case was decided beyond doubt. Baal had been shown to be a “nothing.”

1 Kings 18:40 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.

Elijah then confidently and fearlessly commanded that the four hundred prophets of Baal be taken to the brook Kishon and killed. Is this cruel and inhuman punishment? Not when we consider the amount of danger into which these lying prophets had plunged those who followed their lead.

1 Kings 18:41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

For some reason the life of Ahab was not taken. We must also recall that the prophets of the groves whom Jezebel protected had not been present. They were still to be contended with.

Elijah invited Ahab to make haste. He was to eat and drink before the rain came. They could already hear the sound of the oncoming storm. The drought was broken.

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**1 Kings 18:42 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,**

Ahab did as Elijah told him. He went proceeded to eat and drink. Elijah went to the very top of mount Carmel and sat down upon the ground. He then bent over such that his face was between his knees. We are not told he was praying. However, this seems a logical conclusion.

**1 Kings 18:43 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.**

Elijah then told his servant to go to where he could see the water of the Mediterranean Sea. The servant looked and saw nothing of importance. He was then told to go again and reported nothing. The seventh time, it was different.

**1 Kings 18:44 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.**

When the servant came back the seventh time he reported a small cloud which looked like a man's hand had arisen from the sea. When Elijah heard this he instructed the servant to tell Ahab to get his chariot ready in a hurry. If he did not the coming rain would

prevent his return to Jezreel some eighteen miles away.

**1 Kings 18:45 And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.**

From the one small cloud the sky became black with rain clouds. Ahab managed to get back to Jezreel before the rain and mud prevented his movement.

**1 Kings 18:46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.**

The chapter closes with one of those statements which must be taken by faith. Ahab appears to have started as soon as Elijah urged him to. Then Elijah gathered up his clothing to where it would not interfere with his running and traveled the eighteen miles on foot, reaching the gate of the city of Jezreel before Ahab did.

How fast could I run if God helped me? I do not know!



## Chapter 19

It had looked for a short time as if Elijah had won the day over the prophets of Baal. King Ahab had watched the entire event and had been unable to prevent the slaughter of the false prophets. King Ahab was evil enough himself, but when he reported what had happened to the prophets of Baal, we can anticipate that queen Jezebel would determine to take vengeance upon Elijah and his supporters.

**1 Kings 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.**

Here is a man utterly controlled by his wife. Ahab was soundly intimidated by the defeat of the false prophets. He had to go to Jezebel and see what she thought should be done in retaliation.

**1 Kings 19:2 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.**

Jezebel was ready to live up to her reputation. A prophet of Jehovah meant no more to her than did one of her own false prophets whom she could ignore if she chose to. She let Elijah know very quickly that she did not intend to let the loss of her prophets of Baal go without payback. She promised Elijah that she would see him just as dead as the prophets he had caused to be slain. She pronounced a curse upon her own life if she did not make good the threat. Nor did she expect

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to wait a year or two to put her plan into action. She intended to see him dead by the very next day.

1 Kings 19:3 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.

It is difficult to believe that the same person who faced the four hundred fifty prophets with no one beside him except the Lord, seems now to be cringing in fear and ready to run for his life. He went all the way south to the very border of the territory of Judah. Beersheba was as far as you could get in the populated area. South of Beersheba you were in the wild.

He should have realized that the same Lord who had protected him before would continue to do so. Some writers do not believe he acted through fear. They see him as simply prolonging his life for another day!?

1 Kings 19:4 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.

When he had passed Beersheba and left his servant there, he proceeded another day's journey into the wilderness. Lay down under a juniper tree and asked God to bring his life to a close. The Hebrew word translated juniper tree could just as well have been translated as broom tree. It was not a very satisfactory shade tree.



But why did Elijah make the statement that he was no better than his fathers.? One possibility is that he felt he had failed to turn the people from idolatry just as those who had gone before him. If he was unable to do any better than what he had done, maybe it was best that the Lord bring his life to a close.

1 Kings 19:5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

We can well imagine that Elijah was utterly exhausted. He went to sleep as he lay wondering what the future held. When he awakened, he found that an angel had touched him and was suggesting that he arise and refresh himself. But what would he eat in the barren country to which he had gone?

1 Kings 19:6 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.

He was soon to have the answer to his question. There was a cake which had been freshly baked. There was a container of water beside his head. It is not recorded that he said a word to the angel. He ate, drank and laid back down to rest again. We can conclude that he had reached a condition of mental exhaustion which had reduced his thinking efficiency to nearly zero.

1 Kings 19:7 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.

God was not through with Elijah just yet. The angel came back a second time and told him to get up and nourish himself again. There was a journey ahead of him which would require great endurance. The rest and food would help to meet those needs.

1 Kings 19:8 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.

Most agree that the distance Elijah was about to travel was well over one hundred miles. His goal was mount Horeb, or mount Sinai. He was to go to the place where Moses had received the law. Just as Moses prepared for future action, Elijah would be expected to follow that example.

Forty days and nights is the time period during which a number of God's faithful braced themselves for major feats of service to Him. Moses, Elijah and even Christ Himself passed through that number of days and nights in connection with the transmission of God's will to the people.

1 Kings 19:9 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?

Both Moses and Elijah were secluded for a time in a crevice in the rock or a cave on that same peak. There is a difference of opinion over whether it might have been the same location.

After Elijah had entered into the cave, the Word



of God came to him with a question. “What are you doing here Elijah?” The implication is that he did not have a sufficient reason for hiding in a cave far from the people to whom he was expected to reveal the will of the Lord.

1 Kings 19:10 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’s answer to God was very plain. He had tried diligently to get the people of Israel to serve the only True and Living God. It appeared that all of his efforts were fruitless. The people had ignored him. They broke the covenant. They killed God’s prophets. They had no use for the altars since they did not offer sacrifices, and so they broke them down.

All of the rest of God’s prophets had been killed and the enemies of the Lord were ready to add Elijah to the list of the dead.

1 Kings 19:11 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:

The reply of the Lord was that he should get out of the cave and stand where he could see the land. When

he followed these directions a number of strange things took place. The Lord passed by there on the mount. The first thing to happen was that a strong wind ripped through the mountain. There was such power that rocks crumbled. This was but a preliminary to the Lord's coming. The second event was an earthquake. Even the earthquake was but a means of introducing the coming of the Lord.

1 Kings 19:12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

A fire followed the wind and the earthquake, but these were all preliminaries to the major action which was yet to follow. After all of the fantastic things which had rocked the entire area, there came a still small voice. It was the voice of the Lord.

You see, dear reader, Elijah may have seen himself as most ineffectual. Miracles had been done. Large numbers of the enemies of God had been slain. But all of this had not accomplished what Elijah had hoped might be effected. God was letting Elijah know that it did not require tornados, earthquakes and lightning flashes to accomplish His will. There were still some things remaining to be done. Elijah was not yet finished as God's messenger. Some things which might not be as impressive as Elijah had seen before might well accomplish more than tornadoes and earthquakes.

Does the reader recall a simple statement made by his or her mother or father which had more effect upon his behavior than a physical spanking that left a red bottom? Perhaps it would be wise to recall here that Jesus was the one with the "gentle voice." But, God

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had to demonstrate the contrast between the effects of force, and those of example. He was making that point in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. By the time of the birth of our Lord men should have learned the lesson. Sadly, many have still not learned it.

**1 Kings 19:13 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?**

The mantle was an outer garment by which men recognized a priest. Elijah knew he could no longer hide in the cave. What he did not know was the nature of the experience he was about to have. It could have been blinding. He was ashamed and also apprehensive as to what the Lord would do next.

The Lord proceeded to ask him the same exact question which is recorded in verse nine of the present chapter. "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

**1 Kings 19:14 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.**

Elijah's reply to the question followed the same line of reasoning as it had presented before. It looked like the work of the prophets was unfruitful. It resulted in their deaths and the enemies of the Lord were reveling in victory. What was Elijah to do? He was just waiting

for death to claim him.

Many elderly Christians have felt much as Elijah felt. They have offered their services and their sacrifices to God. But what good did it do? The masses of the people live in pride, pleasure and selfishness. These faithful Christians can see that both their mental and physical abilities are deteriorating. Why not just crawl off in a corner and wait to die?

**1 Kings 19:15 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:**

The Lord informed Elijah that it was not quite time to lie down and quit. He still had some work for him to do. He was to leave the wilderness and go to Damascus, the capitol of Syria. Syria was the major human foe at the time. Elijah was to go to Damascus and appoint a new king over that land. His name was Hazael.

**1 Kings 19:16 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.**

A second task for Elijah was to appoint a new king in Israel. Ahab would be replaced. The new king would be Jehu. A third charge was to anoint Elisha to become Elijah's successor as a prophet of the God of heaven.

The reader should be careful not to confuse Jehu the king with Jehu the prophet. These were two separate persons.



**1 Kings 19:17 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.**

God had not given up the battle. Many of those who had so viciously persecuted the faithful would themselves be eliminated from the battle. Hazael of Syria, Jehu of Israel and Elisha would bring about a drastic reduction of the vicious foes of God's children.

**1 Kings 19:18 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.**

The Lord made it crystal clear that Elijah was mistaken if he thought he was the only one alive who worshipped and served Him. There were seven thousand others of whom he did not know.

This is a common problem for Christians today. Only God knows just how many are still true to Him in the midst of a world where sin and selfishness are so prevalent. The ones on the same road to heaven may be difficult to see among the throng of men and women who walk the broad way that leads to destruction. But God will know when it is time to go to the cave and hide!

**1 Kings 19:19 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.**

Elijah realized the truth of the message which had been delivered to him. He left the cave and found the younger man, Elisha plowing with oxen. Elisha must have been from a family who had better than average wealth. Twelve yoke of oxen would indicate a sizable amount of cultivatable land. It is not to be presumed that Elisha was personally controlling all of these oxen. There were probably others who were driving eleven of these yokes. Elijah was the last of the twelve, and when Elisha passed by him, Elijah took off his mantle and cast it upon the shoulders of Elisha. No other anointing is mentioned so we conclude that this was the way Elijah kept the charge of the Lord to anoint the younger man.

Very often we hear the same idea presented today when a superior officer in a company is replaced by another leader. We say he has “passed the mantle” to the new officer.

**1 Kings 19:20 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?**

Elisha obviously recognized Elijah as the noted prophet of the Lord. He also understood what was meant when Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha.

He was ready to accept the responsibility, but pleaded with Elijah to allow him time to express his love for his parents before leaving them. Then he could freely follow the older prophet.

Elijah then said a somewhat puzzling thing. “Go back again, for what have I done to thee?” The present

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writer believes Elijah was saying he had not expected Elisha to leave his beloved parents without letting them know of his love. That was not what he was asking Elisha to do.

1 Kings 19:21 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.

Elisha understood the words of Elijah to be permission to say a loving goodbye to his parents. He took a yoke of oxen, perhaps the very yoke he had been working with, and prepared a meal for those he was leaving behind him. After the meal was finished Elisha joined Elijah as he trained to follow him in the prophet's role. He would act as a servant while he was preparing for greater service to his Lord.

We are not the judges who will determine who will enter the gate of heaven, but we will be most disappointed if we get there and do not find ourselves in the company of Elijah and Elisha.

Chapter 20

The discussion turns away from Elijah and Elisha for the moment. Benhadad was not at all happy with the disgrace he had experienced when the prophets of Baal were embarrassed by their defeat at the hands of Jehovah. Jezebel was determined that the tables be turned. She had persuaded her husband to send the military into the northern kingdom of Israel and show her power.

1 Kings 20:1 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.

Benhadad gathered thirty-two minor kings who were subject to him, and the entire force marched into Israel and intended to take the city of Samaria where Ahab's headquarters were located. The situation looked dismal for Ahab and his much smaller forces.

1 Kings 20:2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad,

As soon as Benhadad thought he had sufficiently intimidated Ahab and his armies, he sent a boastful message demanding that Ahab surrender in order to avoid further damage.

1 Kings 20:3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.

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Benhadad claimed that Ahab had no means of protecting either the wealth of his territory, or even the people. The women, the children and the property of the people was his for the taking. Ahab needed to recognize that he was utterly helpless to defend himself or the kingdom of Israel.

**1 Kings 20:4 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 felt that resistance was completely impossible. He called Benhadad his lord and his king. Everything Benhadad had claimed, including himself, would be surrendered. He felt that this might save even further embarrassment. His life was at severe risk. He would agree to Benhadad's demands.

**1 Kings 20:5 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;**

Benhadad had a taste of victory in his mouth. His appetite increased rapidly. Since Ahab had admitted he could not defend Israel, there was no stopping place. He could demand anything he desired and it would be given to him. He had already picked many of the fruits of victory. Why not try for even more.

**1 Kings 20:6 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**

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thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

Benhadad threatened to send further forces to the palace grounds of Ahab and they would feel free to take anything with they felt was of value. What was Ahab to do now? He was between Benhadad and Jezebel. He could not win. But, he must take a stand.

1 Kings 20:7 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.

Ahab had acted alone for the most part up to this time. Now he felt the need to call in the elders of the land and call for their advice. He explained just how much he had already offered to Benhadad without gaining peace. What was the advice of the elders?

1 Kings 20:8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

The elders agreed that Ahab should do that to which he had already agreed. However, they could not accept his demand to pillage the capitol city and the palace of the king. This would be to give the entire country away without resisting.

1 Kings 20:9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the
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**first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.**

Ahab went back to the messengers of Benhadad and used the same meek words he had used before. Benhadad was his lord and king. He would give him all he had consented to previously, but he would not give Benhadad and his forces free reign to make the entire country their own.

The messengers of Benhadad reported to their own king and returned with Benhadad's reply. He was furious.

**1 Kings 20:10 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.**

Benhadad swore an oath before his false gods that he would send enough men in to enforce his demands. If each of his men took a handful of dust from the land of Samaria, there would not be enough dust for each man to have a handful.

This threat is viewed in different terms by various commentators, but the basic point is the same. Ahab had better prepare for trouble. Benhadad had too much force for him to successfully resist.

**1 Kings 20:11 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.**

This verse shows a complete turnaround on the part of Ahab. The meek and submissive attitude had been

replaced by one of defiance. He informed Benhadad that the time to boast was after he had proven his power. Benhadad had better be able to back up his words with action. The results might just be different than he expected.

This writer is reminded of an interesting confrontation which took place when he was in about the eighth grade. A new boy had moved into the community. He immediately set out to show the rest of the boys who had already been in the school that he was big enough to whip any of them. He deliberately did something which he thought would establish his claim. He broke a rule in a game where it was clear that he was trying to show he was above the rules.

The boy who had been the leader of the class up to that point faced up to him and challenged him to fight. Both boys doubled up their fists and prepared to do combat. The boy who had been leader before the new boy came in struck first. He placed a clean and powerful blow right on the point of the new boy's chin. The new boy had done much boasting before the fight. Afterward he was just one of the pack.

**1 Kings 20:12 And it came to pass, when Benhadad 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.**

Ahab had been right. Benhadad had been counting chickens before they hatched. When he should have been making preparations for the upcoming war, he had been getting drunk. Without careful forethought he sent his soldiers into the battle. This battle would turn out just the way he expected.

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1 Kings 20:13 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.

Jehovah entered the fray. That gave Ahab all that was needed to win the contest. An unnamed prophet of the true God came to Ahab and informed him of the divine support. The numbers in Benhadad's army did not matter. Jehovah would cause the battle to be decided in Ahab's favor.

He then gave a reason why He was doing this. It was that Ahab might learn that the false gods Ahab and Jezebel had been worshipping were useless. There was but one True God. That was Himself!

The reader may be wondering if that was the only reason. Probably not. It is strange that God would take the side of a king who had supported idolatrous worship so confidently. It is very probable that Jehovah was protecting His long range plans to bring the Saviour into the world through Israel and that if Benhadad and his forces defeated Ahab they would have passed on to the southern kingdom and annihilated the chosen people from the earth.

1 Kings 20:14 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 quite correctly asked the question as to who would lead the battle. The prophet answered that it would be Ahab himself. He would lead the leaders of the provinces of Israel and they would succeed.

1 Kings 20:15 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.

When Ahab took a count of the leaders of the provinces, there were only two hundred and thirty two of them. When he counted the entire force which he had available there were but seven thousand.

It has been thought by many that these seven thousand were the same seven thousand who had been said not to have bowed the knee to Baal.

1 Kings 20:16 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.

Preparations were made for the confrontation at mid-day. Even at that hour Benhadad had consumed so much alcohol that he was quite drunk. Not only was he drunk, the lesser kings who supported him had joined in the drunken party. One alert and sober man can be more efficient than several staggering alcoholics.

1 Kings 20:17 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.

The men of Ahab came out first. When Benhadad began to collect his forces, he was informed that there were already soldiers coming out of the city of Samaria.

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**1 Kings 20:18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.**

With absolute confidence Benhadad commanded that the men of Ahab be taken alive. If they had come out to surrender, they were to be taken alive. If they came out to fight, they were to be taken alive. No doubt he intended to make them slaves in his own service.

**1 Kings 20:19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.**

The leaders of Ahab's forces were alert and ready for combat. The seven thousand followed them as they prepared to face the drunken leaders of Benhadad.

**1 Kings 20:20 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.**

In the initial confrontation, each of the leaders of Ahab's men killed the man whom he met from Benhadad's soldiers. The overwhelming victory of Ahab's forces in this first contact struck fear into the hearts of the rest of the Syrians and they fled, with Benhadad in their midst.

**1 Kings 20:21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.**

Horses and chariots make poor weapons when  
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facing the power of the God of heaven. There was a great slaughter of the Syrians and the battle was won by Ahab and Israel.

1 Kings 20:22 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.

As soon as the battle was concluded, the prophet of God who had told Ahab before the conflict began that he would be successful, warned him that this was but the first step. The Syrians would be back in the next year to confront them again.

1 Kings 20:23 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.

As Benhadad and his men returned home, his princes informed him that the gods of Israel were gods of the hills. They had made the mistake of fighting in the hills. They needed to regroup and do battle next time in the plains where their own gods would be superior.

This was about as serious a mistake as could have been made. Jehovah is the God of the universe. He is not one of many gods. He is THE GOD. They were to find that out later.

1 Kings 20:24 And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

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**1 Kings 20:25** 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.

Benhadads advisors claimed that they needed to place experienced military men in the place of the princes who had commanded his army the first time. He needed to replace every soldier and every horse and chariot, such that the second army was equal in force to the first. Then Benhadad needed to meet Israel in the plains rather than in the hills. His gods would be superior to those of Ahab in the flat land. Benhadad took their advice and prepared for a second conflict. He still did not understand that it was no local god he was facing. It was the Lord of all.

**1 Kings 20:26** 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.

The next year when Benhadad felt he was better prepared, he went to Aphek rather than attacking Samaria. Aphek would have been in lower altitude.

**1 Kings 20:27** 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.

When the two armies faced off, the numbers of the

Syrians were far greater than those of Israel. Israel looked pitifully helpless before the hordes of Syrians. What hope did Israel have for victory?

**1 Kings 20:28** 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 man of God who came and spoke to Ahab was a prophet. He informed Ahab that the Syrians had placed themselves in an unenviable position. They had said Jehovah was only god of the hills, and had no power over matters in the valleys. Because of this, the Syrians would be soundly defeated Ahab would have clear proof that Jehovah was THE LORD!

**1 Kings 20:29** 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.

For six whole days the two armies remained close to one another without entering battle. On the seventh day the conflict began. One hundred thousand of the Syrian soldiers were killed. It was a complete disaster for Benhadad.

**1 Kings 20:30** 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  
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Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

After losing one hundred thousand men in the early battle, the rest of the Syrians attempted to protect themselves by barricading themselves inside the walls of the city of Aphek. That also turned into a complete disaster. The wall collapsed on them and twenty seven thousand more were killed, making a total of one hundred twenty-seven thousand deaths in all.

Benhadad saved his life by going to a hiding place inside the city.

1 Kings 20:31 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.

Benhadad's men were ready to save their lives by any method they could follow. They decided to play humble and place themselves at the mercy of the Israelites. By doing so they hoped that Ahab would have pity on Benhadad and not slay him. This would then improve the possibilities that the rest of his army would escape destruction.

