Treasures From 1 Kings

Dr. Rod Mattoon
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR READERS ON THE 
TREASURES FROM SCRIPTURE BOOKS

* Brother Mattoon, I am reading your book Treasures From Judges. I am completely blessed by your writings. Your outlines are excellent and the material is above reproach; the illustrations are well chosen. I do pray that God’s richest blessings will continue upon you and your ministry.

Dr. Lee Roberson, Chancellor, Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga, Tennessee

* Dr. Mattoon has given to the Christian world a very practical, powerful, and prudent filled book. This book will serve as a text in Christian colleges and seminaries. This book is very readable for the common person who has no background in understanding Genesis. This book is a goldmine for Sunday School teachers and Christian workers.

**Dr. J. Arnold Fair, Pastor, Faith Baptist Church, Angola, Indiana**

* This book is filled with what the title suggests, "Treasures". It’s not only a good commentary on Genesis, but also a great reference book on Old Testament customs and people. A great book for topical seed sermons. The quality of the book is excellent. Treasures From Judges is beautifully done. It is practical, straight forward and even tackling some of today’s more difficult issues. Well done, Rod.

** Dr. Greg McLaughlin, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church Huntsville, Alabama**

* Treasures From Genesis by Dr. Rod Mattoon should be in the library of every young preacher. The outlines are excellent and provide a valuable source for sermon material. ** Dr. Sylvester Matthews, Open Door Baptist Church, Mesquite, Texas**

* I believe that the advantage of this book is its simple, straight forward format. It will be a valuable study tool for pastors and Sunday School teachers.

** Dr. Dave Jaspers, President, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, Wisconsin**

* The pages of this book are packed with research and information that will feed any pastor’s people. It is not hard to use and is very readable and useable. It is first class in its publishing and layout. It’s structure is well thought out and the result is a book that invites your attention. The features most helpful to me are the illustrative charts, the alliterated outlines and the subject index in the back of the book.

** Pastor Mark Thrift, Parkwood Baptist Church, Houston, Texas**

* After perusing this volume of Genesis, I was made aware of the fact that this book is not just a book about Genesis and how to interpret it, but it is a book filled with a treasure of knowledge rarely found in one volume. The tools you have provided will allow anyone studying this book to find information at his or her fingertips that will enrich his knowledge of God’s Word and the subject at hand. The index information you printed in the book is also easy to find and especially helpful when looking for a specific topic in the book.

** Dr. Ron Allen, Sr. Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA.**

* The books are some of the best material I’ve read and studied. They fed me. It has been a joy and blessing to study these books. Thanks.

*Pastor Mike Oldham, Sanford, North Carolina*
*Your book on Judges is a great help to me right now as I am teaching a Bible class two times a week. I am so grateful that someone has started writing something that is worthwhile, helpful, and spiritual. May the Lord continue to bless you with both wisdom and strength to keep up the good work.

**Pastor Ernest Moore, Cumberland Ct. Maranatha Baptist Church, Vineland, N.J.**

* Your work on Genesis is not only one of the finest commentaries on that particular text, but the practical “life applications” for the believer’s walk, especially as you relate the truth to other parts of Scripture are outstanding! I urge every serious Bible student, teacher, and preacher to add this commentary to their library.

**Evangelist Dennis Erwin, Edgewood, Texas**

*I have been reading and studying through Dr. Mattoon’s Treasure series and I must say that they have truly been a blessing to me. Not only do they contain a wealth of information but they have also helped me to study the Bible in a way that I had not before. Consequently, they have helped me in my own sermon preparation. The Bible believing world has needed such resources.

**Pastor Walter Myers, Maynard, Massachusetts**

* I never thought the presentation of truth could be as practical, clear, timely, and satisfying. The books are like a prepared meal ready to eat.

* Pastor David Tandoc, Dagupan City, PHILIPPINES*

* Treasures from Genesis is delightful and refreshing reading. It is unlike any other book that I have on the subject. To anyone looking for treasures and nuggets of gold, I recommend this book to you. The scholarship is great but it is not filled with verbage. Treasures from Ruth is bread from Bethlehem’s oven. If you want to glean in Ruth, stay in this field and you will not exhaust the precious truth in this Gold mine. It is filled with handfuls of purposes for pastors and preachers. Glean in this book to feed yourself and others.

