



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of 1st Kings

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1 KINGS 1:1—4:34

Introduction

1 Kings might be entitled, *The Book of Secession*. It has 22 chapters; 816 verses; and should take about 2 hours to read. In the ancient Hebrew text 1 & 2 Kings was a composition of one, undivided, book. We do not know who wrote the book(s)—most probably Jeremiah since he lived until 586 B.C., and witnessed the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnessar as reported in 2 Kings chapter 25. Jeremiah was kidnapped by his own people and taken to Egypt never to see his homeland again. There he probably died before 536 B.C. and the first increment of Jewish returnees to the land of Judea.. Jeremiah was an adviser to kings and would have had royal record books of the kings of Israel and Judah and writings from earlier prophets available (e.g., Elijah and Elisha) from which to write the earlier parts of the two books. The kings to whom Jeremiah ministered God's word paid little heed to his advice providing strong internal evidence of his authorship of both *Jeremiah* and *Lamentations*. The books (combined as one book originally) in their present form could not have been written prior to 562 B.C., for the accession of Babylonian king Evil-merodach and subsequent release of Judah's king Jehoiachin are mentioned in 2 Kings 25:27. The book could not have been written after 539 B.C. because it is not conceivable that the author would have omitted reference to the return to Palestine during the reign of Cyrus the Persian. On the basis of content a date of about **586 B.C.** for the writing of the book as it exists today is generally adopted.

1 Kings is a history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the death of David to the ascendancy of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, covering a period of time from 120 to 150 years. For the most part, it was a period of shameful degeneration. The book was written to show that when loyal to God, Israel flourished; but when they departed from God, their morals and monarchy fell.

Solomon began well in seeking wisdom from God and in building a temple unsurpassed in architectural magnificence. Yet "Solomon in all his glory" imposed "a grievous yoke" of taxation and royal indulgence which his son, Rehoboam, foolishly tried to expand. This caused the kingdom to be divided—the southern kingdom (composed of 11 tribes), known as Judah, loyal to Rehoboam; the northern kingdom (composed of 10 tribes), known as Israel, following Jeroboam who instituted calf worship and set a standard of wickedness for a long line of kings.

The central theme of the book focuses on the leadership (good and bad) of various kings and prophets and the division of the kingdom. The key verse is 1 Kings 12:16: "And when all Israel saw that the king (Rehoboam) did not hearken to them, the people answered the king, 'What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.'" Main characters in the book are Solomon; the rulers of the divided kingdom; Elijah the prophet.

It is no wonder God set such kings aside and channeled his revelation and dealing with the chosen people through the prophets. The great prophet of this shameful period of moral and spiritual decline was Elijah whom God raised up to check Ahab, the

worst of all Israel's kings.

The book has a number of firsts” (a) the first claims to the right of sanctuary (1:50; 11:23); (b) the first instance of kneeling at devotions (8:54); (c) the first hint of a new chronology (6:1) or the fact that God reckoned the years of captivity (93 years) recorded in Judges as lost; (d) and the first clear statement of the temple as a house for the “Name of the Lord” (5:5; 8:27)—God himself not living in a house made with hands.

1 Kings teaches emphatically that good government is always “under God—a government of the people, by the people and for the people” even as Abraham Lincoln so well said. Both kings and kingdoms of this world must be subject to the King of kings and they must “crown him Lord of all.”

1 Kings may be divided into **three major divisions**:

I The death of David, 1:1—2:11

The determination of Adonijah to seize the throne, 1:1-10

The decision of David to enthrone Solomon, 1:11—2:9

The death of David, 2:10-11

II The reign of Solomon, 2:12—11:43

The throne of Solomon established, 2:12—4:34

The temple of God erected, 5:1—8:66

The turning from God, 9:1—11:43

III The rebellion of Israel, 12:1—22-53

The disruption through the king, 12:1-19

The division of the kingdom, 12:20-24

The decadence of the kingship, 12:25—22:53

You will need to consult with maps in the back of your Bible or in *Halley's Bible Handbook*, or in some Bible encyclopedia to orient yourself with the extent of Solomon's empire, a picture of Solomon's temple, and the “Divided Kingdom” of Israel. Every teacher of 1 Kings should try to have a good knowledge of the lists of kings of both Judah and Israel.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

Kings of Israel

Kings of Judah

Jeroboam, 933-911 B.C.	Bad	Rehoboam, 933-916, Bad mostly
Nadab, 911-910	Bad*	Abijah, 915-913, Bad mostly
Baasha, 910-887	Bad	Asa, 912-873, Good
Elah, 887-886	Bad	
Zimri, 886	Bad*	
Omri, 886-875	Extra Bad	
Ahab, 886-875	The Worst	Jehoshaphat, 874-850, Good
Ahaziah, 885-854	Bad	Jehoram, 850-843, Bad
Joram, 854-843	Bad mostly	Ahaziah, 843, Bad
Jehu, 843-836	Bad mostly	Athaliah (woman), 843-837, Devilish
Jehoahaz, 820-804	Bad	Joash, 843-803, Good mostly
Joash, 806-790	Bad	Amaziah, 803-775, Good mostly
Jeroboam II, 790-749	Bad	Uzziah, 787-735, Good
Zechariah, 748	Bad*	Jotham, 749-734, Good
Shallum, 748	Bad*	
Menahem, 748-738	Bad	
Pekahiah, 738-736	Bad	Ahaz, 741-726, Wicked
Pekah, 748-730	Bad*	
Hoshea, 730-721	Bad	Hezekiah, 716-697, The Best

(Captivity, 721 B.C. by the Assyrians)

Manasseh, 697-642, The Worst

- Assassinated

Amon, 641-640, The Worst

Josiah, 639-608, The Best

Jehoahaz, 608, Bad

Jehoiakim, 608-597, Wicked

Jehoiachin, 597, Bad

Zedekiah, 597-586, Bad

(Captivity by the Babylonians from 606 B.C. to 586 B.C.)

First of all, Bathsheba and Nathan did not “hornswaggle” the throne away from Adonijah! Adonijah was the eldest surviving son of David. Ordinarily he would be entitled to the throne. Adonijah was going full-blast to get the throne, too. He was carrying on the scenario (chariots and horses and runners) to present an “image.” He was regal in looks; he had the support of some very important people (Joab and Abiathar). **However**, Bathsheba reminded David (at the prompting of Nathan the prophet) that David had sworn that Solomon would reign after him and sit on David’s throne (1 Kings 1:13,17). And David swore again to Bathsheba that Solomon was to be king (1 Kings 1:30). Solomon was not merely David’s choice—Solomon was God’s choice (1 Chron. 22:7-10; 28:6-7; 29:1, etc.) to succeed David to the throne of Israel. So, what Nathan (certainly) and Bathsheba (probably) were doing was trying to get the old and dying king David to keep from allowing the express will of God to be thrown down by default. David made enough mistakes in the fathering of his children. He must not make this one which would bring untold suffering and usurpation of God’s command about Solomon. God’s ways are higher than man’s ways. We must make every possible effort (searching, studying, learning) to discern God’s will from God’s word and make certain we are carrying it out! We must exhort one another, even if we are kings, queens, prophets, and princes! None are exempt from God’s will. Adonijah could have found peace in adhering to God’s will—he knew Solomon was to be the next king of Israel—by God’s decree!

Adonijah ran and caught hold of the “horns (small protrusions resembling animal horns) of the altar” (probably the altar which had recently been erected on the threshing floor of Araunah—2 Sam. 24:25—by David). There appears to be a provision in Exodus 21:12-14 for “sanctuary at the altar” for anyone who **accidentally** slays another (“sanctuary” is denied to anyone who **wilfully** kills another—he is to be taken “from the altar” and executed for his crime). Joab also fled to the altar for “sanctuary” (1 Kings 2:29). One commentator says, “By clinging to the horns of the altar, Adonijah was placing himself

under the helping **grace** of God.” There were 3 altars at this time: **(a)** inside the tent on Mt. Zion which David had provided for the Ark of the Covenant, 2 Sam. 6:17; **(b)** at Gibeon (a huge one), 1 Kings 3:4; **(c)** and the one at the threshing floor of Araunah. Sacrificial animals were tied to the altar by means of using the “horns of the altar” (Psa. 118:27). The blood of the sacrifices was rubbed on each of the “horns” (Ex. 29:12). Another commentator says, “It is the fashion of our foolish presumption to look for protection where we have not cared to yield obedience.” The altar of God was designed for worship and for sacrifice—it was not primarily designed for “sanctuary” (there were “cities of refuge” for sanctuary). Only its sacredness (something not to be profaned by shedding human blood) made it incidentally a place to which man-slayers might flee as a last resort! Adonijah (and later, Joab) disregarded its proper use—he used it for his own convenience. The holy things of God exist that men may obey and worship God—but men sometimes want to use them only as “sanctuaries”—places to hide from the consequences of their wickedness and rebellion. Adonijah’s earlier *ostentation* and *boasting* ended in cringing fear! Adonijah addressed Solomon as “King” (1:51) which is in effect his acknowledgment that **Solomon** is the anointed. In demanding an oath that Solomon would not slay him, Adonijah is indirectly confessing that his actions merited the death penalty for sedition! Solomon did not swear an oath—he merely made a solemn promise. Adonijah would be spared so long as he remained loyal to Solomon as king. If he committed any fresh crime he would be executed (1:52). Then Solomon kicked him out of the palace and the court, and sent him to his own house. “How often do we ignore the will of God and then pray for God to deliver us from the consequences? Do we abuse our bodies and then pray for better health? Do we beg to be delivered from the consequences of our bad temper, gossiping tongues, or selfish spirits? Don’t you suppose God would rather save us from our sinful *practices* and not just from the results?” —Kenny Boles in *The Lamp*, June & July, 1986. Adonijah was evidently insincere in his “obeisance” to king Solomon. Adonijah, shortly thereafter, tried to pull a “fast one,” marry Abishag, and work out some *coup de tat* or some way to become king of Israel (2:13-25). **Crisis repentance** is often mere facade or veneer. Crisis repentance usually has a short life! God is more interested in **steady repentance**. God is more pleased with those who are constantly growing through a continuing attitude of repentance, rather than those who repent only under duress.

David said that to “be a man” Solomon should be **wise, courageous, virtuous, and loyal (obedient) to God**. To be “a man” means to be **mature!** To be a “man” (or “woman”), it is of first importance to acknowledge one’s place in creation. Man is not God! God alone is absolute Sovereign and Creator. Many people think (as the devil seduced Eve to think) that believing in God and obeying God’s word (the Bible), man is less than manly. Loyalty (obedience) to God as Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, some think, takes away one’s “manhood” and makes him a cringing, sissyfied, “nerd.” Men “create” (they think) their god out of their own creature-ness—humans are **not** Creators! Some people think of God as the “creation” of some primitive, ignorant, superstitious people who needed a “crutch” to explain what they do not know scientifically. When you don’t need such a “crutch” (because you are so wise), you don’t need a god, and then you have finally become “a man.” But a human being who rejects Almighty God as the Sovereign, the Absolute Reference Point for everything that was, is and shall be, can never be the “man” or “woman” God intended! The old “creeds” said, “Man was made to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” No human being can be wise, courageous, virtuous or loyal without God.

History and philosophy has proven it! To be a “man” or “woman” it is equally important to acknowledge that human beings are **not** animals. Man is not to make himself **higher** than God made him, nor **lower** than God made him. Solomon had all kinds of temptation to make himself into an “animal,” satisfying just his physical urges and never feeding his soul. But he did not do so (read Ecclesiastes). Animals live on instinct alone. They have no wisdom, no courage, no virtue. And there are millions of people living like “animals” today (see 2 Pet. Ch. 2). Such people need to “show themselves to be men—and women.”