1 Kings 20:32 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.

~~~~~ The Syrian soldiers clothed themselves in sackcloth, ~~~~~

which was a way of demonstrating humility and helplessness. They begged Ahab for the life of their king Benhadad.

Then we have a most surprising statement. Ahab asked if it was true that Benhadad was still alive. He added that, "He is my brother." This may look like complete folly on the part of Ahab. Such may not be true. The Syrians were not the only threat to the security of Israel. The Assyrians were waiting in the background. Later they would become a far more serious foe than Syria. Ahab may have thought that by preserving the life of Benhadad, he could combine forces with him to stave off any invasion the Assyrians might attempt.

**1 Kings 20:33 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.**

The men who were watching to see what the outcome of the plea for Benhadad's life would be noted that the word "brother" had been used. They agreed that the use of the word "brother" was a breakthrough. Perhaps the two nations could cooperate to the advantage of both of them. The two men met in a chariot and began to work out an alliance.

**1 Kings 20:34 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**

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covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

Benhadad promised to restore the cities which his father had captured from Israel. In addition, streets would be allotted to Israel in the city of Damascus in Syria. These were thought to be streets where Israel could sell merchandise. Ahab agreed to the partnership and the two parted ways.

1 Kings 20:35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

The sons of the prophets were prophets. One of these prophets called upon another to smite him. The other man refused to do as he was asked. He would not smite him.

1 Kings 20:36 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.

The first man who was of the sons of the prophets told the one who refused to strike him that because he had refused to do as the Lord had commanded he would meet a lion who would kill him. It happened just as the prophet had predicted it would.

1 Kings 20:37 Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.

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The prophet then went on until he came to another man. He commanded him also to smite him. This time the man did as he was commanded. In fact, he struck the prophet so fiercely that he wounded him.

**1 Kings 20:38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.**

The prophet who had been struck and wounded then waited for king Ahab to pass by him. He had smeared his face with ashes and could not be identified. He had a lesson to present to Ahab.

**1 Kings 20:39 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.**

When king Ahab came along, the prophet called out to him. The prophet looked as if he had been in the midst of a battle. He told Ahab that a soldier had brought one of the enemy to him for safe keeping and had told him to be careful not to allow him to escape. If he did so his own life would be taken in place of the one who had been placed under his keeping.

**1 Kings 20:40 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.**

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The prophet then explained that the captured man had gotten away when the one who kept him was careless. Ahab responded that the one who had allowed the captured man to escape must pay with his own life.

1 Kings 20:41 And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

The the prophet wiped the ashes from his face so Ahab could recognize him as being a prophet. Ahab must have been wondering what was coming next.

1 Kings 20:42 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.

The sword descended without mercy. The prophet informed Ahab that he was the very one who had allowed the man to escape. He had allowed Benhadad to get away without being destroyed as God had intended. As a result Ahab would lose his life and his people would be destroyed.

1 Kings 20:43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

Ahab had had every opportunity to deny the false gods and align himself and his people with the Lord of creation. He had failed to use those opportunities. As he

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returned to his capitol city of Samaria, he realized too late just how seriously he had sinned when he allowed Benhadad to go free. God had appointed Benhadad to destruction. Ahab had ignored that appointment.





## Chapter 21

This twenty-first chapter of First Kings is one of the most horrifying chapters in the entire Bible. It demonstrates just how low man can go once he decides to ignore the commandments of God. The sins are flagrant disobedience to several of the ten commandments, and they are so ugly they nearly turn the stomach just to contemplate them.

**1 Kings 21:1 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.**

In the last chapter we had a description of the battle between the forces of Benhadad the Syrian and Ahab the king of Israel. God had supported Ahab in the battle. This was not because Ahab was a righteous man. He was not. But God did not wish to see Israel completely dissolved. He still had plans to bring a Saviour to the world through the seed of Abraham. "After these things" refers to that war. We do not know precisely how long after the war the events of the present chapter took place. It could have been a considerable time.

Naboth was a Jezreelite only in the sense that he lived at that time in the valley of Jezreel. He owned a vineyard there. The location of the palace of Ahab was located in such a position as to overlook fertile land and beautiful scenery in every direction. As he looked out upon the surroundings of the palace, Ahab could see the vineyard of Naboth close by the palace grounds. He coveted the vineyard.

**1 Kings 21:2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth,**

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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.

Without even considering the possibility that his desires as king might be rejected by one of lesser stature, he proposed a deal with Ahab. He would not just take the vineyard. He would be happy to pay for it, or he would give Ahab a vineyard which was better than the one he owned.

Long before this God had informed Israel of the dangers of appointing a king over them. One of the warnings was that the king would take their vineyards for himself. (See I Sam. 8:14.)

1 Sam. 8:11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

1 Sam. 8:12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

1 Sam. 8:13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

1 Sam. 8:14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

1 Kings 21:3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

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Ahab was absolutely right in rejecting the offer to buy the vineyard. It was not his decision. It was the will of God. (See Lev. 25:23-28.)

Lev. 25:23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

Lev. 25:24 And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

Lev. 25:25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.

Lev. 25:26 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it;

Lev. 25:27 Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession.

Lev. 25:28 But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

**1 Kings 21:4 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.**

Ahab was torn between his desire for the vineyard and his knowledge that Naboth was not about to sell it. He went to his bedroom and began to pout like a spoiled child. He even refused to eat.

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1 Kings 21:5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, could hardly miss the change in her husband's behavior. She inquired as to what the reason was. Why was he so down hearted and had no appetite?

1 Kings 21:6 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.

Perhaps with a tremble in his voice, Ahab explained the reason for his dejection. He had been rejected in his offer to Naboth for the vineyard. He wanted that vineyard and Naboth would not give it to him. He did not tell Jezebel that the other side of the coin was God's command not to sell the inheritance of their fathers. It would have made little difference if he had told her.

1 Kings 21:7 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.

Jezebel then asked her husband just who was king in Israel. Was Ahab king, or was Naboth? All Ahab needed to do was to get up off his bed and raise his spirits. Jezebel would take care of the entire matter.

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**1 Kings 21:8 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.**

Jezebel had no qualms about taking over the authority of her husband Ahab. She confiscated his royal seal and sent letters to those in high positions in the land. These men whom Ahab had appointed himself would most certainly bow to his will and honor the information in the letters.

**1 Kings 21:9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:**

**1 Kings 21:10 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.**

Jezebel's directions were to proclaim a fast and set Naboth on high where he could be called to account. Jezebel intended to put him on trial on two charges, blasphemy against God and treason against the king.

To make certain he was found guilty of the charges she commanded the nobles to choose two men whom they knew were corrupt. The word Belial is sometimes applied to Satan. At other times it indicates worthlessness and lying character. With such men as witnesses there was no doubt as to the outcome of the trial. After the guilty verdict was rendered Naboth was to be taken outside the city and stoned to death.

**1 Kings 21:11 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.**

The elders and nobles who received the letters knew better than to challenge the royal edict, sealed with the king's seal.

**1 Kings 21:12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.**

The fast which was proclaimed was intended to show the seriousness of Naboth's defiance of the king. Treason and blasphemy against God would be worthy of death sentences. They were not particularly concerned that what Naboth had done was in subjection to the will of Jehovah, whose status was vastly higher than that of Ahab.

**1 Kings 21:13 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.**

**1 Kings 21:14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.**

The two witnesses did just as the letters had directed them. Naboth was declared guilty and was taken out of the city and stoned to death. Note that those who did the stoning did not report back to Ahab. They were very well aware of the source of the letters, even if Ahab's royal seal was imprinted.

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1 Kings 21:15 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.

Jezebel received the report of the death of Naboth as if it was a very minor matter. Ahab had married this woman who was not an Israelite. He was now being influenced by her heathen background. Jezebel charged Ahab to get up from pouting on his bed and take possession of the vineyard. He did not even have to pay for the vineyard, or provide another of equal worth. It was his for the taking.

1 Kings 21:16 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.

Ahab was still probably a bit nervous because of his knowledge of God's instructions that the inheritance of the Israelites was not to be sold on a permanent basis. Since the difficulties had apparently been solved for him by his wicked wife, he got up and went down to the vineyard to claim it.

1 Kings 21:17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

It was not quite as simple as Jezebel had thought. God contacted Elijah the Tishbite and gave him an important message to deliver to Ahab.

1 Kings 21:18 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.

Elijah was to go down to meet Ahab while he was still in the vineyard of Naboth. He had very foolishly assumed that he could now call it his own.

1 Kings 21:19 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.

Elijah was to accuse Ahab of robbery. He had taken the vineyard which did not belong to him. He was also to charge him with murder. He was responsible for the death of an innocent man. It would come to pass that Ahab's own blood would be licked up by the dogs in the same place where that of Naboth had been licked up.

1 Kings 21:20 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.

Ahab spoke sharply to the prophet and called Elijah his enemy. This was a major mistake. It was not Elijah who was his enemy, it was Jehovah. This was true because Ahab had set himself up in defiance to the will of the Lord. Ahab had committed both murder and robbery, both of which Jehovah despised.

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**1 Kings 21:21 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,**

Since Ahab was attracted to robbery and murder, God would take away that which Ahab held precious. His male descendants would have their lives cut off. The last phrase which speaks of those who were shut up and left in Israel is difficult. This writer's supposition is that it refers to any of his descendants who were imprisoned in the land when others were carried off into captivity.

**1 Kings 21:22 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.**

Jeroboam's dynasty came to an end. That of Baasha did the same. The promotion of idolatry in Israel by Ahab and his wife Jezebel had caused God to despise them. Their posterity would not be allowed to succeed them as rulers over God's nation.

**1 Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.**

Those who exalt themselves God is able to abase. The fall from the throne to the garbage dump is not just distasteful; it is a calamity.

**1 Kings 21:24 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.**

A decent burial is usually provided, even to the poorest of men and women. The consumption of the bodies of Ahab's descendants would be of such disgrace that the entire world would hear of it with disgust.

**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.**

The name of Ahab will go down in the history books as long as time lasts. To sell one's self is the worst deal any man can make. Ahab sold his soul as a result of his spiritual weakness and subjection to his wife.

**1 Kings 21:26 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.**

The influence that Ahab and his wife Jezebel had upon the people of God was such that they became just as wicked as the people whom God had caused to be driven out of the land before them. The Amorites seems to be a very general term referring to a number of different tribes who worshipped idols.

**1 Kings 21:27 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.**

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Here is what seems to be an abrupt change in the attitude of Ahab. He tore his clothing. He clothed himself in rough sackcloth. He fasted and he tiptoed around in quite a contrast to the arrogant behavior he had displayed in taking the vineyard of Naboth.

The problem is that he could not undo the death of a good man who was attempting to hold to his inheritance as God had commanded. The punishment might be lightened, but it could not be erased.

1 Kings 21:28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1 Kings 21:29 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.

Jehovah declared to Elijah that because of Ahab's penitent attitude, He would not destroy his descendants while he was yet alive. He would postpone the elimination of Ahab's posterity to a time when he would not have to witness it.

Chapter 22

We have arrived at what is considered the close of First Kings. First Kings and Second Kings were one document in the beginning. Apparently because of the cumbersome size of the single roll, the priests decided to separate the roll into two parts. As a result we find that there is a steady continuity of the record as we move from the last chapter of First Kings to the first chapter of Second Kings.

1 Kings 22:1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

After Benhadad of Syria had been soundly defeated by Ahab as a result of divine assistance on the part of Ahab, the two countries did not enter into conflict again for three years. Both had suffered severe discomfort and losses. Strife was much less appetizing.

Some time during these years Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab had married Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat creating some degree of alliance between the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel.

1 Kings 22:2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

The kings of the two kingdoms met in the northern territory. It may be disturbing to the reader to read that Jehoshaphat of Judah “came down” to meet the king of Israel. On the map it is “up”. The statement is true in the sense that the elevation of the land is higher at the

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site of the king's house in Judah than it was in that of the king of Israel.

**1 Kings 22:3 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?**

The purpose of the meeting was to consider uniting their forces to regain Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians who had taken it earlier. It may be that both of them considered Syria was weakened by the former defeat and would be easier to overcome.

**1 Kings 22:4 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.**

Ahab wished to know whether Jehoshaphat would join forces with him in the venture. The answer is a bit surprising in view of the bad feelings which had existed as the northern and southern kingdoms separated. Jehoshaphat stated that the forces of the two kings would be as one.

We point out that Jehovah was not pleased with the alliance. The northern kingdom was filled with idolatry. It was detrimental to the southern kingdom to enter such a union. Godly persons are inviting serious trouble when they get into the same harness as the wicked.

**1 Kings 22:5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.**

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Jehoshaphat, being more dedicated to Jehovah than was Ahab, felt that they should determine the will of the Lord in the venture. This would be done by requesting advice from the prophets.

1 Kings 22:6 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.

Ahab agreed to consult with the prophets. It seems that he had little problem enrolling prophets in his territory. He had four hundred prophets of Baal and four hundred-fifty prophets of Ashera before the four hundred prophets of Baal were destroyed. He still has four hundred to whom he can go. Replacement was not difficult.

It is not difficult to see why the enrollment of prophets could be filled easily. These individuals were treated very generously and had prestige among the people. All they had to do was prophesy what the king wished to hear.

1 Kings 22:7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

There are two ways to look at Jehoshaphat's question. It is an indication that all of the four hundred prophets were servants of Baal? Or did Jehoshaphat just wish to know if there was another not included in the four hundred that would have disagreed with their unanimous decision that the battle should begin?

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**1 Kings 22:8** 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.

Reluctantly, Ahab admitted that there was one more prophet who could be consulted, but this was Micaiah who never said anything positive about Ahab's plans or actions. Ahab hated Micaiah!

**1 Kings 22:9** Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.

In spite of his dislike of Micaiah, Ahab gave instructions to have Micaiah brought to them.

**1 Kings 22:10** 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.

Both of the kings had set up temporary thrones at the gate of Samaria. This was a place where major decisions were made. The two kings were arrayed in their royal robes and were seated where the prophets could easily communicate with them.

**1 Kings 22:11** 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.

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One of the means by which the prophets conveyed their messages was by vivid demonstrations. Zedekiah, who is not mentioned other than in this place, took the lead in attracting attention. He wore a set of horns made of iron and stated that the Lord had said the Syrians would be pushed back until they were utterly defeated.

It is wise to be cautious when men declare a “Thus saith the Lord.” It was wise in that day and it is just as wise these many centuries later. Zedekiah was a false prophet who spoke where the Lord had not spoken.

1 Kings 22:12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king’s hand.

The rest of the four hundred prophets chimed in to agree with Zedekiah. This had nothing to do with what the Lord had said. It was what the king wished to hear rather than what the Lord had said that motivated them. The spirits of the kings must have been highly confident in the midst of such a demonstration of support for their venture to regain Ramoth-Gilead.

1 Kings 22:13 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.

The messenger who had been sent to bring Micaiah before the two kings proceeded to warn Micaiah about the type of message he should present to the kings. All
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of the four hundred prophets previously consulted had encouraged them to enter into battle with the Syrians. They would be able to successfully recapture Ramoth-Gilead. Surely Micaiah would not wish to be the lone negative voice. That would not be good.

**1 Kings 22:14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.**

Micaiah let it be known immediately that he did not prophesy that which was comfortable. He spoke as God had spoken, neither less nor more. If all who claim to be messengers of Jehovah would make the most valiant efforts to do as Micaiah did, the religious world would be pleasing to God and beneficial to men. They do not always do so.

**1 Kings 22:15 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.**

Just a casual reading of this verse leaves the reader thinking that Micaiah lost his courage and joined the other four hundred in predicting success against the Syrian forces. There must have been something in the expression on his face, the tone of his voice, or both, that cause Ahab to react harshly to his words. It may have been because Jehoshaphat was standing by and could hardly ignore the tone of his voice or the expression on his face.

**1 Kings 22:16 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?**

Ahab commanded Micaiah to be serious about the prediction. He was not to be silly. He was to state nothing but the truth!

**1 Kings 22:17 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.**

Now the words of Micaiah will not be so pleasant for Ahab. Micaiah related a vision which he had seen. All of Israel was scattered over the hillsides like a flock of sheep with no shepherd. God had pointed out that since they had no shepherd, they should return to their homes in peace.

This was not too difficult to understand. The armies of Israel would be left without their king to lead them into battle. The king would be killed.

**1 Kings 22:18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?**

Ahab then declared to Jehoshaphat that this was just what he had expected from Micaiah. The prophet never had anything good to prophesy about him. Every one of the other four hundred had predicted success. Micaiah had predicted failure.



**1 Kings 22:19 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.**

Micaiah was not quite through. He commanded that the two kings hear him further. He had had another vision from the Lord. This time the Lord was on His throne, surrounded by the angels of heaven. The angels, of course wait to do the bidding of Jehovah.

**1 Kings 22:20 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.**

In his vision Micaiah had heard the Lord ask who would persuade Ahab to go up against Ramoth-Gilead, in order that he might be killed in the battle. Not all of the angels were agreed as to who should go.

**1 Kings 22:21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.**

Finally one of the angels stood up before God and volunteered to persuade Ahab to go into battle.

**1 Kings 22:22 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.**

The Lord then asked the angel how he intended to do this. He said he would act as a lying spirit in the mouths

of all of his prophets. They would persuade him to enter the battle. He would be convinced he should do so.

**1 Kings 22:23 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 reported that the Lord had allowed that lying spirit to control the mouths of the four hundred prophets who predicted success against Syria. In reality the Lord had predicted failure.

**1 Kings 22:24 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?**

Zedekiah, the prophet who had been wearing the horns and leading the four hundred in predicting victory for Israel, came near Micaiah and slapped him on the face, asking which way the Spirit of the Lord had taken to go from Zedekiah to Micaiah.

This appear to mean that Micaiah was still being controlled by guards, and felt perfectly safe that Micaiah would not be free to retaliate.

**1 Kings 22:25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.**

Micaiah was not intimidated in the least. He made another prediction, this time against Zedekiah. Zedekiah would find out if the spirit of the Lord was with Micaiah when Zedekiah had to hide in an upper  
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chamber to protect himself against the Syrians. The test of a true prophet is whether or not his predictions come true or not.

1 Kings 22:26 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;

Ahab had a short answer for Micaiah. He commanded that Micaiah be taken back to the governor of the city and there be punished for his brash statements.

1 Kings 22:27 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.

Ahab ordered that Micaiah be put into prison and fed with bread and water until Ahab returned safely from the battle against the Syrians.

1 Kings 22:28 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.

Micaiah was willing to stand to the test. If Ahab did return from the battle safely, it would be proof that Micaiah was a false prophet. Micaiah's word from the Lord was that he would not return alive.

1 Kings 22:29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.

1 Kings 22:30 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.

Ahab must have been somewhat disturbed by the confidence with which Micaiah made the prediction of his death. He suggested that Jehoshaphat go into the battle wearing his royal robes. Some versions indicate the robes were the robes of Ahab. At the same time Ahab would wear clothing which would not allow the enemy to recognize him. It is difficult to understand why Jehoshaphat would even consider leaving himself identifiable when Ahab was unwilling to do the same. Maybe it was because of the words of Micaiah that Ahab would not return safely. He could have felt that he would not suffer the same fate.

1 Kings 22:31 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.

If the opposing king could be captured or killed, the battle would normally be over in that time of history. The picture here is that Ahab was the more important of the two kings as far as the present battle was concerned. The king of Syria felt that the major goal of the battle was to incapacitate Ahab.

1 Kings 22:32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And

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**they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.**

For at time the ruse was successful. The Syrians made their major objective to pursue Jehoshaphat, thinking he was the king who needed to be captured to win the battle.

Then Jehoshaphat cried out and identified himself. He was not Ahab, the king of Israel.

**1 Kings 22:33 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.**

The Syrians knew they were after Ahab. They were not interested in Jehoshaphat. They left their pursuit of Jehoshaphat and continued the fighting.

**1 Kings 22:34 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.**

Through Zedekiah, Jehovah had made the prediction that Ahab would not return safely from the conflict. During the course of the fighting, one of the Syrians shot an arrow toward the opposing men and without particularly knowing who the arrow would strike, sent it straight into the body of Ahab. Can there be any doubt that God's providence was in action here? Surely not.

By telling us the arrow went between the joints of the harness of his armor, we are to understand that it

struck Ahab in his midsection where the leg armor met that of the abdomen. This would be the thigh or groin area. Ahab knew he was seriously wounded and asked to be taken from the midst of the battle.

**1 Kings 22:35 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.**

Ahab was kept in his chariot as the battle raged. As the day progressed his blood ran out into the floor of the chariot. It would not have been a very pleasant sight. He died before the night came.

**1 Kings 22:36 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 reader will note the similarity of this statement that every man was to return to his own city, to the words of Micaiah that the sheep had not shepherd and were to be returned home.

**1 Kings 22:37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.**

Jezebel did not have a decent burial. The dogs ate her. Because of Ahab's partial repentance, he was permitted a burial, but even so the blood which poured out into the chariot was licked up by the dogs, just as had been predicted.





**1 Kings 22:38 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.**

**1 Kings 22:39 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?**

Additional facts concerning the actions of Ahab can be found in the books of Chronicles. He had a mixed life. He was responsible for building his own ivory covered house and also various cities. What a shame it was that he did not put his talent to work in the service of the Lord.

**1 Kings 22:40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.**

Unlike Jezebel who was eaten by the dogs, Ahab did find a respectable grave where he was laid out to await the final trump of the Lord. It will very likely be a rude awakening.

**1 Kings 22:41 And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.**

**1 Kings 22:42 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.**

~~~~~ We turn now back to the latter years of the reign of ~~~~~

Jehoshaphat over Judah. He had a long reign of twenty-five years from the city of Jerusalem. He was classed as one of the better kings of the southern kingdom.

1 Kings 22:43 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.

For the most part Jehoshaphat reigned in a manner pleasing to Jehovah, as Asa his father had done. However, he either did not choose to, or was unable to remove the high places where the people mixed the worship of Jehovah with that of false gods.

1 Kings 22:44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

1 Kings 22:45 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?

One must place the books of Kings and Chronicles side by side to gain the most complete picture of the periods of the united and divided kingdoms.

1 Kings 22:46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

One very constructive action taken by Jehoshaphat was the removal of the male sodomites or prostitutes



from the land. This disgusting practice always degrades a people. It is a most corrupting practice. Sad to say, it may be found in many nations of the world at the present time.

1 Kings 22:47 There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.

This verse seems to say that the leader of Edom was not an independent king, but was a deputy to Jehoshaphat, the king of Israel.

1 Kings 22:48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.

Tharshish is the area now known as Spain. Jehoshaphat intended to send ships built at Tharshish to Ophir to trade for gold. For some reason the ships were not able to make the journey.

1 Kings 22:49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.

Ahaziah, Ahab's son took over the rule from his dead father. He requested that Jehoshaphat allow his servants to help man the ships in search of the gold of Ophir. Jehoshaphat refused to cooperate. He had enough cooperation with the northern kings for the moment.

1 Kings 22:50 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.

After his twenty-five year reign Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in Jerusalem. He was succeeded by his son Jehoram.

1 Kings 22:51 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.

Ahab's son Ahaziah had a very short rule of just over a full year. It was a most undignified reign.

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:

Yes Ahaziah did evil, if he walked in the way of Ahab his father and Jezebel his mother. This is not enough. He is also said to have walked as did Jeroboam—who caused Israel to sin.

1 Kings 22:53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

It was Jeroboam who promoted Baal worship in the northern kingdom. Ahaziah did the same. From this point on Jehovah's people find themselves in a state of continuous degradation until both kingdoms suffer in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

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**The Book Of  
2 Kings**





# Introduction To 2 Kings

This introduction to Second Kings will be quite brief. The introduction to First Kings contained much which applies also to Second Kings. The two books were originally found in a single roll of parchment. They were divided for convenience of handling.

There are difficulties in the harmonizing of the dates of reign for the kings of Israel and for those of Judah. We do not propose to solve all of these. They are doubtless the result of copyist errors. Sometimes kings reigned simultaneously with other kings. Also there is the problem of sometimes counting of parts of years as whole years. These differences may be a bit confusing, but they are not significant in the understanding of the basic information.

Particularly in the record of Second Kings the spiritual level and the degree of faith demonstrated by God's people was steadily decreasing until He finally allowed them to be captivated by first Assyria and then by Babylonia.

The fleshly descendants of Abraham were not the only persons who were intended to inherit the blessings promised to his seed. Second Kings is a part of the paving of the way for the coming of the spiritual kingdom ruled over by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the new spiritual kingdom, the Jew and the Gentile both find a waiting invitation. Those who believe in the sonship of Christ, and are willing to follow in His steps, are offered the same rewards and blessings.

## *Chapter 1*

The book of Second Kings is a natural continuation of the book of First Kings. Originally the two books were a unit. They were divided because of the excessive length of the scrolls which were used in earlier days.

This book will carry us through the history of Israel from the introduction of Elisha until the Babylonian captivity. The battle between the worship of Baal and of Jehovah is a major theme of the book. The true prophets of Jehovah are opposed by false prophets who see no great importance in worshipping one God.

### **2 Kings 1:1 Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.**

Moab had been defeated by Israel under the leadership of David. Now the spiritual weakness of Israel has given indication to the Moabites that they may engage in a successful revolt. The Moabite stone verifies the reality of this uprising.

Ahab had at this time passed from the scene and was replaced by Ahaziah.

### **2 Kings 1:2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.**

It is thought that this upper chamber from which Ahaziah fell was a rooftop arrangement with a latticework frame around the edges. Although the scripture does not mention it, there are some who believe he could have been intoxicated at the time of

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his accident.

The fall left the king with injuries serious enough that he felt they might well be life threatening. He made the decision to send messengers to Ekron where the worship of Baalzebub was prevalent. He wished to determine whether he would recover or die. This decision was a major mistake. He had chosen Baal over Jehovah. It had been made perfectly clear that Israel was to worship but one God, and that was to be Jehovah. It was added that He was a jealous God and would have no false gods placed beside or above Him.

2 Kings 1:3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?

God spoke to the prophet Elijah and told him to intercept the messengers and ask them if they had gone to inquire from Baalzebub in Ekron because there was no God in Israel. Ahaziah and his messengers all knew of the teachings of the Lord. They had insulted the God of Heaven by inquiring from idols rather than from their Creator.

2 Kings 1:4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

The messengers received a most disheartening word from the prophet. The king would not recover from the

injuries which he had suffered in the fall. As a result of his lack of dedication to the True God, He would die.

2 Kings 1:5 And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

King Ahaziah realized they had not had time to complete the journey on which he had sent them. He wanted to know why they had not completed the assignment.

2 Kings 1:6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

2 Kings 1:7 And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

When the messengers replied that they had been met by a man who had told them their inquiry from the idol Baal had resulted in a sentence of death to Ahaziah, the king asked them to describe the man whom they had met. There is reason to suspect that he already thought it might be Elijah.

2 Kings 1:8 And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

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He was told that the man was hairy and wore a girdle of leather around his loins. Elijah was well enough known that the king immediately realized Elijah's identity.

**2 Kings 1:9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.**

Now the king added a second serious mistake to his first one. He had already chosen to trust Baal instead of Jehovah. Now he concluded that he could intimidate Elijah and order him to "Come down!" He sent a force of fifty men to enforce his decree. Fifty men are not a match for the power of the Lord. It is of interest that the captain of the fifty addressed Elijah as "Thou man of God." He had made the decision to obey Ahaziah rather than to obey a prophet of God.

**2 Kings 1:10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.**

Elijah informed the captain that a prophet of God could be known by that which accompanied his statements. If fire came down from heaven and consumed the force of fifty men, all might know he was a messenger from God.

**2 Kings 1:11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he**

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answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

Human lives do not always hold high position in the minds of power hungry leaders. Perhaps another force of fifty men could accomplish that which the first fifty had not accomplished.

Elijah had taken a position on the top of a hill. This was why the first captain had commanded him to come down. Now the second captain added another word to what the first had said. He commanded that Elijah “Come down quickly!” The king had issued the order and he expected that it be promptly obeyed.

2 Kings 1:12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Elijah’s reply was an exact repetition of his first one. The result was exactly the same. Fire came down from heaven and consumed this fifty just as was the case with the first group. Maybe this would persuade Ahaziah to change his mind and turn from Baal to Jehovah.

2 Kings 1:13 And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.



The death of the second fifty did not alter the stubborn mind of the king. He sent yet a third company of fifty. This time the captain of the men was persuaded that there was a need to avoid the death which had come upon the other two groups. He fell upon his knees and begged Elijah to save his life and those of his men. Elijah was right. Ahaziah was wrong. He was ready to obey the higher authority.

2 Kings 1:14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

2 Kings 1:15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

The true prophets received the messages which they spoke from angels. Here we again find mention of the “angel of the Lord” as though it was a captain of the angels, perhaps even the Word of God before it became flesh and dwelt among men.

Elijah was told not to hesitate in going down from his hilltop and accompanying the captain. There was nothing to fear. Elijah did as he was told. He went with the captain and his men to meet with king Ahaziah.

2 Kings 1:16 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

This time the message got through to Ahaziah. It had come from the Lord, to the angel, to Elijah and from Elijah to Ahaziah. The insult Ahaziah had heaped upon the name of the Lord by inquiring of Baal was sufficient to bring about his death. He would not recover. There was a God in Israel, and Ahaziah had failed to trust Him.

2 Kings 1:17 So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

As a true prophet of the Lord, the words of Elijah came true. Ahaziah died and since he had no sons, he was succeeded by Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat.

The reader must be careful here. There were two rulers named Jehoram. One was the son of Jehoshaphat. The other was the son of Ahab. Sometimes the Jehoram of this chapter is known by the name Joram.

2 Kings 1:18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Ahaziah reigned but a year or perhaps two. He is given the amount of space he receives in the Bible because he is a prime example of the attraction idolatry had for the people of God which led them to be taken captive in Assyria and Babylon.



Chapter 2

The chapter before us tells of the transition of the prophetic leadership from Elijah to Elisha. The demand for a king has fallen far short of what Israel thought it would do. Therefore, Jehovah has provided prophets to maintain a more direct connection with His people than would otherwise have been the case.

Elisha was introduced earlier and then he faded into the background as the difficulties of the earliest kings of the divided kingdoms were shown. Now Elijah and Elisha return to the forefront.

2 Kings 2:1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

The work of Elijah was ready to be drawn to a close. He had been the head of the sons of the prophets for a number of years. His place of prominence at that time served as a type of John the baptist who introduced the Christ. God had revealed to Elijah that he would soon be taken up from the earth. The same information seems to have been given to Elisha and to the sons of the prophets. They all realize this event is not far in the future.

Elisha and Elijah went to Gilgal. There were several communities with the name Gilgal. This one was not many miles from Bethel.

2 Kings 2:2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD

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**liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.  
So they went down to Bethel.**

Elisha had been a constant companion of Elijah for several years. At this point in time Elijah told Elisha to remain behind as he went on to Bethel. Bethel was a unique place. It was where one of the golden calves had been set for the worship of Baal. It was also a center for the sons of the prophets. We can imagine there must have been divided loyalties among the population.

We are not told why Elijah desired that Elisha stay behind as he moved on to Bethel. It could have been that he wished to spare Elisha the grief of the sudden departure which later took place. Elisha replied that as sure as both the Lord and Elijah lived, he would go with the older prophet.

**2 Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.**

As we mentioned, the sons of the prophets were aware of the coming departure of Elijah. They asked Elisha if he did not know of the prediction. It appears that they felt Elisha was clinging too closely to the teacher to have prepared himself to say goodbye to him.

Elisha assured them that he knew very well what was to happen. The sons of the prophets must accept the decision he had made to accompany Elijah until the end.

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2 Kings 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

Elijah then informed Elisha that the Lord had sent him to Jericho. Again we have no reason given for the Lord's instruction. The same series of events occurred here as before. Elisha refused to part company with his beloved teacher. The two of them entered Jericho together.

2 Kings 2:5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

From the fact that sons of the prophets met the two both in Bethel and in Jericho, it appears that God wished for Elijah to make a visit to these training centers just before he was taken from them. Elisha again made it clear that he intended to remain with Elijah as long as possible.

2 Kings 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

Still a third time Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind as he moved on; this time to the Jordan River.

Elisha was just as persistent as he had been both the other times. He was intent on going with Elijah to the Jordan.

2 Kings 2:7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

The fifty sons of the prophets may have been from Jericho. They may have been from Bethel, or they could have been a mixture from both of those schools. They did not follow close to Elijah and Elisha as they approached the Jordan River. They watched from a distance.

2 Kings 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

At the bank of the river, Elijah removed his mantle, folded it up and used it to strike the water of the river. This mantle was in all probability an animal skin with the fur still on it. It was an identifying mark of the prophet. John the baptist wore a mantle somewhat like this one of Elijah.

Adam Clarke reminds us that the royalty in England wore coats adorned with the fur of ermine. Judges have worn garments which identify them as persons with authority. Elijah's mantle was a mark of such authority, this time supported by the hand of Jehovah.

When Elijah struck the water of the Jordan with the folded mantle, the water separated and enabled both Elijah and Elisha to cross to the other side on dry ground. This cannot help but be a reminder to the



reader of that which took place long before in the time of Joshua.

2 Kings 2:9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

As soon as the two had reached the opposite side of the river, Elijah asked Elisha what he would like for him to do for him before he had to bid him goodbye. Elisha made a very serious request. He wanted a double portion of the spirit which Elijah possessed to be passed on to him.

We must now consider the nature of the spirit which Elisha requested. Was it Elijah's own human spirit? Or was it the Spirit of the Lord which he desired? I believe we are safe in saying that human spirits are not capable of performing such miracles as Elijah had just accomplished. When the spirit of a man leaves his body, that body loses the natural powers possessed while the spirit was present. When the divine spirit is given to a human, that person is given power to do that which he could not do through his own human spirit. Elisha was asking for the ability to do the same type of miracles which Elijah had been doing.

The age of miracles is now past, in that the perfect law of liberty has replaced the law of Moses which pointed out the need for it. Men do not make rivers part in a supernatural manner. Men do not turn water into wine as Jesus did. We do, however, need to acknowledge that when one becomes a Christian the Holy Spirit is provided to him through the Word of God. This will allow the man to accomplish victories over Satan and

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his allies which no man could accomplish without such help.

**2 Kings 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.**

Elijah replied that Elisha had asked a hard thing. Perhaps he is even saying that as a human he cannot grant such a gift. But, if when Elisha sees him as he is taken up from the earth, God will have seen fit to grant the wish.

The next question is what Elisha meant by asking for the double portion. Did he mean he wanted to be capable of doing twice as many miracles, or twice as wondrous? Most Bible students answer this in terms of the double portion the first born received under the inheritance pattern of the Law of Moses. They insist that all Elisha was asking for was to be recognized as having the right of the first born of the schools of the prophets which Elijah had taught.

**2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.**

The appearances of God have been described in similar manner at other points in the Bible. We have something similar when Moses received the law on Sinai. Also on the mount of transfiguration, fire was associated with the statement of God that Christ was His Beloved Son, and they were to hear him. When the  
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apostles were baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire, the scene is similar.

This time a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire appeared and Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha saw it. He would receive a double portion of the Spirit which Elijah had possessed.

We wonder if those sons of the prophets who were standing afar off also saw the departure.

2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

Elijah was the father of Elisha only in the sense that he had been his spiritual teacher. When he called him the chariot and the horsmen of Israel, he was saying that the strength of Israel did not lie in the number of horses and chariots available. The teaching and example of Elijah was superior to all of the military force Israel could muster.

The rending of his clothing was a sign of the grief he felt at losing the companionship of the one who had been so valuable as a spiritual advisor. It does not say he simply ripped the garments he wore. He tore them in two.

2 Kings 2:13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

It seems fairly clear that he actually replaced his own clothing with the mantle which had fallen from Elijah to the ground.

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**2 Kings 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.**

Elisha did not hesitate to pick up the mantle which had fallen from Elijah as the latter ascended to heaven. The request had been granted that he receive a double portion of the spirit which his teacher had possessed. He was ready for the responsibility.

He then asked a fascinating question. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The answer was to be made obvious immediately. Although the chariot and horsemen had disappeared, the power of the Lord had now been made available to Elisha. As a demonstration of that fact, Elisha used the mantle to achieve the same results as Elijah had achieved. He smote the waters of the Jordan and when they parted, he passed across on dry ground.

**2 Kings 2:15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.**

The fifty sons of the prophets who had been watching from afar saw that Elisha had duplicated the feat of Elijah. They were convinced that the powers which Elijah had shown were now transferred to Elisha. From this point on we will see Elisha becoming increasingly important in the instruction of the people of Israel. He will perform many miracles, and he will not hesitate





to rebuke kings.

The sons of the prophets bowed before Elisha, not as they would bow before an idol god, but as a representative of the True God of heaven. Elisha did not deserve worship, but he did deserve the respect which is due to those in whom the Spirit of God dwells.

**2 Kings 2:16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.**

A part of the reason for bowing was a plea that they might go to the surrounding areas and search for Elijah. They felt it was quite possible that Elijah had been deposited at some other location. They did not offer a reason why they felt this might have been done.

Elisha told them bluntly, “Ye shall not send!” He knew any search would be fruitless. Elijah was not upon the earth.

**2 Kings 2:17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.**

The fifty sons of the prophets did not want to take no for an answer. They continued to plead with Elisha that they be given permission to search. When it finally became uncomfortable for him to reject their request, he told them to set out. Three days should have been sufficient to find the prophet if he was to be found. After that time they had no success. He was gone.

**2 Kings 2:18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?**

Elisha's reply when they came back and reported the results of the search was that he had told them it would be a waste of time. They must be satisfied with the present situation.

**2 Kings 2:19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.**

Certain citizens of the city of Jericho then came to Elisha with an urgent request. Everyone could see that because the city was well situated, it should be a pleasant place to live. That was not the case. The problem was that the water supply of the city had become contaminated. The ground was barren because of the polluted water.

The word which is translated as "barren" could have been rendered as "aborted." It was as a woman who had lost her child before time. Could Elisha do anything to remedy the problem?

**2 Kings 2:20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.**

Elisha asked for only two things. He needed a new container and some salt. The reader may be hard put to find a natural relationship between these two items and the possibility of curing the polluted water. That does not mean the Lord did not have a reason.



**2 Kings 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.**

Elisha proceeded to go to the mouth of the spring from which the water flowed. He cast the salt into the spring. Then he said, "Thus saith the Lord. I have healed these waters."

**2 Kings 2:22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.**

Elisha was correct. The waters no longer poisoned the land or the people. Elisha was following in the footsteps of Elijah. He had received help from the Spirit of God.

**2 Kings 2:23 And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.**

These three verses which conclude the present chapter have given more ammunition to critics of the Bible than almost any other. The accusation is made that the event described has every mark of a myth, a fable, or some creation of the mind of man than it does of a true miracle supported by a loving God. Let us give it our attention.

As Elisha was going up from Jericho to Bethel, some

little children came out of the city and began to taunt him. They told him to “Go up, thou bald head.” The first thing we should note in defense of the passage is that the original Hebrew term which is translated as “little children” is applied in other places to grown young men. The Hebrew word “naar” was applied to Isaac when he was in his twenties (Gen. 21). It was also applied to Joseph when he was nearly forty (Gen. 41). Also we find a form of the word applied to Ahab’s bodyguard (I Kings 20.) These were not five year old children mocking Elisha. They were accountable for their treatment of a true prophet of the Lord.

Secondly, the term “bald head” could also be translated as “empty head.” We do not know whether the mockers were talking about a lack of hair or a lack of intelligence.

**2 Kings 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.**

To take such offense at a personal insult that one would place a deadly curse upon another person and call upon the name of the Lord to enforce the curse seems out of harmony with the nature of God. Is God not supposed to be forgiving and longsuffering?

The fact that the curse was divinely supported is proven by the death of the mockers through the fury of the two female bears who came out of the woods and attacked them.

I frankly admit that the passage is difficult to explain. But I just as quickly state that the man or woman who uses these verses to discredit either the

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God of the Bible, or the Book of books, must admit the difficulty of finding the true meaning of life without Jehovah or His most influential Word which has led men to righteous behavior for thousands of years. I accept the truth of the passage. I do not claim to read the mind of God.