*Dr. Graydon Giles, Devon, Alberta, CANADA*

Your two books, Treasures from Ruth and Genesis have been a tremendous help and blessing to me. I’m looking forward to reading Judges and Esther.

*Pastor Jim Thompson, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

* In my library I have 34 books on Genesis. Dr. Mattoon’s wonderful work is unlike any other and in my opinion in the first five. It is filled with altered outlines that come from the text. The applications are pungent and perhaps best of all this book is a wealth of information on traditions and customs of Bible times that I have read no where else. I would encourage any pastor preaching from Genesis to be sure to purchase this work. Your book on Judges has great titles, wonderful insights and exposition.

**Dr. Joe Mark, Evangelist, Towanda, Illinois**

Dr. Mattoon, What a treasure I have found in your books! Please send me your latest two books.

**Archie Perez, Normal, Illinois**
Dedication
Dr. Greg McLaughlin

When I think of a person who has wisdom and a passion for the Word of God, I think of Greg McLaughlin right away. I have known Greg for over three decades at the time of this dedication, and he has always been consistent in his character, wisdom, and thirst for the Scriptures. Greg’s preaching is rich with Bible treasures. His grasp of the Hebrew and Greek languages enables him to bring out wonderful truths from the Old and the New Testament that we don’t find on the surface of Bible reading.

Greg was highly instrumental in my conversion along with Dr. Ron Allen. Pastor Greg was my counselor for two weeks at Camp of the Woods in Dryden, Ontario, Canada, where I was saved and called to preach. He was my second youth pastor. We had many discussions about the Word of God and the study of Scripture and still do today. Greg, along with Pastor Ron Allen and Pastor Weniger, taught me a great deal about expository preaching. I am very blessed to have had the opportunity to sit under Greg’s ministry. His love for souls and Scripture is inspiring and motivating. Pastor Greg instilled in us the importance of having a “balance” in our lives. That philosophy has been a standard in my own personal life since I have been saved and called to preach.

Greg has been the senior pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama, since 1979, and this church has flourished under his leadership. It is a great joy for me to dedicate this book to him and tell you about his Christian testimony for Jesus Christ. Thank you Greg for your example, your love for people, and for our Lord.
I Am Very Grateful...

I want to again thank our church family, Lincoln Land Baptist Church, for giving me the opportunity and the tools to put this and the other books on the Word of God into print. The encouragement and support the church has given me has been an inspiration to keep writing the books. I love doing it and I’m encouraged by the response of pastors and our own people who are helped by the insights and practical lessons in the books. To date, over 3200 preachers in ten foreign countries have received the books from the Treasures from Scripture Series. To our knowledge, 175 Bible colleges or Bible institutes are using the books in their curriculums. Some of the series has been translated into three languages.

I hope this volume on 1 Kings will be a blessing to your life. Be sure to take advantage of the Topical Directory of the First Eleven Books located at the back of this book. If you are preparing topical messages or topical studies, this directory will provide for you the location of needed information in the Treasures from Scripture Series. It can save you a lot of time and provide you with a lot of material.

All the material in this book has been preached from the pulpit at Lincoln Land Baptist Church. The notes, special studies, and indexes have been designed in such a way where you can use much of the information to prepare messages and lessons on topics in other books of the Bible. Enjoy!
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I would like to thank Gloria Shellhammer for aiding me in the proof-reading of this book.

ALL VERSES ARE TAKEN FROM THE 1769 KING JAMES VERSION
First Printing: September, 2003
Chapter 1
The Prince Who Tooted His Own Horn
1 Kings 1:1-10

You know you are getting older when ....

* Everything hurts, and what doesn’t hurt, doesn’t work.
* The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals.
* You finally reach the top of the ladder and it is leaning against the wrong wall.
* You look forward to a dull evening.
* You sit in a rocking chair and can’t get it going.
* Your knees buckle and your belt won’t.
* You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

Ah, the adventures of getting old! As we open the curtain on the book of 1 Kings, we find David in the Winter Years of Life. The shadows of the grave are getting closer. David is getting older. Notice verse one.

1. THE AGING DAVID 1:1

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

David is old and stricken in years. This word stricken means “run down.” David is about 70 years old. The years of suffering, conflict, guilt, and grief have taken their toll on his life. The victories over the lion, bear, giants, and armies are all memories now. The once robust warrior is feeble and weak. He has a circulation problem and
has difficulty in getting warm.