Was David’s age turning him into a bitter, spiteful, old man? Did he now decide that he could have Joab killed by Solomon so that he (David) could say he had not done it? There does not seem to be any spite or personal revenge in David’s admonition to Solomon to execute Joab. Had David been eaten up with spite he would have cursed Joab for disobeying a direct order and killing Absalom, David’s son. Or, he would have struck out at Joab for backing Adonijah’s attempt to take over the throne. Or, he might have cursed Joab for causing him (David) to be suspected of complicity (2 Sam. 3:28,37) in the murders of Abner and Amasa. Joab did do much harm to David’s administering of the throne when he killed these able generals, but David considers that as a crime against him as the leader of the nation, and not something personal. These anarchistic crimes of Joab cried out for **judicial punishment**. Joab had taken the law into his own hands—that is anarchy! David should have ordered Joab executed when he slew Abner 33 years previously. But 33 years prior to this moment, David was weak, politically, militarily, and morally. All he could do (he thought) at the time was pray for divine retribution upon the head of Joab (2 Sam. 3:29). Joab must be allowed to die a natural death. He must pay for his crimes with his life. The rest of the nation must see that no man (even an army general) can take the law into his own hands or murder people who are personal threats to him. The time is now more opportune for Joab’s reckoning. The kingdom is once again secure. Solomon is solidly in power. God’s **justice** must be done for the good of Israel.

Solomon had spared Adonijah’s treachery once, solemnly warning him not to try it again. Now Adonijah is trying again to take over the throne. This time in a much more subtle, treacherous way. By means of getting Abishag as his wife (she was the former concubine of king David) he hoped to accomplish what his chariots, banquets, and public-relations campaign had not. First, Adonijah “battered up” to Bathsheba (Queen-mother). Notice: **(a)** he affirmed the throne of Israel was legally his (2:15) and it is emphatic in the Hebrew text—“**You** (Bathsheba) know that **mine** was the kingdom”; **(b)** he bragged that all Israel was supportive of him (2:15)—that couldn’t have been true or Solomon would never have gotten the throne; **(c)** he pretended to have resigned himself to God’s will (2:15)—Adonijah knew of God’s will in this matter a long time before his first attempt to take it away—why didn’t he do God’s will then; **(d)** he flattered Bathsheba by stating that she was so powerful the king would not deny a request made by her—Bathsheba was being manipulated. She should have known better and been able to see through the subtleties. Solomon saw in the request of Adonijah an indirect, but dangerous, attempt to usurp the throne. Taking possession of a wife or harem of a dead king was equivalent to establishment of the claim to the throne. David did this with Saul’s wives when he came to the throne (2 Sam. 12:8); Absalom did so publicly (2 Sam. 16:22). In public opinion in that culture there existed a close connection between the title to the crown and possession of a dead monarch’s harem of wives. If Adonijah’s request were granted it would throw gasoline

on the fires of conspiracy which continually burned within the heart of Adonijah. Solomon seems to know of the continuing conspiracy (2:22) including that of Joab and Abiathar. Adonijah is a classic example of a man who had “worldly grief” but not a “godly grief which leads to repentance. He was very sorry he “got caught” in the act of sedition and treason and fled to the altar to preserve his life. He even *outwardly* did obeisance to King Solomon (after he was caught). But his heart was not in it! *Inwardly* he was continuing to plot and plan and scheme. He intended to carry out his crime and sin by all and every means he could—manipulating, using people (Bathsheba, Abishag, Joab, Abiarhar)—and planning on being smart enough the second time to keep from being caught. Was Solomon’s order to execute Adonijah a ruthless misuse of royal power? **(a)** it was God’s decree that Solomon succeed David; **(b)** it was the will of the majority of Israel that Solomon be king; **(c)** had Adonijah succeeded, much blood would have been shed (Solomon, Bathsheba, Nathan, and many others of David’s family and “administration” would have died); **(d)** Adonijah knew he deserved execution for treason or he would not have fled to the altar; **(e)** Solomon extended mercy to him the first time beyond what was expected then; **(f)** Adonijah had been warned about continuing seditious conspiracy; **(g)** for Solomon to extend mercy now would signal weakness which would result in confusion, and wide-spread treason within Israel.

This marriage had not been given the attention it deserved. It was a political occurrence without parallel. No other example has yet been found of a Pharaoh’s daughter being given in marriage to a foreign royal house. But, never before had a power comparable to the kingdom of David and Solomon arisen on Egypt’s frontiers. This probably explains why the Egyptians allowed it. Solomon’s marriage was strictly political, and arrangement between two families in which any courtship was out of the question. Treaties between nations in that time were customarily sealed by intermarriage of the two royal houses. Solomon needed recognition by the once prestigious and powerful Egypt, and Pharaoh needed trade concessions from Solomon who now controlled the important north-south trade routes! This alliance must have been very shocking to the average Israelite since Egypt was the ancestral foe of Israel. Solomon brought this Egyptian wife to the city of David and she lived in the palace formerly occupied by David (2 Chron. 8:11) until a palace all her own was built (1 Kings 7:8). Marriage with foreign women is not without precedent in Hebrew history—Joseph married an Egyptian (Gen. 41:45); Moses married a Midianite woman (Ex. 2:21), and later a Cushite (Num. 12:1). Rahab (Matt. 1:5) and Ruth (Ruth 4:13) both were foreign women who married Israelite men and became part of the ancestry of Jesus Christ. Only marriage to Canaanite women is specifically condemned in the Law of Moses (Ex. 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-5), and even that restriction apparently applied only to *unconverted Canannite* women. Solomon was within the **letter** of the law in marrying an Egyptian. But the **spirit** of the law of Moses would require that the foreign wife renounce idolatry and pledge allegiance to the Lord God of Israel. Did Pharaoh’s daughter abandon her idols upon becoming the wife of Solomon? We do not know for certain, but three factors lead us to think she did: **(a)** Solomon at this period of his life was an enthusiastic observer of the law of Moses; **(b)** the king is never condemned for this particular marriage; **(c)** no trace of Egyptian idolatry or religious rites can be found in Israel *at this time*. But marriage is a much more serious business in a monogamous society. Happy, loving, God-fearing marriages are the very foundation upon which social order, moral order and spirituality are built! All civilizations in which marriage and the home

were allowed to deteriorate are testimonies that this was the beginning and fundamental reason for their depravity and eventual obliteration (Egypt, Israelite, Roman, Nazi, Communist, etc.). Is America's turn coming? There are people in America who want to do away with the sanctity of Biblical marriage and home. The church must stand for marriage—marriage as God intended it—commitment to love and faithfulness in spite of feelings and fads and false teachings. Solomon's later disregard of the will of God in marriage was the primary factor in the ruination of all he had accomplished for God!

Solomon was no more than 17 or 18 years of age when he came to the throne (although he already had one son, Rehoboam, by the time he became king). He faced an awesome responsibility to rule such a powerful kingdom. Furthermore, (and most awesome) he was to rule God's redemptive, covenant people. He went to Gibeon and offered 1000 whole burnt offerings to God. The leading citizens of the land, captains, judges and governors, went with him. Gibeon is about 6 miles n.w. of Jerusalem. There, at Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon, in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall give you." Solomon asked: "Give thy *servant* therefore an *understanding mind* to govern thy people, *that I may discern between good and evil.*" Solomon literally asked for, *leiv shema...lehavvin*, or, "an obedient or hearing heart, to understand between good and evil." What would most people ask for, had they been granted such a favor from God? To win the Missouri lottery! To be beautiful! To have perfect health! To be free of all troubles in life! To be a "movie star"! But Solomon's reply to God did not stop with a request for wisdom—it was wisdom in order to **serve** God by **serving** God's people! That so pleased God that he gave Solomon **supernatural wisdom** plus riches, power and honor. The blessing of long life, however, was conditioned upon Solomon's continual walk in the way of the Lord. Solomon did not meet the conditions and thus died at a relatively early age (about 55-60). 1 Kings 3:12 is God's statement that Solomon was the wisest man who has ever lived (and that includes a lot of people!!!). Yet, I believe, the humblest, growing Christian is wiser than Solomon (Matt. 6:29; 12:42; Col. 2:3). Christians are promised that if they lack wisdom they should ask God who gives it to all men generously, and it will be given (James 1:5-6) but **be sure you ask "in faith" (trusting what God gives you as "wisdom")**. Then James connects that promise up to God-give trials and tests (James 1:9-15). **Wisdom from God is connected to being put to the test of God and trial from God!**

These women were not professional prostitutes, but were women who had borne children out of wedlock. Because of their shame they lived together and alone (3:17-18). Solomon was **not** being "abusive" to anyone—not the women, nor the child. Solomon was trying to get at the truth in the midst of two very emotional women—**truth always takes precedence over feelings**. It is extremely doubtful that Solomon would have "divided the child in half with a sword" (3:24) regardless of what the answers of the two women were! Solomon was thinking in one of the most fundamental rules of logic—**two contradictory propositions (statements) CANNOT BOTH BE CORRECT!** (It is a tragic thing in our 21st century society to see so many people who *constantly* violate this fundamental rule of thinking—and *pretend* that two contradictories can both be right—as long as you "feel" they are right). Both women might have been wrong—the baby might have belonged to some **other** mother—but **the baby could not belong to both mothers at the same time!** Solomon was also using both the divine wisdom granted him from God and common sense

when he came up with the threat to “divide the child in half” and give one part to one mother and the other part to the other mother. He knew that the **true mother** would rather give up her child to someone else than to have it killed by a slashing sword! **Any true mother would do the same!** The woman who was not the true mother would be exposed as a liar and demonstrate that she was not concerned for the living child because, according to the **true mother** the “false” mother had already demonstrated clumsiness and neglect and had smothered the **true mother’s child** having laid upon it in the night (3:19-21). Now the “false mother” wants to take the **true mother’s child** as her own. This is what today is called, “a gut-check.” The **real mother** was emotionally stirred by Solomon’s proposition which would be instant death to her son. The Hebrew text reads literally, “*her bowels were in a ferment.*” The ancient Hebrews regarded the lower digestive tract as the center and seat of emotions. The **real mother** preferred to lose the argument and suffer the agony of handing over her child to her rival rather than allow it to be killed. What a blessing it would be in today’s society if mothers of unwanted children (millions every year) would give them birth and hand them over for adoption rather than aborting them! *World* magazine, September 7, 2002, repeats a Family Research Council report that in the USA between 1960 and 2000, the birthrate for married women decreased by 43 percent. By 2000, one in every three babies was born outside marriage, and one out of four children lived with a single parent. Cohabitation has gained in popularity; in 1970 just over half a million couples cohabited; by 2000, 4.7 million unmarried couples were living together. **And children usually suffer the worst of the consequences of such social immorality and chaos!**

Solomon’s great wisdom attracted economic trade and friendship from many nations surrounding Israel! The daily consumption of the royal household is nothing short of incredible! Each day approximately 340 bushels of fine flour and 155 bushels of meal were consumed. Thirty head of beef, 100 sheep, plus wild game, were daily eaten at the king’s table. Such a quantity of bread and meat would feed approximately 14,000 persons (some estimate 35,000). Solomon controlled a vast domain—the region west of the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean sea, north to Lebanon, and south to the frontier of Egypt, and east, beyond the Jordan into Syria, Ammon, Moab, Edom, *etal.* During his reign he spoke 3000 proverbs (less than 1/3 of them are preserved in the Bible). He wrote 1005 songs (only 3 have survived). Solomon made observations and research into natural science, or botanical and zoological studies. Hearing of this great wisdom kings from all over the earth sent ambassadors and messengers to Solomon’s court to learn from him! But, as Kenny Boles points out in his devotional *Lamp* on 1 Kings here: “We must not mistake material well-being for spiritual well-being. It is almost inevitable that people who live in peace and prosperity lose sight of their need for God. The complacency of Israel under Solomon paved the way for the apostasy of Israel under Jeroboam.” Is it possible that same pattern could be developing today? Is a “fat” church in danger? Remember Laodicea (Rev. 3:15-22).

Solomon’s wisdom in the Proverbs is **extremely relevant for the 21st century!** **In the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes Solomon lays forth the wisdom of God as experienced and proven in the realities of every-day living!** He discusses many subjects that are just as up-to-date as your morning newspaper or evening TV news-cast—family; parenting; justice; personal-relationships with everyone from a neighbor, to an

employee, to a civil ruler; conduct of civil authorities; personal speech habits; business ethics, education, etc. etc. One can search the ruminations of philosophers from the ancient Chinese and Greeks and Romans to European and modern American, and NEVER find the “down-to-earth” “where-you-live” wisdom that Solomon puts forth in his writings! Solomon tells in the book of Proverbs how he, himself, tried applying the Word of God to every-day living and that he found God’s Word to be extremely **practical and relevant for life as we live it on this earth, NOW!** The book of Proverbs should be required reading for every family at family devotions once a year, at the least! TRY ‘EM----YOU’LL LIKE ‘EM!