2 Kings 2:25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

Mount Carmel was a particularly important site in the days of the prophets. Elisha was well on his way to spiritual leadership as he took upon himself the mantle of Elijah.

Chapter 3

This chapter tells of a confrontation between Moab and three of the kings surrounding the Dead Sea. Jehoram , or Joram was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. The king of Edom had bound himself to Jehoshaphat and so we have the three as an alliance. Mesha was the king of Moab and had been paying tribute to Omri and Ahab. When Ahab died Mesha decided this was an opportune time to cease paying the tribute. He let it be known that he was not going to continue that practice.

We see the settlement of this dispute as we continue our examination of the history during the times of Elijah and Elisha.

2 Kings 3:1 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

We are talking about a time of 895 B.C. There was quite a difference in the religious condition of the northern and southern kingdoms at this time. Israel had fallen to Baal worship under Jezebel and Ahab. They were actually polytheistic, worshiping several gods, though Baal held the most prominent place. Judah had remained more faithful to Jehovah, partly because Jerusalem was dedicated to His worship.

2 Kings 3:2 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

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Jehoram was not quite as evil as his father Ahab. He took away the molten image of Baal which he father had made. But he continued to allow the calves to be worshipped at Dan and Bethel.

**2 Kings 3:3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.**

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat was the one who introduced idolatry into the Hebrew worship. Jehoram followed in his footsteps, except for the maintaining of the idol of Baal.

**2 Kings 3:4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.**

Mesha, the king of Moab had become subservient to Omri and Ahab after him. He was paying an enormous tribute of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, along with their wool. This was agriculturally possible, but was a terrific drain on the wealth of Moab.

**2 Kings 3:5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.**

This decision of Mesha to cease paying tribute was no less than a declaration of war against Israel. He obviously knew when he announced his decision that he would have to use military force to back it.

**2 Kings 3:6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.**

The king of Israel did just what might have been expected. He began to muster his forces and prepare for an attack on Moab which might keep the tribute flowing.

**2 Kings 3:7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.**

Since Jehoshaphat had made an alliance with Israel before Jehoram felt that he might be willing to do it again. He sent and asked if he could depend upon the help of Jehoshaphat in an attack on Moab. He received a positive answer. Although there were sharp religious differences, there was enough in common to join their efforts. Jehoshaphat offered his men and his horses to fight alongside those of Jehoram.

**2 Kings 3:8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.**

The next question to be answered was which route should be taken to make the attack. Should they go north of the Dead Sea, or take a more lengthy route around the south of the Dead Sea and through the nation of Edom. Edom was a vassal to the southern kingdom of Judah at this time and this gave them one more ally. It was  
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decided to go through the country of Edom. This could have also been because the roundabout route would be more apt to result in a surprise to Moab.

2 Kings 3:9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

There were unexpected troubles. The long journey through Edom took seven days and water which would normally have been available seems to have been lacking. Both men and beasts were suffering from the drouth. This could have led to calamity if the attack on Moab were to be carried out.

2 Kings 3:10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

Jehoram, the king of Israel became extremely concerned. He suggested that the Lord had deliberately arranged for the three kings to be led into their present position was a means of delivering them into the hands of the Moabites.

This would not be an unexpected suggestion from one who was torn between Baal and Jehovah.

2 Kings 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah was not so easily discouraged. He was willing to seek advice from Jehovah. He wished to know if there was a prophet of the Lord nearby who could be consulted to determine the will of God in the matter.

He was told that there was such a prophet. His name was Elisha. He had in the past acted as a servant to Elijah with whom they were much more familiar. Clearly Elisha had not yet established himself as a prophet of the same calibre as Elijah.

2 Kings 3:12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah was persuaded that God did reveal His will through Elisha. They would do well to seek his help. Perhaps he could give them an answer to the water shortage. All three kings went to meet with Elisha.

2 Kings 3:13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

Elisha did not welcome Jehoram very warmly. He asked him why he had come to him for help. Why did he not go to the prophets of Baal whom his mother and father appealed to. Jehoram replied that he felt the reason they were in the present circumstances was that

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the Lord Jehovah had led them into an ambush. They needed to ask his advice. Thus Elisha could help.

**2 Kings 3:14 And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.**

Elisha made it known clearly that if it had not been for the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, he would not have even honored the presence of Jehoram. Because Jehoshaphat had asked, he would help.

**2 Kings 3:15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.**

Elijah requested that a musician be brought to play, in order that the Lord might reveal the information they desired. The playing of music was associated with the calming of the spirit of man that the Lord might speak through him.

(See Heb. 1:1.)

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

**2 Kings 3:16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.**

When the minstrel played, Jehovah did speak through Elisha. Elisha revealed that the valley should have ditches opened up throughout it. The three kings

must have wondered what good it would do to dig ditches since there was no source of water to fill them.

**2 Kings 3:17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.**

The answer to that puzzle was to be supernatural. They would not see either wind or rain which would normally accompany rainfall. In spite of that the ditches which had been dug would become filled with water. There would be enough for both the men and the beasts.

**2 Kings 3:18 And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.**

This miracle would be no great thing for the hand of the Lord. Not only would he provide water. He would see that the Moabites were defeated.

**2 Kings 3:19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.**

Today we would call this a “scorched earth” policy. There was to be great destruction such that the land of Moab would be rendered unfit for food production. They were to break down the fences of the cities. They were to cut down the trees. They were to stop the wells and litter the ground with stones.

The cutting of the trees may have been limited to  
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the timber and not have included the fruit trees.
(Compare Deut. 20:19-20.)

Deut. 20:19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege:

Deut. 20:20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

2 Kings 3:20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

The armies of the three kings did as they were commanded. The next morning at the time of the early sacrifice, water came from the direction of Edom and the ditches were filled with it. Elisha was proving to be just as effective as Elijah had been in revealing the will of the Lord.

2 Kings 3:21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

Word reached the Moabites that they were about to be attacked. They enlisted everyone who was able to put on armour and caused them to mass at the border between Moab and Edom.

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**2 Kings 3:22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:**

When the Moabites awoke in the morning they could see the light of the sun reflecting off the surface of the pools of water. The water appeared to be mixed with blood. This may not have been a miracle. There is a saying which has been passed down from generation to generation in parts of the United States which states:

Sun red in the morning, sailors take warning.

Sun red at night, sailors delight.

Water can appear red either in the early morning or the late evening if it reflects the light from the sun.

**2 Kings 3:23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.**

The Moabites decided there was an abundance of blood. They decided the armies of the three kings had fallen out with one another and waged an internal battle among themselves. They concluded that this was their chance to attack the armies of the three kings and take spoil from them.

**2 Kings 3:24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.**

The hand of Jehovah had been behind it. When the Moabites rushed into the camp of the Israelites, the  
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Israelites rose up and ambushed them. They were so thoroughly defeated that they retreated into their own Moabite territory.

2 Kings 3:25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

The Israelites did just as they had been told. They even came to the major city of Kirharaseth and were able to smite it.

2 Kings 3:26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

As a last resort, the king of Moab decided to make a pointed attack upon just the king of Edom. He took seven hundred men and tried to kill the king. He was unable to accomplish that. He was left quite helpless.

2 Kings 3:27 Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

The Moabite stone which was discovered in 1868 tells this story from the point of view of the Moabite king

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Mesha. There has been a great controversy over why the offering of the king's eldest son as a burnt offering was followed by a departure of the Israelite forces who then returned to their own land.

Surely it was not the result of the assistance of the false god Chemosh whom Mesha worshipped. It is more likely that the sacrifice of the king's eldest son, who would have succeeded him on the throne stirred up the emotions of the Moabites to the point that they fought more fiercely and were able to drive off the armies of the three kings. This would mean that they did succeed in stopping the tribute of lambs, rams and wool. There are unanswered questions here.





## Chapter 4

Elisha has replaced Elijah as the head of the prophets. He performs a number of miracles which establish the power of the Lord when used in combination with a devoted servant such as Elisha.

There are several of these miracles recounted in the chapter. If the reader is not careful he or she will find themselves treating the accounts as fables or fairy tales. The cursory reader who skims over this material is particularly apt to treat it in this manner. Just because God is not bringing about miraculous events such as these in the present day is no reason to reject the truth of such in the days of Elijah and Elisha, or in the days of the Son of God.

**2 Kings 4:1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.**

Elisha moved about to such places as Shunem and Gilgal as he went about his duties. The sons of the prophets were disciples who sat at the feet of the prophets and learned from them. Some of them did marry, as this record proves.

One of these men had a wife who came to Elisha crying out for help. Her husband had died. She reminded Elisha that the man had been a God fearing person. Debts had accumulated, either while the man was still alive, or as a result of insufficient support for the family after his death.

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It was permissible under the law of Moses for one

who had borrowed money and could not pay it back to be forced to sell his own children, or go into bondservant status himself until the year of the jubilee, when all were to be freed. In the present case the one who had loaned the money had come to take the woman's sons as a means of paying off the debt.

(See Exo. 21:2.)

Exo. 21:2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

2 Kings 4:2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

Elisha was sympathetic to her plea. He asked her what he might do for her. She replied that all she had in the house was a pot of oil. The context here implies that the center of the topic was a lack of food. She had no food, but did have a pot of oil which could be used for cooking food.

2 Kings 4:3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

The woman was apparently on good relationship with many of her neighbors. She was told to borrow many empty containers. It was left up to her just how many she would gather. It is a credit to her neighbors that she was able to call upon them and receive a positive answer. The vessels were made available to her.



2 Kings 4:4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

Elisha gave instructions that what was to be done next was to be a private matter between she and her sons. Others were not to be present. She was to close the door and begin to pour oil into the borrowed vessels until they were full. This must have seemed an impossibility. How could the oil in the single pot be poured into a large number of other containers until all of them were full?

2 Kings 4:5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

The woman did not object that this would be wasted effort. She knew the prophet was a servant of Jehovah and that he could on occasion do wondrous things. She and her sons went inside the house and shut the door upon themselves. Her sons then brought the vessels one by one as she poured oil from the one pot into each of them.

2 Kings 4:6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

After a while the vessels were all full. She called for one of her sons to bring another vessel and he answered that there were no more. All were full. At that point

the oil in the original pot came to an end. What was to be done next?

2 Kings 4:7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

When she told Elisha the details, he directed her to sell the oil in the vessels, pay off the debt which she owed, and live along with her children on the rest which was not required to pay the debt.

One wise commentator added that the Lord had even provided her with enough oil to get her started in a business. With care she might be able to use the business to care for herself and her sons in the future. This concludes the first event of this chapter.

2 Kings 4:8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

One day while Elisha came to Shunem, a woman of means suggested that he stop at her home and eat a meal. This was but the beginning of a lasting arrangement. When Elisha passed by that way he would stop at that home and be cared for.

2 Kings 4:9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

The woman's husband was a willing partner in this hospitality. The woman discussed the possibility
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of doing something even more to assist Elisha in his labors. After all, he was a godly man and it would be right to offer him help.

**2 Kings 4:10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.**

A prophet of God did not require great possessions to accomplish his duties. They could build a little room on the top of the house, and place a stool, a table, a candlestick and a bed in the room. Then, when Elisha stopped he could have some privacy for rest, for meditation and for prayer.

**2 Kings 4:11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.**

**2 Kings 4:12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.**

One day when Elisha had stopped at the home, along with his servant Gehazi, he told Gehazi to call the Shunammite woman so he could talk to her. She came to the door of the chamber to see what he wanted.

**2 Kings 4:13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.**

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Strangely, he did not communicate directly with the woman. He talked to Gehazi and told him to relay the words to the woman. He wished to know whether there was something that he could do for her. She and her husband had been very generous to him. He wished to repay their generosity. He had access to both the king and the captain of the army. Would she like for him to request some favor from either of them?

The woman replied that she was quite satisfied as things were. Rather than to move to some grand location in another place, she would be contented to live among the people she had grown to know and love.

2 Kings 4:14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

Elisha then asked Gehazi if he could suggest some blessing which could be offered to her. He answered that she had no children and her husband was old. She would probably rejoice at the thought of having a child.

This brings on a question. Nothing is said about the age of the woman. It is highly unusual for a woman young enough to have children to be married to a man to old to sire a child. Perhaps the statement of Gehazi about her husband was meant to say that both she and her husband were beyond the child bearing age.

2 Kings 4:15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

2 Kings 4:16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

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Gehazi was told to call the woman. She came and waited at the door to hear what Elisha had to say to her. His words must have been a sizable shock. She was told that she would conceive and after the normal time of pregnancy she would hold her own son in her arms.

Her response was an indication of disbelief. This was a man of God who was talking to her. It would be cruel for him to make a promise such as had been made and then find her hopes had been dashed. Her words seem more critical than necessary, but we will see that Elisha will be reminded of them later.

**2 Kings 4:17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.**

In spite of her doubts, the woman did conceive and give birth to a son just as Elisha had predicted.

Bible critics are quick to twist such events as this into evil directions. The child was the fruit of the woman and her husband. God had made the conception of the babe through an impotent man possible. The reader feels just a hint of the happiness which this elderly couple must have enjoyed at the birth of the infant.

**2 Kings 4:18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.**

**2 Kings 4:19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.**

The verse does not say the child was grown to maturity. It had grown to the extent that it was capable of going out into the field where his father and the

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reapers were harvesting grain. The next verses say the mother sat the boy upon her knees.

Harvesting time is hot. After a time the child went to his father complaining of a severe headache. The father told another young man to carry the boy to his mother. It is quite possible that the boy had suffered a sun stroke.

2 Kings 4:20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

The mother cared for her son until noon, when he died. We might expect that she would immediately have called for his father for comfort and additional advice as to what should be done.

2 Kings 4:21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

She did not do that. She took her son and laid him on the bed of Elisha, shut the door of the chamber and left him there.

2 Kings 4:22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

Then, instead of calling her husband to come and help, she asked him to send a young man with one of the asses in order that she might call for Elisha to come to their house.



2 Kings 4:23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.

Not knowing that the son was dead, the father wished to know why his wife wanted to make contact with the prophet. It was neither a new moon, or a sabbath. Those were the times when such contacts with holy men were made.

Her answer still did not reveal that the child was dead. She simply said all would be well. The reader will remember the words of the hymn which states, "It is well. It is well, with my soul." If God had worked through the prophet to give her a son, He could certainly restore that son to life. It would be well! The husband did not even have to leave the harvest field.

2 Kings 4:24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.

The woman commanded the servant to move the ass forward as rapidly as possible. He was not to worry about going too fast for her unless she told him otherwise.

2 Kings 4:25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite:

Elisha saw her coming while she was still a distance off. He recognized her and told Gehazi she was the Shunammite woman who had received a son.

2 Kings 4:26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well:

Gehazi was to hasten to meet her and see if something was wrong with herself, her husband, or her young son. When Gehazi inquired she told him it was well with all of them. If the lad was dead, how could she state that he was well?

As we stated before, if God could bring a child into being for her, why could he not restore the life of the child when it had died? Surely Elisha, through the power of God, could see that all things worked together for good.

2 Kings 4:27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

When the woman came up to Elisha she fell at his feet to plead with him for her child. Gehazi thought her action was uncalled for and tried to push her away. He was told not to do so. The woman was in inner turmoil and God had not let Elisha know about it. Elisha would try to help her.

2 Kings 4:28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

The woman reminded Elisha that she had told him not to build up false hopes when he promised she
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would bear a son. According to the text, she did not tell Elisha the child had died. She must have told him more than the report here indicates. He knew the son was in serious trouble.

**2 Kings 4:29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.**

Elisha told Gehazi to prepare to make haste and go to the child. He was to take Elisha's staff and lay it upon the face of the lad. No time was to be wasted in any conversations on the way. If the child was merely ill, perhaps the staff would provide the needed power to heal him.

**2 Kings 4:30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.**

The woman was not satisfied. She wanted Elisha to go with them to the child. She would not leave Elisha to go with Gehazi to where the child was. Elisha went with her.

**2 Kings 4:31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.**

Gehazi went on ahead and arrived before Elisha and the mother did. As soon as he came to where the son was

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he placed the staff on the face of the dead child. This did not revive him. He did not hear. He did not speak. Gehazi returned to Elisha and reported that he could see no signs of life in the boy.

2 Kings 4:32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

When Elisha arrived at the house, he knew why there were no signs of life. The boy was dead. He was not in a coma, etc.

2 Kings 4:33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.

Elisha then entered the room and closed the door, with only himself and the boy inside. He first prayed before proceeding any farther. In such cases, man does all he can. Then he calls upon God to do whatever else is right.

2 Kings 4:34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

Did Jehovah reveal to Elisha some of the medical facts which are utilized centuries later in the application of artificial respiration? Whatever the case, the procedure worked. When Elisha stretched himself out upon the child with his entire body in contact with that of the child, the boy began to gain body heat.

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**2 Kings 4:35** Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

Elisha then left the room and walked around in the house for a time. He then went up a second time and stretched himself upon the child. This time the boy began to sneeze repeatedly. He was alive!

**2 Kings 4:36** And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

**2 Kings 4:37** Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

Elisha told Gehazi to call the woman and inform her that she could come and take up her son. He was alive. She was so grateful she bowed before Elisha, took up her son and left.

The Bible does not always report all of the details of events. We can hardly believe the woman said nothing to Elisha in gratitude for his part in bringing on such a blessing from the Lord.

**2 Kings 4:38** And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

Gilgal and Shunem were two favorite locations in the work of Elisha and the sons of the prophets. Elisha

followed some of the same patterns of action as did Jesus. We are told that Jesus “began both to do and to teach.” We now find Elisha sitting with the sons, or disciples of the prophets in his teaching capacity.

He instructed his servant, perhaps Gehazi, to set the table for the sons of the prophets. He was to boil soup, or seethe pottage. There was a problem however. There was a dearth, or shortage of food in the land. It would not be easy to find materials from which to fill the pot.

**2 Kings 4:39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not.**

While they were searching for herbs from which the pottage could be made, one of the men found a wild vine which had produced gourds. He gathered a lap full of the gourds, cut them up and cast them into the pot. He did not know the identity of the gourds. Gardeners today believe they were a plant which had a strong purgative effect, and which taken in quantity could be lethal.

**2 Kings 4:40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.**

When it came time to take out their servings of the pottage the men realized the food contained poisonous materials. They dared not eat of the servings they had poured out. If the persons who have suggested the name  
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of the gourds which had been put into the pottage are right, the taste would have given it away. It was said to be very bitter.

2 Kings 4:41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

It was difficult enough to find food without destroying that which they already had. All the work which had been done in finding enough to feed themselves had been wasted.

Elisha came to the rescue. He told them to bring him some meal. He cast the meal into the pot and told everyone that they might safely eat. The poisonous effect had been removed. This was clearly more than just a dilution of the pottage by the addition of the meal. God's hand was once more working through his servant Elisha.

2 Kings 4:42 And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

We do not know the location of Baalshalisha. It is not critical that we know. The important point is that a man from that place brought twenty loaves of barley bread, and some of what we might today call roasten ears of corn. He had brough it as God instructed the first fruits of the harvest to be donated to the priests or his special workers. Elisha commanded that the food be given to the people that they might eat.

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**2 Kings 4:43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.**

The one who was to serve the men was astonished. How was he to serve one hundred men with such a small amount of food? Elisha was not disturbed. He repeated his instruction that the men be served. He added that they would eat all they wanted and would have food left.

**2 Kings 4:44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.**

Elisha's word proved to be true. The men ate what they wanted and food was left.

We are reminded of Christ's feeding of the thousands on the seashore with but five loaves and two fishes. God can overcome what are insurmountable obstacles for men. When this world is replaced by the new heaven and earth, those who have trusted in Jehovah will find the joys of heaven to be all they can make use of, with some left over.





## *Chapter 5*

We come now to one of the most fascinating events of the Old Testament. The chapter contains an account of the curing of Naaman the leper of his deadly illness. God has thus reached out to the Gentiles with an offer of his blessings. Every preacher who has stood in the pulpit for any length of time has used this as the backbone of a sermon. Every regularly worshiping Christian has heard the account.

**2 Kings 5:1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.**

Naaman was a man of reputation from the land of Syria. It is clear from this first verse that he was commander of a large number of Syrian soldiers. His master would perhaps been Benhadad the king of Syria. Naaman had earned the respect of this man. He is described as a strong and courageous person. He had been responsible for delivering Syria from some type of oppression.

But Naaman had one serious handicap. He was a leper. Depending upon the type of leprosy from which he suffered, he could have faced embarrassment and shame from others because of the repulsive ailment.

**2 Kings 5:2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.**

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At the time of Elisha, the Syrians who dwelt just to the north of Israel often raided the northern kingdom of Israel and took spoils. On one of these raids they had captured a little Israelite maiden. She had proven so dependable that Naaman's wife had taken her into their home to help with the household duties.

It is to the credit of the maiden that she did not fuss and fume over having been taken from her own land and assigned these humble tasks. Her faith in Jehovah made it possible for her to glorify the true God in a land ruled by idols.

2 Kings 5:3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

One day the maiden expressed her feelings about the leprous condition of her master to his wife. If only Naaman could make contact with a prophet of God who lived in Samaria, that prophet could cure him of the leprosy.

2 Kings 5:4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

The remarks of the maiden were passed on to Naaman, and it is evident that he was impressed enough that he was moved to take action. It is not far fetched to believe Naaman had made strong attempts to get the gods he worshiped in Syria to remove his curse. He was ready to test the truth of the maiden's report. He went to his king and asked for permission to visit the prophet.

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**2 Kings 5:5** And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

The king of Syria agreed to the request and added that he would send a letter along with Naaman to the king of Israel. Naaman was a valuable man to the king of Syria and he went so far as to send very valuable gifts to Jehoram, king of Israel. There were ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of clothing. Some has estimated that in modern terms this would have amounted to somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred thousand dollars.

**2 Kings 5:6** And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

Why was it that Naaman delivered the letter to the king of Israel rather than to Elisha? Elisha was the one who had been claimed to be able to bring about the healing. This is not too difficult to understand. It would have been dangerous to bypass the king. The king would have been assumed to have power to order Elisha to honor the request. It was politically correct to offer the gifts through the king. Then, if the king agreed, he could pass on whatever he thought appropriate to Elisha.

**2 Kings 5:7** And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make

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alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

The reaction of Jehoram was not exactly what the king of Syria had expected. Syria and Israel had not been on the best of terms for a long time. When Jehoram saw the request that Naaman might be cured of his leprosy, he took the request personally. He was not God. Only God could give life and take it away. He felt that the king of Syria had only made the request in order that when Naaman was not healed, he could accuse him and start a military conflict.

2 Kings 5:8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

It did not take long for Elisha to receive word that his king had rent his clothing in anguish because of the difficulties he faced. Elisha sent word to his king that there was no reason to become excited. If the king would send Naaman to Elisha, he would prove that there was a prophet of the true God in Israel.

The influence of the little Israelite maiden was beginning to be felt far beyond the household of Naaman where she served.

2 Kings 5:9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

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Jehoram agreed to let Naaman go to the home of Elisha to see what could be done for him. Naaman came with flying colors. He had a chariot and horses. He was expecting to be treated with the greatest of dignity by Elisha.

**2 Kings 5:10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.**

Elisha did not even bother to come to the door to meet Naaman. He sent a messenger to tell him what he needed to do. All Elisha intended to do was give Naaman the information he needed and then let him do as the Lord specified. Elisha's God was not to humble himself before Naaman. The exact opposite was to be the case. Naaman needed the help that Elisha's God could give. Jehovah was far superior to Naaman.

Elisha's messenger told Naaman that he should go and dip or wash himself seven times in the Jordan River. Then he would be made clear of his leprosy.

We might ask ourselves why he was told to dip seven times. Why not just once? The reason was that God had said seven. Any other number would not suit. It was God's choice, not that of Naaman, or any other man.

**2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.**

Naaman was filled with wrath. He turned away and expressed his feelings about his treatment. He had

expected to be met personally by Naaman who would come to stand before him. Then he thought Naaman would call upon his God and wave his hand over the leprosy. That was not at all what had taken place.

**2 Kings 5:12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.**

There was another objection from Naaman. If the cure was to be effected by dipping in a river, there were at least two rivers in Syria which could have been used. If Elisha was not even going to talk to him, he might as well have received the instructions while back in Syria and dipped in either the Abana or Pharpar rivers. They were clean. The Jordan was muddy. Naaman was ready to return home with his leprosy.

There are multitudes of persons through the ages who have heard the instructions of the Lord with respect to being plunged into the waters of baptism who have reasoned to themselves that being dipped in water was a ridiculous command, and had no part to play in the removal of sins from the soul. And so they refuse to be baptised and continue to be laden with sin and spiritual death.

**2 Kings 5:13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?**

Naaman's servants were of quite a different frame of mind than was their master. They reminded him that  
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if he had been told to do something which required the courage and valor for which he was famous, he would have done it. Why then, would he not do such a simple thing as dipping seven times in the Jordan River?

2 Kings 5:14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Naaman was persuaded. He did as he had been instructed by the prophet. When he did as he was told, his flesh is said to have come again, and was as clean and whole as that of a little child.

Jesus referred to this event. It is recorded in the fourth chapter of the book of Luke.

(See Luke 4:23-29.)

Luke 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

Luke 4:24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

Luke 4:25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Luke 4:26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

Luke 4:27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Luke 4:28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luke 4:29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

The Jews were angry at Christ for reaching out to the Gentiles with his blessings. They told him he needed to be blessing those of his own country.

The Lord replied that back in the time of Elijah and Elisha there were those of the Gentiles who were blessed when Jesus own Jewish brethren rejected him.

2 Kings 5:15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

Naaman was filled with gratitude when he found that his leprosy was gone. He took the time to return to the house of Elisha and admit the power of Jehovah. He admitted that there was no other God but the One Elisha worshiped in Israel. He wanted to show his appreciation with a generous gift to the prophet.

2 Kings 5:16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

Elisha declined the gifts. He was not serving God for the material benefit he might obtain. He was attempting



to glorify the Lord. Now the little maiden's influence had made another step forward.

2 Kings 5:17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

If Elisha would not take a gift, Naaman said there was a gift which he would like to have. He desired the amount of earth which two mules could carry. He would take it back to Syria and build an altar where he could worship the God Jehovah of Israel. Naaman was having trouble untangling himself from the idea that every people had a god who was to be worshiped in their own land. If one went to another land, he might expect to be under the lordship of a different God. Therefore, he needed a little of the earth of Israel so that he could worship the God who had healed him of his leprosy.

2 Kings 5:18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

There was a complication. Naaman wished to make certain that when he went into the house of Rimmon, the false god of Syria and bowed down along with his master in that house of worship, both Elisha and Jehovah would understand that he was not truly worshipping Rimmon.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not take that

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route when they were expected to practice false worship. They refused. It seems likely that this would have been the best choice for Naaman. Still, the reader must ask himself what he would have done in Naaman's place. After all, Naaman made it certain to Elisha and Jehovah that he would not be worshiping Rimmon. The problem is that others who saw him bowing down, would believe he was doing so.

**2 Kings 5:19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.**

There is a difference of opinion as to what these words "Go in peace." meant. Were they only a parting farewell, or were they an indication that God would not condemn Naaman for doing what he had just suggested?

**2 Kings 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.**

Elisha's servant Gehazi had had both his eyes and his ears open when his master refused to take the expensive gifts which Naaman offered him. Gehazi determined that this was an opportunity for him to profit by the generosity of Naaman and the high principles of his master Elisha. If Elisha would not take the gifts, then Gehazi would take some.

**2 Kings 5:21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he**  
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lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

Gehazi ran after the departing chariot of Naaman. When Naaman saw him following them, he was concerned that something might be wrong. He descended from the chariot and asked, "Is all well?" We would say in our own time, "Is anything wrong?"

2 Kings 5:22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

Gehazi assured Naaman that everything was all right. But his master Elisha had changed his mind. There were two young sons of the prophets who had come to them from mount Ephraim. There was a need to help them. It would be appreciated if Naaman would provide a talent of silver and two changes of garments.

This was an outright lie, but Gehazi could see no way that his plan would be discovered. He could seclude the gifts and use them for his own benefit.

2 Kings 5:23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

Naaman was quite agreeable to the request. He wished to go a step farther. Naaman could have two talents of silver, along with the two changes of

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garments. He would even provide bags for the money and servants to carry the gifts. Gehazi would not even have to carry them.

**2 Kings 5:24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.**

When Gehazi and the two servants came close to the place where they would meet Elisha, Gehazi dismissed the two servants and hid the gifts where Elisha would not see them.

**2 Kings 5:25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.**

Gehazi then went in and reported to his master Elisha. He ran into the same difficulty the present writer sometimes does when he tries to do something without his wife knowing about it. Elisha asked Gehazi, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" Gehazi replied that he had not been anywhere. One lie is apt to lead to another. Gehazi was piling one sin on top of another and another and another.

**2 Kings 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?**



Elisha scolded Gehazi. Did the servant not realize that God would make it possible for Elisha to see just what had happened? He then proceeded to show Gehazi just how much he did know about his motives. He had expected to use the gifts which he had received to buy garments, oliveyards, sheep, oxen and both male and female servants.

**2 Kings 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.**

Elisha told Gehazi just what the consequences of his greed were to be. He had received the money and other gifts from Naaman, but he would get something else which he had not anticipated. He would inherit his leprosy. Not only would he personally become leprous. His seed would be lepers for ever. The leprosy came upon Gehazi suddenly and he left the presence of Elisha with the same horrible disease from which Naaman had been cured.

We must not close our discussion of this chapter without considering the criticisms which some have leveled against the punishment of Gehazi and his seed. First, we do not know how long the seed of Gehazi continued to exist. Second, we are not told what the character of his seed was. Third, we recognize, even today, that it is not easy for the children of sinful parents to escape the consequences of their parents drunkenness, laziness, brutality, etc.

## *Chapter 6*

Elijah had given way to Elisha. The latter is attempting to demonstrate the power of Jehovah to both Israel and Israel's enemies. One miracle after another is produced by the prophet. Neither Israel nor her foes are easily convinced that a full and happy life requires respect and obedience to the Lord.