Stress can sponge the life out of a person. In David’s case, much of his stress came from his sin and disobedience to the Lord. The same thing can happen to us if we live a carnal life. Sin creates stress.

* Psalm 107:17- Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
* Proverbs 13:15- Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard.
* Romans 2:9- Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

**God wants us to have His rest and peace in our life.** This rest comes from being broken by the Lord and yielded to Him. In Montana, cowboys break a wild horse by putting a saddle on the horse and leaving it on for a month. The horse gets use to the saddle. The cowboy is patient with this horse and speaks in a gentle tone to the steed. The next step is the placing of the bit in the mouth. After two months, the cowboy mounts the horse. The principals of this story are found in Matthew 11:28-30.

* Matthew 11:28-30 ... Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**God doesn’t want us to be all stressed out.** He wants to give us His peace and rest by depending upon Him for our needs.

Let me ask, “What bothers you the most about aging?” Is it health problems, loss of youth, losing friends in death, losing your abilities, or getting closer to death yourself? Any of these concerns should motivate us in our younger years to make our life physically count for Christ while our bodies are still strong and not hindered by common health problems of the elderly. Live your life for God and start while you are young. I am so grateful to the Lord that I was saved at the age of 15 and started living for Christ in my teen years.

* Ecclesiastes 12:1 - Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

II. AN ATTENDANT IS SOUGHT 1:2-4

Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. [3] So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found
Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. [4] And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

A medical solution for chills in David’s day was to use the body heat of another to keep the person warm. David’s servants conduct a Miss Israel contest and Abishag was picked. She was an incredibly beautiful, young woman and became a part of David’s harem, yet, he did not have sexual relations with her. She cherished and cared for the king and kept him warm.

III. THE AMBITION OF ADONIJAH 1:5-7, 9

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. [6] And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. [7] And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants:

Adonijah exalts himself and toots his own horn saying, “I will be king!” As the shadow of death approaches David’s bed, his home problems still plague him as another son seeks to take the throne. Adonijah follows the same path as Absalom. He is less deceitful than his brother.

Adonijah is motivated by pride. He is handsome and has a very high opinion of himself. His will is unchecked and rarely curbed (vs.6). He is a spoiled and undisciplined man.

Amnon, the firstborn son is dead. Absalom’s command killed him. Chileab is believed to have died at an early age. Absalom was killed by Joab. Adonijah is next in line for the throne and assumes he will be king. This is why he exalts himself and toots his own horn. Adonijah has forgotten the God factor. He is not God’s man and part of God’s will and plan for the nation of Israel.

We note several insights at this point in the story.

A. The Folly of Exalting Yourself or Tooting Your Own Horn

When you toot your own horn and lift up yourself, you will eventually fall down and your glory will fade. When Ptolemy, outstanding
astronomer and mathematician of the second century, decided to build the Pharos, he chose Sostratus to design the mammoth lighthouse which became later one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Ptolemy insisted that the lighthouse should bear his inscription as a personal memorial; however, Sostratus didn’t think the king should get all the credit. He therefore put the title of Ptolemy on the front of the lighthouse in a thick plaster which would be eye catching at first, but later would be worn away by the elements of the weather. Secretly Sostratus cut his own name in the granite under the plaster. For decades the sea dashed against the plaster inscription and gradually eroded it. Though it lasted the lifetime of Ptolemy, it finally was obliterated, leaving the name “Sostratus” boldly and clearly exposed in the granite. Worldly fame often disappears before the relentless waves of time.

The Bible warns us about strutting our feathers like a peacock.

* Luke 14:11- For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
* Proverbs 17:19- He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.
* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

God’s advice for us....

* 1 Corinthians 10:12 - Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
* Proverbs 30:32- If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

B. The Failure to Discipline Your Children Leads to Problems

When you fail to discipline your kids, you are showing your hatred for them. That sounds weird and is totally, politically incorrect, but this is what God says.

* Proverbs 13:24- He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Why does this show hate? Your kids will grow up expecting to get their own way and this is not going to happen. They will be selfish, irresponsible, wild, unhappy, frustrated, and have difficulty in getting along with other people. Their actions could lead to a broken marriage, difficulty in keeping a job, jail, or imprisonment.

* Proverbs 29:15- The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.
* Proverbs 29:17- Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he
shall give delight unto thy soul.

When you spare the rod on your misbehaving or rebellious child, you bring it upon yourself eventually. David’s neglect has brought the rod upon himself.