1 KINGS 5:1—8:66

Solomon paid Hiram, king of Tyre, 25,800 bushels of grain **per month** (that's 860 bushels per day, or, 309,600 bushels per year)—9258 gallons of (olive & animal) oil per month (309 gallons per day), and 92 gallons of wine per month (3 ½ gallons per day, 1104 gallons per year) and 20 cities of Galilee for supplies and labor to build the temple. This went on for **seven years!** Total cost of the temple was, in our money today, about \$100,000,000,000,000 (100 billion) dollars! Was it worth it? Of course, it was worth it! The largest amount we give to God is the least we can do! God is dishonored, displeased and hurt when we try to give him less than the best (Malachi 1:6-14). If an edifice is to be built as a tool through which people may serve God, it ought to be the best edifice (not necessarily the most ornate) money can build. But the question of **stewardship** must also enter into the **cost of anything** done in the name of Christ. During the time of the covenant of "shadows and types" (i.e., the OT law) it might have been necessary to erect elaborate "models" of **things** to foreshadow the realities in the **fulfilled** covenant (the spiritual covenant under Christ). But as the books of Hebrews, Galatians, Romans, Ephesians and Colossians emphatically teach, we do not need those elaborate "models" any longer. We can relate to God without "seeing, touching and tasting" (and we certainly should if we are spiritually mature). It is only the spiritually immature who insist upon visibility to obey and worship Christ and God. So, **our best** in the New Dispensation of grace is spirituality without the elaborate expenditures on the flesh-comforting, visible, perishing "trappings" Americans associate with "religion."

It certainly would not be proper for Christians to try to build something using "forced labor." I would assume it was not really "proper" for Solomon to do so! The Canaanites are called "tribute-slaves" (Hebrew, *mas'obed*) while the 30,000 Israelites are called "tribute-laborers" (Heb. *mas*). Solomon forced 153,600 Canaanites to labor in building the temple, and he "conscripted (i.e., drafted)" 30,250 Israelites in addition as laborers (see 1 Kings 9:20-22) (that's a total of 183,850 workers on the temple—that's almost exactly as many people—young and old, male and female—as live in the cities of Springfield, MO, and Joplin, MO, combined!). Samuel predicted this would be their lot when Israel demanded from God "a king like the nations" (1 Sam. 8:16). The Canaanites had been drafted into forced labor by the Israelites for a long time (Joshua 9:27; 16:10; 17:17; Judges 1:29-30; 1 Chron. 22:2). Some may think from this, that the Bible condones slavery (the NT Christians had slaves—Philemon, Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22ff). **However**, the Bible does not **command** slavery—at best it only *permitted* slavery just as it permitted divorce for the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. 19:8). The Bible always teaches God-fearing people to defend and help the oppressed and enslaved. The Bible has no prohibition against voluntary servant-hood, but it does oppose forced slavery! Those who hire themselves out to work, for pay, to any corporation or business are, in effect, "voluntary servants." However, the Scriptures are clear in advocating civil rights for mankind and the sinfulness of oppressing others (Exodus 22:21; Deut. 23:16; Jer. 30:20; Ezek. 18:5-9; Malachi 3:5). The strongest indication that God does not approve of slavery is in Exodus 3:8-9—he delivered Israel from Egypt for that very reason (Ex. 1:11-13). If NT admonitions were followed in human relationships slavery would be eliminated (Gal. 3:28; Col. 4:1;

Philemon 16; 1 Cor. 7:20-22). The Christian obligation to slaves is to help free them from their oppressors—political, economic, or whatever (1 Tim. 6:1-2).

The temple was built with “*shalom*” stones from the quarry. “*Shalom*” in the Hebrew language means, “perfect, complete, finished—at peace.” The stones were completely chiseled at the quarry and brought to the temple ready to put in place (that took some expertise!). Some of these stones were 30 ft. long, 8 ft. wide, and 3 ½ ft. high (about the size of two medium-family automobiles bumper to bumper). This “**silence**” was dictated by the Lord when he commanded Moses in the law to have an altar built upon which to worship him (Deut. 27:5-10). God wants his “temple” (now, the church—i.e., Christian people) to be **quiet and know that he is God!** Could it be that God would like us to be more **silent** than we are when we turn our attention to worshiping him? Of course, he does not want us to be *mute*—absolutely silent—he wants us to praise him with our lips in prayer, song, preaching and teaching. At the same time, we could use a little less noisy clamor when we are trying to concentrate our minds on the majestic awesomeness of Almighty God and his “unspeakable grace.” Quietness is much more appropriate in the presence of God than boisterous, rowdy, loud, clatter. When the church gathers together it must not act like the gatherings of worldly-minded people! God is a Person of order—not chaos and clamor (1 Cor. 14:23,40). Jesus exhibited anger at those who made the temple a place of clattering, clamoring, noisy business, like a mall or a department store. He said God’s buildings were to be places of reverent prayer. So, worship is not something that is to be taken lightly. It deserves and demands absolute sincerity, concentration, planning, focus, thought, and single-mindedness. It cannot be done properly in the midst of distracting, clattering, worldly noise. All of worship is prayer! Let’s have more silence when we come together to worship—we don’t have to be singing without taking a breath between songs—we don’t have to have “something going” all the time—**WE COULD JUST SIT AND SILENTLY MEDITATE FOR 10 OR 15 MINUTES IN EVERY WORSHIP SERVICE!** David “**meditated**” a lot on God’s law (see Gen. 24:63; Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2; 5:1; 19:14; 49:3; 63:6; 77:12; 104:34; 119:15,23,48,78,97,99,148; 143:5; Isa. 33:18; Luke 21:14; 1 Tim. 4:15). The Hebrew word for “meditate” is *hagah* which means “take refuge in the cleft of a rock”—in other words, as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt. 6:7).

The temple Solomon built was one of the **wonders** of the ancient world. Its cost was incredible! It took the breath away just to behold it! After it was destroyed and they built another temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah; the “old-timers” who had seen Solomon’s temple and compared it with Zerubbabel’s, broke down and wept over the difference. There is always the tendency in people to have their “heads (i.e., their loyalty) turned” toward themselves and away from God when they are famous, rich and powerful. The building of this temple made Solomon all of this—famous, rich, and powerful. So, God warned him! “No doubt God was pleased with this earnest effort of men’s hands, but he wanted Solomon to understand that there was something else more important than the costly edifice erected in God’s honor. What was even more vital was keeping his commands.”—Kenny Boles in *The Lamp*, op.cit. God wanted Solomon to know that just because Israel now had a “house” in which God promised to dwell—his dwelling there would be conditional. God’s promise to “indwell” his church (his people) today is similarly,

conditional. God is **holy**. He dwells only where he is welcomed and where there is holiness (separateness from worldliness). Divine holiness is *imputed* (i.e., accredited) to us by the free gift of God's grace in the death of Christ, but we **continue** to be holy by being faithful to the covenant of goodness and truth in which God's grace is deposited. Those who want God to dwell in them must be loyal to everything God calls good and true! Solomon wasn't. And his failures led the whole nation into disloyalty and idolatry. God left them—left them to the fruit of their wickedness!

The Jewish temple was built of wood supplied by a Gentile, and furnished with bronze crafted by a man who was half Gentile and half Jew. This is well in line with the design of God, who intended his house to be "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7-8). Although the Jewish people often acted as though they had exclusive ownership of the temple, even from the first there were Gentiles participating in building it. All this seem to be a foreshadowing of the time when the church, God's new dwelling place, would be made up of every nation, tongue, and people. God used Gentiles from beginning to end of the Old covenant as a part of his redemptive program. Abraham, father of all Jews, was a Gentile before he was circumcised. God used a powerful Gentile empire (Egypt) to discipline and nurture the "chosen" people. God put Gentile women into the ancestry of Christ. God used Gentile nations to punish Israel and Judah and save a Messianic remnant (the captivities) and delivered them by a Gentile (Cyrus) and had the Gentiles help pay for building the second temple. Many Gentiles became "converts" (Proselytes) to the Old covenant (see Esther 8:17; 9:27). Jonah preached and turned a whole huge Gentile city (Nineveh) to belief in Jehovah. The O prophets repeatedly predicted that Gentiles were to become leaders in the redemptive program of God during the Messianic age (Isa. 25:6-9, etc.). It is no wonder that God would allow Gentiles to take such a significant part in building the magnificent "house" of his dwelling in the OT. God's dwelling now, and forever more, shall not be limited to a place, a certain people, or a building. **People** are not the "stones" that build God's dwelling (1 Pet. 2:4-5; Eph. 2:11-22; 4:1-16). God dwells no where else with his covenant of redemption! The unredeemed are "without God" (Eph. 2:12).

The "molten sea" was designed to contain the water necessary for the "ablutions" (washings) of the priests. It was circular and measured 15 ft. in diameter, 45 ft. in circumference, and 7.5 ft. deep. It held, brim full, 16,500 gallons of water. It probably weighted about 25-30 tons. There were ten "lavenders," each containing about 220 gallons of water. These were used to wash the flesh and fat of sacrificial animals which were to be consumed upon the altar of burnt offering. These are just two examples to show how massive things were in the temple (compared with the old tabernacle). Inside the temple were 10 lamp-stands and 10 tables for show-bread (the "bread of the presence"). The dimensions of the temple itself were 10 times that of the tabernacle. Everything in the temple was either made of pure gold or overlaid with gold. Nothing was too good for God—10 times over! How much more the case for his "building not made with hands"—his habitation in the Spirit, the new Mt. Zion and city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:22ff)—**the church of Christ**. What we are, what we offer him, the way in which we serve him—all should be 10 times better than anything in the world! One hundred times better would be a mere token in the light of the grace he has given us in Jesus Christ! Are we 10 times more active

in seeking the lost than the world is in getting them lost? Are we 10 times more studious of God's word than the world is studious of knowledge that opposes it? Are we 10 times more generous to hurting and needing people than those who give in the name of "humanity"?

Even though Solomon acknowledged that "God had kept his promises" to his father, David, and it was a matter of record that God had done so, still it was incredible to Solomon that God would "indeed dwell on the earth.!" Since God is bigger (greater) than the earth—even greater than all the universe—how could **we** expect God to condescend and accommodate himself to coming down to earth—especially, to restrict himself to a building in such a lowly place as Palestine? That is completely foreign to the thinking of the human mind. It cannot be rationalized—it has to be believed on the basis of the evidence. God promised he would do it—is there any evidence (beyond a reasonable doubt) that God kept his promise? YES! God's incarnation (taking the form of a human—actually becoming human) is not only unexpected by mankind—it is **unacceptable** to most of mankind. Most of mankind has made up its mind that such an event could never happen. Therefore, the claims of Jesus Christ to be God in human form, and the evidence he gave to back up his claims, is dismissed by the most of mankind because **they** have decided it cannot happen! Is their decision based on any evidence to the contrary of Jesus' claims (that it can't and didn't happen)? No! No! There is no such evidence available, even if they wanted it! **Evidence beyond any reasonable doubt** says, "YES—IT DID HAPPEN!" And that is the crux of the matter—most of mankind does not **want** such an event to be possible. For it would mean that God is the absolute Sovereign—that he knows man's sin, man's inadequacies, and has redeemed him by grace! Proud, deceived, arrogant, egotistical man does not want a God able to dwell on the earth! That a "wholly-other" God (absolutely spiritual, absolutely holy, absolutely perfect, absolutely sovereign) could come to a world of matter (physical), a world imperfect, a world of wickedness, and take the form of corrupted and dying flesh, is completely unexpected. But the evidence that he did is sufficient for any **reasonable, honest** person to **believe** that he did. We must remember that all faith, faith of any kind, and faith in any thing or person, is based on reasonable evidence. Jesus claimed to be God incarnated. I believe he gave evidence he was who he claimed to be! Now, I **believe** Jesus (God, and/or God's Holy Spirit) **dwells in me**, which was another thing he claimed he could and would do, on the basis of the same evidence that makes me believe he was God in the flesh dwelling here on earth. I don't expect him to dwell in me—I don't sensationally-experience him dwelling in me (that is, I haven't heard him, touched him, smelled him, or seen him dwelling in me) but I **know** he is there because he promised he would be and he has given me **evidence** that he is not only capable, but that he keeps his word. Paul even writes that it is by faith we **know** Christ is dwelling in us—that is, **faith** is the *instrumentality* by which we are **knowing** the indwelling of Christ (Eh. 3:17). Is the fellowship of believers actually the dwelling place of God in the Spirit? YES! Is God actually present in this world? YES! I believe it because he promised it—and proved his promises are kept!