**2 Kings 6:1 And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.**

The sons of the prophets were disciples of Elisha. They came to him complaining that their dwelling place was too confined for them. They needed more space.

**2 Kings 6:2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.**

They proposed that they move to the edge of the Jordan river and build a dwelling and workplace there. Supposedly every man would pitch in and help in the construction of the new living quarters.

**2 Kings 6:3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.**

They were apparently a bit concerned that Elisha would not consent to the move. They asked him to agree to go with them and bring God's blessing with him. Elisha did agree to go with them.

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2 Kings 6:4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

2 Kings 6:5 But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

In the process of cutting down wood for the dwelling, one of the men discovered that his ax head had come off and had fallen into the river. The man was much disturbed over it. He had borrowed the tool and now would be unable to return it to the lender. We gather that he was poor and did not have funds to buy another for replacement.

2 Kings 6:6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.

Elisha asked the man where the ax head had fallen into the water, and was shown the spot. The prophet then cut a stick and threw it into the river. When this was done the ax head came to the surface and floated.

This has been dismissed by some Bible students as a very trivial event. This may not be true. It demonstrated God's concern for the poor. It also pointed out God's ability to solve problems which men can not solve. It requires supernatural wisdom and power to make iron float on top of water.

2 Kings 6:7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

The man retrieved the ax head, and we suppose had

a greater respect for the prophet of the Lord than had been the case before this.

2 Kings 6:8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

The king of Syria was probably Benhadad. The Syrians looked with greed and envy at the northern kingdom of Israel. There were periodic attacks on Israel's territory in an effort to find tender spots.

The king of Syria called his underlings together to give them instructions as to where they should set up for their attacks.

2 Kings 6:9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

God revealed to Elisha the locations of the Syrians before they had the chance to attack. Elisha then informed Israel as to where danger might lie. The Syrians had come down in two senses. Syria lay north or Israel and it also was a more elevated country.

2 Kings 6:10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

The king of Israel realized the value of Elisha's information and sent troops to the point of danger. This

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prevented a surprise attack. Not once or twice means more than a couple of times.

**2 Kings 6:11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?**

The king of Syria was much troubled by the fact that his foe was always prepared and ready. He felt that someone in his own army must be acting as a traitor and offering information to Israel. He tried to find out who the traitor was.

**2 Kings 6:12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.**

The king was told by one of his own servants that there was no traitor. The reason Israel knew of their location was that Elisha was a prophet, and he was telling the king of Israel everything that the king had told his inferior officers.

The implication of the bedchamber was that there was no place secret enough that God would not be able to hear and pass on the facts to Elisha.

**2 Kings 6:13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.**

The king of Syria was ready to remedy that problem. The thing to do was to capture Elisha. His men were

told to find out where Elisha was. He was told Elisha was in the city of Dothan.

**2 Kings 6:14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.**

This time the Syrian king was not just sending a token force. He intended to stop Elisha from passing information. He assembled a great number of men, plus horses and chariots. During the night they gathered around the city.

Why did Elisha not inform the king of Israel as to what was happening? Perhaps because it was done quickly and at night.

**2 Kings 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?**

When Elisha's servant rose up in the morning he discovered the large army ready to attack. He wanted Elisha to tell him what must be done. This does not indicate that the servant had lost faith in his master. He simply realized that if they were to be rescued God would have to provide the answer.

**2 Kings 6:16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.**

Elisha informed the servant that he was not to be alarmed at the size of the opposing force. In reality there  
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were greater numbers and more power on the side of Israel than on the side of Syria.

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Then Elisha prayed that the servant's eyes might be opened that he could see the power of the army which defended Israel. This was not an opening of the physical eyes. It was the spiritual eyes which were to be opened.

When the Lord answered the prayer of Elisha, the servant saw a whole mountain covered with horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha. The man of God was correct. The greater power was on the side of Israel.

2 Kings 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Then Elisha prayed a second time. This time it was not for an opening of the eyes. It was for physical blindness to come upon the Syrian forces. This prayer was also answered.

2 Kings 6:19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

Elisha then told the Syrians that they were headed to the wrong place. If they would follow him, he would make it possible to find the man they were seeking.

Did Elisha lie to the Syrians as some claim, accusing him of character weakness? Not necessarily. He led them to Samaria, the capitol of the northern kingdom. When they arrived there they would be able to see the one for whom they had been looking. That turned out to be the case.

2 Kings 6:20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

The army of the Syrians was to receive a shock when their eyes were opened. They were not at Dothan. They were at Samaria where the king of Israel could quickly send his own forces against them.

2 Kings 6:21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

The king of Israel knew he had the upper hand. He also knew Elisha could give him some straight answers as to what needed to be done. Should he send his own forces against the Syrians and destroy them?

2 Kings 6:22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

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Elisha's answer, which was actually God's answer, was that they should not destroy the Syrians. The thing to do was to teach them peace. The right response was to give the Syrians food and drink and send them back to their king.

Does this not remind the reader of Jesus command to His followers to pray for them that despitefully use you, and to do good unto all men.

**2 Kings 6:23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.**

The king of Israel took Elisha's advice. He fed the enemy and sent them home to their king. The advice was helpful. For some time after this the Syrians did not try to invade Israel. This does not mean they never did so again. However; it was a lengthy period of time.

**2 Kings 6:24 And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.**

The following events prove that the Syrians did come back under the leadership of king Benhadad. This may have been more than a year after the treatment described in the previous verses.

**2 Kings 6:25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.**

On this occasion a famine had struck the area of Samaria. Food was nearly nonexistent. When the attack of the Syrians was added to the effects of the famine the price of food skyrocketed. The ass was an unclean animal. It was forbidden to the Jews. Nevertheless, they reached the point where they would pay a large price for the “head” of an ass. There could hardly be a less desirable portion of the animals for human consumption.

The identity of the “doves dung” is disputed. Some have claimed that the Hebrew phrase is talking about a certain type of beans. If so, it would not be quite so offensive. It is true that men have eaten rat and mouse leavings when food became almost impossible to find. This has taken place in time of war.

**2 Kings 6:26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.**

The king was expected to help if anyone could. A woman saw him walking around the edge of the city and cried out to him for help. The situation was serious enough that he was in little better shape than she was.

**2 Kings 6:27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?**

The king’s reply was that only God could help her. He had no way of helping due to the lack of food and drink. After all, what kind of help could he provide for her? What was her problem?

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2 Kings 6:28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.

She answered that she and another woman had agreed to eat their sons. They were to eat this woman's son one day, and the other woman's son the following day.

The text does not say they killed their sons before preparing to eat them. The sons may have perished from the famine, and then the women saw their dead bodies as a source of food. It is a gruesome scene either way.

2 Kings 6:29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

The woman claimed that her companion had failed to live up to the agreement. They had cooked and eaten her own son. Then when it was time to cook the other woman's son, she had hid him. Even so, this may have been the dead body that was hidden.

The cooking and eating of one's own children had been predicted long before this time. God had declared through his prophets that if Israel turned from Him this would be one of the consequences of such disobedience.

(See Lev. 26:27-29 and Deut. 28:53-57.)

Lev. 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

Lev. 26:28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for

your sins.

Lev. 26:29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Deu. 28:53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

Deu. 28:54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

Deu. 28:55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

Deu. 28:56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

Deu. 28:57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

2 Kings 6:30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

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The king of Israel was grief stricken. He tore his outer garments and exposed that he was wearing sackcloth underneath. It is not a good idea to defy Jehovah. The results are often unimaginable.

**2 Kings 6:31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.**

Now the attitude of the king of Israel had done a complete turnaround. Rather than trusting in the prophet, he is seeing Elisha as the one who needs to be chastised for the problems. He swears by God that he will take off the head of Elisha before the day is over.

**2 Kings 6:32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?**

The king of Israel sent for Elisha to kill him. He sent a messenger, and he was following after the messenger. Before the two of them arrived, Elisha had warned his companions of what was about to happen. The verse calls the king of Israel “the son of a murderer.” This could only mean that he acted like a murderer, or it could mean that his father was responsible for killing others.

Elisha commanded that they shut the door and prevent the messenger from entering. He knew the king of Israel was close behind the messenger.

**2 Kings 6:33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?**

As Elisha had predicted, the messenger came to the door. Although the identity of the one who spoke the words in the last part of the verse, it seems likely that it is the king of Israel. When the king met his messenger and reported that the door had been shut, the king felt that Elisha was the main reason the Syrians were besieging the city and it was time to cease waiting for God and Elisha to rescue them. It was time to burst in and take off the head of the prophet.



## Chapter 7

The Syrians beseiged the city of Samaria and tried to capture Elisha by starving the city until he was turned over to them. Conditions became hideous, with food becoming almost unavailable. That which was available was too valuable to pay for. Through the help of the Lord the Syrians were made to hear a sound like an army rushing toward them. They fled and the city was relieved.

**2 Kings 7:1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.**

The Syrians were determined to capture the city of Samaria. They had surrounded it and the people were reduced to eating their own children to stay alive. It appeared that they could hold out no longer when Elisha made the above statement. Within twenty-four hours the famine would be broken and food would return to it's normal cost.

**2 Kings 7:2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.**

Upon hearing Elisha's prediction, one of the high ranking officials of Israel made a mocking statement. He said that even if the Lord opened windows in heaven  
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and allowed food to rain down from above, Elisha's prediction could not be fulfilled. He was in effect saying that not even the Lord could save them in a twenty-four period. This was a very foolish statement.

Elisha answered the mockery by saying that the man would most certainly see it with his own eyes, but that he would not eat a bite of it.

2 Kings 7:3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

Four lepers were sitting at the entry gate of the city. They were castoffs from the city because of their uncleanness. They could beg at the city gate, but could not enter in and have contact with the inhabitants. They decided it was nearly impossible for them to avoid death.

2 Kings 7:4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

It would be of no benefit to enter into the city for food because of the general shortage that the whole city was suffering. If they just continued to sit at the gate and receive no handouts from the inhabitants they would also die. There was apparently only one possibility. They could present themselves to the Syrians and ask for their help. It was the last hope!

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**2 Kings 7:5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.**

In the evening they ventured to the edge of the Syrian camp. What a shock it was to them to find the camp deserted. There was not a man in the camp.

**2 Kings 7:6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.**

The reason the camp was deserted was that God had caused the Syrians to hear a sound as if a great army of horses, chariots and men was about to fall upon them. They concluded that the king of Israel had managed to hire forces from the Hittites and the Egyptians to join the forces of the city of Samaria.

**2 Kings 7:7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.**

The Syrians had become panic stricken. They did not bother to take the time to dismantle their tents. They left their beasts of burden behind, and everything else they possessed, and ran for their lives.

**2 Kings 7:8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one**

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tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

The four lepers were free to survey the entire camp. As they did so, they went into one of the tents and found an abundance of food, plus gold, silver and clothing. They went from one tent to another taking what they could find and hiding it for the future.

2 Kings 7:9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

After having gathered a portion of the food and other supplies, they agreed that this was a dangerous practice. If they remained silent and did not tell the people of the city, the Syrian retreat would be found out anyway. Then they faced the danger of being chastised for not sharing the good fortune which they had enjoyed. They must go and tell the king of Israel.

2 Kings 7:10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.

2 Kings 7:11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.



They went to the gate of Samaria, but were still fearful of entering in because of their leprosy. They told the porter at the gate of the city. This chief porter reported it to those under him and the news finally reached the house of the king.

2 Kings 7:12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

By the time the news reached the king, it was night. The king did not believe what the lepers had reported. He was convinced that it was a trick by which the Syrians intended to entice the citizens of the city to come out and get food. Then the Syrians would fall upon the people and catch them alive. They could then take Elisha and they could sell the citizens of the city for slaves.

2 Kings 7:13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

One of the king's servants suggested that they do a test. They could send five men on horses to check and see if there was a trap. If they were killed they would be

no worse off than either those who had already died in the city, or those who were still alive but about to die.

2 Kings 7:14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

The king of Israel agreed to send two chariot horses with riders to investigate the situation. They were told to go and see. If they did not return, the conclusion would be that they had been captured.

2 Kings 7:15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

The city of Samaria was several miles from the Jordan river. The men who had been sent out traveled that distance and did not find a single Syrian. They did find that the lepers had told the truth. The path the Syrians had taken in the flight was strewn with discarded possessions.

2 Kings 7:16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

Now the rest of the people of the city went to the site of the Syrian camp and collected that which had been abandoned. There was enough food for everyone and the price of necessities dropped to normal. This

all happened within the twenty-four hour period that Elisha had predicted. God had intervened in behalf of His people.

2 Kings 7:17 And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

God's providence seems to have entered the picture at this point. The king of Israel appointed the very man who had mocked Elisha's prediction to supervise the people who were leaving and reentering the city. He was unable to control the hungry rushing mob and was trampled to death just as Elisha had predicted.

2 Kings 7:18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

2 Kings 7:19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

2 Kings 7:20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

These last three verses serve to emphasize the power of Jehovah. In what appears to be a hopeless situation God can provide when man finds solution of problems to be impossible.

Also we have the lesson that when God makes a
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promise, that promise will be kept. It may not be kept in a way which his people expected, but it will be kept.

Dear readers, God has predicted that there will be a judgment day. The righteous will be told to enter into heaven. The wicked will be cast into the fires of hell. Do you believe Him??



## Chapter 8

Things become more difficult to follow as we come to this chapter. Utter chaos is beginning to prevail because of the indifference of God's people to His commandments. This will continue until both the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah find themselves in long periods of captivity.

If the reader will trace through his or her memories, it is likely that a classroom chapter by chapter study of the book of 2 Kings will not be in the recollections. This is difficult material. Even the most conservative of the commentators hesitantly admit that copyist errors have been made which lead to apparent contradictions. They contend that the original inspired books were non contradictory, but that the copyists allowed unintentional changes to creep in.

**2 Kings 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.**

The events in this chapter almost certainly took place before the seven year famine which covered the entire area. Elisha had enjoyed the hospitality of a Shunemite woman. She had arranged for him to have a private room in her home. In return, he had raised her son from death to life.

At this time Elisha aided the woman and her son in another way. The prophet knew a seven year famine was on the way. He advised the woman to take her son and go wherever she could to find food.

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2 Kings 8:2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

The woman took Elisha's advice. She moved her household into the land of the Philistines and stayed there for the seven year period.

The reader is cautioned not to confuse the famine caused to the city of Samaria as a result of the seige of the Syrians with the more general and long lasting famine of the present verse.

2 Kings 8:3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

During the seven year period during which she was absent, she lost control of her home. It could have been taken over by another resident, or it could have been confiscated by the government. She approached the king to get her land and her house back into her own hands.

This woman's husband was elderly when the son was brought back to life. The reason that she took it upon herself to cry out to the king for justice was because her husband was either dead or unable to take the responsibility.

2 Kings 8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

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At the time she came to him, the king was talking with Gehazi, who had been the servant of Elisha. The king wanted to hear of the miraculous acts which the man of God had done.

**2 Kings 8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.**

Even as Gehazi was telling the king of the acts of Elisha, the woman who was trying to regain control of her property appeared on the scene. Gehazi informed the king that this was the very woman whose son Elisha had raised from death to life.

From the time this writer was but a lad, he heard his mother repeat the words, "God works in mysterious ways, His wonder to perform." The appearance of the woman just as Gehazi was telling of Elisha's works was providential. It was no accident.

**2 Kings 8:6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.**

The interest of the king was now turned to the woman. She deserved to have her case resolved. He appointed an officer to restore her property, and also pay her for that which had been harvested from her property while she was absent.

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2 Kings 8:7 And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

The Bible does not reveal the reason why Elisha made the trip to Damascus. This city was in Syria and was several miles across the border. It seems that at this time the prophet had established a reputation among both the Israelites and the Syrians as one who could perform miracles.

2 Kings 8:8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

Benhadad, the king of Syria had fallen sick and was worried about the possibility of death. When he heard Elisha had come to Damascus, he requested that one of his officers go and ask Elisha if the king would recover from the disease. The officer, Hazael, was told to take a present to Elisha.

2 Kings 8:9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

Hazael did as the king instructed him. He loaded forty camel's with a large assortment of goods produced in the land of Syria, and went to ask Elisha if the king

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would recover of the disease.

This raises a serious question. Should the spokesmen of the Lord be paid for their services? The answer to that question is, "Yes." The laborer is worthy of his hire. The preachers of the Gospel of Christ deserve to be supported by those they benefit. As long as they are conscientious and preach the truth diligently, they should be paid.

Then a second question must be addressed. It is right for a talented speaker to preach for the monetary profit he can obtain, even if he has to sacrifice the truth to appeal to the people. The answer this time is, "No." This is a dastardly sin which will be taken into account when the records are read at the time of the final judgment.

**2 Kings 8:10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.**

Elisha told Hazael to go back to the king of Syria and tell him he would most certainly recover. At the same time, Elisha told Hazael that the Lord had showed him the king would die. Is this an absolute contradiction? Did God command Hazael to tell a lie?

One strong possibility is that Elisha knew Hazael planned to tell the king he would die, and told him to go ahead with the lie if he was determined to do so. But that the truth was just the opposite. The king would not recover from the disease.

The other possibility is that Elisha was only answering the question as to whether the king would die from the disease. He would not die from the disease. He would die because Hazael would kill him, which he did.

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2 Kings 8:11 And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

Either Elisha, or Hazael looked stedfastly at the other. If it was Elisha, he stared at Hazael and thought of the terrible things Hazael was about to do. This then would have caused Elisha to break out in tears.

If it was Hazael who stared intently at Elisha, his countenance might well have saddened because of the guilt feeling he had over thoughts of the upcoming murder.

2 Kings 8:12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

This verse seems to settle the matter of who did the weeping, although that would not necessarily tell who had gazed at the other. It was Elisha who wept. Hazael inquired as to why he was weeping. Elisha told him the weeping was over thoughts of what Hazael was to do in the future. He would set their fortifications on fire. He would use the sword to execute young men who opposed him. He would throw their children against hard surfaces which would result in their death. He would even rip open pregnant women to kill their unborn babies. Such thoughts were enough to make many of us weep.



2 Kings 8:13 And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

Dogs were not the most highly respected animals in the time and place being considered. They fed upon garbage. They hunted in packs. When one wished to downgrade another person he might refer to him as a dog. It is likely that the present day use of the word “bitch” for a woman with no morals is a related idea.

Some commentators put a different interpretation on the words of this verse by saying Hazael was referring to himself as of such a lowly state that he would certainly not have the power to do something which required much influence. Elisha did answer Hazael that shortage of power would be no problem. He was to become king of Syria and could command such atrocities.

2 Kings 8:14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover.

When Hazael went back to Benhadad, he was asked about what Elisha had said concerning his recovery from his disease. Hazael replied that Elisha had told him the king would surely recover.

2 Kings 8:15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

Hazael made plans to guarantee that the king would not be killed by the disease. He set out to smother him. The king was no doubt weak from the effects of the ailment, but this only enabled Hazael to dip a thick cloth in water and hold it over his mouth and nose until he died from lack of air.

2 Kings 8:16 And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

Here is a verse which must be paid careful attention. It will help to clear up some of the difficulties of the next few verses. We are told that Joram, or Jehoram, had been the king of Israel for five years, and that Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. In the fifth year of the reign of Joram, who was the son of Ahab, Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, began to reign in place of his father. This Jehoram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah were reigning at the same time. We do not know whether Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram were co-rulers or whether Jehoshaphat died and his son took the throne.

2 Kings 8:17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat was thirty-two year of age when he began to rule and continued for eight years.

2 Kings 8:18 And he walked in the way of the



kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

In general the kings of the northern kingdom were wicked. In comparison, the kings of the southern kingdom were of mixed behavior. Some were wicked. Some were good. This king was wicked. He had married the daughter of Ahab. Ahab was notoriously wicked. Ahab's daughter had a strong influence upon her husband and he adopted the behavior of her family.

2 Kings 8:19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children.

Though conditions in Judah were becoming very revolting to the Lord, He did not destroy them because of His promise to David that He would preserve one of his descendants to keep the light of truth burning.

2 Kings 8:20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

Moab and Edom did not consider themselves to be a part of Israel, even though they had both been under the control of God's people for a number of years. The weakness of Judah under the rule of Jehoram allowed the Edomites to revolt and declare themselves independent from the Jews.

2 Kings 8:21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night,

and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

In verse sixteen this king is called Jehoram. Now he is called Joram. This makes the events very difficult to follow. Joram is but an abbreviated form of the name Jehoram. We pray for the reader's understanding. It is definitely being tested.

Joram went over to Zair in Edom and took his army with him. He defeated the Edomites and they fled.

2 Kings 8:22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

Even so, Edom finally succeeded in breaking the hold of the Jews until the time of the writing of the present words. Libnah followed suit. This is a sign of the deterioration of the Jews in both Israel and Judah. Their days of independence are numbered.

2 Kings 8:23 And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Much of the material in the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are either repetition or expansion of that in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. The reference above is to the twenty first and twenty-second chapter of 2 Chronicles.

2 Kings 8:24 And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of

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**David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.**

Jehoram, or Joram, died and was buried in Jerusalem. His son Ahaziah took his place as ruler of Judah. Jehoram had reigned for twelve years.

**2 Kings 8:25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.**

The reader will be excused if he has difficulty. The Joram now mentioned is the son of Ahab, the wicked king of the northern kingdom. Joram of Judah had married his daughter. Now Ahaziah, the son of Joram of Judah began to reign in Judah, after his father had died.

**2 Kings 8:26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.**

Ahaziah was a very young man when he began his reign in Jerusalem. He reigned but a single year. His mother was Athaliah, who was a daughter to Omri, one of the kings of the northern kingdom. As can be seen, there was some degree of compatibility between Israel and Judah at this time. This can be determined by the intermarriage between the royal families of the two kingdoms.

**2 Kings 8:27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the**

**son in law of the house of Ahab.**

The reign of Ahaziah of Judah was very short and very wicked. As a son-in-law of the house of Ahab. The wickedness of Israel was filtering down steadily into Judah.

**2 Kings 8:28 And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.**

Hazael had become king of Syria after he smothered Benhadad. He looked greedily at the territory of Israel. The kings of Israel and Judah combined forces to prevent Hazael from conquering them.

**2 Kings 8:29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.**

Joram was wounded during the battle with the forces of Hazael. He went to the city of Jezreel to have his injuries treated. Ahaziah, the king of Judah went to see Joram while he was being cared for.



## *Chapter 9*

We will now observe the fulfilment of several prophecies. Some were made long before this time. Others were short term. The dynasty of Omri will be brought to an end with the destruction of both Joram, king of Israel and Ahaziah, king of Judah.

The providence of God will be evident in the location of the death of Joram where Naboth's vineyard had been.

**2 Kings 9:1 And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead:**

Elisha had a message to deliver. He did not see fit, for some reason, to deliver it in person. He chose one of the son's of the prophets to attend to the task. The children, or son's of the prophets were men who trained as prophets under the master prophets such as Elijah and Elisha.

The young man was to take a box of oil and hurry to Ramoth-Gilead where conflict with Hazael of Syria was occurring. To gird up the loins was to gather up loose outer garments to keep them from interfering with easy motion of the legs and feet.

**2 Kings 9:2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber;**

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When the young man arrived in Ramoth-Gilead, he was to locate Jehu who was apparently the commander of the forces fighting the Syrians. He was to call Jehu aside to a private room.

2 Kings 9:3 Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

When the two were closeted in the inner room, the young man was to pour the oil in the box upon the head of Jehu and tell him the Lord had commanded that he be anointed as king over Israel.

As soon as he had anointed Jehu he was to leave the room rapidly and depart from the scene.

2 Kings 9:4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead.

2 Kings 9:5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

The young man followed the instructions carefully. When he found Jehu, he found him in the midst of a meeting of the military leaders of Israel. He told Jehu he had an errand to a captain. Jehu seems to have been acting as the one in charge of the meeting. He asked the young man which of them he meant. The man replied that it was Jehu himself.

2 Kings 9:6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said

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**unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.**

When the two of them had left the rest and secluded themselves in the inner room the young man poured the oil on the head of Jehu and stated that this had been commanded by the Lord, and that Jehu had thus been anointed as king.

**2 Kings 9:7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.**

As the new king, Jehu was to supervise the elimination of the house of Ahab who was of the house of Omri. This destruction was punishment for the injury Ahab had done to God's prophets and His people as a result of the influence of Jezebel.

**2 Kings 9:8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel:**

Every male descendant of the house of Ahab was to be killed. This would include those who were still too young to be out roaming the land as well as those who were adult and alive in Israel.

**2 Kings 9:9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah:**

The households of both Jeroboam and Baasha had been eliminated because of their disservice to God's people. The household of Ahab would meet the same end.

**2 Kings 9:10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.**

Jezreel was the area where the kings palace was in the summer. God had made this same prediction back in the time when Naboth's blood was shed in order to rob him of his vineyard.

(See 1 Kings 21:23.)

1 Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

The young man then fled from the room and from the scene of the meeting.

**2 Kings 9:11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.**

Jehu then came back into the meeting area and was questioned by his curious companions as to what the young man wanted with him. He must have had something of importance to say or he would not have burst unannounced into the military meeting of the captains.

Jehu passed off the question by saying the young  
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man was not responsible. He was known to do and say strange things before this.

2 Kings 9:12 And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

The others did not accept Jehu's explanation. They insisted that he tell them the truth about the message of the intruder. This caused Jehu to reveal that he had been anointed at the command of the Lord to be the new king of Israel. This would mean that the rest of the captains would have to make an immediate decision as to whether they would continue to serve the past king, or transfer their loyalty to Jehu.

2 Kings 9:13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

There was no hesitation on their part. Each of them quickly took off his official garment and laid it under Jehu in a prominent place where he could be honored as ruler. They even blew trumpets to spread the word of what had happened.

2 Kings 9:14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.

From this time forward Jehu set out to destroy Joram, king of Israel. Joram had been wounded in the battle

against Hazael at Ramoth-Gilead. He had been forced to leave the battle site and go to Jezreel for treatment. He was not in the best of physical condition.

2 Kings 9:15 But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.

Jehu wished to ambush Joram by surprise. Even though it had been announced publicly in Ramoth-Gilead that Jehu was the new king, he requested that no one was to go to Jezreel and pass the information on to that place. He wished to arrive there first.

2 Kings 9:16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

Jehu then set out on his bloody mission. He went by chariot and drove furiously. It just so happened that Ahaziah, king of Judah had joined Joram at Jezreel to see how he was recovering from his battle wounds.

2 Kings 9:17 And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?

Watchmen were appointed to man the towers of important forts and military bases and let everyone know of any suspicious movements which could mean
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there was a need for defensive action.

The watchman at a tower in Jezreel reported that he saw a company moving rapidly toward them. Jehu was not by himself. He had been accompanied by a sizable group.

Joram was well enough to give commands. He gave orders to send a horseman to ask if the company was on a mission of peace.

**2 Kings 9:18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.**

As the horseman met Jehu and his company he relayed the question from Joram as to whether the group was on a peaceful mission. Jehu answered that the horseman was not really the one to discuss peace and war. The thing for this messenger to do was to join his company of riders and follow him. The messenger apparently did what Jehu had said. We do not know whether he did so willingly or if he was forced to do so.

The watchman reported from his tower that the horseman had met Jehu's group, but he was not returning to report.

**2 Kings 9:19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.**

Jehu sent out another rider to ask the same question. Was all well? Could they expect a peaceful meeting, or not? This time Jehu answered in identical fashion to what he had told the first rider. The man was to join his group and follow him.

**2 Kings 9:20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.**

The watchman reported from his tower that this rider had done just as the previous one had. He had met the oncoming group but was not returning to Jehu. In addition, he said the rider's reminded him of the furious riding Jehu was known for.

**2 Kings 9:21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.**

In spite of his physical problems, Joram decided that he and Ahaziah, king of Judah needed to go out themselves and confront Jehu. The two of them should have known by this time that the mission was not a peaceful one. The company of Jehu was bent on a confrontation.

Interestingly enough, through God's providence they met right at the point of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. There were a multitude of other places they could have met. Does the reader believe the location of this meeting was strictly coincidental?

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2 Kings 9:22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

As soon as Joram met Jehu he asked the same question the two horsemen had asked before. Could they expect peace from Jehu, or was trouble ahead?

The answer came short and to the point. There would be no peace as long as the whoredom and witchcraft which Jezebel had introduced in Israel and Judah persisted.

The whoredoms mentioned were both spiritual and fleshly. The people of the Lord had been persuaded to engage in idolatrous worship. God sees Himself as the husband of his people. They are His wife. When they offer worship to idols, they have committed spiritual whoredom. But Jezebel had also been responsible for physical whoredom in the land as God's people allowed themselves to lust after those who were not their own mates. There could be no peace as long as such sins ran rampant over the land.

2 Kings 9:23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.

To turn his hands meant that Joram had turned his chariot around and was ready to retreat. He called out to Ahaziah to prepare for the worst. Jehu was bent on mischief.

2 Kings 9:24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms,

and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

It takes considerable strength to draw a strong bow to shoot an arrow. Jehu pulled the bow as far as it would go and sank the arrow in the back of Joram with so much force it went completely through his chest and exited from the front near his heart. Joram dropped to the floor of his chariot.

2 Kings 9:25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him;

Bidkar was one of the captains who had been with Jehu when the group laid their garments before him to indicate they would obey him as ruler. He was told to throw the body of Joram into the field of Naboth. Jehu reminded Bidkar that back earlier Bidkar had known of the curse which God had pronounced upon Joram when Ahab ruled.

2 Kings 9:26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

Compare 1 Kings 21:19.

1 Kings 21:19 And thou shalt speak unto him,
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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.

The vicious sins of Ahab and Jezebel were being avenged through the shedding of the blood of Joram, their descendant. The vengeance was literal. Naboth's blood had been real. So was that of Joram.

**2 Kings 9:27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.**

Ahaziah had been with Joram when the two met the company of Jehu. When he saw what had happened to Joram, he knew he was next in line for the arrows. He fled.

Jehu followed him and gave orders that he be shot also. He did not die immediately, but was mortally wounded and died after he reached Megiddo a few miles away.