Notice Joab is still consistent, seeking his own self-interests. Decisions that are based upon the “Finger in the Air to See Where the Wind is Blowing” mentality will eventually get you into trouble. Joab was attracted to the false king. He is like the lost man who has a natural attraction to follow sinful ways. People who follow sinful living or Satan, instead of Christ, do so because they belong to Satan.

* John 8:44 - Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

They offered sacrifices to make the coronation official. Sealing an action with religious ceremonies does not make it approved by God or God’s will. **Labeling something as Christian does not make it necessarily Christian, Christlike, or approved by the Lord. Christian Day at Bikini Beach does not make the event Christian.** Many people who claim to be Christians are not, because they have never truly been born again. Churches are filled with religious people who are not born again. Any activity, entertainment, or relationship with a person that contradicts Bible teaching or principle is not God’s will. **God never leads us to contradict His Word! NEVER!** Dating, marrying, or going into business partnerships with unsaved people contradicts God’s Word and is not the will of God for the believer. In the years that I have been preaching, I have seen multitudes, who thought they knew more than God on this matter. They were greatly distressed, disappointed, and depressed because they did not obey God in this matter. Some have had to bear their disobedience for the rest of their lives.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

**IV. THE AVOIDANCE  1:10, 8**

But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.
Have you ever been left out of a party? It is no fun, is it?
Here, Solomon and his supporters are conveniently left out. Obviously, Adonijah knows Solomon is next in line to the throne. God
told David to crown Solomon.

* 1 Chronicles 22:9,10- Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be
a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about:
for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto
Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be
my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his
kingdom over Israel for ever.

David has made the promise to Bathsheba about Solomon (vs.17).
If you were Bathsheba or Solomon, wouldn’t you let everyone know about
this? This is exciting news. Adonijah, knowing this truth, tries to usurp
the throne by proclaiming himself as king. He toots his own horn. He
doesn’t invite Solomon to the feast because he would then be bound to
protect him by their laws of hospitality.

We want to note two key points at this juncture.
1. Just as Adonijah avoided inviting the rightful king to his banquet, we
are guilty of doing the same type of thing when our actions or activities are
rebellious, selfish, or sinful. We grieve the Holy Spirit by our indifference
and stubborn disobedience.
2. Don’t be surprised if this world does not want you around or shuns you.
Many unsaved people are not comfortable in the presence of a godly
Christian. Some will hate what you stand for or hate the Lord.

* John 15:19- If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but
because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world,
therefore the world hateth you.

Your life may be a source of conviction.

* 1 Peter 4:14- If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye;
for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil
spoken of; but on your part he is glorified.

You may also be considered a fool or nut.

* 1 Corinthians 4:10,13- We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise
in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are
despised. Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the
world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

* Hebrews 10:33- Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by
reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of
them that were so used.
Are you under stress and guilt from your sin? Seek God’s forgiveness. Are you living for yourself or the Lord? Begin serving the Lord in your youth if you are not already doing so. Are you exalting yourself and tooting your own horn? Stop before you fall. Humble yourself before the Lord.

* James 4:6 - But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

* James 4:10 - Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

It’s when we forget ourselves that we do things that are most likely to be remembered.
Chapter 2
The Problems of Presumption
1 Kings 1:11-53

When you know something is wrong, do you act quickly to make it right or do you follow the philosophy, “It’s None of My Business! I Don’t Want to Get Involved!” As we begin this chapter, we find Adonijah exalting himself and making himself king of Israel. He has the military support of the scoundrel, Joab, and religious support from the priest, Abiathar. Adonijah has held a feast with all his half brothers and the servants of the king present. Everyone is present except the rightful king, Solomon, and his supporters: Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan the prophet, and David’s mighty men.

Nathan the prophet gets involved and acts quickly. He informs Queen Bathsheba of what is going on. Adonijah is about to encounter the problems from presumption.

I. THE APPRISING OF BATHSHEBA 1:11

Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not?

Nathan knows Bathsheba and David are unaware of what is happening and brings it to their attention. He does his job as prophet of God, keeping a watch, and courageously speaking up when it is time to do so. He knows Solomon is to be the next king.

II. THE ADVICE OF NATHAN 1:12-14

Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. [13] Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign
after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? [14] Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

In the Middle East, potential claimants to the throne were often executed. Nathan knows Solomon and Bathsheba’s life are in jeopardy and he offers to give them counsel to save their lives. Good counsel is very important.