Solomon prayed for the salvation of the world (8:41-43)! Solomon had experienced the grace of God in his life. Any person who has been truly saved and converted will be like a starving person who has found food—that person will want to find other starving people and show them where to find the same life-saving food! No Christian can be selfish with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He will pray for, give his finances for, and

give his time for the world-wide proclamation of the grace of God. The Christian conscience cannot be at peace with God until it fulfills this moral responsibility—sharing the gospel across the world! Solomon built the magnificent “house” for God for that very purpose—that others would come to know Jehovah God and “fear” (worship, esteem, trust) him. Solomon shared his divine “wisdom” with all the world which came to him from afar. Solomon wrote down many of the things God revealed to him. Solomon passed on to his son, Rehoboam, the obligation to serve God. This is the ultimate purpose of God’s “house” (the church built of human minds and hearts) in the earth today—that the whole world might come to know God and worship him. All believers, all Christians, **are** that building—Christians **not** personally involving themselves in world-wide evangelism (one way or another) are **not** really a part of the place where God dwells! They really aren’t Christians. **World evangelism is done by preaching—only by preaching (Rom. 10:14-17). PREACHING IS DONE ONLY WHEN PREACHERS ARE SENT!** The church must recruit, train, and finance many more “preachers” or it may find itself “sent” through God’s instrument of exile and dispersion as the Old Testament church was and the seven Churches of Asia Minor were in the years of the Roman empire (A.D. 100-500)!

1 KINGS 9:1—11:43.

The Hebrew word translated “forever” in 9:3 is *’olam*. But *’olam* doesn’t **always** mean “forever.” According to the context, and according to other scriptures which would qualify its use, the Hebrew word *’olam* can and does mean simply “of long duration” (see Gen. 9:12 where *’olam* is translated “future generations”). See also Exodus 21:6; Lev. 25:46; Deut. 15:17 where God permits some slaves to serve their masters *’olam*, i.e., “forever”—clearly, the world *’olam* cannot mean “forever” so it must mean, “for life.” Leviticus 25:34 states that Israel was given “perpetual” (*’olam*) possession of the land of Palestine—but this, also, cannot mean “forever” for it shall be melted with a fervent heat some day (2 Pet. 3:10)! In Jeremiah 20:17, the prophet’s mother’s womb was made “great forever” (*’olam*)—once again it is not for eternity! The word *’olam* is used in Amos 9:11-12 to mean “as in the days of old.” Contextual considerations, plus the NT fulfillment’s of OT prophecies, determines the meaning of the word *’olam*. God was simply committing himself to a covenant-in-perpetuity with Solomon, **so long as Solomon** (and his people and their descendants) **kept the conditions of the covenant**. This kind of arrangement had no fixed length of years. It would be kept by God as long as they kept its terms in loyalty, faithfulness and love. Of course, God’s redemptive plan (even as God predicted in the OT) included the eventual abrogation of the Hebrew system (including the temple, sacrifices, etc. see Jer. 3:15-18) and the institution of the completed, **final** and **new** dispensation of the Holy Spirit under Christ. So God’s promise to put his name in Solomon’s temple “forever” (*’olam*) simply meant, “as long as My (God’s) plans provide for the temple—and as long as Israel keeps its terms.” Now when the NT speaks of human existence beyond this earthly life, it is speaking of “forever”—a world and life without end (1 Pet. 1:4, etc.).

Just because God allowed Solomon to build him a temple it did not guarantee Israel a permanent “lock” on God’s presence among them or guarantee them a “lock” on the “promised land” (see Jer. 7:1-15). Israel became more “heathen” than the heathen (Jer. 2:10-13). She outdid the idolaters in idolatry. So, God cast them out of the “promised land.” But, for the sake of his program of redemption, a remnant (because of its faith) was put back in the land. This was in order that the “Redeemer” of all mankind could be produced by a people who had been given special preparation (especially the law and the prophets, Rom. 9:4-5). But that “restored” special people, for the most part, rejected its Messiah and its calling. The Messiah and his “kingdom” (the church) was the last, perfect, complete opportunity for Israel to continue in the grace of God. They “made light of the invitation (Matt. 22) so the “King” sent his “army” (the Romans) and killed those murderers and burned their city (A.D. 70). God had predicted this would be the punishment if they rejected the “prophet like unto Moses” (Deut. 28). Israel may still be forgiven—even though she has rejected her Messiah and despised her privileged calling! God will forgive any Hebrew who will, in this life, turn to the Messiah and accept his atoning death for sin. That does not mean the land of Palestine belongs to the Jews now or forever by any Biblical “mandate.” Jesus made it plain that “the times of the Gentiles” would be from the Jewish rejection of the Messiah (Jesus’ first coming) until the end of time. Jerusalem was to be “trodden down by the Gentiles” until the end of time (Luke 21:20-24). But, what is a

Gentile? A Gentile is an unbeliever! Jews in Jerusalem today rejecting Messiah are “Gentiles” by scriptural classification. Just because some Jews live in today’s Jerusalem does not mean they are fulfilling OT prophecies—practically all of them are apostates from the true Biblical covenant, the New Testament. The apostle Paul said, in his day, “God’s wrath has come (past tense) upon them at last (or, “completely”) unless they repent through Jesus Christ)—1 Thess. 2:16.

The Queen of Sheba was probably a Yemenite (an Arab kingdom 1200 miles south of Israel). Ancient Sheba had grown rich by controlling the spice trade. Spices in ancient times were used even in medicine! They were very costly! The Queen had probably come to have a “summit” meeting with Solomon about trade policies and practices. She may have feared that Solomon’s tremendous influence and power and strategic position would threaten her camel caravans traveling the ancient routes to the “West.” The people of “Sheba” (Yemen) were descendants of Abraham through Jikshan, his son through Keturah (Gen. 25:3; 1 Chron. 1:32—also known as “Sabeans”—see Isa. 60:6; Jer. 6:20; Ezek. 27:22; 38:13; Job 1:15; Joel 3:8). But the most interesting thing about the Queen of Sheba is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ used her as a comparison with the Jews of his day (Matt. 12:42; Lk. 11:31). Jesus indicates her reason for riding 1200 miles on a camel was to “hear the wisdom of Solomon.” Her thirst for “wisdom,” her great sacrifices to hear it, her teachable spirit, and her response actually **condemned** those Jews who stood face to face with the “**One Greater than Solomon**” and mocked him, scoffed at his teaching, and sought to kill him. The Queen of Sheba probably had it in her mind to ask Solomon questions about the meaning of life—about the origins of things, the purpose of life, the destiny of the human soul. These are the things Solomon “philosophizes” on in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his “Song.” So many people today will not drive across town to learn about the “**One Greater than Solomon**” in whom are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). WHAT WILL GOD SAY AT THE JUDGMENT TO THOSE PEOPLE?!

The Queen of Sheba *had heard* of Solomon’s wisdom and wealth—but when she got to Jerusalem and began to talk to him and **see** for herself what was going on in his kingdom, she was “flabbergasted.” She said, “Behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard.” She **saw** that Solomon, unlike so many other potentates, was not **selfishly** wasting his wisdom and wealth on himself. She saw how happy his “wives” were (his harem)—she **saw** how happy his servants were. They were undoubtedly sharing in the affluence of the wealth Solomon had brought to Israel (see 1 Kings 4:20-21; 8:65ff). She had also logically concluded that such wisdom, righteousness and justice as Solomon exhibited could only come from an Almighty God of Israel. So, she said: “Blessed be the Lord your God.” Solomon’s conduct and words in the presence of this heathen queen caused her to acknowledge the God of Israel. We wonder what she must have proclaimed and how she must have acted when she returned home to Yemen! Kenny Boles says, “We have the opportunity today to demonstrate the splendor of the **One** (Christ) who is ‘Greater than Solomon.’ Our loyal service in his kingdom, the church, can still today make the world sit up and take notice. If we can present him (Christ) as he really is, there are yet those perceptive enough to praise his name.” *op.cit.*

The weight of gold that poured into Jerusalem in just one year was 666 talents, or

just over 50,000 pounds or 800,000 ounces (the USA has about 261 million **troy** ounces—12 ounces to the pound—of gold in “reserve” today). On today’s gold market at about \$6400 per lb. Solomon was amassing about \$300,000,000 (300 million) **per year!** Solomon’s gold collecting continued for **many years!** Solomon used part of this gold to decorate his palace with 200 large shields at about \$43,000 each—300 small shields at about \$21,500 each. All the goblets and various utensils were made of gold, because sterling silver would have been too cheap! His throne was made of ivory, overlaid with gold. No king ever had as magnificent a throne as Solomon’s! God is the source of all this! He promised it to Solomon because of Solomon’s selfless, humble, servant-oriented heart in his early years (1 Kings 3:10-14). Kenny Boles: “But if I get too carried away with the splendor of the gold and ivory, I may lose sight of a more important point—God’s ultimate blessing for his people is heaven. It is there the streets will be paved with gold and riches beyond measure will be enjoyed. If I get turned around in my thinking, I may start to expect this present life to be heaven...I may even assume that the only time God is blessing me is when I am getting money. The NT certainly does not promote the idea that godliness is a way of getting rich. It concentrates on spiritual riches, as demonstrated in the life of Jesus, Paul, and all the heroes of the early church. While God could have blessed them with Solomon’s gold and silver, he chose to bless them with something better: spiritual wealth.” We are blessed with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). God’s ultimate blessing for his people is **character—spirituality—goodness, guiltlessness, cleansing, freedom, love, peace, joy**. What are my values? Do I prefer spiritual wealth—or would I rather have the “gold” of this world?

King Solomon loved (Hebrew word is *ahav*, the usual word for real “love”) all his 1000 wives! Solomon’s reason for marrying so many women was both political and sentimental! In ancient times marriages were made in royal families to make strong political alliances between countries. But Solomon also cared for these women—his love was more than physical. He “clung” to them in love—he *cherished* them. While all this is commendable, the tragedy is that he loved them more than he loved God! He thought he needed them more than he needed to obey God, so he let **them** dictate his loyalties. **They** turned his heart to idolatry. Of course, *he* permitted his heart to be turned (*he* made the final choice), but had he not been so greedy for reputation, fame, and power (had he never married idolaters), the opportunity for him to be tempted with divided loyalty to God would not have existed. How could such a **wise** man be so **foolish**? Why didn’t he use his wisdom on himself? Did he think wisdom was only for political things and not for personal life? Did his heart overrule his head? YES—all of the above! Solomon’s sin was that “his heart was not fully devoted” to his God! Discipleship with Christ is an awesome, serious, sobering, severe, no-nonsense matter. Discipleship with Jesus is “building”—don’t start unless you are prepared to finish (i.e., “count the cost”). Discipleship with Jesus is “going to war with the devil and his helpers” so don’t start unless you are prepared to fight to win (“count the cost”). Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple (read Luke 14:25-33). Jesus vomits at the thought of half-heartedness, lukewarmness—he wants no superficial, game-players. The church is not a fellowship of frivolity! It is work! It is war!

Jeroboam was an Ephraimite (most powerful of the northern tribes and a constant rival to the tribe of Judah). Ephraim, you will remember was one of Joseph’s two

sons (the other Manasseh) and his “portion” of the land of Canaan was divided between his two sons (Gen. 48:17-22). Jeroboam was an officer in Solomon’s court—appointed superintendent over the workers of the house of Joseph who had been compelled to labor on Solomon’s temple and palace. It would be very humiliating and distasteful for a proud Ephraimite to find himself employed on the fortifications of Jerusalem! God raised up Jeroboam as an adversary against Solomon to chasten Solomon for his sin, and to keep his word. God promised to Jeroboam 10 tribes of Israel as a kingdom over which he would rule. Judah would retain only itself and Benjamin over which to rule. But, notice—Jeroboam was not promised a **perpetual**, enduring, kingdom as was promised to David (Judah). God kept his promises—and because he did, a few of the descendants of Abraham also kept faith in God down through the ages to Christ. Therefore, God was able to work with these faithful few and eventually bring to the world the Messiah (from the tribe of Judah and the family of David). Because David was faithful, some of the people of Israel (especially some from the tribe of Judah) were faithful. Please get your notes on lessons in Matthew and study the lesson on the genealogy of Christ to see how God produced the Messiah from David’s family). Just because some of the succeeding kings in David’s lineage were extremely wicked, does not mean all succeeding generations of David’s descendants (like Mary and Joseph) were not faithful and fit to bring the Messiah into the world! All men and women are sinners—but God can (and does) work redemption through penitent and loyal sinners and makes them into saints.