**2 Kings 9:28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.**

Ahaziah was given a decent burial in the city of Jerusalem as he joined his forefathers in the grave.

**2 Kings 9:29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.**

This verse seems out of place here. It does not follow the previous verse or lead to the next

**2 Kings 9:30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.**

There was one more part of the errand of Jehu which had not yet been attended to. Ahab was dead, but Jezebel remained alive. He headed for the palace grounds.

Jezebel heard he was coming and made an attempt to escape the fate of Joram and Ahaziah. She painted her face and attired her head in such a way as to impress others with her position as queen of Israel. This might deter Jehu from murdering her.

Some think Jezebel painted her face and fixed up her hair so she could turn Jehu's anger into lust for her body. This hardly seems logical in view of some of the words of her upcoming conversation.

**2 Kings 9:31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?**

Zimri had murdered his master Elah. He had no peace. He met disaster soon afterward. The question seems to intimate that Jehu was about to find disaster just ahead if he did not abandon his bloody methods. Killing her would not lead to peace for him.

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2 Kings 9:32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

Jehu was not in the least intimidated. He challenged those who were with her to make up their minds. Would they take her side, or his?

There were some eunuchs who were attending her and they made the same decision the military captains had made when they found Jehu had been anointed king by the Lord's command.

There is a common thinking that any time the word eunuch is used in the Bible, it refers to a man who has been castrated. This is not always the case, although sometimes this was the case.

2 Kings 9:33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

Seeing that the eunuchs were ready to abandon Jezebel and support him, Jehu told them to throw her down. She may have been at a window some height from the ground. Her body apparently struck a portion of the wall on the way down and spattered her blood on the wall and the horses who had pulled the chariots.

With no mercy at all, Jehu caused the horses to trample the wicked woman under their feet. If she was not dead when she struck the ground, she was soon afterward.

2 Kings 9:34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this

cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter.

Jehu had no remorse whatsoever. He went in to eat and drink a meal soon after Jezebel met her end. He did happen to recall that since she was the daughter of a king she might deserve to be buried.

2 Kings 9:35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

When the servants went out to take up the body of Jezebel for burial, they found that it was not in the best of condition. All that was left was her skull, her feet and the palms of her hands. One could hardly give a prestigious burial to such remains.

2 Kings 9:36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

When Jehu was told what they found, he reminded them of the word of Elijah that in the very site of Naboth's vineyard, dogs would feed upon the flesh of this woman who defied all truth and righteous ways. It is certainly not out of order to present I Kings 21:23 again!

1Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

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**2 Kings 9:37 And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.**

The dogs had consumed the major part of the body of Jezebel. When her flesh had passed through the digestive system of the dogs and had been excreted as dung these words were precisely fulfilled. The woman who had promoted a life of filth had been scattered across the land as filth.

## Chapter 10

It is no pleasure to read one of the bloodiest chapters in the entire Bible. This commentator used to dread fall butchering when the hog's throats were cut and they were made to walk around until their blood turned the snow white and they fell to the ground from weakness. Anyone who reads this chapter without a feeling of revulsion must have a very well insulated set of emotions!

Jehu had received a command from the Lord to annihilate the descendants of Ahab and Jezebel. He seems to have taken on the task with much enthusiasm. The prophet Hosea makes it clear that Jehu went beyond the will of God in some of what he did. (See Hosea 1:4-5.)

Hosea 1:4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

Hosea 1:5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel, in the valley of Jezreel.

**2 Kings 10:1 And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying,**

Jehu was determined to eliminate any possible claimant to the throne of Ahab. There were seventy possible candidates in Samaria who could have spoken for it. These probably included other close kin such

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as grandchildren. It is not impossible that they were actually sons since there were those whom the Bible states had numbers such as this. A harem of wives could produce a multitude of offspring.

These sons of Ahab had been placed in the supervision of trusted tutors who had been expected to give them special attention.

Jehu wrote letters to the elders and rulers of Jezreel, as well as to these caretakers of Ahab's sons. We sometimes speak of taking the bull by the horns. Jehu had just killed both Joram and Ahaziah. He felt that this was the time to challenge any possible descendant of Ahab, or maybe any other person who had a hunger for the throne.

2 Kings 10:2 Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;

In mockery Jehu called for those who had knowledge of Ahab's sons to select the choicest of them to send and fight for the throne. He pointed out that there were horses and chariots available. They also had the advantage of a fenced city and armor for protection. Let them come against him and do their best. He was ready.

2 Kings 10:3 Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

If they would pick out the best of the lot and put him on the throne, Jehu was ready to dethrone him.

2 Kings 10:4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?

Those who received his challenging letters were shivering with fear. Jehu had already killed Joram and Ahaziah. If he had accomplished that, there was every reason to believe he could back up his challenge.

2 Kings 10:5 And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

As a result of their fear of Jehu, they replied to him that they were ready to accept him as ruler. They would make no attempt to enthrone one of Ahab's descendants. Jehu could do whatever he pleased without opposition.

2 Kings 10:6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up.

Finding that they were willing to follow his instructions, he wrote a second letter telling them what he expected them to do. They were to behead every one of the seventy sons of Ahab. They were to meet Jehu with the heads in hand by the next day.



2 Kings 10:7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel.

The very ones who had been entrusted with the upbringing of the seventy sons slew the seventy, beheaded them and placed their heads in baskets. If the reader thinks this is beyond the realm of human capabilities let him examine the slaughters which go on in that part of the world to the present day and his doubts will evaporate. The struggle for power in Israel and the surrounding nations is hard to believe.

2 Kings 10:8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning.

A messenger was sent to Jehu to inform him that his instructions had been carried out. The heads of the king's sons had been brought. Jehu commanded that they be piled in two piles at the gate of the city where all who went in or came out could see the grisly scene. This, of course, should deter any other brave soul from making an attempt on the throne.

2 Kings 10:9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?

In the morning Jehu went to the place where the
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heads were piled and made an appeal to the people. He admitted that he had killed Joram and Ahaziah, actually implying that he had done so only to follow the will of God in eradicating the descendants of Omri and Ahab. Then he paid a doubtful compliment to the gathered crowd. He had not killed these seventy. God had commanded that they be killed, and even then it was others who had truly killed them. Since they were a fair and righteous people they would surely not condemn him for the deaths.

**2 Kings 10:10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah.**

After all, he was only seeing to it that the words of Elijah the prophet had spoken against this family in days gone by. (See 1 Kings 21:17-22.)

1 Kings 21:17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1 Kings 21:18 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.

1 Kings 21:19 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.

1 Kings 21:20 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.

1 Kings 21:21 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,

1 Kings 21:22 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.

**2 Kings 10:11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.**

Jehu was accomplishing the curse which God had placed on the descendants of Ahab. But, at the same time, he had his eyes upon the throne of Israel.

**2 Kings 10:12 And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the shearing house in the way,**

**2 Kings 10:13 Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.**

He left Jezreel and moved toward the city of Samaria. On the way he came into contact with some of the relatives of Ahaziah, whom he had killed along with Joram. When he asked them their identity, they told him they were Ahaziah's brethren. This was a serious mistake on these innocent persons.

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2 Kings 10:14 And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men; neither left he any of them.

Jehu did not hesitate for a moment to order them killed. There was a pit in the vicinity of a shearing house where the wool was taken from sheep and goats. The obvious conclusion is that these forty-two bodies were cast into the pit without burial.

2 Kings 10:15 And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

A bit farther along he met Jehonadab, the leader of the Rechabites. The Rechabites were a very strict group who had come out of Egypt with the Jews and entered into the wilderness wanderings with them. The Rechabites had continued to live very austere lives. They did not build homes, but lived in tents. They neither planted vineyards, nor drank wine.

Jehu made overtures to Jehonadab that he might join his company. He asked if Jehonadab felt drawn to him as he was drawn to Jehonadab. If so, they would shake hands and work together. This may well have been a way of improving Jehu's reputation by association.

2 Kings 10:16 And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

Jonadab agreed and the rode together in Jehu's chariot.

2 Kings 10:17 And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

Blood, blood, blood! Everywhere Jehu went men shed that life producing liquid. Practically nothing was left of the persons who had followed Ahab's idolatrous ways. Again I repeat that he was in a sense carrying out the will of God toward Ahab's house, but he seemingly fed a thirst for blood and power.

2 Kings 10:18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.

Jehu now hatched a clever plan designed to bring out of the woodwork just as many of the worshipers of Baal as possible. He began to put the plan into action by announcing that he would be an even more dedicated servant of Baal than Ahab was.

2 Kings 10:19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

To prove how much he loved Baal, he would proclaim a gathering of all the prophets, priests and servants of

Baal for a great sacrifice. Anyone who refused to come to the sacrifice was to die.

The fact was that anyone who came to the gathering would die if they were truly found to be followers of Baal.

2 Kings 10:20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

2 Kings 10:21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.

This was an exciting time for the worshippers of Baal. This was to be a grand ceremony, with a massive number of Baal's faithful. The response was so great that every man came. The house of Baal was filled to capacity.

2 Kings 10:22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

Robes were provided for those who of importance. This has been a common practice in the worship of nations in that part of the world. Some dress their religious leaders in special robes in congregations in highly respected countries today.

2 Kings 10:23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look



that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.

Jehu and Jehonadab encouraged the worshippers of Baal to see that none of the servants of Jehovah were left in the house. This appeared to be a mark of dedication to Baal. Actually it was a means of seeing that the upcoming slaughter was to be confined to Baal's followers only.

2 Kings 10:24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.

Who are the "they" who went in to offer sacrifices? Did this include Jehu and Jehonadab? It would not have been past Jehu to do so, but it hardly seems that a leader of the Rechabites would resort to this type of hypocrisy. It does seem that when the sacrifices were begun Jehu was busy appointing eighty men to surround the building, and was giving them strict orders to kill everyone who was inside the building. Perhaps it was the officials of Baal who went in while Jehu and Jehonadab remained outside.

2 Kings 10:25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

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Now, if we follow the line of thinking we presented in the previous verse, we must identify the “he” who offered the burnt offering. The way the sentence is stated in the King James Version it would seem that it was Jehu. Whichever is true, Jehu gave a command immediately after the burnt offering was made that the guards were to enter the house of Baal and kill every man.

After the slaughter was completed, the guards went to the house of Baal and brought out the image of Baal. Some versions use the plural here and leave one wondering if there was more than one of these images

**2 Kings 10:26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.**

If more than one of the images of Baal existed, it would seem that some were wood and could be burnt. The word “burned” may only mean heated very hot.

**2 Kings 10:27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.**

At least one of the images of Baal had to be destroyed by breaking it. This could be done by heating it to a high temperature and then pouring cold water upon it.

When the destruction of the images was complete, the house itself was desecrated and was used as a public privy for the disposal of human excrement.

**2 Kings 10:28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.**

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Let us say that for the moment Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel. There were hundreds of prostitutes who are not mentioned in the slaughter. Later we find the corrupt and lascivious worship returned to the land and resulted in the complete downfall and captivity of the northern kingdom.

2 Kings 10:29 Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan.

Jeroboam had set up the golden calves in Dan and Bethel. They were highly instrumental in the division which took place between the northern and southern kingdoms. Jehu did not eradicate the worship of these calves. Here is proof that he was not as interested in holding Israel to the true worship of Jehovah, as he was in becoming the sole possessor of the throne.

2 Kings 10:30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

Jehu had done part of the will of God. He had killed Ahab and his house. He had broken down the house and the images of Baal. The reward for this was that for four generations his descendants would sit on the throne.

2 Kings 10:31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all

his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Jehu left much to be desired. He had failed to remove the worship of the golden calves. Because of his shortcomings Hosea made the statement which was quoted in the introductory comments to this chapter. (Hosea 1:4-5.)

2 Kings 10:32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

Things were not improving. Hazael, the king of Syria took full advantage of the weakness of the northern kingdom and took control of nearly all of the land which Israel had claimed on the east side of the Jordan river.

2 Kings 10:33 From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

The territory which had been assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and one half the tribe of Manasseh was overrun by Hazael and the Syrian host.

2 Kings 10:34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

The book of the chronicles when is mentioned here is not the books of First and Second Chronicles which
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are included in our Old Testament canon. This term could have applied to another book which God did not see fit to have included in the divine record.

**2 Kings 10:35 And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.**

Jehu gave place to his son Jehoahaz. Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah made up the other three of the four generations of Jehu's heirs who sat on the throne in fulfilment of God's promise.

**2 Kings 10:36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.**

The present commentator is quite pleased that the rest of the acts of Jehu were not accounted in detail. We have a sufficient number of them to demonstrate the depths of moral and religious impurity to which Israel had descended.

## *Chapter 11*

If Jezebel was the most wicked woman in history, her daughter Athaliah must have come in a close second. The present chapter tells of her six year reign over Judah, and the horrors she heaped upon the southern kingdom until she was slain and replaced by Jehoash the boy king Joash.

**2 Kings 11:1 And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.**

Let us get our facts straight on the family relationships of this woman. She was not only the mother of the Ahaziah whom Jehu had killed along with Joram. She was the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab. She was the granddaughter of Omri. She was the wife of Joram the king of Judah. She came from an disreputable bloodline.

Jehu had attempted to destroy all of the seed of Ahab in the southern kingdom. He in the process had eliminated both Joram, king of Israel and Ahaziah, king of Judah. Now we find Athaliah ready to take vengeance for the death of her son Ahaziah. She set out to rid the land of every vestige of David's dynasty. She very nearly succeeded. The reader should be careful not to confuse the Ahaziah of the northern kingdom with the one being discussed here. There were two Ahaziahs and also two Jorams.

**2 Kings 11:2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him**

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and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

Jehosheba was the sister of Ahaziah, but probably was born of a different mother. She took Joash who was the son of Ahaziah and was but an infant, and hid him in what is called the bedchamber. This could have been a room where mattresses and beds were stored rather than a true bedroom. Both Joash and his nurse were secluded from Athaliah. Thus she missed him in the slaughter of the rest of David's royal line.

2 Kings 11:3 And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

We recall that Moses was hid from the hands of Pharaoh who was bent on killing all of the male children of the Israelites. His mother then placed him in the bulrushes where he could be found by Pharaoh's daughter.

During this time Jehoiada the high priest was preparing for a "coming out party" to present this lad to Judah as their new king. David's light was still burning, although it had almost been extinguished.