* It gives safety...Proverbs 11:14 - Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.
* It gives wisdom...Proverbs 12:15 - The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Nathan’s plan is to report matters to David and make sure two witnesses confirm his words, Bathsheba and Nathan.

III. THE AUDIENCE WITH THE KING  1:15-27

And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. [16] And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? [17] And she said unto him, My lord, thou warest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. [18] And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: [19] And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. [20] And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. [21] Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. [22] And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. [23] And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. [24] And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? [25] For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. [26] But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. [27] Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?
While Adonijah has his bar-b-que, Nathan informs the king that he is about to lose his power and authority, "Adonijah reigneth and you know it not David." A problem was arising and David was ignorant of it.

**Ignorance of important matters can create terrible problems for us.** Sometimes those problems carry eternal consequences. Many years ago a paraplegic was cruelly named "Old Rattle Bones" by a group of boys on the street. The ringleader, named Freddie, was quite worried, however, when the man headed straight toward his home one day. Because his friends were with him, the boy tried to hide his anxiety. "Go on, Old Rattle Bones," he shouted, "see who cares if you talk to my mother." The man said with sadness as he continued his way, "You wouldn't call me names if you knew what caused my situation."

Arriving at his destination, the man was welcomed by Freddie's mother. She told her son to come in also. Turning to Freddie, the man said, "Years ago when you were just a baby, your nurse took you out in your carriage for a ride near the river. When she let go of the handle for a moment, it suddenly began to careen down the hill. Before she could catch up with the buggy, it plunged into the water below. I jumped into the river and after a difficult struggle, I brought you safely to shore, but I left before anyone could ask my name. The water that day was freezing, and it aggravated my rheumatic condition. Now, ten years later, I can scarcely hobble along." Freddie hung his head and began to cry. "Thank you for saving me. Forgive me for calling you 'Old Rattle Bones. I didn't know who you were!"

Millions upon millions are ignorant of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. Their ignorance will have eternal consequences. The wisdom, philosophy, and reasoning of this world make people spiritually blind and ignorant of God and His truth.

* 1 Corinthians 1:21- For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

* Ephesians 4:17,18- This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Folks, including Christians, are ignorant of the Scriptures because they do not take the time to read them. The result of their ignorance is
often the making of foolish decisions.
* Matthew 22:29- Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Ignorance of God’s Word can lead to ignorance of God’s will.
* Numbers 22:34- And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. God uses His Word to reveal His will.

It is sad that many children are ignorant of the Lord.
* 1 Samuel 2:12- Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. Some children are ignorant of the Lord because their parents are out of church. Parents usually get out of church right before the teen years of their kids. The hardness of the parents destructively affects their kids.

Many are ignorant of God’s blessings. They are ignorant of God’s power and promises. They are in the dark on what God has done, can do, and wants to do.
* Judges 2:10- And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

Some folks are ignorant of what the Lord has blessed them with because their selfishness, ungratefulness, bitterness, anger, and problems blind them. Beloved, count your blessings!
* Genesis 28:16- And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

As eyes were upon David, waiting for his direction and leadership (vs.20), the world is looking for direction and leadership too. This world says in its songs, poems, and films that it is looking for love, joy, peace, tolerance or patience with others, and kindness. Does this sound familiar? All these things that the world is seeking are found in Christ.
* Galatians 5:22,23-But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Only when a dead king’s wishes were unknown, could the son claim the right of succession (vs.21). This is why David needed publicly to announce Solomon as king.
IV. THE APPOINTMENT OF SOLOMON 1:28-40

Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. [29] And the king sware, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, [30] Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. [31] Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. [32] And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. [33] The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: [34] And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. [35] Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. [36] And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too. [37] As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. [38] So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. [39] And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. [40] And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

David promises to keep his commitment to Bathsheba and makes Solomon the king. They inaugurate Solomon at Gihon Spring which was closer to the palace than En-Rogel Springs. Benaiah is the “Amen” section of the coronation. The people rejoiced and the earth shook from the excitement.

We will note several insights from this section.

A. The Problems From Presumptions

Adonijah thought he would make himself king. He forgot the God Factor. God had other plans. Never underestimate or forget God’s plans, timing, and will. Presumptions can lead to problems and disappointments. We are to be prepared for the unexpected.