The Hebrew word translated “lamp” is *niyr* (pronounced *ny-year*). Some commentators say it might be more appropriately translated, “coal or glowing ember” because it refers to “perpetuating an heir to David’s lineage” (see 1 Kings 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; 2 Chron. 21:7). Whatever the case, the Messiah was to be a “light to those who sat in great darkness” (Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:15-16). Jesus claimed to be “The Light of the world.” And he certainly was from David’s lineage (see his genealogies, plus Rom. 1:3). Although the Jews were all taken into captivity (or slain), including the kingdom and tribe of Judah from 606 to 586 B.C., and only 50,000 came back from the captivities, the lineage of Judah and David was perpetuated. And, although many of the “returned” Jews became apostates (see Dan. chs. 8-12; Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi), some remained faithful to God and a **certain virgin girl of the family of David became the “handmaiden of the Lord,” gave conception to the seed of man planted in her womb by the miraculous impregnation of God’s Holy Spirit, and gave birth to Jesus Christ, God’s anointed Redeemer for all mankind! It is marvelous to think about!** For 1000 years, from David to Mary of Nazareth, God and certain believing human beings, working together, overcame what unbelievers would call insurmountable obstacles (wars, persecutions, pestilence, wickedness, unbelief, discouragements, doubts, exiles, enemies, poverty, death) and, at the right time, in the right place, through the right persons, the right circumstances, brought salvation to mankind! God kept his promises—a few people kept the faith—it took 1000 years—**BUT IT CAME TO PASS! God forgive us for doubting God’s promises for our present and future!**

1 KINGS 12:1—14:31,

The older men had advised Rehoboam to “be a servant” to his people. Rehoboam was not in the mood to humble himself—to “serve” others—after all, he was “the king.” He probably had an “inferiority complex.” His father, Solomon, had left him with an impossible standard with which to compete! So Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men. He wanted no **advice**—he wanted **affirmation** for his own opinions. That is so often true of us all. We seek counsel not to follow it, but to reinforce the decisions we have already chosen. The advice of the younger men was customary of younger men! Rule from strength—show them who is boss—negotiation will be interpreted as weakness—make a name for yourself—ramrod things through—organize everything—push, shove, whip into shape—shape up or ship out! That is why elders are not to be “novices.” Eldering is **servicing**! To lead people to serve, you must lead by *servicing* (12:7). That is what the elders of Israel tried to teach Rehoboam. Jesus said: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. *It shall not be so among you*; but whoever would be great among you must be your *servant*, and whoever would be first among you must be your *slave*; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:12-17). It is rare to find a young man possessed of this frame of mind. But there are some. David was a “servant” to his people—but he had to come to it through the sufferings and disciplines of his young life. That’s the only way it comes—even to older men!

Rehoboam’s refusal to heed the pleading of the people is said to be “a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord that he might fulfill his word” to Jeroboam (12:14). That does not mean, however, that the Lord gave Rehoboam only **one** choice to make—Rehoboam had **two choices** (do what the people and the elders advised, or do what the young men advised). He made the one to follow the advice of the younger men all on his own. God simply **used** the wicked choice Rehoboam made for himself to accomplish the divine work. No matter which choice Rehoboam made, God would carry out his will. God had already decided to give Jeroboam 10 tribes to rule over and had Rehoboam gone along with God’s decision, Jeroboam would still have been given the 10 tribes. Had Rehoboam agreed with God, there probably would not have been any civil war between these Israelite brethren. There probably would not have been any idolatry in Judah (if Rehoboam was that agreeable with God). If Rehoboam had “served” his people as he had been advised to do, even the 10 tribes under Jeroboam might have had a different attitude toward idolatry! It is philosophically ridiculous (as well as theologically) for us to decide whether God has given us a free will or not—for in the very act of arguing and deciding we are exercising our free will to choose an option! That human beings are moral beings and make choices and have free wills is certainly taught in the Bible from the Garden of Eden to the end of Revelation. There is no such thing as irresistible grace! No such thing as universal salvation. God offers options and man chooses! No man can ever blame God for his choices—even those without the Bible (see Rom. 1:18-22; 2:12-16).

Jeroboam was uneasy and insecure in his kingdom. Already the priests and

Levites of the 10 northern tribes had migrated back to Judah (see 2 Chron. 11:13,16). If all the people of Israel should faithfully travel to Jerusalem 3 times each year at the great feast times, there to sing the psalms of David about the divine promises to the tribe of Judah and David's family for the whole nation, it would not be long until the 10 tribes would want to be **reunited** as one nation! Jeroboam never thought of building a "wall" like the one the Communists built in Germany, but he practiced the same kind of "information blackout" and "brainwashing" as the Communists did and still do (in China, Cuba, North Korea, *etal.*). Jeroboam used a "state religion" to "indoctrinate" his people and isolate them. He had golden calves set as "representations" of the Divine Person who led the nation out of Egypt. He set up a great religious festival to parallel Judah's Feast of Tabernacles. He led the way in practicing this renegade religion himself. All this Jeroboam did as a result of his own "feelings" ("said in his heart"—12:26,33) with complete disregard as to God's revelation in the OT scriptures about worship for the Jews! This is not the last king or political leader to follow his "feelings" rather than God's revealed will. Does God have a "revealed will" for political leaders for all time? I refer you to *What The Bible Says About Civil Government*, by Paul T. Butler, 1990, College Press. Can people govern by listening to God—making their decisions based on what God's word says? Is the Bible sufficient to guide political leaders? Or is it only for "women and children"? It is *not* just kings who need to beware of following their "feelings"—it is all of us? Human feelings about anything and anyone must be subordinated to God's revealed word—even feelings about oneself (Num. 15:39; Jer. 17:9-10)!!!

God was not going to let Jeroboam make apostates of hundreds of thousands of people without making some demonstration of Divine displeasure! God sent the unnamed prophet to Jeroboam and the 10 tribes. He predicted the eventual desecration of Jeroboam's altar by a descendant of David and he named the son (Josiah) who would be born 300 years later. To give Jeroboam proof that his message was from God, the prophet would validate it with an instant miracle (destruction of the present altar of Jeroboam and scattering of its ashes). Jeroboam did not want to wait to see if the miracle would come to pass—he thrust out his arm to punish the prophet of God and, lo, it became paralyzed and shriveled! God was trying to teach this presumptuous and apostate king that he must never lay a hand upon the spokesmen of God. At the exact moment Jeroboam reached forth to lay hold of the prophet, the altar was smitten and God's sign was seen by all present. Jeroboam was humiliated and alarmed, and in desperation he begged the prophet to intercede for him with Almighty God! God restored the king's hand. Did Jeroboam learn his lesson? We know, as a matter of record, Jeroboam did **not** change his ways. Just after this incident, Jeroboam tried to outwit God and deceive God's prophet (see 14:1-20). We are too often like Jeroboam! We think we can disobey and mock God's will, and if anyone tries to stand in our way or warn us we will do them in, too! How long does it take a man to learn from God? Why do people have to learn "the hard way?" This is history, fact and not myth. This is literally the way God thinks and acts. Let us learn! No national interest is more important than God's will!!!

That the "old prophet" was silently residing in the stronghold of apostasy, and that he was allowing his sons to attend Jeroboam's apostate religion and festivals, may be an index to his character. His allegiance to his tribe superseded his allegiance to truth. Despite his better judgment he had gone along with the majority of the nation (the 10

tribes). The godly priests had emigrated to Judah, but this old prophet could not bring himself to leave his home and family. Perhaps the “old prophet” was hoping to gain some personal advantage with the king by being able to bring the “man of God” back—and perhaps even win the “man of God” over to Jeroboam’s policies. Whatever the case, the “old prophet” **lied** to the “young man of God” and the “man of God” fell for the lie. Kenny Boles points out that the old prophet lived in **Bethel** “just across the line” from God’s people in Judah. “There may be great danger in trusting the words of men who are ‘just across the line’ from God’s people.”—Boles. How quickly obedience can turn to disobedience when one’s guard is down! The “man of God” was disarmed because it was an “*old* prophet” who lied to him. But, lo, the “old prophet” did receive a true message from God to deliver! What a spot to be in! The “old prophet” had to admit he had lied—then had to pronounce the “man of God’s” death! **Disobedience brings punishment irrespective of past faithfulness and service!** Great responsibility is placed on those who accept the privilege of speaking for God! God expects more of them than he does of kings and presidents and congressmen!

Jeroboam did not learn anything from the death of “the man of God” either! He went right on appointing apostate priests (13:33-34). Then Jeroboam’s son, Abijah, fell ill. Jeroboam sent his wife in *disguise* to Ahijah (the prophet who had predicted Jeroboam would be king). He knew Ahijah would speak nothing favorable toward him because of his apostasy, so his wife must try to fool God’s spokesman. Jeroboam and his wife were only fooling themselves! You can’t fool God! In some kind of godless superstition, Jeroboam apparently believed that a prophet could be **tricked** into saying something that would come to pass! But the king’s son, Abijah, would be the one **exception** to the gruesome picture of 14:11 where it is predicted that all the rest of Jeroboam’s house would be left unburied, and the dogs and the birds would eat their flesh. Abijah alone had demonstrated the kind of godliness which deserved recognition by the Lord (14:13). Boles makes this suggestion: “It would seem that God took Abijah in death as an act of kindness to the boy. To have left him to grow up in the midst of such corruption apparently would have been the unkind thing to do. At any rate, when the young crown prince died he was mourned by all Israel, and was the only one of all Jeroboam’s house who would receive a decent burial.” **There are things for the godly worse than death in this world!**

Jeroboam did not, of course, **force** anyone in Israel to sin. Every rational adult sins against God and man when he chooses to do so. No person **has** to sin! Jesus came and lived in the flesh, in this wicked world, tempted in all points in which human beings are tempted, and did **not** sin! But we all have tremendous power and influence to **tempt** others to sin. Jesus said: “We to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes!” (Matt. 18:7). Jesus went on to say it would be better for a person to cut off his hand or foot, or pluck out his eye than to tempt someone else to sin. It is especially urgent that people in places of “leadership” (fathers, mothers, elders, deacons, teachers, political servants, public servants, “heroes,” “role-models,” etc.) recognize the **powerful influence** they have for good or evil! Such people are “parables” through which all the non-Bible-reading-world forms its work-a-day concept of good and evil! Jeroboam was warned a number of times, but he kept on leading his nation into idolatry (in order to continue his throne). “Making” Israel to sin was **deliberate**—it was not an honest error. There are many leaders in the

world today doing the same thing—deliberately living a public life of sin and wickedness. There are deliberately rebelling against the truth as they know it in order to maintain their hold over others and profit by it. God took 200 years to “deliver Israel up”—but he did so! And he will deal with modern “Jeroboams” in his own good time.

Twice, the mother of Rehoboam (king of Judah) is called “the Ammonitess” (14:21,31). “The fact that she was an Ammonite...may have some connection with Judah’s worship of Molech, the god of the Ammonites...countless idol shrines began to spring up...the ‘sacred stones’ were dedicated to a god of nature named Baal, while the ‘Asherah poles’ were wooden posts dedicated to the goddess of reproductive power. This widespread worship of the god and goddess of fertility culminated in the presence of male shrine prostitutes in the land. This should not be interpreted as simply the vice of sexual lust. It is rather to be seen as a serious attempt to worship and win the favor of whatever supernatural power it was that controlled fertility. The people thought that if they could just get that power to work for them, they would have fertile flocks, abundant crops, and many sons. According to Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5 the kind of idolatry practiced in ancient times was basically the same thing as covetousness. It was not that the ancient Jews thought the stones or the wooden poles were actually gods, but that they thought the objects were in some way a point of contact between themselves and the supernatural. They wanted to get the supernatural power going their way.”—Boles, *op.cit.* **However, Isaiah seems to indicate the people of Israel in those days DID think of their stone and wooden “idols” and “images” as gods (Isa. 44:9-20).** Are we ever guilty of trying to manipulate God for our own selfish purposes? Do we practice our religion merely for what we hope to get out of it? Do we “worship” the gods of prosperity and plenty? Know this—covetousness and greed disqualifies one for citizenship in God’s kingdom!