2 Kings 11:4 And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

~~~~~ In the beginning of the seventh year of Athaliah's ~~~~~

reign, Jehoiada's patience paid off. The people were unhappy with Athaliah's cruelty and were ready for a change. Jehoiada called the officials of the temple together and made an agreement with them. He took a solemn promise from them that they would reject Athaliah and accept Joash as their new king. Joash was shown to these officials.

**2 Kings 11:5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;**

**2 Kings 11:6 And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.**

He divided the large group into three subdivisions. One of these three divisions was then again divided into three. One of these latter groups was to watch the king's house. One was to be placed at the gate of Sur which led into the area of the king's house. The third was to support the other two.

**2 Kings 11:7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.**

The other two major groups who were leaving their shifts of the sabbath were to be stationed around the temple, where Joash had been hidden.

**2 Kings 11:8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let**  
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him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

Jehoiada considers Joash to be the king, even though he has not yet been officially designated as king. The military and the priests were all to be armed. If any person attempted to enter the area which was assigned to various ones was to be killed. Joash was to be completely protected as he moved to the place where he was to be crowned.

2 Kings 11:9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

It could hardly be made any clearer that Jehoiada had won the loyalty of the vast majority over from Athaliah. The priests and captains of hundreds did that which he commanded.

2 Kings 11:10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD.

Jehoiada even gave these men the choice weapons which David had caused to be stored in the temple of God.

The reader will note that all of this took place at a time when much movement would have regularly taken place with the changing of the palace guard and the fresh priests relieved the ones who had been serving.

This would have allowed the actions taken to be used without attracting the attention of Athaliah.

2 Kings 11:11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

The guards, with weapons ready took their positions all the way along the side of the temple where the crowning would take place. They were ready for any eventuality.

2 Kings 11:12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

The high priest Jehoiada then had Joash brought out where all could see him. They placed a crown upon his head. They gave him a copy of the law of God which he was to enforce. They then applauded and said, "Long live the king!" All of this produced enough noise that Athaliah realized something very exciting was happening.

2 Kings 11:13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

Athaliah then went into action. She moved to where the people had gathered at the temple to see just what was taking place.



2 Kings 11:14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

The evil woman was astonished by what she saw. Joash was standing beside a pillar of the temple, just as would be done with the coronation of a new king. The officers and the trumpeters of the guard were cheering and blowing the trumpets. The entire crowd was gay and rejoicing. Athaliah was helpless to change the direction of the movement. She had been dethroned. She tore her clothes in horror and cried out "Treason." She had forgotten the manner in which she had taken over the throne. This was not treason. It was God's will being done to protect His promise that David would have a seed to sit upon the throne of Israel.

2 Kings 11:15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

Jehoiada was in complete control. He commanded the military to take Athaliah away from the confines of the temple and kill everyone who indicated that they were ready to stand in her defense. She was not to be killed in the temple area.

2 Kings 11:16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses

came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

One of the gates to the temple area was known as the "horse gate." This was the entrance used to bring the horses in and out of the stable area. Athaliah was killed at the horse gate. Does the reader remember the manner of the death of Jezebel, Athaliah's mother? She was trampled by horses until she was unrecognizable. "Like mother, like daughter."

2 Kings 11:17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people.

At this point we might as well say that Jehoiada was the acting king. Even so, he engineered a commitment between God, Joash and the people of the kingdom that all three would honor one another. This was a much finer situation than had existed when Athaliah was trying to promote Baalism and destroy the seed of David.

2 Kings 11:18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

The house of Baal and the temple of the Lord were two separate buildings. The people had worshipped Baal because they had been forced to do so. They now showed their disgust with the false god by destroying
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his altars and his images. They also killed the priest of Baal right before the altars.

Jehoiada then appointed a guard to protect the temple of the Lord.

**2 Kings 11:19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.**

Jehoiada then told the military to escort the young king from the temple to the palace. Many of the people of Judah moved along with the king and his guard. This support meant that Joash had been accepted in place of Athaliah.

**2 Kings 11:20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.**

This is just a summation verse. The horse gate must have been not too far from the king's palace. It was there that the queen was killed with a sword. We are not told that she was beheaded, but she had "lost her head" long before this!

**2 Kings 11:21 Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.**

A seven year old boy was now officially king of Judah. At that age he would have been much too young to make decisions of national importance. Jehoiada would make such decisions until Joash reached maturity.

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Chapter 12

The temple had been allowed to deteriorate. In addition Athaliah had plundered it to promote the worship of Baal. Jehoash realized the need for repair and attempted to get the priests to speed up the work. He reigned for about forty years, and as long as Jehoiada was living he seems to have stayed relatively faithful. After the death of this high priest Jehoash turned to paganism and after causing the death of Jehoiada's son, some who were bitter with him slew him.

2 Kings 12:1 In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.

Jehoash's infancy and boyhood paralleled the reign of Jehu in the northern kingdom for the first seven years of Jehu's rule. Jehoash was six or seven years old by the time Jehu had reigned for seven years.

He enjoyed a very extended rule. Forty years was almost unimaginable in those days when coups were as common as they were.

2 Kings 12:2 And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

Jehoash had an extremely capable instructor, both as a boy and later as king. The influence of Jehoiada was tremendous. As long as Jehoiada lived Jehoash made a modest attempt to follow the will of the Lord. This did not last after the death of Jehoiada.

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**2 Kings 12:3 But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.**

Even while Jehoiada was still living, Jehoash permitted the people to sacrifice to idols in the high places of Judah. The pressure of the public was apparently too great for him to feel that he could eliminate it. It is not that unusual for rulers to alter their standards when the mass of the population disagree.

**2 Kings 12:4 And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,**

Jehoash noted that the temple remained in disrepair even though the worshippers had provided funds for the task. He called for the priests to change their methods.

There were several sources of money. First, there was the money that every adult male was to provide. Second, there was money that the strangers who passed through contributed. Third, there were the free will offerings which the people gave in addition to the set amounts.

**2 Kings 12:5 Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.**

The order had been given to use some of these funds to make temple repairs. It was the responsibility of the priests to see that this was done. It had been over a century since Solomon had caused the temple to be constructed. No building can resist deterioration forever.

**2 Kings 12:6 But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.**

Twenty three years into the reign of Jehoash, the repairs had not been made. Some believe this was a diversion of the funds to the personal uses of the priests. Some think it was matter of sheer indifference. Still others think the shortage of funds was due to Athaliah's efforts to decrease the influence of the Lord and increase the influence of Baal worship.

**2 Kings 12:7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.**

This verse is strange. We would have expected the high priest to have called the attention of the king to these needs, especially since Jehoiada had exerted such a strong influence on Jehoash in many matters. Instead, we find the king asking Jehoiada why the repairs had not been completed. The priests were not to receive any more money from those who desired to help them personally. The monies designated for the temple were to be used for that purpose.

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2 Kings 12:8 And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

The priest agreed to allow the responsibilities to be shifted from them to workmen. They would not receive that money, nor would they be responsible for seeing that the work was done.

2 Kings 12:9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.

Rather than the priests pocketing the contributions, Jehoiada had a chest prepared with a hole in the top where the money could be cast into it by the contributor. We recall that Jesus, in his time, saw a widow casting her mite into such a box.

2 Kings 12:10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

When it was clear that a sizable amount of money had been put into the chest, the high priest and his scribe emptied the money into bags and “told” or counted it. The rest of the priests did not handle it.

2 Kings 12:11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work,

that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD,

2 Kings 12:12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

After the money was properly counted, the high priest and the scribe placed it directly into the hands of the supervisors and workmen who were to make the repairs. This included pay for the carpenters and stone masons, as well as the cost of the raw materials.

2 Kings 12:13 Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD:

Even though this resulted in the repair of the temple itself, it did not include replacing the gold, silver and various furnishings which had been a part of the temple area in the glory days of Solomon.

2 Kings 12:14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 12:15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

The money was given to the supervisors and then
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distributed to the craftsmen who did the work. The priests did not receive the money which was to be used for the repairs. It was felt that the supervisors and the workmen could be trusted not to divert it to their own benefit. The present writer is not certain whether or not this implies that the priests had been doing that.

**2 Kings 12:16 The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests’.**

There were fines assessed for trespasses and sins. This money was given to the priests for their upkeep and was separate from that which was used for the repairs.

**2 Kings 12:17 Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.**

At this point we find Hazael, the king of Syria enters the picture again. He had apparently come out ahead in the conflict which had been going on between his forces and those of the northern kingdom. Either that or he had decided to spend his efforts on the east side of the Jordan instead of making war with Israel. He had gained control of much of the territory which had been given to the two and one half tribes east of the river.

Now he decided to try for Jerusalem. He first fought over the city of Gath and took it. The city of Gath is nearly impossible to locate. Hazael apparently moved southward on the east side of the river and then moved across to invade the southern kingdom, setting his sights on it’s capitol city of Jerusalem.

**2 Kings 12:18** And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

Jehoash did not wish to risk war with the forces of Hazael. He buckled under the pressure and paid an enormous amount of tribute to Hazael, which caused the latter to turn back from the capitol city. This tribute included all of the gold in the temple treasury and also in the king's palace. Large numbers of other precious furnishings were also turned over to Hazael.

If Judah had been faithful to the Lord and abstained from the worship of idols, there would have been no need for this tribute. God would have been on the side of Israel and Hazael would have found his army vanquished.

**2 Kings 12:19** And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

The twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Second Chronicles give more information on the life and rule of Joash.

**2 Kings 12:20** And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Mollo, which goeth down to Silla.

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We get a sudden shock the the change in tone of the account of Jehoash's record. We find from the book of 2 Chronicles that he was responsible for the death of Zechariah, the son of the high priest who had tutored and advised him for many years. What a terrible blot this is on what was such a promising beginning! The reason for the slaying of Jehoash was very probably the result of bitterness on the part of those who loved and respected Jehoiada.

2 Kings 12:21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

This seems unlike the other killings of the kings of Israel and Judah. In those cases the sons of the slain king were not permitted to assume the throne. This time Amaziah, who was Jehoash's son, replaced him on the throne.

Chapter 13

In this chapter we find Israel having more trouble with the Syrians. Worship of the idols continues, drawing the nation farther away from the will of the Lord. Elisha is growing very old and his death is recorded in the latter part of the chapter.

2 Kings 13:1 In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

Our attention is now turned back to the northern kingdom where Jehoahaz the son of Jehu, is beginning his reign. He begins his reign in the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash the son of Ahaziah in Judah. Since Joash reigned for forty years, he was still in power at the close of the reign of Jehoahaz. Both of these kings lasted longer than the majority of the rulers.

2 Kings 13:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

Jehoahaz led the nation downward again as he followed in the ways of Jeroboam who had introduced idol worship in Israel.

It is not true that the people of Israel had no choice. A ruler can pressure his people, but in the end it is each individual who makes up his mind to follow, or not to follow the Lord.



2 Kings 13:3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

Hazael had been a thorn in the flesh of Israel for many years. God could have arranged things such that Hazael would find it impossible to overrun Israel. Since God was angry at His people, He permitted the invasion to succeed. The oppression of Israel continued through the reign of Hazael and on into that of his son Benhadad. The situation became increasingly difficult to bear.

2 Kings 13:4 And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

Surprise! A king of the northern kingdom decides to make a request to God. There are many persons like this. As long as they see themselves in control of their lives God will take a back seat. But, when life becomes uncontrollable, they bow their knee to God and ask for help.

The patience and grace of the Lord is amazing. It will come to an end some day. God heard and answered the prayer of Jehoahaz that they be saved from their anguish.

2 Kings 13:5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.

A saviour was provided. We do not know the identity of the saviour. One guess is that it was a king of Assyria who attacked Syria and weakened them, diverting their attention from Israel to their own defense. Another is the the saviour was Elisha who is later called the chariots and horsemen of Israel. The truth is that we are not told.

2 Kings 13:6 Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)

All too many times one calls upon God for help in impossible situations, receives the requested help, and then attributes the improved conditions to other factors than the Lord. This happened in the case of Israel. It would be logical to think that they appreciated the relief from the Syrian forces and began to serve and worship Jehovah. They did not! The continued to worship idols in the groves and high places

2 Kings 13:7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.

In the glory days Israel had two thousand chariots and horsemen. Now they have been reduced to ten chariots. Just as wheat is threshed and only the chaff remains, The Syrian kings had almost eradicated the military force of Israel.

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**2 Kings 13:8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?**

The reader can find additional remarks concerning the actions of Jehoahaz in the twenty-fifth chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles.

**2 Kings 13:9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.**

The common summary of the life of a king is applied to that of Jehoahaz. He is replaced by Joash, his son.

**2 Kings 13:10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.**

The arithmetic does not work out just right when this verse is compared with what is said about the time of reign of Joash, and the length of the reign of Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz is said to have begun to reign in Israel in the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash of Judah. If Jehoahaz reigned sixteen years as the above verse states, he would have died in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Joash. This would mean an overlap of a couple of years in the reigns of Jehoahaz and his son Jehoash. The most logical solution to this puzzle is that Jehoahaz had become so old that his son Jehoash had to act as co-ruler for two or three years.

Now we must point out that there was a Joash in

Israel and a Joash in Judah, both reigning at the same time for a short while. Both of them are at times referred to as “Jehoash” instead of Joash.

Don't give up!

**2 Kings 13:11 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein.**

Things were not improved in the northern kingdom under the rule of Jehoash. He did not just flirt with the sins of Jeroboam. He walked in them.

**2 Kings 13:12 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?**

The same king called Jehoash in verse ten is now called Joash. He was not occupied with defending against the Syrians. He devoted his military might against Amaziah, who was ruler of the kingdom of Judah. How can a people become strong when they spend their time in conflict with one another. The northern kingdom is ripe for plucking.

**2 Kings 13:13 And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.**

We have a repetition of the mention of the death of this king. He died and was buried in Samaria, the

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capitol of the northern kingdom, where the other kings of Israel were interred. His son Jeroboam replaced him. Note that this is not the Jeroboam who was so prominent at the time the two kingdoms divided.

2 Kings 13:14 Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

This is the verse which causes some to conclude that Elisha was the one referred to when it was said that God sent a saviour to Israel. Elisha had become deathly sick and was ready to die. Joash came to his sickbed and wept, mixing words with his tears. He said, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsement thereof." The Syrians had reduced the chariots of Israel to ten. That would not have been disastrous if the people had depended upon the Lord, working through the prophet Elisha. The combination of The Lord and his prophet was far more powerful than all of the chariots of the enemies.

It is somewhat surprising to find such a feeling of admiration on the part of a king of Israel for the prophet. There should have been a far greater dependence upon the word of the Lord than any of these northern kings had displayed.

2 Kings 13:15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

Jehoash was fearful as to what might happen to Israel after the death of Elisha. Elisha made an attempt

to mend the anxiety. He told Joash to get a bow and some arrows.

2 Kings 13:16 And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

When Joash had obtained the bow and arrows, Elisha told him to take it in his hands. Then Elisha placed his own hands on the bow along with the hands of Joash. This was an indication that if Joash would depend upon divine help, God's power would be with him.

2 Kings 13:17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.

Joash was told to open the window so that the two of them could look eastward, toward the land of Syria. Elisha instructed Joash to shoot an arrow in the direction of Syria. This was an action used by nations in that time to declare war. Joash was not to wait for Syria to attack Israel. He was to attack first. The Lord would provide deliverance. A battle was to be fought at Aphek which was in Syria. The battle would be won by Israel.

2 Kings 13:18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel,

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**Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.**

Elisha then told Joash to take several arrows and strike the ground with them. We get a mental picture here of Joash taking several arrows in his hand and striking the ground with them three times. It may be that the smiting was when each arrow made it's flight and came to a halt when it struck the earth. After Joash had repeated the action three times he ceased. Notice that Elisha did not tell Joash how many times to strike the ground.

**2 Kings 13:19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.**

Elisha reprimanded Joash for not being dedicated enough to strike the ground five or six times. If he had done so Syria would have been completely defeated. Since Joash had struck the ground only three time there would be three victories, but no final victory.

**2 Kings 13:20 And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.**

Elisha is thought to have lived until he was about ninety years of age. When he died, he was given a dignified burial in a sepulchre.

After the death of Elisha, some roving bands of Moabites invaded. The reader should be careful not to confuse these Moabite bands with the Syrians whom

Joash had been told to attack. These were Moabites, not Syrians.

**2 Kings 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.**

Some of the Israelites were busy burying a man when they saw one of these bands of Moabites approaching them. They hurriedly cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha. A sepulchre is more than just a grave. It is a space large enough to enter into and place bodies inside. Elisha had been placed in the sepulchre. Now the man who was being buried was quickly thrown into the same sepulchre in order to finish the procedure before the Moabites attacked.

As soon as the body of the man being buried came into contact with the bones of Elisha, the man came to life and stood erect. The point is that even though Elisha was dead, the power of the Lord was still capable of working through Israel if they would walk with Him rather than worshipping idols.

**2 Kings 13:22 But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.**

In spite of the prophecy of Elisha that Israel would defeat Syria three times, Hazael continued to make life miserable for them throughout the reign of Jehoahaz, the king of Israel.

**2 Kings 13:23 And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had**  
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respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

The Lord had ample reason to destroy the Israelites long before He did. The reason why this was not done was that He remembered His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that through their seed the nations of the world would be sent a Saviour. The “as yet” on the end of the verse is very meaningful. There comes a time when God’s grace is stretched to the breaking point.

2 Kings 13:24 So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead.

It is appointed unto all men to die. Hazael might have seemed to the Israelites to have lived forever. But the end finally came. His son Benhadad took the throne. Benhadad was not as strong as his father. The nation of Syria was under attack by the Assyrians. It was a difficult time for the Syrians.

2 Kings 13:25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

Joash was able to fulfil the prophecy of Elisha that Israel would defeat Syria three times. The forces of Israel under Joash were able to recover all of the cities which Hazael had taken from Israel. This would have meant all of the cities of the two and one half tribes

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on the east side of the Jordan, and also a number of cities in the northern kingdom. For the moment things looked more optimistic for Israel. This prosperity would not last.



## *Chapter 14*

God's people have enough trouble on their hands from the outside. They do not need internal wars to complicate things. That is exactly what we see in chapter fourteen. Israel and Judah fight with one another while Syria and Assyria threaten them from the northeast.

Usually understanding the Bible comes as a result of determining what happened, or was said, and then looking for the meaning of the words and actions. By the time we reach this chaotic portion of Israel's history, it is easier to see the overall trend of the lessons being taught than it is to keep names and events in order. We will try!

**2 Kings 14:1 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.**

Back and forth we go from Israel to Judah and then back again. This time we are looking at both scenes together. Joash is king of Israel and Amaziah is king of Judah.

**2 Kings 14:2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.**

Many of these kings began their reigns at what we would consider a very early age. Amaziah was but twenty-five when he began. He ruled for twenty-nine years, which was a relatively lengthy period.

**2 Kings 14:3 And he did that which was right**  
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in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did.

A number of the kings of Judah were righteous when compared with those of Israel. Amaziah is described as doing right for the most part. He followed in the path of his father Joash, but he did not find the favor in the eyes of Jehovah that David had.

2 Kings 14:4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

The sins of Jeroboam continued to contaminate both the northern and the southern kingdoms. Even the better kings of Judah failed to abolish the burning of incense and the worship of idols which occurred at the high places and groves.

2 Kings 14:5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father.

Joash, the father of Amaziah had been assassinated. As soon as Amaziah felt he had sufficient control to do so, he killed the assassins. The Lord had commanded that if a man shed the blood of another man, he was to pay with his own blood.

2 Kings 14:6 But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put

to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

God had commanded through Moses that a man's children should not be slain as a result of the father's sins. A man should answer only for his own sins.

This leaves us with a problem. Even the Lord Himself had commanded that when Israel when into the promised land they were to slay every man, woman and child of the Amalekites, etc. Does this leave us with the conclusion that those infants had committed sin worthy of death? The present writer does not know the answer to the problem. What he does know is that the Lord has the answer, and perhaps He knew it was better in these cases to allow the children's death than to let them grow up in the horrible environment which could well lead them to the gates of hell.

2 Kings 14:7 He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

Edom had revolted from being under the control of Judah. Amaziah took forces into the Edomite area and brought the Edomites back under the control of Judah. Ten thousand of the Edomites were slain. There are salt marshes south of the Dead Sea. The valley of salt is thought to have referred to such conditions. The name Joktheel means "God strength-ens."

2 Kings 14:8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.

Amaziah's victory over Edom led him to feel invincible. He determined to make an attempt to unite the northern and southern kingdoms by defeating Jehoash and bringing Judah and Israel together under his rule.

A second reason may well have been that he had recruited a large number of soldiers from Israel to fight against the Edomites. When a prophet of God warned him not to take these recruits into the battle, he sent them back home. They were angry about being sent home without the opportunity to gain plunder from Edom. They satisfied their hunger by plundering the cities of Judah on their way home. Amaziah may have felt that this was a second motive for fighting against Israel.

He sent to the king of Israel and challenged him to come meet him and "look one another in the face." This reminds us of the playground fights between sixth grade boys who would glare at each other before taking the first swings. Amaziah's challenge was much more serious. It was a declaration of war.

2 Kings 14:9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

Jehoash, the king of Israel was not highly impressed. He replied with a parable designed to take some of the steam out of Amaziah's pride.

The thistle in the parable was Amaziah. The cedar of Lebanon was Jehoash. The wild beast was the army of Israel. But what was the meaning of the proposal of
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marriage. This leads us to think Jehoash and Amaziah both saw the challenge as a means of uniting the two kingdoms by having one defeat the other and control the entire nation.

**2 Kings 14:10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?**

Jehoash told Amaziah that he was making a big mistake in letting his pride take over from his good sense. What he needed to do was be satisfied with his mediocre victory over the Edomites and quit meddling in affairs which were too large for him to handle. He needed to take his army and go home. He was about to get hurt, and cause his people to suffer along with him.

**2 Kings 14:11 But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Bethshemesh, which belongeth to Judah.**

Amaziah did not listen. As a result the battle began. What a tragedy! The Syrians and the Assyrians were the real enemy. Fighting against one another only weakened them and hastened the coming invasions of the Assyrian armies.

**2 Kings 14:12 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.**

The battle was decisive. Israel soundly defeated Judah. The ones who were not killed ran for their lives.

**2 Kings 14:13 And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.**

Amaziah, king of Judah, was captured. The northern forces had no great difficulty in moving through the southern territory all the way to the capitol city of Jerusalem. They even broke down some six hundred feet of the wall of Jerusalem on the northern side of the city.

**2 Kings 14:14 And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.**

This is the third time the temple of God had been plundered. One begins to wonder at the resiliency of the treasury of the Lord's house. Jehoash took gold, silver and valuable vessels from the temple and then proceeded to the king's palace. Hostages were captured and taken to the north.

Amaziah had found the parable of Jehoash to be quite accurate. He had been trodden down like a thistle before a wild beast.

**2 Kings 14:15 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how**  
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he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Some of the information on the conflict described above was gleaned from the twenty-fifth chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles.

2 Kings 14:16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

This verse is the typical summary of the end of a king's life. The verse also introduces one of the more important figures in the history of the northern kingdom. This is Jeroboam. Since this is not the same Jeroboam as seen earlier, this one should be called Jeroboam II.

2 Kings 14:17 And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

Although Amaziah had been captured by Jehoash the king of Judah during the civil war, he outlived the former by fifteen years. It seems apparent that he did not remain in captivity for the rest of his life, as the next few verses show.

2 Kings 14:18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

The student of the Bible cannot really put everything
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together concerning the period of the kings without consulting the record as given in the books of both Kings and Chronicles.

**2 Kings 14:19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.**

Amaziah was not a particularly popular person after the horrid experience the people of Judah had suffered as a result of his decision to go to war with Jehoash. The people plotted his death. He evaded them and went to Lachish but was caught up with and his death followed.

**2 Kings 14:20 And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.**

Amaziah's return from Lachish to Jerusalem was anything but dignified. His body was loaded upon horses and buried without honor.

**2 Kings 14:21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.**

The assassination was not motivated by desire for a new dynasty. His sixteen year old son, Azariah, was made king in his place.

**2 Kings 14:22 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.**



The pronoun “he” in this verse has to do with Amaziah rather than his son Azariah.

**2 Kings 14:23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.**

Now we switch our attention back to Jeroboam II. He had begun to rule from Samaria in the fifteenth year of Amaziah. He had an extremely long reign of forty-one years.

**2 Kings 14:24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.**

Like the rest of the kings of the northern kingdom, Jeroboam II was not pleasing to the Lord. He did not use his influence over those forty-one years to clear Israel of spiritual adultery. He had ample opportunity, but did not take it.

**2 Kings 14:25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher.**

Under the rule of Jeroboam II most of the territory which had been a part of Israel in the time of Solomon was restored to God’s people. This included land on the east of the Jordan and also that which had been overrun

by the Syrians.

Jonah, the prophet from Gathhepher who was sent to preach to the city of Ninevah is the same individual as the Jonah mentioned here. He is called the son of Amittai in both places.

Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

**2 Kings 14:26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.**

The all knowing Lord of heaven and earth was quite aware of the suffering of His people. He had noted that they were in serious misery when invaded by the Syrians. They had no direction to turn except to Him. He had promised a saviour. We mentioned the possibility of Elisha earlier. Now we have similar thoughts regarding Jeroboam II. Either of these men could have been the saviour who had been promised. We did not capitalize the word saviour because this had nothing to do with the coming of Christ. This was a localized problem.

**2 Kings 14:27 And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.**

The Lord did not allow the complete blotting out of the Israelites. He had promised a greater Saviour through the seed of Abraham and David. Israel would not be utterly annihilated.





**2 Kings 14:28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?**

Repeatedly we see the references to additional information available in the books of Chronicles.

When the verse mentions Judah here it is talking about the territory originally given to the tribe of Judah rather than the southern kingdom of Judah.

**2 Kings 14:29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.**

After forty-one years Jeroboam died and joined his predecessors in the grave as his son Zachariah ruled in his place. This coming of Zachariah fulfils the prophecy that four generations of the dynasty of Jehu would rule. The four generations included Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II and Zachariah. The dynasty ended when Shallum, the son of Jabesh killed Zachariah.

(See 2 Kings 10:30 and 15:10.)

2 Kings 10:30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

2 Kings 15:10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh

conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

Both Israel and Judah had enjoyed a short period of relative calm after much chaos and bitter fighting. They should have turned to the Lord and eliminated their worship of false gods. Since they did not, even greater troubles loomed ahead.



## *Chapter 15*

The spiritual condition of the northern kingdom had been corrupt from the time Jeroboam I introduced false gods into the worship of the people. The political and social conditions have by this time declined to the point where there is anarchy and utter chaos. It can only be a short time before the weakened nation will be taken into captivity.

The southern kingdom of Judah is slightly better off, having had the benefit of a few scattered kings who are described as having done right, but not having rid the kingdom of corrupted worship.

This chapter gives an account of two kings of Judah and five kings of Israel. None of it is pretty.

I intend to depart from the verse by verse comments in this chapter and comment on events king by king.

**2 Kings 15:1 In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.**

**2 Kings 15:2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.**

**2 Kings 15:3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;**

**2 Kings 15:4 Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.**

**2 Kings 15:5 And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and**

**dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.**

**2 Kings 15:6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?**

**2 Kings 15:7 So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.**

Azariah is called Uzziah in the book of 2 Chron. His reign in Judah began at the early age of sixteen. the length of his rule fifty-two years and the second longest of all the kings of Israel and Judah.

He is in the list of good kings of Judah, having done that which was right, except for failing to remove the false worship at the high places. This latter deficiency was true of all of the kings of both the north and the south. It is surprising that the Lord allowed this to continue as long as He did.

He was smitten with leprosy during his reign. This book does not give the reason why this was done. The record in 2 Chronicles tells that it was a result of his having offered incense in the temple. This was not a privilege of the kings. It was a duty given only to the priests. When the priests scolded him for doing it, he became angry. Even in the midst of his anger the Lord caused him to break out with the leprosy. From that time until his death he dwelt in a "several house." This was a residence severed, or separate from the rest of the population. Lepers were quarantined, even if they were kings. He was still considered king even though his son Jotham was making the critical decisions of the nation.



Further details can be found in the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles.

**2 Kings 15:8** In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.

**2 Kings 15:9** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

**2 Kings 15:10** And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

**2 Kings 15:11** And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

**2 Kings 15:12** This was the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.

The scene changes now to the northern kingdom of Israel where Zarachiah, the son of Jeroboam ruled for only six months. He came to power in the thirty-eighth year of the rule of Azariah in Judah. His six month reign certainly did not raise the spiritual level of his people. His rule came to an end when he was assassinated by Shallum.

Thus the promise the Lord made to Jehu that his dynasty would sit upon the throne for four generations was fulfilled.

**2 Kings 15:13** Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah

**king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.**

**2 Kings 15:14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.**

**2 Kings 15:15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.**

After Shallum assassinated Zachariah, his rule lasted but one month. We are not completely surprised by this. Assassination seems to have become the rule rather than the exception for the end of one king and the beginning of the next.

Again the reader will find more details in the books of 2 Chronicles.

**2 Kings 15:16 Then Menahem smote Tiphseh, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.**

**2 Kings 15:17 In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria.**

**2 Kings 15:18 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.**

**2 Kings 15:19 And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be**  
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with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

2 Kings 15:20 And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.

2 Kings 15:21 And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 15:22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

Mena hem killed Shallum in order to obtain the throne. It is suggested that he was a general of the armed forces and used this as a launching pad for his takeover. His assassination of Shallum was only the beginning of the violence of this wicked king. He proceeded to rip up the pregnant women of the territory he had conquered. This abomination was intended to reduce the amount of resistance he might have met later at the hands of these unborn babes.

At this point Tiglath-Pileser, also known as Pul, was ruler in Assyria. He moved into the northern kingdom and threatened the rule of Menahem. In order to save his crown, Menahem offered Pul one thousand talents of silver to allow him to continue his rule. Pul agreed with the full realization that any time he wished to do so he could obtain more money or take over the rule of Israel.

It seems that Menahem died a natural death and joined the other previous kings of Israel in whatever fate the Lord had laid up for them.

2 Kings 15:23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.

2 Kings 15:24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 15:25 But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

2 Kings 15:26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

We are still following the kings of Israel, and only referring to those of Judah to date the dates of their rule.

Pekahiah, the son of Menahem became king at the death of his father. Almost nothing is said of him other than that he was evil and continued the sins which Jeroboam had introduced. After a two year reign he was the victim of a conspiracy. Pekah, who was an officer in his army rose up against him, smote him and killed him. Notice that one can be smitten without being killed. In this case both took place.

2 Kings 15:27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

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**2 Kings 15:28** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

**2 Kings 15:29** In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

**2 Kings 15:30** And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

**2 Kings 15:31** And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

After having killed Pekahiah, Pekah ruled for twenty years. The idolatry and worship in the high places was not halted. God was getting extremely impatient with the northern kingdom. He allowed Tiglath-pileser to take large amounts of the land and carry many captives to the land of Assyria.

Hoshea conspired against Pekah and took over the nation, which had become little more than a vassal to the king of Assyria.

**2 Kings 15:32** In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.

**2 Kings 15:33** Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

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2 Kings 15:34 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

2 Kings 15:35 Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 15:36 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

During the reign of Pekah, before he was killed by Hoshea, Jotham began to reign in Judah. His reign lasted for sixteen years. He is listed as a good king, but the reader will note that over and over the statement is made with respect to both the kings of the north and of the south that the sacrifices and the burning of incense were not halted at the high places. As long as these practices continued, there was no hope for God's people to avoid being chastized with loss of their freedom.

2 Kings 15:37 In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah.

2 Kings 15:38 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

Here we find that the king of Syria and the king of Israel determined to join forces against the power of Assyria. Both knew they were not strong enough to resist without combining their efforts.



Chapter 16

This sixteenth chapter discusses the reign of Ahaz. If Jeroboam can be said to cause Israel to sin, Ahaz is a close second, just as the comparison was made between Jezebel and Athaliah. He left the southern kingdom of Judah in spiritual shambles.

He would have been far better off to have placed his trust in the Lord than to place it on Pul, the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 16:1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

Ahaz did not find himself in an enviable position as he began his reign. Pekah, king of the northern kingdom, and Rezin, king of Syria were terrified at the power of Assyria. They were searching for allies against the Assyrian threat. Assyria had designs of conquest even as far west as Egypt. Israel and Judah were but stops along the way.

2 Kings 16:2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

Ahaz was still a young man at the beginning of his reign. He reigned for sixteen years in Judah and defied the will of Jehovah. His comparison with David left much to be desired.

If Ahaz was twenty years old when he began his reign and reigned for sixteen years, he would have been

thirty-six at the time of his replacement by his son Hezekiah. But it is stated that Hezekiah was twenty-five when he began to rule. This would mean that Ahaz would have been but eleven years of age when his son Hezekiah was born! This is not impossible, although highly improbable. The common explanation of the apparent contradiction centers on the possibility of a co-regency.

2 Kings 16:3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

We have seen nothing up to this time about this type of sacrifice by either those of Israel or Judah. Later on the sacrificing of children by passing them through the fire to Molech was practiced, and was condemned by the prophets as an abomination to the Lord. This may have been the first incident of this kind among all Israel. If God had cast the heathen out of the land for this same sin, what did Ahaz think would be the consequences of his rebellion?

Molech was worshiped by heating a gigantic statue of the god to red hot state. The child sacrifice was then thrown into the mouth of the false god and burned to ashes.

2 Kings 16:4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

The activities listed here were the duties of the priests, not the king. Ahaz was "doing his own thing."

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Even if the sacrifices were dedicated to the Lord, they were being practiced at the sites where lascivious worship was paid to the many false gods of the polytheists.

**2 Kings 16:5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.**

Rezin and Pekah wanted a united front to face the threat of an Assyrian invasion. They wanted Ahaz to join them in their resistance. Ahaz refused. It is likely that he could see ahead far enough to know that even if Israel, Syria and Judah were all to unite, the combined power would still be overcome by the Assyrians. What he did not realize was that if he had placed his trust in Jehovah, the power balance would have been on his side.

Because of his rejection of the coalition Pekah and Rezin both came to battle against Ahaz and Judah. We can assume that they felt they could overcome Judah and place a king on the throne who would be willing to join them.

Rezin and Pekah found their goal out of reach. They were not able to defeat Ahaz.

**2 Kings 16:6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.**

Elath had been taken from Syria by the Jews in the past. Now Elath was taken back into the possession of the Syrians. This was getting serious for Ahaz. Things were looking dismal for both Israel and Judah.

**2 Kings 16:7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.**

Ahaz felt that his wisest course of action would be to admit the power of Assyria and become tributary to that nation. He sent a message to Pul declaring his willingness to submit to the Assyrian ruler. He would be as timid as a servant or a child. In return, he asked Pul to come and save him from Pekah and Rezin.

**2 Kings 16:8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.**

To indicate his sincerity, Ahaz took the silver and gold in the temple and also in the king's palace, and sent it as a present (or tribute) to Tiglath-pileser. Judah had become a vassal province of Assyria.

**2 Kings 16:9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.**

With Israel and Syria involved in battle against Judah, Tiglath-pileser found it fairly easy to conquer Damascus of Syria. He took the city, killed Rezin and carried many of the people to Assyria.

**2 Kings 16:10 And king Ahaz went to Damascus**



**to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.**

We do not know whether Ahaz willingly made the trip to Damascus to meet Pul, or whether it was commanded by Pul. Ahaz did make the trip.

While Ahaz was in Damascus he saw a very impressive altar which was used in the worship of false gods. His appreciation of the altar may have been increased by his desire to gain the favor of the Assyrian ruler. Ahaz sent home the pattern of the altar and required Urijah the priest to make an exact copy of it.

**2 Kings 16:11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus.**

Some priests would have utterly rejected the command of the king. Uriah was apparently not much more impressed with the importance of loyalty to Jehovah than was Ahaz. Uriah made the altar. To say that he made the altar against king Ahaz return from Damascus means Uriah built the altar in time for Ahaz to see it upon his return.

**2 Kings 16:12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.**

When king Ahaz returned from Damascus he was

pleased with the altar and presented an offering on it. Let us hope the offering was to the Lord rather than to the false gods of the Assyrians.

**2 Kings 16:13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.**

These various offerings are described in the law of Moses. However, Ahaz was abusing his power. God had given clear directions as to the construction of the altar used in the temple area. Ahaz was ignoring those directions.

**2 Kings 16:14 And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.**

The altar which had been used in the worship of Jehovah was moved to a position of less prominence than the new altar built by Uriah. The method of worship used by the Assyrians was of greater importance to Ahaz than that which was due to the Lord.

**2 Kings 16:15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood**



**of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by.**

Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest to offer the sacrifices of the people upon the new altar. The brazen altar which had been used for the true worship of the Lord was to be used only by Ahaz as he made divine inquiry.

**2 Kings 16:16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.**

The command of Ahaz was put into action. If Tiglath-pileser either saw this arrangement, or heard of it Ahaz expected he would have been pleased.

**2 Kings 16:17 And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon the pavement of stones.**

The reader should not confuse the altar and the laver. After having moved the altar, Ahaz caused the bases of the laver to be removed. He took down the molten sea from off the oxen upon which it rested and put it on a stone pavement. This would have reduced it's appearance.

**2 Kings 16:18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.**

There is little agreement as to the nature of this “covert.” It is ordinarily thought of as being a covering of some sort. This present writer believes this was a canopy which was overhead as the king moved from his own palace to the temple entrance. When Ahaz caused it to be turned from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria, he may have rearranged it such that placed an emphasis upon the importance of that king instead of glorifying the Lord.

**2 Kings 16:19 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?**

**2 Kings 16:20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.**

We rejoice to read of the end of the reign of this most wicked king of Judah. He made the sad mistake of receiving strength from Tiglath-pileser instead of relying on the Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth. The foolish decisions of Ahaz brought tremendous distress upon the nation in the years to come.



## *Chapter 17*

We have finally come to the point of the actual fall of the northern kingdom of Israel into the hands of the Assyrians. What a tragedy! After all God's longsuffering and patience, He finally allows them to be punished for their many sins and deported from the land of Canaan, and removed from His sight. Many nations in the world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have also had ample opportunity to hear the commandments of the Lord through the apostles of Jesus Christ and the Christians who have passed on those truths to every nation. Yet they have followed in the footsteps of ancient Israel and will reap a horrible harvest just as Israel did.

**2 Kings 17:1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.**

Hoshea was the last king to reign over the northern kingdom. His reign lasted for only nine years, from 731 B.C. to 722 B.C. He saw the end of what Jeroboam I began when the latter caused Israel to sin by adopting the gods of the nations around them.

**2 Kings 17:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.**

Hoshea did not help the situation. He is still classed as doing evil in the sight of the Lord, even though not as much so as the kings which preceded him. We are not informed as to what difference there was which caused him to receive the lesser condemnation.

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2 Kings 17:3 Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

Shalmaneser was the son of Tiglath-pileser. By the time Shalmaneser took the crown in Assyria, Israel was little more than a servant state to Assyria. The city of Samaria was still strong, but it had been made clear that Assyria was so dominating that Hoshea was forced to serve him and pay tribute (presents) to him.

2 Kings 17:4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

Hoshea paid this tribute for some time and then decided to call upon Egypt for help. This was a mistake in that Assyria was much stronger than Egypt at the time. When the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea had failed to pay the tribute and had made an appeal to So, king of Egypt, he captured Hoshea and imprisoned him.

2 Kings 17:5 Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

After putting Hoshea into prison, the Assyrian king marched his armed forces through the northern kingdom of Israel, until he reached the capitol city of Samaria. Samaria was well defended and it required three years for the Assyrians to take it.

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**2 Kings 17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.**

The deportation of the Israelites was not limited as it had been before when a few of them were taken for servants. This time the vast majority of the entire population was transported into various places within the territory of the Assyrians.

Speculation runs wild as to just what ultimately happened to these Jews of the ten tribes. No one has found an explanation so clear that all have accepted it.

**2 Kings 17:7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,**

The inspired writer of the books of the kings now goes on to tell why God finally came to the end of His patience and allowed the Israelites to be removed from the land of Canaan.

The first reason presented is that the people were determined to forsake Jehovah and worship those which were no gods. From the beginning of the covenant which had been given on Sinai, it had been made clear that this was precisely what would happen if God's people did not worship Him, and Him only.

**2 Kings 17:8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before**

**the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.**

The Lord had warned Israel when they demanded that they have a king like the nations around them that they needed more than human wisdom. He did allow them to appoint a king, but let them know just what dangers would come upon them. Neither the statutes of the the heathen nations, nor the human wisdom of pride filled kings could guide and protect them.

**2 Kings 17:9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.**

Nothing is done without Jehovah being aware of it. When it is said that the children of Israel sinned secretly against the Lord, it only means that they thought they were acting in secret.

It would really be hard for either man or God to overlook what they were doing. They worshiped the false gods in the most prominent places they could find. These places could be found everywhere, from the isolated regions where the watchtowers were set up to the highly populated cities.

**2 Kings 17:10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:**

From one end of the land to the other, the images could be found. Every pretty spot was made the site of idol worship. When two young children wish to insult  
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one another, each may stick his tongue out at the other. Israel was showing just how little respect she had for the Lord who had brought her out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the promised land. God would not allow this disrespect to go on endlessly.

2 Kings 17:11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

Incense was pleasant smelling perfume like material which the people thought would be pleasing to their gods. Jehovah Himself had commanded the burning of incense to Him. He did not appreciate His people doing so to impress the so called gods and goddesses of the surrounding nations.

2 Kings 17:12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

It was not that they knew no better. They had been forewarned repeatedly that this kind of worship was wicked conduct which would bring on the anger of the Lord.

2 Kings 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

God had sent powerful prophets into their midst to remind them of the sinfulness of what they were doing. Amos, Hosea and Isaiah did not mince words when they called upon the people to put away their idols, and cease their lascivious ways.

Both prophets and seers are mentioned as being sent to them. The seers had visions of what could happen if the sins were not eliminated. The prophets were given messages from God which were to be presented to the rebellious people. There were to be no excuses. The present captivity was what should have been expected when they fought against the will of the Lord.

2 Kings 17:14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

God has several pictures which he uses to allow us to see man as He sees him when man is stubborn. Man is said to have closed his eyes so that he cannot see the truth. He is said to have stopped his ears so that he cannot hear the truth, and he is said to stiffen his neck like a spoiled child when that child screams out to a parent that "I won't do it." God does not like such behavior. He can be expected to react to it negatively.

2 Kings 17:15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.



Vanity is nothingness. Solomon said, “Vanity, Vanity, All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” We agree with Solomon that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. When one follows vanity, he will become a nothing.

2 Kings 17:16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

Should God then have simply turned His face the other way and acted as if He did not see them when they put up their two calves to worship, and when they worshipped the sun, moon, stars and planets. Abandoning the commands of the Lord and turning to the worship of Baal was ridiculous.

2 Kings 17:17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

The sacrifice of their own children to the false God Molech was abominable. Going to witches and magicians to supernatural guidance was to spit in the face of the only True and Living God. You do not spit in the face of Jehovah and expect Him to ignore it. He will be angry.

2 Kings 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his

sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

The Lord considered Israel the “apple of His eye” when they were obedient to Him. They lost that standing when they sought to commit secret sins. If they desired to get out of His sight, He would turn His head the other way and let them be carted off into Assyria, where they could try to communicate with the vain idols.

Actually the tribe of Benjamin was also a part of the southern kingdom, but Judah was far more prominent in the history of God’s people.

2 Kings 17:19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

2 Kings 17:20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

The southern kingdom of Judah was only a step behind their northern neighbors. All Israel had rejected the Lord. Judah would last a short time longer but was destined for the same type of future unless they changed their ways quickly.

2 Kings 17:21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.

2 Kings 17:22 For the children of Israel walked



in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

God had made the promise to David that from his family there would always be the hope of a king who would bring blessings to men. At this time the northern kingdom had acted so impudently that he stripped them from that family and allowed them to follow the wicked ways of Jeroboam I.

2 Kings 17:23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

“To this day” is to the time of the writing of the words of the books of the kings. The words of the prophets were accurate. Israel had sinned grievously. They had been told what would happen by the prophets. Now it was happening.

2 Kings 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

Not only did the king of Assyria remove the Israelites from their land and send them into Assyria. He replaced them with other persons from a number of different places. These people who were imported into the northern territory later became known as the Samaritans. They were despised by the Jews who

returned from captivity when it ended.

2 Kings 17:25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them.

These imported strangers did not fear Jehovah and keep his commandments. It seems that the new population was not very numerous and wild animals began to attack them. God allowed the lions to attack and kill some of them.

2 Kings 17:26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

These Samaritans decided the reason they were being killed by the lions was that they did not know how to live as the God of the land of Canaan wanted them to. They needed to know what to do to please Him.

2 Kings 17:27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

The king of Assyria had a solution. What was needed was for a priest of Jehovah to be brought back so that he could instruct the Samaritans in what was pleasing
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to God. He did not suggest that the entire priesthood be returned. He considered one of the priest of the Lord to be sufficient to handle the problem.

**2 Kings 17:28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.**

The priest of Jehovah was brought to Bethel which was an appropriate place because the name means “house of God.” This priest was allowed to teach the statutes of the Lord.

**2 Kings 17:29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.**

The Samaritans listened to the priest of the Lord, but in addition to learning of the will of God, each group clung to the worship of the gods they had worshiped before they were brought into Canaan. They thought it proper to try to please every god to which they were introduced. God does not like it that way.

**2 Kings 17:30 And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,**

**2 Kings 17:31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.**

We will not take the time and space to attempt an identification of each of the gods listed here. The important point is that the Samaritans began to worship Jehovah, but only added his worship to that of the gods they already praised.

**2 Kings 17:32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.**

Since they did resolve to worship Jehovah, they felt they needed a priesthood. In order to organize this priesthood, they chose men who were not Levites and therefore not qualified to be priests, and then sent them to the high places to serve both Jehovah and the false gods.

**2 Kings 17:33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.**

This worship of Jehovah simultaneously with false gods is termed “syncretistic” worship. The Samaritans were pleased with it even though the Lord was not.

**2 Kings 17:34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;**

So the Israelites had failed to fear either the Lord or the false gods of the nations. The commandments of  
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Jehovah as given through the law of Moses had been ignored as they turned to vain idols.

2 Kings 17:35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

God could not have been more specific when he told Israel He was a jealous God and would be angry if his people worshiped rivals for his affection.

2 Kings 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

The charge God had given Israel was that they were to remember it was Him who brought them out of Egypt. Thus it was Him who was to be worshiped, and Him to whom; sacrifice should be made.

2 Kings 17:37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.

God had made it clear that His laws and commandments were prepared particularly for Israel. Therefore they were to honor them and forego all others gods as being vain and meaningless.

2 Kings 17:38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.

2 Kings 17:39 But the LORD your God ye shall
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**fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.**

Jehovah promised to be their God, and expected Israel to be His peculiar people. If they gave themselves to Him, He would be with them and protect them from all foes.

**2 Kings 17:40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.**

In spite of all the blessings God had prepared for them, they ignored the covenant between Himself and the people. They would not hear Him, but continued to worship many gods.

**2 Kings 17:41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.**

The present writer believes this last verse refers to the people from various nations who had been sent in to repopulate the land after the Israelites had been removed to Assyria. These Samaritans worshiped Jehovah, but they still remained loyal to the gods of their ancestors and worshiped them along with Jehovah. This was true even until the time of the writing of the chapter before us.





## Chapter 18

The northern kingdom has been deported to Assyria. Although the two kingdoms were very often at serious odds with one another, the very existence of the northern kingdom was some degree of strength to Judah. Now Judah is alone. She faces Assyria from the outside, plus idolatry and moral corruption on the inside. How much longer can she last until she follows in the footsteps of Israel?

Fortunately she will have a short reprieve as the result of the coming rule of one of the few good kings in her history since the united kingdom divided into Israel and Judah. Things do improve under his rule, but the relief is only temporary.

**2 Kings 18:1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.**

Hoshea had ruled for nine years in Israel before the Assyrian conquest and deportation into captivity. Hezekiah came into power in the third year of Hoshea which means he ruled in Judah for six years after Israel was removed from the picture.

**2 Kings 18:2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.**

Hezekiah ruled over Judah from the time he was twenty-five until he reached the age of fifty-four. It

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does not help greatly to say that his mother was the daughter of Zachariah. There are some two dozen or more Zachariah's listed in the pages of the Old Testament.

It does tell us more when we find that he was the son of Ahaz, one of the more wicked kings in Judah's history. It also impresses us when we hear that Hezekiah's son was as wicked as his father had been. Like father, like son does not hold in this series of three generations. A wicked father can produce a righteous son, and a righteous father can produce a wicked son.

2 Kings 18:3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

This verse is high praise. King after king in both Israel and Judah had been said to fail in following the model set by King David. Judah desperately needed a good king. Hezekiah was just such a king. What was it that caused Jehovah to honor him so highly?

2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

2 Kings 18:5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

2 Kings 18:6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his



commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

1. He removed the high places and cut down the groves.

2. He broke the images.

3. He even broke into pieces the brazen serpent Moses had made.

4. He trusted in the Lord Jehovah to a greater degree than any king either before or after him.

5. He tried diligently to keep the law which God gave through Moses.

2 Kings 18:7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

The Lord promises that if men will trust and obey Him, He will respond by causing them to prosper. This was proven in the case of Hezekiah. This man even obtained fifteen extra years of life as a result of his dependence on Jehovah.

It was a mark of courage and bravery for Hezekiah to refuse serving the king of Assyria. He had already seen what happened to the northern kingdom. Without the help of God, he would have faced impossible odds.

2 Kings 18:8 He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

The Philistines bounced back and forth between independence and subservience to Judah. Hezekiah succeeded in regaining the entire country of these

people. This may have been a means of avoiding having to meet the Philistines while being attacked by the Assyrians.

2 Kings 18:9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

2 Kings 18:10 And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is in the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

The above events had already been discussed. This is a reminder of the power and dominance of that empire. It had taken three years for Shalmaneser of Assyria to take Samaria, the capitol city of the kingdom of Israel.

2 Kings 18:11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

2 Kings 18:12 Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

The reason is given for the fall of Israel. They were relocated because they had failed to hear and obey the commandments of the Lord. They broke His covenant. They lost the promised land.

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**2 Kings 18:13 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.**

In the sixth year of Hezekiah, Samaria had fallen. Now, eight years later Sennacherib, a later king of Assyria invaded Judah and made havoc of the land. He took many of the cities of the land, a number of them were fortified. With such devastation, Judah had reason to fear for her future.

**2 Kings 18:14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.**

Hezekiah showed a certain amount of spiritual weakness. If he was on the same side as the Lord was, he had no reason to fear. He did fear, however, and sent a message to Sennacharib that he was willing to pay a large sum of tribute to the Assyrian king if he would depart from Judah and not besiege the Holy city of Jerusalem. Sennacharib agreed and commanded Hezekiah to pay many millions of dollars worth of silver and gold.

The statement of Hezekiah that he knew he had offended is difficult to interpret. We do know that he had flirted with Egypt to gain her assistance. This may be what he had reference to.

**2 Kings 18:15 And Hezekiah gave him all the**  
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silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.

2 Kings 18:16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Are we to condemn Hezekiah for turning over the treasures of the temple to the wicked foe? We should probably put ourselves in his shoes before criticizing him too sharply. He may have rationalized his decision by persuading himself that he was protecting his people from further suffering.

2 Kings 18:17 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

Even the stripping off of the gold from the doors of the temple was not sufficient to feed the greedy heart of Sennacharib. He sent three of his high officials to make a further demand.

The words used above to identify them are not proper names. They are official titles such as we would use in sending the Vice President and Secretary of State on a political errand. These three men were supported by a large military force. They gathered by the water source which led from a reservoir down into the city. From this vantage point they desired to communicate with Hezekiah.

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**2 Kings 18:18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.**

Hezekiah did not come out in person to meet the three Assyrian officials. If Sennacherib was to important to make the call himself, Hezekiah would also appoint underlings to meet with those of the Assyrian king. He appointed Eliakim, Shebna and Joah, all of whom had prestigious positions in government of Judah.

**2 Kings 18:19 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?**

Rabshakeh acted as the spokesman for the Assyrians. He first tried to conquer through intimidation. He pointed out that Judah was about to find herself in combat with “the great king of Assyria.” What then did Judah think they could call up for help in their defense? The implication was that it was perfectly ridiculous for Judah to put up any resistance.

**2 Kings 18:20 Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?**

Rabshakeh repeated his question. If Judah was trying to convince themselves that they had leadership and power enough to contend with the forces of the

great king of Assyria, from where did they think it would come?

**2 Kings 18:21 Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.**

Did Judah think they could call upon aid from Egypt? That would be misplaced confidence. For Judah to lean upon Egypt was as if a man leaned upon a bruised reed to keep him from falling. All that would happen would be that the reed would pierce his hand and injure him. Dependence upon Egypt would only produce injury to Judah, not victory.

**2 Kings 18:22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?**

But perhaps Judah was placing their safety in the hands of God. Rabshakeh pointed out that such would be useless. Hezekiah had removed the high places and broken down the altars. God would have been so displeased He would have fought for Assyria rather than Judah.

This made sense in the minds of the Assyrians because they saw no difference between the false gods and the Lord God. What Hezekiah had done would have pleased God and caused Him to defend Judah.

**2 Kings 18:23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will**  
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deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

Since Judah could not depend upon Egypt for help, nor could they depend upon Jehovah, it was logical in the minds of the Assyrians that they prepare to pay tribute to Sennacharib.

If they did decide to fight, the king of Assyria could offer them two thousand horses from his own stables. They would still be helpless because they would not even have riders to make use of them.

2 Kings 18:24 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

Rabshakeh raved on. If the great Assyrian king would send one of the weakest of the captains of his army he could defeat Judah, even if they called upon Egypt to help them.

2 Kings 18:25 Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Rabshakeh closed his impudent speech with the statement that if they thought the Lord was on their side, they were wrong. He had come up against Judah at the Lord's command.

This was a bald faced lie. God would not take the side of the idolatrous Assyrians against his own people who at that time were trying hard to restore true worship among the people of Judah.

2 Kings 18:26 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

Hezekiah's representatives, Eliakim, Shebna and Joah tried to persuade Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian language in order that the transaction would be limited to the high ranking officials. The men on the wall did not have to be involved. This was an effort on their part to avoid panic among the men of Judah when they heard the insolent words of the Assyrians. They could become demoralized and decide to give up.

2 Kings 18:27 But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

Rabshakeh not only continued to speak in the language of the Jews. He got right down to the kind of language everyday workers would understand. He explained that he had not been sent to speak only to the high officials of Judah. These men on the wall must realize that if their was a siege, the famine could become so serious that the people would have to recycle food and drink by eating and drinking their own feces and urine.

He did not fail to point out that Hezekiah and his officials would find themselves doing the same as everyone else.

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**2 Kings 18:28** Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

**2 Kings 18:29** Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

**2 Kings 18:30** Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Still speaking in the language of the Jews so that all could hear and understand what he had to say, Rabshakeh tried to undermine the confidence of the Jews in the king. He claimed Hezekiah could not defend them, nor could he find aid to support him. If they thought Jehovah would deliver them they were very very mistaken.

**2 Kings 18:31** Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

According to Rabshakeh it was far better to submit to Assyrian control than to listen to the advice of Hezekiah. The proper procedure was to ignore Hezekiah and gather a tribute to the king of Assyria. If they would do that, the king would return the favor by making it possible for those of Judah to live in prosperity with their own land and their own produce. They would have an abundance of water to drink rather than being forced to drink their own excrement.

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2 Kings 18:32 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

It was common for the Assyrians to promise those whom they vanquished that they would make life abundantly pleasant for them. In reality those they conquered were assigned hard labor and abused in many ways. Rabshakeh made it sound as if surrender would take Judah to the garden of Eden. The truth was that such surrender more often led to the gates of hades.

2 Kings 18:33 Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

2 Kings 18:34 Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

What caused those of Judah to believe their gods could do that which other gods had not been able to accomplish. More prosperous nations than Judah had already been captivated and their gods had not been powerful enough to deliver them from the Assyrian king. Judah was dreaming if they believed their gods would protect them.

2 Kings 18:35 Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

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The Assyrians saw no difference in the fictitious gods dreamed up by humans and the Lord who created the world and all that is therein. They would live to find out the difference.

**2 Kings 18:36 But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's command-ment was, saying, Answer him not.**

Hezekiah knew it would be detrimental for his subjects to get into a discussion with the Assyrian representatives. He had thus instructed them not to replay to anything that was said to them by these power hungry enemies.

**2 Kings 18:37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.**

The three representatives whom Hezekiah had appointed to meet the Assyrians had remained silent. They were instructed to listen but not to reply. But when the confrontation was complete, the three of them tore their clothing in distress and reported the unpleasant words to Hezekiah.

Were the Assyrians right? Was there no hope of survival?



## *Chapter 19*

Sennacherib and the Assyrian forces were licking their lips over what they thought to be an enormous difference in power between their own army and the remnant of the Jews who were trying to defend the city of Jerusalem. They had completely ignored the fact that Jehovah could very possibly take the side of the Jews.

Hezekiah had received insulting messages telling him what was in store for him if surrender was not accepted promptly. Hezekiah knew there was but one possible avenue of relief.

**2 Kings 19:1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.**

King Hezekiah demonstrated his grief over the seemingly insurmountable predicament. He tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. With these signs of helplessness and humility the king went to the temple of Jehovah. This was a far different approach than other kings had taken. They had behaved in such manner that there was a giant gap in their relationships with Jehovah. This was not so with Hezekiah.

**2 Kings 19:2 And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.**

While Hezekiah was going to the temple, he sent some of his most trusted men to make contact with

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Isaiah and see if the prophet would give them any good news. From this point on in the history of Judah we will hear more and more of Isaiah. In fact, some believe a sizable portion of the book of 2 Kings was written by the prophet. Certain chapters are nearly identical in the book of Isaiah and the book of 2 Kings.

2 Kings 19:3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

The messengers presented Hezekiah's worries to Isaiah and explained that it was a sad day for Israel. There were difficulties on every side, and without divine help there would be no hope. There had been great hope that God's people could become a blessing to all the earth. Now it looked as if the hopes were dashed, just as those of a woman who had carried her child up to the time for birth and then was unable to complete the birth process.

2 Kings 19:4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

The messengers pleaded that Jehovah might take note of the blasphemies and insulting words which Rabshakeh had directed toward both the Lord and His people. Perhaps the prayer of the prophet would bring

about some help from heaven.

2 Kings 19:5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

2 Kings 19:6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

Isaiah replied to the servants of Hezekiah that the Jews were not to be fearful of the boastful things which Rabshakeh had spoken in such a blasphemous manner.

2 Kings 19:7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

God promised through Isaiah that He would do two things to help His people. First, He would send a blast upon the Assyrian forces. Second, the Assyrian ruler would hear a rumor which would cause him to return to Assyria where his life would be cut off by the sword.

2 Kings 19:8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

Rabshakeh returned to Lachish where he expected to find the ruler. He discovered Sennacherib had moved from Lachish to Libnah. Rabshakeh relayed the message of Isaiah to Sennacherib. The reason for this



change of scene is not explained.

2 Kings 19:9 And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

At this point Sennacherib was beginning to realize he had problems. It was not just the Jews that he was concerned with. The Ethiopians had approached from the west. Back home Babylon was becoming steadily stronger. He decided he needed to close out the Jewish conflict first.

2 Kings 19:10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

The Assyrian leader was beginning to be concerned. He began to speak in even more blustery terms than he had previous done. He warned Hezekiah not to trust in Jehovah. When all was said and done, Jerusalem would fall to Assyria.

We can anticipate that these words were the beginning of the end for Sennacherib. Jehovah does not find pleasure in pride filled men and women at any level of prestige.

2 Kings 19:11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

2 Kings 19:12 Have the gods of the nations
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**delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?**

If Hezekiah was going to depend upon the help of the Lord, he needed to take the time to consider what had happened to other people who had relied upon their gods to defend them. A lengthy list of rulers is given who had been defeated by the Assyrian forces. Their gods had not been capable of rescuing them. What made Hezekiah think his God could do any better?

**2 Kings 19:13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?**

**2 Kings 19:14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.**

Hezekiah received the letter, but did not let it deter him from his plan to lay the problems in the hands of the God who was infinitely more powerful than the sticks and stones which men's hands had carved out and called gods.

To say that Hezekiah spread out the letter before the Lord was only to say he prayed over the nature of response he should make to the Assyrian king. It is doubtful that Hezekiah actually went into the holy place in the temple. Only the priests were given permission to enter that area.

**2 Kings 19:15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God,**  
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even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

2 Kings 19:16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

The prayer of Hezekiah is so fine that one almost hesitates to take away from it by making comments on it. His main point is that there is but one True and Living God who created heaven and earth. The false gods Sennacherib was boasting about having overcome were “nothings.”

2 Kings 19:17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

2 Kings 19:18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

2 Kings 19:19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

Hezekiah pleaded that the Lord would defend His own name. By delivering the Jews when all the other nations with their false gods had crumbled would be strong evidence that the Lord Jehovah is GOD.

2 Kings 19:20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

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Isaiah sent word to Hezekiah that his prayer had been heard and approved by the Lord. Jehovah would take action against the blasphemous words which Sennacherib had leveled toward Him.

**2 Kings 19:21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.**

Jehovah compared Israel to an attractive young virgin whose beauty had caught the greedy eye of the Assyrians. This virgin daughter of Zion had no respect for Sennacherib and his forces. She had shaken her head in disgust. The attentions of the Assyrians were an insult to her.

**2 Kings 19:22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.**

God called upon Sennacherib to reflect upon what he had done when he raised his voice in threats and insults to the Ruler of the universe.

**2 Kings 19:23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.**

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What a terrible mistake Sennacherib had made in thinking a multitude of horses and chariots were more than a match for Jehovah. He had thought he would have free reign to pass through the land of Canaan and take anything his heart desired.

2 Kings 19:24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

God now began to point out to Sennacherib what HE had done. Sennacherib was not the one who had dried up rivers and allowed armies to pass. Such would not have happened if God had resisted it.

2 Kings 19:25 Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

The Lord had used Sennacherib to accomplish certain objectives. Nations had to be chastised for disobedience. The Assyrians had only been a tool in the hand of the Lord to teach lessons to the people who needed them.

2 Kings 19:26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

With God permitting Sennacherib to eat up the nations as if they were fields blasted by the summer

sun, the Assyrian ruler had gathered the false notion that he had accomplished this on his own. Sennacherib was now to find himself on the receiving end of some lessons.

2 Kings 19:27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

2 Kings 19:28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

God let Sennacherib know without doubt that the Assyrians proud words and actions had registered. He was quite aware of the insulting behavior. Since He had heard these insults He was preparing to let the ruler know the difference between the false gods he had dealt with in the past and the one True God.

Just as one might put a ring in the nose of a bull and lead him wherever he chose, just as one would put a bit in a horses mouth and guide him without difficulty, Sennacherib would find himself in the same obedient condition, whether or not he liked it.

2 Kings 19:29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

The Lord now turns His attention to Judah. They will have a sign that the Assyrian attack has ended.

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In the upcoming year they would be able to survive by eating that which grew without sowing and cultivating. The second year there would be more but would still be limited. In the third year they would be able to go about their normal sowing, reaping and enjoying the fruits of their labor. This might be difficult to believe, but God had promised.

**2 Kings 19:30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.**

Many of the Israelites had been killed. There were still enough to provide a new population. Like healthy plants they would take root in the land and replenish it with descendants of the Judahites.

**2 Kings 19:31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.**

Those who had survived the ravages of invaders would, with the help of Jehovah, build back the southern kingdom for a time. Of course, the reader knows this would not last. This new population would turn wicked and ultimately be taken into Babylon for a seventy year captivity.

**2 Kings 19:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.**