* James 4:13-15... Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get
gain: [14] Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. [15] For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.
* Proverbs 27:1- Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

B. Parallel Contrasts

When you look at the history of Jerusalem, you find two sons of David have ridden through her streets on a mule amid the shouts and praises of people. Those two sons were Solomon and centuries later, Jesus.

1. Their triumphal ride came after an anointing. A prophet or priest anointed Solomon to be king. The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus to be king, priest, and prophet.

2. Each rode through the city as king. The people cried, “God save king Solomon.” In Jesus’ time they shouted, “Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38).”

3. Each rode as a son of David. To Jesus they said, “Hosanna to the son of David (Matthew 21:9-15).”

4. The differences between the two are first, all those who were great surrounded Solomon. The poor followed the Lord.

5. Secondly, Solomon went to sit upon his throne. Jesus went to suffer on the cross.

Solomon rode to ease, glory, pomp, and unparalleled magnificence. Jesus rode to shame, spitting, denial, and death.

V. ADONIJAH IS INFORMED  1:41-48

And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? [42] And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings. [43] And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. [44] And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: [45] And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. [46] And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. [47] And
moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. [48] And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

Presumption brings problems and embarrassment again (vs.42). Adonijah says, “Come in Jonathan! You are a valiant man and bring me good news!” Jonathan hits Adonijah right between the eyes with unpleasant news, “They have made Solomon king.”

VI. THE APPREHENSION AT EN-ROGEL 1:49-53

And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. [50] And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. [51] And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. [52] And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. [53] So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

Adonijah’s guests are afraid and flee. This word “afraid” means “to tremble and shudder with fear or terror.” They presumed Adonijah would be king, but they were wrong. Worldly, carnal, backslidden friends can be very fickle. Presumption assumes they are loyal friends, but that is not necessarily true. False friends are like a shadow, keeping close to us while we walk in the sunshine, but leaving us when we cross into the shade.

* The prodigal son found out this truth.
* Jesus did too. Matthew 26:56 - But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.
* Fickle friends hurt Paul. 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

The crowd at Adonijah’s party was worried about accusations of being traitors. They feared the king’s wrath because new kings purged traitors from the kingdom.
* Proverbs 16:14-The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.
* Proverbs 19:12-The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favor is as dew upon the grass.

Adonijah is also very afraid. That which he presumed would bring him pleasure has brought him misery and despair. This is the path of a rebel. Adonijah runs to the horns of the altar in the Tabernacle. He seeks God’s mercy and forgiveness. His circumstances have humbled him.

* Proverbs 29:23- A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Beloved, don’t wait until you have made a mess of things to run to the Lord. Most people do this. Seek God’s guidance before you act. Obey the Lord early in your life. Our prayer should be that which is found in Psalm 143:10.... Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. God’s promise to us is found in Psalm 25:9.... The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

There is an ancient tale from India about a young man who was seeking God. He went to a wise old sage for help. “How can I find God?” he asked the old man. The old man took him to a nearby river. Out into the deep water they waded. Soon the water was up just under their chins. Suddenly, the old man seized the young man by the neck and pushed him under the water. He held the young man down until the young man was flailing the water in absolute desperation. Another minute later he might have drowned. Up out of the water the two of them came. The young man was coughing up water from his lungs and still gasping for air. Reaching the bank of the river he asked the old man indignantly, “What did that have to do with my finding God?” The old man asked him quietly, “While you were under the water, what did you want more than anything else?” The young man thought for a minute and then answered, “I wanted air. I wanted air more than anything else.” Seriously, the old man replied, “When you want God as much as you wanted air, you will find Him.”

How badly do you want to know the Lord? What price are you willing to pay to know Him intimately? Beware of the problems with presumption.
Chapter 3
On the Borderline
Between Time & Eternity
1 Kings 2:1-9

There are three distinct times in my life where I believe I was personally facing death in the eye and on the borderline between time and eternity. In the first case I was terrified and in the other two, the Lord gave me peace and a calmness for that particular moment. In all three cases, the danger came unexpectedly and without a moment’s notice.

The first case took place when I was seven. I ran through a window, slicing my arms to the bone. The cuts were deep and the arteries were bleeding profusely. I had been playing “Super Man” and thought I could knock down a glass paneled door. I was wrong. By the grace of God, my mother’s quick thinking, and our family doctor, Dr. Bailen, my life was spared.