1 KINGS 15:1—16:34

We get a good answer to this from Kenny Boles “*Lamp*” devotional booklet: “The heart of David became the measure by which every king of Judah would be measured (15:3). David was ‘a man after God’s own heart.’ He had done ‘what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord’s commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite’ (15:5). Wait a minute! We’re talking about a man who broke at least five of the Ten Commandments (kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet). The Bible is painfully honest about this man’s failures. But his *heart was right* with God, and his sins were followed by sincere repentance. This is a wonderful lesson to us about God’s mercy. God knew every sin David ever committed, but still could use him as a standard of excellence by which to measure Judah’s kings. God is apparently a lot more forgiving than some folks realize! God does not expect perfection from us, but he does demand our loyalty and he does expect our love.” So, the stability of the family (dynasty) of David on the throne of Judah lasted for nearly 400 years, while in Israel nine changes of dynasty within 250 years. Judah’s political and social stability can be accounted for only by the Divine providence of God as he fulfilled his promises to David as a reward for David’s loyalty. God rewards loyalty. God keeps his word. No power in this world is able to set aside the promises of God—not even death!

However, in the southern kingdom, Judah, there were periods of apostasy. Abijam was arrogant like his father, Rehoboam. He refused to acknowledge that God himself had divided up the kingdom. From 2 Chronicles 14 we learn Abijam (or Abijah) had made or perpetuated “foreign altars,” and “high places,” and “pillars to the Asherim,” and “incense altars.” These were the heathen shrines Solomon had built for the wives he “clung to” and Rehoboam had perpetuated them—a so did Abijam. Abijam also multiplied wives to himself (2 Chron. 13:21). Abijam’s heart was not **shalom** or “perfect, complete” with the Lord. The word **shalom** does not mean sinless—it means “whole, single, loyal, devoted to.” His heart was divided between Jehovah-God and idols. God’s patience is amazing to contemplate. God puts up with despicable, impenitent, unfaithful enemies as he carries out his program of redemption. He has every right and power at his disposal to rid himself of any rebel at the first moment of rebellion—but he doesn’t. He is not willing that any man should perish, but it is his will that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). The Spirit and the bride say, “Come...whosoever will may come.” Those who leave this life in rebellion against him, thinking to meet him face to face arguing to God with personal merit to win their case, do so of their own choice. But the Divine judgment has already been handed down! Pardon is granted only to those who have surrendered in faith in the Son’s vicarious atonement and in a repentance that is singularly loyal to the Son’s calling.

The next king in Judah was Asa. Asa must have come under some good influence at some time in his young life! That is the only explanation we can make for his piety in the face of the impiety of his father, Abijam. We know that people do not just grow up good! Goodness comes from exposure to good and training in goodness. The Scriptures have a large part to play in people being “trained in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). Asa could have had a godly mother (as Timothy did)—he could have been influenced by

some priest or prophet (2 Chron. 15:1-19). We know Asa loved the law of God (2 Chron. 14:4) and knew how to pray to the Lord (2 Chron. 14:11ff). Asa purged the land of foreign altars and high places. He purged the kingdom of God of the sodomites (homosexuals) (1 Kings 15:12). He even deposed his grandmother from being “Queen-Mother” because she was an idolatress. God’s word is able to overcome the worst kind of upbringing and social environment. The gospel changes the minds and actions of the most wicked of sinners (1 Cor. 6:9-11). All it needs is an “honest” heart! The word of God can produce a good man from the midst of a wicked environment. But the gospel must get to where that prospective “honest heart” is (Rom. 10:5-17). A “prospective honest heart” left in a wicked environment without the opportunity to hear the gospel will become a wicked person—lost for all eternity.

Now the author of 1 Kings relates a sketch of a succeeding king of Israel. God is not the author of evil. He does not induce human beings to commit massacres. There is no indication that he commanded Baasha to slay all the family of Nadab. The Scripture says, “Baasha...conspired against him (Nadab); and Baasha struck him down...and as soon as he was king, he killed all the house of Jeroboam.” In Ahijah’s prophecy against the dynasty of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:7-16) the Lord says, “I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male...and utterly consume the house of Jeroboam,” etc. But God did not **force** Baasha to massacre Nadab’s family. Baasha **wanted** to do what he did! Baasha massacred the family for his own purposes—to secure his throne! God, being omniscient, was able to know ahead that Jeroboam’s dynasty would be eradicated...and even knew who would do it. And how did God know that? Because God is omniscient; he knows that is what impenitent wickedness leads to! That is why he forbade Eve and Adam from “knowing” the tree of forbidden fruit. If you want to know what the wickedness started by Jeroboam was leading to in Israel, read the books of Amos and Hosea. These prophets lived in the early years of Israel’s history. The wickedness of Jeroboam was leading *inexorably* to social anarchy. When morality becomes relative, so does the structures of civil and social order. The home disintegrates, civil government collapses, religion becomes a sham, business dies. Morality, trust, honesty, faithfulness selflessness is the indispensable fiber of human social structure—it cannot exist without it. This is why Baasha massacred Nadab’s whole family—human evil and pride and selfishness.

In words almost *identical* to those used by Ahijah against Jeroboam, Jehu (the prophet) pronounced the doom of Baasha’s dynasty (16:3ff). The Lord did not necessarily destroy Baasha for his massacre of Nadab’s family. The Lord destroyed him because “He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin” (15:34). It was *his* idolatry and his leading the *nation* deeper into idolatry that caused the Lord to give Baasha up to the wickedness of his ways. All the Lord has to do to destroy the wicked is allow their wickedness to pay its inevitable wages! Falsehood, immorality, and rebellion against truth and goodness (against God and man) has a consequence—it produces a result—it reproduces **ITSELF!** It cannot produce anything but ITSELF. Error not corrected produces or perpetuates a chain of error. That is the absolute maxim of human experience. Human behavior (good or bad) unchecked and unchanged, inevitably reproduces after ITS OWN KIND. Jeroboam’s unchanged behavior reproduced itself in Abijam, in Nadab, In Baasha. Baasha himself died a natural death, but his son Elah, trying to succeed his father on the throne, was killed by a conspirator (Zimri)

when Elah went on a drunken spree at Tirzah (16:8-10). And this was because Baasha behaved like Jeroboam (16:5-7). A holy God has built destruction into his moral administration of the universe for moral creatures who defy holiness!

Idolatry is doctrinal and spiritual **poison**. It is **lethal** to the eternal soul of man! It is falsehood—it is the ultimate lie—it is irrationality—it is insanity—it is immoral! It is destructive of any and all good! There is no light, no truth, no reality to idolatry at all (see Isa. ch. 44). It produces despair, pessimism, cynicism, and animalistic behavior in human beings who were created in the image of God and intended to live forever in the image of God (Rom. 1:18-32). Idolatry is contrary to nature and divine revelation. It is a mockery and shameful, ungrateful, dishonoring of the Living God! Idolatry is not **innocent** ignorance (Rom. 1:18-22; Isa. ch. 44; Psa. 19). Idolatry is inexcusable! It is deliberate irreverence, disgrace, and disrespect toward the Creator (Acts 17:16-31). It produces a society of base-minded people filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, gossip, slander, hatred of God, insolence, haughtiness, boasting, inventing of evil, disobedience to parents, foolishness, faithlessness, heartlessness, and ruthlessness. It produces sexual perversion, child abuse, child murder, abortion, human sacrifice, suicide, thievery, cheating, robbing and enslavement. Idolatry is whoredom toward God (Hosea). It is breaking the most sacred relationship ever! It is mocking divine love! God cannot remain God and tolerate idolatry—sooner or later he will let idolatry produce its consequences in a society and in individuals, i.e., destruction of the soul. Idolatry is terribly wicked. That is why it is the **FIRST** prohibition of the **TEN COMMANDMENTS!**

Zimri was only able to hold the throne of Jeroboam **for one week!** Zimri gained the throne by assassination. He was a “servant” of king Elah (Baasha’s son). He killed King Elah when Elah had gotten himself drunk. When the army in the field heard that Zimri had slain King Elah, the troops immediately declared their general (Omri) to be the king of Israel. The army refused to acknowledge Zimri’s authority because **(a)** he was not of the royal family and not in the army—he was merely a “servant”; **(b)** Zimri had not “fought” for the country like Omri had; **(c)** when Zimri murdered Baasha’s and Elah’s families and friends, he doubtlessly made many enemies throughout the army. Naturally, the troops turned to the popular commanding general, Omri. One may see how idolatry had brought almost total depravity and chaos to the leadership of the nation of Israel. Elah in a drunken stupor with one of his servants. Zimri assassinated Elah. Then Zimri committed suicide. Zimri’s death is the “fruit” of all the idolatry of Jeroboam and his successors. Zimri committed suicide (1 Kings 16:18) rather than be taken alive by Omri and the army. He probably knew that he would be slaughtered, just as he had slaughtered so many of Elah’s house. The religious situation continued to deteriorate under Omri (see Micah 6:16). But Omri was an able diplomat and an outstanding protector (militarily) of the nation. He ended military confrontations with Judah, and built the fortress **Samaria**. Archaeology (the Moabite Stone and the Black Obelisk of Shalmeneser) substantiates, in detail, Omri and the Biblical record here!

Ahab married Jezebel. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidonia. Her father was a zealous worshiper of Baal. She brought her hell-born religion to Israel and tried to impose it upon the Israelites. Ahab built an altar to Baal in Samaria (1 Kings

16:32). There were 450 “prophets of Baal” who ate at her table (2 Kings 18:4-13). She murdered all the prophets of God on whom she could lay her hands (1 Kings 18:19). The worship of Baal consisted of, among other things, human (child) sacrifice (Jer. 19:5), homosexual intercourse as religion (1 Kings 14:23-24), self-inflicted cutting of the flesh (self-mutilation, 1 Kings 18:26-28), and all kinds of heterosexual indecencies and lewdness (fornication, adultery, prostitution (Num. 25:1-9). Jezebel and Ahab married off their daughter, Athaliah, to Jehoram, king of Judah, and Athaliah introduced Baalism into the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Chron. 17:3; 21:6; 22:2). Hosea the prophet writes that God’s people came to Baal-Peor, and consecrated themselves to Baal, and became detestable like the thing they loved” (Hosea 9:10-21). It is a fact of human nature that people **become like** that which they **worship** (i.e., value, adore, praise, believe in). That to which we devote ourselves is what forms our character, personality! That is why the NT urges us to devote ourselves to knowing Jesus Christ from intensive and constant Bible study (i.e., “beholding him” 2 Cor. 3:18) so that we may be changed into his image or likeness from one degree of glory to another. That is God’s desire, hope, predestined program for us—that is what he made us for—THE CHOICE I

1 KINGS 17:1—19:21

It is significant that Phoenicia was the native land of Jezebel—Baalism came from Phoenicia to Israel. Israel rejected Elijah. Israel, because of Baalism, was steeped in materialism. They wanted to hear nothing about spirituality. These are God’s people—they are now unbelievers—worse than the heathen! So, what about the heathen? Are there any honest enough, remorseful enough heathen that they will accept God’s messenger and his message? YES! And God will honor faith with reward wherever it is found! Perhaps this will make those Israelites (who had such great privileges) jealous, or ashamed, that they will eventually receive God’s messenger. This is Jesus’ interpretation of Elijah’s experience with the widow in Phoenicia (Luke 4:1-6ff). Jesus applied Elijah’s experience to his own experience with the people of Nazareth and the Jews of his day! They were extremely materialistic in their expectations of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom to come. Jesus came with a **spiritual message**. They rejected him and would have killed him on the spot had he not walked away! Jesus spent 3 years trying to bring the Jewish nation to a **spiritual kingdom**—they crucified him. He sent the apostles to the Jews for another 40 years and they killed them—finally, he destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and, beginning with the apostle Paul (Acts 13) the ministry of the gospel concentrated on the Gentile (heathen) world! Through Elijah’s ministry in Phoenicia God was showing that truth was greater than Baalism—even in Baal’s own “fortress” (heathen societies)! God’s truth is greater than Communism, humanism, atheism, and paganism **today!**