~~~~~ Sennacherib would not be allowed to even come near ~~~~~

to the city of Jerusalem. He would not get close enough to shoot an arrow into the city. Nor would he be able to build a ramp which would allow his forces to march over the walls and enter by that means.

2 Kings 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

Sennacherib would end up by going right back to where he came from. Jerusalem was off limits for this vile and bloodthirsty ruler.

2 Kings 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

When God is for us who can be against us? There were two very good reasons for God to intervene in defending Jerusalem. First, it was known to be His city. To allow it to be sacked would reflect upon His glory. Second, king David had received precious promises as to the relationship between this city and his descendant who would become a blessing to the world.

2 Kings 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

The rumor which Isaiah had predicted would cause Sennacherib to back off and consider going home had already been heard. Babylon was becoming more threatening on the home front. The Babylonian king
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had already moved toward his forces where they were extended toward the west.

Now the blast of the Lord struck. During the night “the” angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of the Assyrian soldiers and slew them. There are numerous guesses as to the identity of this angel. Some think it was the second person of the Godhead. Others see it as a lesser servant of Jehovah. The other unknown here is the manner in which the deaths occurred. Was it the result of a great hailstorm? Was it a plague brought on by an onslaught of rats and mice? Did they die of heart attacks. We do not know.

**2 Kings 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.**

Just as Isaiah had predicted as an inspired man of God, the Assyrian king reconsidered his position and hurried off home to Ninevah.

**2 Kings 19:37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.**

According to sources outside the Bible, Sennacherib overlooked two of his older sons to choose a younger brother to succeed him on the throne. The two older brothers then became angry and slew their father to take over the rulership. Even so, the younger brother was enthroned.



## *Chapter 20*

Our present chapter focuses upon the reign of Hezekiah. It gives particular emphasis to a sickness which came upon him, and his recovery from that ailment. The last part of the chapter discusses a serious mistake Hezekiah made in showing visitors from Babylon all the treasures of the kingdom.

**2 Kings 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.**

I shall not attempt to pinpoint the time of Hezekiah's illness. It happened fifteen years before his death. That is about all we can be confident about.

Everything indicated that his sickness was serious enough to bring an end to his life. The prophet Isaiah even stated that he should arrange for that event. It was not far ahead.

**2 Kings 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,**

Hezekiah was greatly disturbed by this prophecy. He did what he had done unnumberable times before this. He prayed. Would prayer truly make a difference when a prophet of God had made such a definite declaration of the future? It did this time!

**2 Kings 20:3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and**

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with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Hezekiah did not have to remind God of that which he had done. God has a very good memory. But, it did make a difference that the king recognized the difference in his own power and that of God. He could not expect to continue life without the help of the Lord.

It is unfair to accuse Hezekiah of boasting. He was only stating true facts. Few kings of Israel or Judah had lived with such devotion and courage as he had. No doubt there were things he wished to do in the service of God and the nation of Israel which had not yet been accomplished.

Hezekiah wept. Do grown men who have the ability of Hezekiah break out into tears which roll down their cheeks. It is no sign of weakness to weep. Jesus wept! There is a time to weep and a time to rejoice.

2 Kings 20:4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

God responded almost immediately to the prayer. Isaiah had hardly left Hezekiah when he was given a message to relay to Hezekiah.

2 Kings 20:5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

Isaiah was told to go back and tell Hezekiah He
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had heard his plea and noted his tears of sincerity. In a period of no less than three days Hezekiah would be made well. At that time he would be healthy enough that he could go to the temple.

**2 Kings 20:6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.**

Hezekiah would be allowed to live for another fifteen years. Does the reader feel that he or she would like to know the very year of their own death? There are both advantages and disadvantages. It would be possible to organize one's life such that the most could be accomplished in the given time. Still, it would be difficult to realize each year that the grave was one year closer.

**2 Kings 20:7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.**

God would do His part. He expected Hezekiah to join him in the treatment. He was to place a poultice of figs on the inflamed area. He did so, and he recovered.

The word which is translated as "boil" is one that could refer to any number of inflammatory conditions. The reader may have doubts about the killing power of boils. Hezekiah's problem was more than just a very tender and inflamed sore some two inches in diameter. It would have been lethal if not treated.

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2 Kings 20:8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

The healing itself should have been sufficient proof that the Lord was answering his prayer. He was out of order to ask for a sign. Nevertheless, he did ask, and God was longsuffering enough to give him the sign for which he asked.

2 Kings 20:9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

God's prophet, Isaiah, told him God was willing to give him a choice. Would he like for the shadow of the sun dial to move forward ten degrees, or would he rather it move backward that amount. Either of these happenings would be powerful evidence that the healing of the illness was done by the power of the Lord.

2 Kings 20:10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

Hezekiah decided he would prefer that the shadow on the sundial go backward ten degrees. That seemed to him to be a more impressive act. If that took place, he would be convinced God was the one who had healed him.

2 Kings 20:11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

Isaiah brought the choice before the Lord and that which had been requested was granted. Some have ridiculed this record by stating that the entire system of the sun and the planets would have to be affected to cause such an event. That is not true. All that was necessary was for God to intervene in the degree of refraction which occurs as light passes through different materials. The sun appears to the view of an onlooker even after it has passed below the horizon because of this phenomena. It would have been a minor achievement for the Lord, and would not have necessarily interfered with the entire solar system.

If the reader can accept the account of Joshua's long day, recorded in Joshua 10:12-14, there should be no hesitation in acceptance of the present miracle. See below.

Josh. 10:12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

Josh. 10:13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

Josh. 10:14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice



of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

2 Kings 20:12 At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

In other records the individual mentioned in this verse is called Merodach-baladan. He was a prince in Babylon. At this time Babylon and Assyria were vying for power. It appears that the royalty of Babylon gained knowledge of the sickness of Hezekiah and felt that an alliance with Israel might be of benefit to them. Sending consolation letters and presents to Hezekiah could have been a means of bringing about such a cooperative venture.

2 Kings 20:13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

Hezekiah was much too trusting. He was pleased with their concern and invited them to his palace, and perhaps even to the temple area to see the wealth of the nation. He also revealed the weaponry which was available to his army. Sometimes God's honest people expect others to be equally honest when they are not.

2 Kings 20:14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What

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**said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.**

Isaiah had either seen the visitors, or had heard of their presence and meeting with Hezekiah. He wished to know the purpose of their visit, and also from where they had come. Hezekiah informed him that they had come a long ways, even from Babylon.

**2 Kings 20:15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.**

Hezekiah then went on to reveal to Isaiah just how completely he had shown the riches and glory of Israel. He was to be mightily surprised at what he heard next.

**2 Kings 20:16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.**

**2 Kings 20:17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.**

It was not the Assyrians who should have been on the mind of Hezekiah. His visitors were to prove far more dangerous than the Assyrian army. The day would come when all the riches of Israel would be taken from them and carried off into the land of Babylon. The

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Babylonians would leave nothing behind.

2 Kings 20:18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Not only would the riches of the nation be taken. The descendants of Hezekiah would be captured and taken to work as servants in the palace of the Babylonian king. The word “eunuchs” is often misunderstood. Sometimes a eunuch was a male who had been castrated and thus lost his manhood. At other times the word only meant a male servant. Daniel and his three friends are examples of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

2 Kings 20:19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

Hezekiah did not seem overly concerned about the destiny of his descendants. He was more interested in the fact that there would be peace and truth in the few remaining years which he would live.

2 Kings 20:20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Additional details of the accomplishments of

Hezekiah can be found in the latter chapters of the book of 2 Chronicles. The conduit which brought water into the city was a very critical project which he completed. This assured a water supply in case the city of Jerusalem was attacked. It would be much more difficult to cause surrender if the citizens of the city had an ample supply of fresh water.

2 Kings 20:21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Israel was to face a drastic change in government with the death of Hezekiah. He was one of the best kings of Israel. His son Manasseh was one of the worst, perhaps the worst of the entire history of the southern kingdom.



Chapter 21

The southern kingdom of Judah is now going it alone. The northern kingdom has been removed to Assyria and for that matter the Assyrians have almost completely taken control of Judah. King Manasseh, who is discussed in this chapter watched to see how Assyrian was going to react to his actions. Much of the time those actions fell in line with Assyrian thinking.

2 Kings 21:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.

There were a number of co-reigns during this period of God's people. Hezekiah was a good king, and it seems he wished for his son Manasseh to have some experience before he took over the rule. Manasseh was born about three years after Hezekiah received his fifteen extra years of life. This meant that Manasseh was twelve when his father died. He reigned for longer than any other of the kings of Israel.

2 Kings 21:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Here is solid proof that sons do not always follow in their father's footsteps. Hezekiah was a good king. His son Manasseh was the complete opposite. The material we are studying right now is depressing reading for those who are faithful to the Lord. It is almost as if

God's people were trying to prove that his warnings about what would happen if they insisted on a king like the nations around them were correct. The nation first divided. Then the northern kingdom turned idolatrous. The southern kingdom lasted about a century longer, but then it also embraced idolatry.

2 Kings 21:3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

Hezekiah had tried diligently to get the people to leave their idolatry and lascivious forms of worship. To a point he succeeded, but a close look indicates that their heart was not in the matter. As soon as his son began to rule the tide turned back to corrupt worship practices. Manasseh took the lead in these sinful ways.

1. He rebuilt altars to Baal.
2. He built groves for the worship of Asherah.
3. He encouraged the worship of the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies.

2 Kings 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

4. He built altars for the worship of other gods in the very temple area.

2 Kings 21:5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

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5. He built altars in the temple courts to worship the heavenly bodies.

**2 Kings 21:6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.**

If the reader can think of any type of false worship, it is likely that it is included in this list

**2 Kings 21:7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:**

When the temple was built God made it extremely clear that Jerusalem was a special city dedicated to governing His people. He also made it clear that the temple was to honor His name, and His alone. If Israel was true there was no reason why they could not maintain their influence indefinitely through both the city and the temple.

**2 Kings 21:8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.**

There was an “if” connected to this promise. “If  
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they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them through Moses.

2 Kings 21:9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

Rather than observing all those commandments, Israel had chosen to go after the false gods of the nations around them. They had even gone so far as to become more wicked than those nations who lived in Canaan when they entered, and whom God allowed them to replace.

2 Kings 21:10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

God had not failed to warn His people. He spoke to them through the prophets, and He also allowed them to suffer many curses because of their insistence on directing their own ways.

2 Kings 21:11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:

The prophets did their part. They informed the people that they could not continue to prosper and at the same time act in a more sinful way than did the people whom they had replaced.

2 Kings 21:12 Therefore thus saith the LORD
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**God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.**

Mothers and fathers tell their children to do that which is right and avoid that which is wrong. When the child then does wrong rather than right, they receive unpleasant disciplinary measures. That is precisely the plan God used with His chosen people. He warned them through the prophets and made certain they knew His will. Then when they deliberately ignored Him, He applied correctional measures. Some of those corrective measures were so unpleasant that anyone who heard of them would find the message as unpleasant as having a gong rung right beside his ears.

**2 Kings 21:13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.**

The kingdom of Judah knew what had happened to the northern kingdom when they ignored God. Now the Lord declared that He was going to use the same measuring stick for Judah that He had used for Israel.

He would wipe the population of His people off the land of Canaan just as a person would wipe a dish, dumping its contents and then wiping away the remnants.

**2 Kings 21:14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the**

**hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;**

**2 Kings 21:15 Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.**

From the time the Lord had delivered His people from slavery in Egypt, they had shown they were ready to forsake His commandments. Since that was true, He would return the favor and forsake them. They would find themselves at the mercy of any who wished to prey upon them. They would lose their possessions and also their freedom.

**2 Kings 21:16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.**

The cruelty of Manasseh was abominable. It is one thing to kill a person because he has shed the blood of a murderer. Manasseh shed the blood of anyone who obstructed his will. He encouraged the people of Judah to walk in their own ways, even though they knew those ways were directly opposite to the ones which Jehovah had given them.

Manasseh and Jeroboam I were cut from the same mold. Jeroboam I caused Israel to sin. Manasseh caused Judah to sin.

**2 Kings 21:17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the**  
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chronicles of the kings of Judah?

A number of additional facts can be found in the thirty-third chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles. The present writer feels that the best time to deal with that material is when the books of Chronicles are covered.