The second case occurred at the age of 19. Our college group had just finished soul-winning in Munster, Indiana. We were waiting on a sidewalk for the college bus to pick us up and take us back to the college. While we were waiting, a 1977 green Chevy Vega pulled up on the curb, and the window rolled down. A man proceeded to ask us for directions. He then pulled out a gun and asked me if I was ready to die? I replied, “Yes, I am. Are you?” I then proceeded to share the Gospel with him. The car drove off after a minute and I was unharmed. Through this whole incident, I had an unusual calm and boldness.

The third incident was when I was 27 and on a fishing trip in New Mexico. My friend, David Christopher, was driving his Ford Explorer up a steep, narrow, mountain pass backward. It was the only way we could
get to the top of the mountain where there was a beautiful lake filled with trout. Things were going just fine until the edge of the road gave way and the jeep slowly began to slide down the mountain cliff. A pine tree stopped the slide of the jeep. The jeep was leaning at a 45 to 50-degree angle. My view out of the passenger side was straight down. Thank God for pine trees! Calmly, I asked David, “What are we going to do now? David was very sharp. He got out on the driver’s side and was able to get help to tow us out. Thank God, nothing happened. I believe my guardian angel was working overtime that day. In the last two cases, God gave grace to me for that moment.

For some, the thought of death terrifies them. Woody Allen put it this way, “I’m not afraid to die. I just don’t want to be there when it happens!” Some folks are too busy to think about death. George Burns said, “I can’t die. I’m too busy!” Others are prepared and ready to die. Winston Churchill said, “I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter.”

As we open chapter two, we find David is on the borderline between time and eternity. He has run the race of his life and is about to cross the finish line. His attitude about life, death, and his final instructions to Solomon reveal insights for us to consider.

I. THE CHARGE OF DAVID 2:1-4

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, [2] I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; [3] And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: [4] That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

I believe David knows he doesn’t have much time left to live. He is taking care of last minute affairs. His conduct and demeanor show he is not afraid of death, “I go the way of all the earth.” Death is described as a “way.” It is exiting this world and entering another. Unless Christ returns in your lifetime, you will die. You and I have an appointment with death that we must keep. We can’t get out of this appointment. We will not be late for this meeting.
* Hebrews 9:27- And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

The Lord determines your days.

* Job 14:1,5- Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. 5- Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

For the Christian, death is something we need not fear. The Lord gave Paul perfect peace about his approaching death and martyrdom.

* 2 Corinthians 5:8- We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. This verse has comforted millions.

* 2 Timothy 4:6-8... For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7] I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. God gave Paul perfect peace.

David had peace too. Does this verse sound familiar to you?

* Psalm 23:4 - Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. What thoughts lie behind the phrase “shadow of death?”

A story about Donald Grey Barnhouse will provide some answers. Barnhouse was a noted Bible teacher in the first half of the twentieth century. He lost his first wife to cancer and was left with three children under the age of twelve. As Barnhouse and his family were driving to the funeral service, a large truck passed them and cast a huge shadow across their car. Turning to his oldest daughter, who was staring sadly out the window, Barnhouse asked, “Tell me, sweetheart, would you rather be run over by that truck or its shadow?” After she thought over her father’s question, she replied, “By the shadow, I guess. It can’t hurt you.” Barnhouse then shared this wisdom with his children: “Your mother has not been overridden by death, but by the shadow of death. That is nothing we should fear.”

Charles Spurgeon put it this way, “Death in its substance has been removed, and only the shadow of it remains. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot block a man’s pathway for even a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill.”

Let me ask, “Are you prepared for death?” Some say, “I don’t like to talk about it!” You better talk about it. Your death is the gate to the life
you will live in eternity. If you are saved, you will go to Heaven, and if not, you will go to Hell. Being an ostrich, closing your eyes to death, pretending it is not there will not make you immortal or make death go away. Because we are frail and life is so short, we MUST prepare for eternity before it comes.

Pagan and Moslem monarchs had heralds that daily and publicly reminded them of their frailty. Ancient Egyptians would bring a mummy to their feasts to keep life and death in proper perspective. Life is short. People known as _kaffirs_ keep boards for their coffins in their homes. James told us in James 4:14... _Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away._ David was on the borderline between time and eternity. You may be too and not realize it. This day could be the last day of your life.