The Hebrew word Ahab used to call Elijah “Troubler” is *’okher*. It denotes **alienator of society** (Gen. 34:30) or alienator from God (Josh. 6:18; 7:25; 1 Sam. 14:29) resulting from some heinous crime or act. Ahab was charging Elijah with **alienating** Israel from the accepted deity, Baal, so that the rains had been withheld from Israel! Remember, Jezebel and Ahab were worshiping Baal now for the prosperity and fruitfulness they believed Baal could send Israel like he was supposed to have sent to Phoenicia for worshiping Baal. Ahab was saying that the drought and famine and “trouble” which had come upon Israel was Elijah’s fault because he had made Baal angry. Elijah threw the accusation back into the teeth of the idolatrous king! “I have not alienated (“troubled”) Israel; but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals.” 18:18. Elijah displayed holy courage! It is not usually safe to one’s physical well-being to be defiant toward kings and other rulers! And, especially to *accuse* them of ineptitude or religious apostasy as Elijah did! God’s word was clear about his wrath against idolatry. God’s actions in the days of the Hebrew ancestry against idolatry was well documented! God’s revelations and judgments against idolatry were as **recent as one generation prior to Ahab**. There simply was no excuse for Ahab’s idolatry. The guilt for Israel’s judgment from Jehovah lay squarely upon the shoulders of Ahab and Jezebel. Proclaimers of God’s truth are not alienators! They are reconcilers! If standing up for the truth, publicly, is “trouble-making” then believers today **must be those who “make trouble!”**

Elijah “mocked” (Heb. *vayehattel*, from the root word *thalal*, literally, “to heap up, to lay it on” and metaphorically, “to mock, deride, deceive, delude, lead-on”). Elijah was

“putting-them-on” in a sarcastic, satirical way, goading them, “mocking” them. Read it for yourself! Here is a man-of-God “mocking” other people’s religion! Verbally, out-loud, **publicly!** Elijah uses the phrase to mock their god, Baal, “...or he has gone aside...” means, literally, “Perhaps he has gone to the toilet!” (James Smith writes, “...turn aside is a euphemism for having a bowel movement”—Hebrew *soog*, “moving of dross”). **Now that would offend people!** Strangely enough, it did not offend God! It was evidently approved by God! Elijah’s bold, blunt, sarcasm put the “prophets” of Baal in a position from which they could hardly refuse the test and retain the respect of their constituents. Elijah will leave no possibility that the impotency of these Baalites be fully exposed before he demonstrates the power of his God, Jehovah. This is **polemics!** By the way, the Greek word *polemeo* is where we get our English word “**polemics**” and it is translated “war” in Rev. 2:16; James 4:2, etc.). We used to have a course called “Polemics” at Ozark Christian College. Christians are in a **war**. They are to take the Divine weapons (the word of God) and “**cast down every stronghold and imagination that exalts itself against God and bring every thought into captivity to Christ**” (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Every Christian is to be a polemicist (1 Pet. 3:15)! Elijah was **on the attack!** Jesus “attacked”—Paul “attacked” and the church today needs a little more **polemics** (“war”) against falsehood and false gods—more “attack.” Trouble is, most worshipers of false gods take “attack” personally (Matt. 15:12ff) and do not understand that Christians are “attacking” their ideas, philosophies, mental-falsehoods—AND NOT THEIR SOULS!

The slaughter of the prophets of Baal has been called “an act of gross fanaticism and cruelty” by some critics of the Bible, while others have called it “a wild and terrible vendetta for Jezebel’s persecution of God’s prophets.” Who knows what they would say about Abraham and his troops “slaughtering” the “kings of the East” (Gen. 14:13-24; Heb. 7:1)—God called him a “hero of the faith.” Kenny Boles writes about Elijah’s slaughter of the “false prophets of Baal”: “To be blunt, the brutal violence was not senseless...it was perfectly right and perfectly necessary. Moreover, not only those few hundred men, but all men who reject the true God will ultimately face a violent end (in eternity). It is not pretty, but it is right...” God must have approved of Elijah’s execution of these false prophets because Elijah was seen, along with Moses (who prayed and the Red Sea drowned Pharaoh and his army), in heaven along with the transfigured Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:26-36). Consider: **(a)** the Law of God, through Moses, required the **execution** of those who worshiped false gods and **especially** those who **taught** others to do so (Exodus 22:20; Deut. 13:1ff; 17:2-7); **(b)** whereas it was normally the duty of the theocratic ruler to carry out such executions, in Elijah’s day the “theocratic ruler” (king Ahab) was corrupt, powerless and himself an idol worshiper; **(c)** Elijah had just proved that Jehovah was alive, now he must likewise prove that the **law of God was not dead**; **(d)** these prophets of Baal had been instrumental in corrupting the whole nation and had thereby threatened the very existence of true faith in the One True God; **(e)** God approved or he would not have answered Elijah’s prayer following the execution; **(f)** Baalism involved human-child murder (“sacrifice”) and other despicable and socially destructive practices—its devotees deserved death for capital murder; **(g)** idolatry and irreligion are not today to be avenged by execution, not because the sin is any less grievous, but because the place for punishing these crimes has been reserved for **eternal wrath and torment**. **However**, I must say, I believe the death penalty should be invoked for those who **deliberately murder** human life by **abortion** (except, only, for the imminent probability of the death of a mother

in the process of delivering a baby).

Shakespeare said it (I think)...”Hell hath no fury like that of a woman spurned!” It was, after all, **Jezebel** who gave the orders for the murdering of many true prophets of God (1 Kings 18:4), not Ahab or the prophets of Baal (although they all bear part of the guilt undoubtedly for approving and abetting the wicked woman). It was **Jezebel** who put out “the contract” on Elijah’s life. It is the later cold-blooded murder of Naboth by **Jezebel’s** scheming that shows us what a devil **she** was. She had no conscience—she had no moral scruples at all—she was not an Israelite by any stretch of the imagination—**she was the power** upon the **throne** (not Ahab)! She took pains to “send a *messenger*” (not merely a message) to Elijah saying, “So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make **your** life as the life of one of **them** (the dead prophets of Baal, floating out to sea in the River Kishon) by this time **tomorrow**.” JEZEBEL MEANS BUSINESS! Her reputation precedes her! Elijah is not perfect. He let fear for his life take the place of trusting that God would preserve his soul even if his body had to die. The devil has been so adept at deceiving us to believe our very existence is in jeopardy when our bodies die that we live in great fear of that body dying (see Heb. 2:14-15). The devil still exercises that “power” over the majority of the world. The **fact** of the **resurrection of Jesus Christ** is the “power” of the gospel (not its “workability” or its “psychological release”). It is the **fact of the resurrection that FREES mankind from the fear of extinction, annihilation, and thus he does not need to compromise the truth from fear of death!** While Elijah had witnessed a “resurrection” he did not have **the** resurrection of Christ to fortify his mind and heart!

When Elijah heard Jezebel’s raging threat, he took off into the “wilderness” (uninhabited—barren—deserted place, not necessarily a forest or jungle), walked all day, and finally sat down under a “broom tree,” begging God to take his life (sounds like Jonah, doesn’t it)! Here a man begs to die who hours before was *afraid* of the threat of death! What is going on? Now he is having a “pity-party”...now he believes his ministry and life is a fruitless **failure**. He had expected the contest on Mt. Carmel to settle the issue of who was God in Israel. Baalism seems even stronger than before the contest because of the queen’s defiant, violent, and unchallenged declaration that she is going to kill Elijah. Now Elijah believes **he is all alone**...no one cares... no one sympathizes...no one helps. Now he is depressed! Elijah would be diagnosed by modern psychology as “manic depressive,” “bi-polar,” (i.e., sometimes up, sometimes down) or “paranoid-schizophrenic with suicidal tendencies.” Add to that Elijah’s complaints (19:9,10,13,14) and the modern “psychological” diagnoses would be multiplied to “compulsive compensation, rationalization, and neurotic transference.” HE’S BLAMING GOD OR JEZEBEL FOR WHAT HE THINKS IS HIS FAILURE! **But God’s diagnosis was: He was not knowing the will of God and was not doing the will of God!** It was as simple as that! But that is too *simplicistic* for modern psychology! Too absolute! Too religious—too God-oriented and not human-self-oriented. God’s diagnosis was that Elijah’s depression was not the result of circumstances...not the fault of God or other people. God’s question: “What are you doing here?” focuses the cause of Elijah’s depression being **Elijah’s ignorance of God (God’s character, God’s faithfulness, God’s will) and Elijah’s desertion of his ministry**. Elijah was centering on himself. That is the cause of his depression—and as far as God was concerned it was uncalled for! While some depression is caused by chemical imbalance or

other physical impairment, and we should be understanding of all depression, yet most often **selfishness, self-centeredness, envy, self-pity, self-serving worldliness are the self-imposed attitudes that most often lead to depression and may be corrected by a humble, self-surrendering in faith to God and his word.** That is usually rejected by most people in the world today because there is the self-serving tendency to want to blame depression on anything (circumstances) or anyone (supposed enemies) other than oneself! But, honestly, the bottom line is **most depression comes from self-pity!** The simple cure for it is—get busy, in the name and will of God, serving others. Jesus, although “troubled in spirit,” was never depressed because he never served himself—he always served others! Though a man of sorrows, he had joy because he was always so consumed with compassion for others and helping others he never had time to have a “self-pity-party.” Another fundamental cause of depression is a “this-world-mind-set.” Anyone whose whole existence begins and ends with this world will inevitably be depressed, despondent and will wallow in self-pity. **This world,** as the only world there ever will be would make anyone depressed because God has subjected this world to *futility* and *decay*—it causes even Christians to “groan.” But Christians “groan” in **faith and hope of redemption and the resurrection.** That’s something those with a “this-world-mind-set” do not have (Rom. 8:18-25). Read humanistic philosophy (ancient and modern)—listen to worldly music—read worldly literature—it is *depressing in its message!* But Jesus, “for the joy that was **set before him,** endured the cross, despising its shame” (Heb. 12:1ff). Jesus said, “In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” There is another world where you will have joy. The cure for depression is to get the “heavenly-mind-set.” It is just that simple. You don’t need a psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst, or therapy for that—you only need God’s word, belief in his Son, Jesus Christ, and a ministry to others of that word and that faith! You will have joy instead of depression!

Elijah was a man of action, of boldness, of judgment. His ministry had been, up to this point, characterized by stupendous, spectacular, miracles. He was always where the action was—on the “cutting edge.” His ministry was always confrontational, catastrophic, climactic. He was always where the “biggies” were (kings, prophets, princes, “wanna-be-kings” etc.). God had solved almost all Elijah’s ministerial confrontations with miracles in the past. Now Elijah is questioning God’s apparent silence and inactivity concerning the whole issue of the continuing deterioration in Israel. **Why doesn’t God send a catastrophic miracle of judgment (a whirlwind, an earthquake, a fire) to eradicate idolatry, wickedness, and Ahab and Jezebel?** Why doesn’t God intervene, immediately supernaturally, and solve the problems in Israel? God took Elijah for a “mountain-top-experience” which turned out to be opposite from what most of us think about as “mountain-top”! God demonstrated that he does his most important, crucial, fruitful, and lasting work, **not** in the catastrophic, supernatural Divine interventions—but **in “still small voices.”** God was showing the prophet of the spectacular that while the miraculous has its place in God’s order of things most often the Divine program is carried out through the “still small voice” which teaches, instructs, persuades, convinces and convicts, and in this way moves the wills and choices of people. While God is the God of judgment, he also the God of mercy and grace. Elijah needed to be reminded of that. Don’t we all?! The still small voice of **persuasion** of teaching the truth, is, in the long run, the most powerful force. The good news of atonement and everlasting life is the power of God unto salvation!