2 Kings 21:18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

After a fifty-five year reign in which evil and rebellion against Jehovah ran rampant, Manasseh died. He was not buried in the normal burial grounds of the kings of Judah. He was interred in a garden near his house. That separation from others who were far more righteous than he was appropriate.

2 Kings 21:19 Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

Manasseh's son Amon began his rule when he was but twenty-two. He reigned only two years. This was true of several of the kings and their sons. A father who reigned for a lengthy period of time was often followed by a son who lasted only a year or two.

2 Kings 21:20 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

We would like to read here that Manasseh's son
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Amon turned back from his father's wicked leadership. That was not the case. Amon was also an evil king. Judah was steadily moving downhill in their respect for the Lord who had done so much for them.

We have to ask ourselves just how long an imperfect human leader would tolerate such behavior on the part of those they were attempting to lead. Human leaders are never perfect. God is perfect. He will not forever allow sin without applying whatever means are necessary to reverse the wickedness.

**2 Kings 21:21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:**

**2 Kings 21:22 And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.**

By this time it may be that the people were beginning to recognize that unpleasantness follows when men's ears are turned away from Jehovah. Two very evil men have followed one another in Judah. God's lessons should have penetrated the hearts of a large number of the people.

**2 Kings 21:23 And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.**

We can understand this verse if our suppositions on the previous verses are correct. At least some of the people were ready to find a new king who would respect the will of the Lord.



**2 Kings 21:24 And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.**

It is also possible that the slaying of Amon displeased a large enough group of the people that they thought these conspirators were due death because of their assassination of Amon. Whichever the case, Josiah, the son of Amon became the new ruler.

**2 Kings 21:25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?**

As mentioned several times before, the book of 2 Chronicles gives additional details of the reign of Amon. They will be noted during the study of that book.

**2 Kings 21:26 And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.**

Thus Manasseh and his son Amon were both very evil rulers, and were both buried separate from the majority of the kings of Judah. Josiah is now king.



## Chapter 22

Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah are kings who did right in the sight of God. It is likely that Judah would have collapsed and gone into captivity before this actually occurred if it had not been for the restraining influence of these three kings. As in the case of a number of the other kings, Josiah began his reign at a very early age. This usually meant that some older individual made many of the decisions which a mature king would have made.

The period of time in which Josiah reigned was one in which political change was taking place. Assyria was weakening as Babylon was growing stronger. The Medes and Persians were also growing in influence. Egypt was in control of the territory north of Israel and south of the Mediterranean. This vying for power relieved Judah of some of the pressures which existed earlier. Josiah did have an opportunity to lead his people back to the true worship of the Lord.

**2 Kings 22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.**

Both Josiah's father and grandfather were evil rulers. It was truly a mark of high character for him to rise above both of them in his dedication to Jehovah.

**2 Kings 22:2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.**

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One commentator stated that Josiah began well, continued well and ended well. This was highly unusual in his time period. God had a particularly high evaluation of David. Later kings are compared with the loyalty of the man “after God’s own heart.”

2 Kings 22:3 And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

This was not the eighteenth year of Josiah’s life. It was the eighteenth year of his reign. He would have been about twenty-six years of age. He was interested in doing whatever he could to bring the worship and the services of the people of Judah into harmony with the will of the Lord. The proper handling of the financial aspects of the temple were high in priority in attending to his concerns.

2 Kings 22:4 Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:

There does not seem to be evidence of a blatant mishandling of the temple funds. But Josiah wished to put everything in the best possible order. Close supervision would help to insure that disaster did not appear.

2 Kings 22:5 And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the

house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

It seemed best to Josiah to bypass the priests handling the funds to whatever degree was possible. Thus the ones who collected the funds as they were contributed were to give them to the heads of the workmen who were now going to see to the repair of the temple. It had been some time since Solomon had caused the temple to be built. Even with only age deterioration there would be a need for repair. In addition, the temple had been abused by invaders. There was a justifiable need for improvement.

2 Kings 22:6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

2 Kings 22:7 Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

There was no concern over the honesty of the supervisors or the workmen. They were trusted as being devoted to their work.

2 Kings 22:8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

In the course of making the repairs, Hilkiyah the high priest went to Shaphan who seems to have been a scribe of some prestige. Hilkiyah informed Shaphan that he had found “the book of the law” within the temple. This is outrageous. It would be like someone
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being surprised at finding a Bible in a church building today. Especially this was so since the temple was not one of thousands. It was the central point of worship for the followers of the Lord.

**2 Kings 22:9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.**

After Shaphan the scribe examined the book, he pointed it out to king Josiah while he was reviewing the work that was proceeding.

**2 Kings 22:10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.**

**2 Kings 22:11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.**

Shaphan read from the book of the law to the king. As Josiah heard what was written in the book he was grief stricken. He tore his clothing in penitence for what had happened among his people. What were they to do to make amends for their sinful conduct?

**2 Kings 22:12 And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiyah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,**

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Josiah then commanded some of those whom he most respected among the priests and the scribes to see if guidance could be found that they might make amends for the insulting attitudes of the people as they had ignored the God of heaven.

2 Kings 22:13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

When Josiah compared what had been done with what God expected to be done, as laid out in the book of the law, he was most certain that the Lord must be furious with His people. For generations Israel had been indifferent to the desires of Jehovah. The results could be catastrophic if these attitudes continued. It was time for a drastic change of attitude.

This present commentator is not interested in an in depth analysis of the debate concerning the documentary hypothesis which states that this book of the law was not a copy of the law as given by the Lord through Moses. It is assumed that the readers of the present commentary are more interested in following the will of the Lord as it is revealed in the sixty-six books of the Bible as commonly accepted to be canonical today.

James Burton Coffman has devoted a great deal of time to the study of the so-called higher critics. A careful reading of his writings dealing with this issue can be profitable for those who are interested in delving

more deeply. See his discussion of this twenty-second chapter of 2 Kings.

2 Kings 22:14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

The group Josiah had assigned to see what should be done decided to go to Huldah the prophetess for an answer. We do find it interesting that since Jeremiah was alive at this time the group did not inquire from him. There may have been a number of reasons. Do not automatically assume that only men were spokesmen for the Lord at that time. There are other women who are called prophetesses.

This should not alarm readers of the Holy Book today who find that women are to remain silent in the churches. God can alter His instructions for the behavior of men and women as He sees fit from time to time.

2 Kings 22:15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

2 Kings 22:16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

The prophetess did not mince words. She informed the messengers that it was too late for Judah to avoid punishment. God intended to bring evil upon those who

had reason and opportunity to do His will and then turned their backs on Him. The horrible suffering that was listed in the book which had been found in the temple would come to pass.

2 Kings 22:17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

Neither Josiah nor any of the people of Judah would be bypassed by the oncoming wrath which God would pour out upon the disobedient. There was no way the suffering could be avoided by the evil workers.

2 Kings 22:18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

2 Kings 22:19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

There was one soft spot in the words of Huldah. The messengers were to return to Josiah and tell him that God had taken note of the sorrow of heart which he had when he found just how defiant the people of Judah and Israel had become over the centuries.



Jerusalem would become desolated and the curse of the Lord would be poured out upon Judah. God had, however, noted just how deeply grieved the king was and would not forget that.

2 Kings 22:20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

There are some difficulties in this last verse. Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt in the midst of battle. This does not seem to be “gathered to the grave in peace.” It may be that the latter part of the verse explains the difficulty. Josiah died before the city of Jerusalem was made desolate by the enemies of the Israelites and their God.

There is a very fine lesson within this chapter. A man or woman does not have to become a servant of Satan just because their fathers, mothers, grandfathers or grand-mothers were evil. God had said, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” Choice to choose good or evil is one of the great differences between men and animals. Animals choose because of immediate uncomfortable consequences. Man has the mental power to see beyond this life and prepare for eternal consequences. Does the present reader look beyond the pleasures and miseries of today? Eternity is real dear friends. Get ready for it.



Chapter 23

In the course of cleaning up the temple of God, the book of the law was found. This was an exciting discovery for Josiah, who was trying very hard to restore the hearts of Israel to faithfulness toward the only True and Living God. This chapter tells of his tremendous efforts to remove the idolatrous worship into which the southern kingdom of Judah had fallen.

2 Kings 23:1 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

This was a momentous occasion. Josiah wanted desperately to cause the people to hear and respect the will of Jehovah. His first step was to gather the elders of the people and ask for their help in the effort.

2 Kings 23:2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

This verse must mean that the king went to the house of the Lord with this great mass of people. The entire group could not have entered into the temple itself. Note that priests, prophets and elders were all present. This does tell us that some vestiges of true religion still were having a positive influence in the land, even though idolatry had made vast inroads in their thoughts and actions.

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In showing his respect for the book of the covenant, the king himself read from the precious book. He did not tell each of them to get a copy and read it. The situation was not as it is today. Most of us can take a Bible off a shelf in our house and read from it at any time. Any copy of the book of the law in the time of Josiah had been written out by hand.

What an immense gathering this must have been! Priests, prophets, elders and all the people were assembled for the reading.

**2 Kings 23:3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.**

We cannot be certain of the identity of the pillar beside which the king stood. It was probably one of the two great pillars named Jachin and Boaz. Solomon had erected these pillars and the kings had made addresses to the people from a porch from which the pillars arose.

**2 Kings 23:4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.**

Hilkiah was the one who had brought the copy of the book to Josiah. Now Josiah was enlisting the help of the high priest in the attempt to rid the land of the idolatry which the book condemned. The worship of Baal had so completely taken over that worship items dedicated to Baal had invaded the temple of the Lord.

Everything that had been used in the false worship was to be removed. This included those items which were associated with the sexually impure rites of the grove, and also those related to the worship of the sun, moon, stars and planets. By burning these items and strewing their remains unto Bethel he reminds us of the worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel.

**2 Kings 23:5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.**

The majority of the kings of Judah had mixed the worship of Jehovah with that of Baal, the heavenly bodies, etc. One of the practices was to burn incense to send up pleasant odors to the supposed dieties. There was nothing wrong at that time with the burning of incense to Jehovah. There was great sin in honoring that as God which is no god.

**2 Kings 23:6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and**

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cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

This grove was not a cluster of trees planted in the temple of God. It was apparently a model which reminded the people of the so-called pleasures which could be tasted in the real groves. The burning of this grove and casting the ashes upon the graves was a way of stating that the worship of the groves was to be killed.

2 Kings 23:7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

We ordinarily connect the word “sodomy” with male homosexual behavior. The reader will no doubt think of Lot casting his tent toward Sodom, and the demand of the men of Sodom that the male visitors be brought out to them for their distorted minds and actions. As used here, the word apparently is related to homosexuality by both men and women. The women were closely enough associated with it that they wove curtains or hangings for the use of the groves in providing some degree of privacy for their sins.

2 Kings 23:8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man’s left hand at the gate of the city.

Josiah had great intentions. He caused the priests who had at least partially remained faithful to defile the high places where unfaithful priests had burned incense to the false gods. Geba was at one end of the Judah. Beersheba was at the other. The gate of Joshua was one of the gates of the city of Jerusalem. The false worship was even being practiced at that location.

2 Kings 23:9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

Not all of the priests cooperated. Those who had a prominent place in the false worship at the high places ate unleavened bread with the fellow Jews, but they did not join in the elimination of the false worship. They apparently wished to have their bread buttered on both sides. Worship the Lord, and also worship the host of heaven.

2 Kings 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

The burning of infants as sacrifices to the false gods was a hideous practice. Josiah saw the wickedness of this type of worship had defiled the area which was used for that purpose. We remember that Abraham was ready to offer his son Isaac on the altar when Jehovah commanded him to cease. Burning babies to death is not acceptable in the sight of the God of love.

2 Kings 23:11 And he took away the horses
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**that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.**

Josiah cause the horses and chariots which had been devoted to sun worship to be removed or burned. The sun has always been admired by men and women through the ages. It has been seen as a chariot of fire driven across the sky and pulled by horses. A god was thought to be riding in the chariot and surveying the earth as he rode.

**2 Kings 23:12 And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.**

Former kings of Judah had acted in just the opposite manner to that of Josiah. That which they had established, Josiah removed. Hezekiah had made a similar effort in previous days, but Josiah was even more thorough in his actions. Ahaz and Manasseh had done much damage. Josiah was doing his best to undo that damage.

**2 Kings 23:13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the**

**king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.**

This verse takes us back to the time when Solomon was influenced by his many wives to build places of worship for their false gods. Some of these women were of the Zidonians, Some were of Moab. Still others were of the Ammonites. Josiah even demolished the sites where they were worshiped.

**2 Kings 23:14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.**

Josiah made a cemetery of the places where these false gods had been worshiped. This would not have made them the choicest spots to worship.

**2 Kings 23:15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.**

We are continually reminded that Jeroboam was the king who caused Israel to sin. Would you not hate to have that description attached to your name for all the centuries until the end of time. No place in the land seems to have escaped the wickedness of idolatrous and false worship. Jerusalem itself was turned into a hotbed

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of pleasure centered worship. Josiah was determined to follow the will of the God who had caused the book of the law to be written. All else had to go.

2 Kings 23:16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

2 Kings 23:17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

In the course of his efforts to purify the worship of the people of God, Josiah happened to fasten his gaze upon the sepulchres that were located on the Mount of Olives. He commanded that the bones be removed from those sepulchres and used to pollute the altar upon which Jeroboam and his subjects had sinned.

As his eyes fastened upon one of the sepulchres Josiah asked what the inscription was that he saw written upon the sepulchre. He was told that this was the sepulchre of a prophet who had come out of Judah and had predicted just such things as Josiah was carrying out at the time.

2 Kings 23:18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

Josiah had a special respect for the prophet who had made those predictions. His bones were to be allowed to remain untouched. It would have been well if the people had listened more closely to this prophet. Sadly, they had ignored him.

2 Kings 23:19 And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.

Josiah did not stop with his purge of false worship. After his actions in the area of Judah, he moved on into the land of the Samaritans. The Samaritans were a result of the intermarriage between Jews and the people of the land who were supposed to be driven out by the Israelites. The result of the intermarriages was the acceptance of idolatry by the Jews as they adopted the ways of their spouses. These high places were taken away just as those of Judah had been.

2 Kings 23:20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

The priests who officiated at these focal points of idolatrous worship were slain. Their bones were burned upon the altars at which they had served. Thus they were considered unfit for further use.

2 Kings 23:21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the
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**LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.**

The command to keep the passover had been found in the book of the law. In the attempt to honor the will of the Lord, Josiah commanded the people of God to obey that command. The passover was an event which was to be celebrated in memory of the passing of the destroyer over the homes of the Jews at the time they escaped from bondage in Egypt.

I will not take the time and space to discuss the differences which exist with respect to the nature of the document which Hilkiyah brought to the attention of Josiah as they were cleaning the temple. It is my personal conviction that it was a complete copy of the five books of the law, as presented by the great prophet Moses. Obviously it did include instructions for the keeping of the passover feast.

**2 Kings 23:22 Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;**

**2 Kings 23:23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.**

The criticism that there was a passover held before this time during the time of the judges and kings is not a valid argument. This passage does not say this was the only passover. It says there was not one so impressive as was this one.

**2 Kings 23:24 Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images,**

**and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.**

Men have tried to communicate with higher powers from the beginning. They are not satisfied with the means God has used to reveal His will. They must have magic. They must talk with the dead. If only such men would take the time to honestly investigate the Word of God, they would find it revealing all that is necessary to prepare for life beyond the grave. All that wizards, witches, fortune tellers and magicians do is to muddy the water and poison the souls of those who turn to them for spiritual wisdom.

**2 Kings 23:25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.**

David, Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah are given special respect as men who served God with all their heart. Josiah was not one whit behind the other three in his respect for Jehovah. All the things which he had done, as described above, were attempts to promote the dedication of the people of God to righteous lives.

**2 Kings 23:26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath,**

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wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

It was Josiah's hope that by turning the people back to Jehovah, His wrath toward the people would be erased. That was not the case. Judah had gone over the brink. Although they had participated in a great passover, much of what they had done was not from the heart. It had been brought about by the pressures which Josiah brought upon them. The Lord knew very well that the future would see similar rebellion against righteousness. Judah was going to have to pass through a period of discipline. They were intent on being separated from His commandments. He would honor their wishes by removing them from the land of Canaan.

2 Kings 23:27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians. They had been in captivity for some time. Judah would soon follow as they fall to the Babylonians, and find themselves in bondage also. What a horrible thing to consider. Here was Jerusalem, the city which God had especially chosen for the glorification of His name.

Not only would the city be ransacked, the beautiful temple intended for His worship services would be desecrated.

2 Kings 23:28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Further discussion of the things recorded above may be found in the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters of the book of 2 Cronicles.

2 Kings 23:29 In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

There were three powerful nations with which the people of Judah had to contend. There was Assyria. There was Babylon, and there was Egypt. Each of these nations had delusions of grandeur. Each would like to have expanded it's power to include the known world. Israel had escaped from the bondage in Egypt before this. Assyria had taken the northern kingdom into captivity. Babylon was becoming an ever increasing threat.

Pharoah Neco of Egypt made up his mind to conquer the Assyrians. The land of Canaan lay between Egypt and Assyria. He must take his forces through Canaan to attack Assyria. Josiah made the mistake of intervening in the conflict between the two powers. The result was that Josiah was killed by the Egyptian army.

2 Kings 23:30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king

in his father's stead.

Good king Josiah was dead. Things would go rapidly downhill from this point on for the people of Judah. Josiah was buried in Jerusalem and Jehoahaz, who was one of his sons, would succeed him as ruler. Jehoahaz was not the man his father Josiah was.

2 Kings 23:31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Jehoahaz was but a young man when he became ruler. His reign lasted but three months. The reader should not connect the Jeremiah here with the prophet Jeremiah. They were not the same person.

2 Kings 23:32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

After all of the effort which Josiah had put forth to purify the religion of the people, Jehoahaz reversed the tide. He returned to the evil and wicked ways of the bad kings who had gone before. In this case it was certainly not true that "like father, like son."

2 Kings 23:33 And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

At this time Judah had become vassal to Egypt. The Egyptian Pharaoh imprisoned Jehoahaz and assigned a tribute to the people of Judah. It was not as large a tax as they had previously seen when under the control of Sennacherib, but it was still a heavy burden and a constant reminder that they were subject to a foreign ruler.

2 Kings 23:34 And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

Jehoahaz died in bondage. He was replaced by another son of Josiah. This was Eliakim. The Pharaoh changed his name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim, probably just as a way of demonstrating his power over the new king.

2 Kings 23:35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh.

Jehoiakim was only a king in name; not in fact. He bowed to the power of Pharaoh and paid the tribute which was assigned to him. In order to obtain the silver and the gold he taxed the people of Judah. It was a day of gloom for the Lord's people. They had rejected Jehovah. Now they were paying the consequences, both in precious metals, and also in loss of freedom.

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**2 Kings 23:36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.**

Men in their twenties are not mature enough to rule a nation. Over and over we have seen the results of such immaturity. It was not in vain that the Lord has stated one of the qualifications of elders in His church must be experience. Jehoiakim's reign was eleven years, but it was not the type of governing which brings spiritual health and prosperity to those he governed.

**2 Kings 23:37 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.**

Jeremiah reports on the nature of this king. The twenty-second chapter of his book of prophecy describes the wickedness of Jehoiakim. He is described as a tyrant. Jeremiah was alive at the time and as an eyewitness he drew a very somber portrait of the Pharaoh's servant.



## Chapter 24

What a contrast there is between the power Israel had when they entered the land with God's blessing, and what is taking place now that they have insulted Him and turned to idolatry. When they entered the land they were told to drive out the idolatrous people who lived there. God gave them the help they needed to follow His instructions.

At the time we are now examining Israel it was being battered around from pillar to post. They became a vassal of Egypt. They are under the power of Assyria. They fear Babylon. They have but a short time before both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah will be held captive in Assyria and Babylon.

**2 Kings 24:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.**

Nebuchadnezzar will be a prominent person in the Biblical story for some time now. However, he is but one of the enemies of Israel which the Lord allowed to invade the nation. Without the support of the Lord, Jehoiakim had no chance of overcoming this powerful ruler.

Jehoiakim thought he saw a glimmer of light when the enemies began to quarrel among themselves. He misjudged the situation. After serving Babylon for three years he turned against the Babylonian ruler. This was a mark of poor wisdom.



**2 Kings 24:2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.**

Did the Lord give a commandment to the Chaldeans, the Syrians, the Moabites and the Ammonites to attack Judah and destroy it. No. That is not the way He accomplished His purpose in disciplining His people. He simply allowed these nations to make the attacks, knowing full well that without His power Judah would fall.

The prophets were very prominent during the period of time during which Judah was transgressing. They spoke out clearly about the sinful directions the people were following. But they were not taken seriously. God gave Israel sufficient warning. It made little difference. They continued to rush down the path to destruction as they adopted the follies of immorality and idolatry.

**2 Kings 24:3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;**

Manasseh was one of the most wicked of all the kings of either Israel or Judah. The path downhill was accelerated rather than being braked by this evil person.

**2 Kings 24:4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent**

**blood; which the LORD would not pardon.**

What was this innocent blood with which Manasseh filled Jerusalem? All we can say is that he was responsible for the murder of others who were far more godly than himself. The Lord despises those who use their power to destroy the righteous. Every opportunity is given for the wicked to turn from their evil ways. But there comes a time when God knows further disciplinary action is a waste of time. That tragedy was true in the time of Manasseh. It is just as true in our own day.

**2 Kings 24:5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?**

**2 Kings 24:6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.**

One king after another fell to the same sinful ways. The book of 2 Chronicles should be read side by side with the present material to get the clearest picture possible. It is not a pretty picture!

**2 Kings 24:7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.**

By this time Egypt was much weaker than Babylon. The Egyptian Pharaoh knew better than to venture into the territory controlled by Babylon. The river of

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Egypt is the Nile. The Euphrates is on the border of Babylon. The only thing that caused Nebuchadnezzar to refrain from extending his rule over Egypt was the tremendous distance which had to be covered in sending the Babylonian army.

2 Kings 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

Jehoiachin became ruler of Israel when his father Jehoiakim died. The reign of Jehoiachin, also known as Coniah, was but three months. Again we find a king taking the throne at an age far too young to deal with the responsibilities of the throne.

2 Kings 24:9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

How sad that the noble efforts of Josiah were so easily cancelled. Both his son, Jehoiakim and his grandson, Jehoiachin were so evil that the fleshly kingdom of Israel was rushing toward its end.

2 Kings 24:10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

2 Kings 24:11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

At that time refers to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

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Jerusalem and Judah were doomed. Nebuchadnezzar and his allies were far too powerful for the rebellious nation of Israel to contend with since they did not have the blessing of the Lord.

**2 Kings 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.**

Jehoiachin knew resistance was hopeless. He and his army surrendered to the king of Babylon and were at his mercy. Jehoiachin had reigned for eight years.

**2 Kings 24:13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.**

Nebuchadnezzar ransacked the treasures of both the temple and the palace of the king of Judah. The wonderful utensils and decorations which Solomon had gathered to glorify God were cut into pieces and carried to Babylon.

**2 Kings 24:14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.**

We do not know the total population of Jerusalem  
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at the time. Not all of the population was taken to Babylon. Nevertheless, the cream of the crop was taken. Ten thousand persons was a sizable number. Those who were left in the land intermarried with the non-Israelites and brought forth the Samaritans who were looked down upon in the time of Jesus Christ.

2 Kings 24:15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Jehoiachin was carried away, along with his mother, his wives, the officers of the military and anyone else whom Nebuchadnezzar felt would be of influence and could later provide a resistance movement.

2 Kings 24:16 And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Mattaniah was another son of Joash. The king of Babylon changed his name to Zedekiah and made him ruler in place of Jehoiachin.

2 Kings 24:18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's

name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Zedekiah was at least past his twentieth birthday. Still, this was highly inadequate maturity for a ruler. Since the Babylonians did not force their captives to worship their false gods Zedekiah had some degree of freedom. Jeremiah actually suggested surrender instead of continued resistance. This would not have been true if forced worship of idols had been the lot of the captives.

See Jeremiah 38:17-22.

Jer. 38:17 Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house:

Jer. 38:18 But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

Jer. 38:19 And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.

Jer. 38:20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.

Jer. 38:21 But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me:

Jer. 38:22 And, behold, all the women that are left

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in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back.

**2 Kings 24:19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.**

For nine years Zedekiah found it favorable to remain in vassal status to Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of that time the Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt came into power and reversed the attitude of the Egyptians. He summoned the courage to resist Nebuchadnezzar. When Zedekiah saw that Egypt was challenging the presence of Nebuchadnezzar he determined to ally his forces with those of the Egyptians. This was another major mistake.

**2 Kings 24:20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.**

God's wrath toward Israel resulted in His allowing Nebuchadnezzar to overcome Zedekiah and Israel. They deserved severe punishment. They would receive it by spending seventy years separated from the promised land.



## *Chapter 25*

This last chapter of 2 Kings deals with the reign of Zedekiah and the destruction of both the city of Jerusalem and the great temple of Solomon. It is a sad conclusion to the fleshly kingdom of Israel. The southern kingdom of Judah had outlasted the northern kingdom, but now falls to Babylonian captivity.

**2 Kings 25:1** And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

Nebuchadnezzar could have done nothing against the citizens of Jerusalem if God's people had remained faithful to Him. They broke the covenant and denied Him as their only God. He then allowed them to be taken by the forces of Babylon.

**2 Kings 25:2** And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

For a year and a half the Babylonian army kept the city under siege. The conditions must have been nearly unbearable inside.

**2 Kings 25:3** And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

Finally the food supply in Jerusalem was exhausted.

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Starvation stared them in the face.

2 Kings 25:4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

At that point the walls of the city were breached and the Chaldeans moved in. As they entered, the army of Judah fled during the night. Zedekiah, the king went with them toward the plain of the Jordan river. This was just hopeful thinking. The enemy had the city completely surrounded.

2 Kings 25:5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

The Chaldean soldiers soon caught up with Zedekiah and scattered his supporters.

2 Kings 25:6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

Riblah was a short distance from Jerusalem. It provided a position from which Nebuchadnezzar could maintain contact with his forces. Zedekiah was taken captive to Nebuchad-nezzar. He was proclaimed guilty of rebellion against Babylon and was sentenced.

2 Kings 25:7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

Part of Zedekiah's punishment was to witness the murder of his sons. After he had seen this tragedy, his eyes were put out and he was led bound securely to the land of Babylon.

This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah found in Jer. 34:1-5. He would see the king of Babylon, but he would die in that land without seeing the land.

2 Kings 25:8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

Nebuchadnezzar then sent Nebuzaradan to do the mop up work in Jerusalem. The Lord allowed it but it was no sign of weakness upon His part. The people had to be taught the folly of faithlessness.

2 Kings 25:9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

Nebuzaradan left the city in absolute ruin. He burned the temple, the king's palace and every house of significance. Ashes were the most common sight in every direction.



2 Kings 25:10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

The walls of the city had been broken into before, but now the Chaldean army completely demolished them.

Just think, dear reader, how much time and effort had gone into the construction of these projects. It takes much less time to destroy than to build up.

2 Kings 25:11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

Nearly all of the remaining people who had not been taken to Babylon earlier were not removed to the land of Babylon. That once proud city had been reduced to helplessness and ashes.

2 Kings 25:12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

Nebuzaradan did not take everyone. He left some of the poorest people to keep the land from being overgrown with wilderness. They were to cultivate Canaan and produce crops which could be used by the Chaldeans.

2 Kings 25:13 And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD,

did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

2 Kings 25:14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

There are some things one does not want to burn. The brass pillars of the temple were cut into pieces and taken to Babylon. Also the various brass furnishings were treated in similar manner.

2 Kings 25:15 And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

Anything composed of silver or gold was melted down and taken to Babylon as bricks of the metal. Those who remained to till the land must have wept until their eyes were dry when they saw what was happening to their beloved city and temple.

2 Kings 25:16 The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

2 Kings 25:17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

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The amount of brass was enormous. Each of the pillars was eighteen cubits, or about twenty-seven feet. The chapters which sat on the top of each of the pillars was three cubits, meaning that the height of the entire pillar and chapter exceeded thirty feet.

**2 Kings 25:18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:**

**2 Kings 25:19 And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:**

**2 Kings 25:20 And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:**

**2 Kings 25:21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.**

The high level priests of the temple, and also the highest officials of the king were removed, taken to Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah and killed.

**2 Kings 25:22 And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.**

Nebuchadnezzar then appointed Gedaliah as governor of the poor who had been left to cultivate the land. Gedaliah would not last long.

**2 Kings 25:23** And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

Several of the men of Judah came to Gedaliah, the new governor and desired to serve under him. Their names were Ishmael, Johanan, Seraiah and Jaazaniah. Some of these leaders men came along with them.

**2 Kings 25:24** And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

Gedaliah assured them that if they would faithfully serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, they would see no harm. He did not foresee that he would be the one in danger.

**2 Kings 25:25** But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.



Two months after Nebuzaradan had left Gedaliah in charge and returned to Babylon, Ishmael and ten others killed Gedaliah. Apparently some of the Jews had joined Gedaliah. They were killed along with him.

**2 Kings 25:26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.**

After killing Gedaliah, those who were responsible became fearful of repercussions on the part of the Chaldeans and went to Egypt to save their own lives.

**2 Kings 25:27 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;**

When Nebuchadnezzar died, Evilmerodach became king of Babylon. For some unexplained reason the latter decided to reverse the severe treatment Jehoiachin had received. He removed him from the prison and showed him favors.

Once more we look beneath the surface and catch a glimpse of the providence of Jehovah. The seed of David was being preserved.

**2 Kings 25:28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that**

were with him in Babylon;

**2 Kings 25:29 And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.**

Not only did Evilmerodach remove Jehoiachin from prison. He set him on a throne of honor, gave him more desirable garments and allowed him to live a pleasant life.

**2 Kings 25:30 And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.**

The former king of Judah received a daily allowance from Evilmerodach for the rest of his days. How strange that after the hideous happening of the early part of this chapter, it should end with just a glimmer of the light of human kindness.



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