Elijah was instructed by God to “go...anoint (i.e., predict) Hazael to be king of Syria...Jehu to be king over Israel...and Elisha to be prophet in your place...” Hazael will execute God’s judgment upon the nation of Israel. Jehu will execute God’s judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel. Elisha, by the sword of the Spirit, would preserve a “Messianic remnant.” Hazael and Jehu were destined to create in Israel catastrophic upheavals like the wind, earthquake and fire—Elisha would be the “still small voice” of preaching and teaching which would constrain some to humble themselves before the Lord. **Elijah, himself, did** produce some real, spiritual and eternal results. A faithful “remnant” **was** existing even when he thought he was all alone (there were 7000 who had been loyal to Jehovah even when he was despairing) (Rom. 11:1-5; Job. 31:26,27; Hosea 13:2). And then **Elijah** was given the **privilege** of **perpetuating** his labor for the Lord in **Elisha**. After casting his mantle upon Elisha, Elijah strode on by, leaving it for the young man to take or reject the challenge to ministry as he saw fit. It is clear that Elisha both understood the act and made up his mind at once. He offered up his oxen, burned their yokes, and never looked back! He trained with Elijah for a period of time before his own ministry. **Thousands of Elishas are crucially needed in this hour of the 21st century!** “No man careth for my soul—thus cry the millions” as the poignant Christian “missionary” song goes. Fields white unto harvest have been that way for years and years—but the laborers are pitifully few! And “white fields of harvest” formerly closed are opening every day—where are the “laborers” for the field—where is the church in enlisting, training and financing them and paying for them? WAY BEHIND!

1 KINGS 20:21—22:53.

Benhadad, king of Syria, had threatened, boasted, and mocked Ahab and the nation of Israel (10 northern tribes), 20:1-12. Things haven't changed much between Israel and Syria even in the 21st century! Ahab runs to the elders of Israel with the problem. They advise him to reject Benhadad's demands. Ahab's reply to Benhadad, "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," served only to stir up the drunken Banhadad to immediately encompass the city of Samaria with his troops. Benhadad's command is one word in Hebrew, *shimu*, "Set in order" ("take your positions" 1 Kings 20:12). Now, Ahab is in deep trouble! And God, who holds no grudges, sends a prophet to Ahab with an offer of divine help. Ahab, and his satanic wife, Jezebel, have already killed many of God's prophets and defied the preaching of the ones left alive. But God will still lend his loving assistance to Ahab and Israel—AMAZING GRACE! The **primary** purpose of God's assistance to Ahab is that Ahab, and all Israel, might know that Jehovah is truly God—not just the God of judgment (as on Mt. Carmel), but also the God who, alone, is capable of securing redemption and salvation (20:13). Not only does Israel need to be re-taught this lesson, but so does Benhadad and Syria (20:28-30). **While there is life there is hope.** This is the way God has worked providentially throughout history—from Genesis to Revelation (and even now works)—**judgments and redemptions—goodness (Acts 14:15-18; Rom. 2:4) and badness (Rom. 1:18-32; Rev. 9:20-21; 15:1-4; 16:8-9; 16:10-11; 18:1-8).** God would have us know that he "creates both weal (prosperity) and woe" (Isa. 45:5-7). God does not leave himself without witness in history, in conscience (Rom. 2:12-16) and in creation (Rom. 1:18-32). And God continues to send millions of "prophets" (messengers) into the darkened corners of this earth with his **word** of judgment and redemption. What a terrible eternity awaits those who have been indifferent to his **pleadings**.

God delivered Ahab and Jezebel. Behhadad was humiliated. 127,000 Syrian soldiers were slain (27,000 by a wall falling on them!). All this in **one day!** Israel had appeared before this massive army like "two small herds of goats." But Israel's God was not merely the "God of the hills" as Benhadad had theorized, he was the God of all heaven and earth (even of walls). "Some of the modern-day theologians who think God is merely the tribal deity of a few Semitic nomads need to learn the same lesson Benhadad did!—Kenny Boles. When Benhadad's emissaries went to Ahab in sackcloth, begging for mercy and the life of their king, Ahab let it go to his head. He began to feel very important, self-satisfied, and magnanimous. Ahab spared them! Besides, Ahab would get something in return. A dramatic lesson was shortly acted out through God's prophet (20:35-42) which would, in turn, elicit from Ahab's own mouth the sentence he should receive for releasing a man who should have been executed. Kenny Boles—"I find myself wanting to be sympathetic to the man in verse 35 who refused to strike and wound his companion. It seems so innocent, so forgivable. Yet when the Lord commands something, it is not up to us to evaluate whether it is a good idea or not! It is up to us to obey...Lord, help me to stop judging your commands, and start doing them." God has given many commands (both in the OT and the NT) which seem unreasonable, even unethical according to finite, human reckoning, but they are to be obeyed. Abraham was ordered to slay his son as a sacrifice

to God; Israelites were ordered to slay Canaanites, etc.

Human preferences and opinions and rationalizations as broad as they may be, are limited to either the past or the present—never is human knowledge privy to the future. Have you ever thought about what you would do if God gave you a command like the one he gave this prophet? What if you were given a command like that given to Abraham concerning his “son of promise” (Gen. 22:1-19; Heb. 11:17-19)? What if you were given the command “Go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations? Would you do it? What if you were commanded, “Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple?”—would you do it? Ahab learned, like Uzzah, Nadab and Abihu, King Saul, Ananias and Sapphira, Elymas, and so many others, that God expects obedience. Why are we so reluctant to talk about obedience and God? God deserves obedience! Why do we want to rationalize away the clear commandments of Christ? Why do we think that 20 centuries of time would make obeying to the letter any clear commandments of an infallible God impossible? How do we dare to think that God’s commandments need to be altered or modernized to “catch up” with human progress and sophistication? God’s word is “firmly fixed in the heaven” (Psa. 11:89-90). He is the same yesterday, today and forever! He changes not! There is no variation or shadow of turning in him. Heaven and earth may pass away, but his word will never pass away (Mt. 24:35)!

A fundamental principle of Israel’s law (Lev. 23:25; Num. 36:7; Ezek. 46:18) was that real property (land) belonged to the family (and tribe) rather than to the individual. The Mosaic law directed that only the sons of a legal wife had the right of inheritance. Hereditary property was supposed to stay within the family. For this reason Naboth would be violating the will and law of God should he sell his vineyard to Ahab. An Israelite could redeem the family property, whenever it had come into other hands by having been given as a surety for a debt, as did Boaz, in order to maintain the name of the deceased (Ruth 4:10). Land was extremely important in an agricultural economy! God’s law was to protect people who are often unable to act with any foresight when an economic crisis or crunch comes suddenly. The temptation to liquidate any possession on the spur of the moment, in order to ease some pressure is great! Man has to be protected against himself by divine legislation. Ahab himself was sinning just by insisting that Naboth sell his vineyard¹ Ahab was tempting Naboth to sin. Ahab was willing to violate a plain commandment of God for his own selfish ends. There are some people who would rationalize Ahab’s actions by saying, “All the responsibility lies with Naboth—Ahab did nothing wrong. Had Naboth sold he would not have been in the wrong—Ahab was just practicing ‘good business sense.’” Some would ask, is God that much of a “nit-picker” that a man can’t sell his land, or even trade it for other land? Is land worth laying your life on the line? Why not just give in to the king? It was not a matter of land—IT WAS A MATTER OF KEEPING GOD’S COMMANDMENTS!

Jezebel’s sarcastic question to her husband betray’s the motive for her murderous scheme! She said, “Do you now govern Israel?” In other words, “Are you the king of Israel, or a wimp?” “Are you a man or a mouse?” “Why don’t you show them who’s in charge around here—never mind, I’ll take care of it!” Her words and her “taking over” also shows what kind of woman she was—what her estimation of her husband was—her contempt for God’s law and her merciless attitude toward the rights of others (Naboth).

She demonstrates that she had no respect for the truth—no conscience—no sense of justice. One suspects, and her calculated, premeditated, manipulated slaying of Naboth justifies the suspicion that Jezebel was doing this more for herself than for Ahab! Did she really **love** Ahab that much? When there is no respect there certainly is no **true love**. Jezebel was exploiting Ahab (the immature, selfish **dupe**) and he did not have enough sense to recognize it! It was Jezebel's power that was being challenged! It was Jezebel's image that needed protecting! If Ahab the king is humbled, then Jezebel (the real power in the palace) is humbled. That, she will not tolerate! It was not because Jezebel was a woman that she was so wicked—it was because she was a person contemptuous of Almighty God and his word! She was an idolater—an unbeliever. Unbelieving women can be as wicked, cruel and murderous as unbelieving men!

Ahab went down to take possession of the dead Naboth's vineyard. Elijah, commanded by God, went down to the vineyard also. Ahab said, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" Elijah was not Ahab's enemy. Ahab was his own enemy! God said that Elijah was sent to rebuke him because Ahab had "**sold himself** to what was **evil**" in the sight of the Lord. Elijah hadn't "sold" Ahab—God hadn't "sold" Ahab—Ahab had "enslaved" **himself to sin**. In fact, "there was **none** who sold himself to do what was evil **like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited...**" The confrontation, the drastic words of Elijah, stabbed the calloused conscience of this "bloated toad" and Ahab repented! Ahab is called a "bloated toad" by the late Robert G. Lee, famous Baptist preacher of Memphis TN in his famous sermon, "Payday, someday. Lee called Jezebel "the hissing serpent". **True, it did not last long!** But it evidently was sincere for the short time it lasted or God would have known of its insincerity and fulfilled his warning. God is merciful with us all! Jesus taught us that if a person sins against us 7 times in a day (49 times in a week) and turns and repents 7 times in a day, we are to forgive him! WILL GOD DO LESS? But, as we all know, there evidently comes a time when the opportunity to cultivate a penitent attitude or surrendered heart is ended. And if the grace of God has not been penitently responded to when this probationary existence ends, there remains no more a sacrifice for sin. Ahab did not cultivate this moment of sincere repentance. He did nothing to develop it—make it grow. He slipped back into impenitence!

Kenny Boles—"Micaiah...related a vision he had seen. The Lord on his throne recruited a lying spirit to lead all the other prophets to lie to Ahab and entice him into the battle where he would die. Here is the hard question—Did Micaiah mean that the events of his vision actually happened, or did he intend it as a dramatized parable to show that the 400 prophets were not to be trusted? If the first is true, God is responsible for the lying spirit. This, however, seems unlikely. Probably it is better to understand it as a dramatic picture, and that God merely allowed the 400 prophets to tell the lie they themselves wanted to tell. At any rate, Ahab deliberately chose to believe the lie. One of his false prophets slapped Micaiah in the face and Ahab sent Micaiah to prison. Ahab knew the truth but chose the lie. What is God supposed to do with people like that? God warned him to escape destruction, but he rejected the warning. Is it God's fault if the stubborn king then perished? Is it God's fault when any stubborn sinner rejects the gospel and condemns himself to hell?" James Smith—"How can the all Holy One (God) give his sanction to deceit and lying for the purpose of tempting Ahab to his death? Here one must distinguish between the permissive and the positive will of God. God permitted the evil spirit to do his

evil work. The same thought is expressed in Ezekiel 14:9. Ahab **wished** to be guided by false prophets, and the justice of God permitted him to be so guided. Sin is punished by sin.” God still works the same way today, my friend (see Rom. 1:24-32; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; 2 Cor. 11:3,13,14,15; 2 Tim. 4:3-4). God has revealed to us what is true and good—what is false and evil—**and we are free to choose!**

Ahab was determined to violate the revelation of God that he was **not** to go into battle to regain the territory of Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab’s false prophets were lying to him. Ahab knew it. He did not want to hear a true prophet (many Israelites were equally incorrigible, see Isa. 30:8-14). But he heard one, nevertheless. And the true prophet told him the true message of God. But Ahab deliberately chose to reject it in favor of the false prophets. So, God fulfilled the warnings he had formerly given Ahab, by both Elijah and Micaiah. Thus, God destroyed him. God is faithful—he keeps his word, both of grace and judgment. “What have we learned from this study of 1 Kings? Just a few facts of history? Just some Bible names that are hard to pronounce? Surely we have seen that the Lord God has an active interest in the lives of his people! Surely we have seen that good men are ultimately rewarded and wicked men finally perish. Surely we have also caught a longing for the glorious kingdom of the Son of David whose reign shall be forever. One day all the kings of this book will bow their knee to the King of kings. The mighty lords of earth will confess the Lord of lords. May we all live in such a way that the glorious day will be a climax of victory for our faith.”—Kenny Boles, *The Lamp*, op.cit.

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