**How you deal with the subject of death will dictate your outlook on life.** If you believe death ends it all, then you will probably follow the "_Live it Up!_" philosophy and lifestyle. If you refuse Jesus Christ, then death is something to be feared and many do. If you accept Christ as your Savior, death does not have to be feared for you know where you are going.

The words of a dying man carry great weight. As David hovers on the borderline between time and eternity, he gives his final instructions to his son. He challenges Solomon to be strong, committed to the Lord, wise, virtuous, courageous, and to obey God. We are challenged to be strong too.

* Ephesians 6:10- Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

* 2 Timothy 2:1- Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We are to grow in the desire and power to do God's will.

**How does a person become strong in the Lord today?** First, don’t throw away your physical, emotional, and spiritual strength on wicked living. The stress from a sinful, carnal lifestyle will sponge the strength of your life away.

* Psalm 31:10- For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. Don’t spend your life regretting your wickedness. Why not spend it rejoicing over your obedience to the Lord and godliness?

**Secondly,** strength comes from God’s wisdom. His wisdom keeps us from making foolish mistakes.
* Ecclesiastes 7:19- Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.

**Thirdly,** wisdom comes from waiting upon the Lord. He encourages, revives our strength, joy, attitudes, and desires.

* Isaiah 40:31-But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

* 2 Timothy4:17-Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

**Fourthly,** strength comes from the grace of God Himself. The Holy Spirit gives us the power and desire to do God’s will.

* 2 Corinthians 12:9- And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

* Ephesians 3:16- That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

The name Star Daily is well known throughout England. His reputation as a notorious, vicious killer and armed robber was rooted in his childhood years. Star was called upon routinely to stand and read in front of his class. Reading, however, was very difficult for him. The mockery and laughter of the other students did not help at all.

On one occasion, Star was struggling terribly. The other students began to laugh again. Stars’ sister buried her head in laughter and embarrassment. Star looked to the teacher for support, but she too was laughing.

Star was crushed. This timid little boy exploded in rage. He threw the book against the wall and ran out the door. As he left, he screamed, “You will fear me! You will hate me! Nevertheless, this will be the last time you laugh at me!” Star killed, looted, and demeaned all those he met for the rest of his life. Life could have been much different for Star if he knew the Lord who could have encouraged him in his trials and difficulties. Thank God for the Holy Spirit who strengthens us day by day.
II. THE CONTEMPT FOR JOAB  2:5,6

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

As death approaches and David borders time and eternity, he continues to set his house in order. Wrongs are to be made right. Debts are to be paid whether they are debts of gratitude or debts of judgment. Joab shed the blood of war in peace, murdering Abner and Amasa. His sin has not been dealt with and this was David’s final responsibility. David was unable to deal forcefully with Joab because of an unstable, political, and military situation in Israel. Joab had clout with the army and knew too much about David’s sin. He now gives Solomon instructions that Joab’s hoar or gray head not die a natural death. These instructions were for the good of Israel...that the land be cleansed from sin.

III. THE COMPENSATION FOR BARZILLAI’S FAMILY 2:7

But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

David wants to express his gratitude for this man by blessing his family. Gratitude doesn’t forget what others have done for you. Our duty is to be grateful.

* 2 Thessalonians 2:13- But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

It is also God’s will that we are grateful.

* 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

IV. THE CONDEMNATION FOR SHIMEI  2:8,9

And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now
therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

Shimei needed to be dealt with for what he did was a capital offense.

*Exodus 22:28 - Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.*

He would be a continual menace to Solomon and a threat to the peace of his reign. He had the potential to strike at Solomon as he did David, being a Benjamite, and of the tribe of Saul. David instructs Solomon to bring judgment upon Shimei. David may have been superstitious, believing the removal of Shimei’s curse required the removal of Shimei.

All of these examples teach a basic concept . . . take care of unfinished business. If you are not saved, then trust Christ as your Savior. If you are not right with God, then get right. If you need to make restitution with someone, then do it. If you need to seek forgiveness or give forgiveness, then do it. You never know when you may be on the borderline between time and eternity.

***Special Study***

*Learning from Turning*

1 Kings 2:3 - And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

This is the first place in the KJV that the word “turnest” appears. Some form of the word “turn” shows up in 594 verses in the KJV and some form of the word “return” appears in 427 verses. These words are very important in Scripture as they appear at a rate of almost one time for every three verses. A key, consistent message in Scripture is to *turn or return to the Lord*. I thought at this junction of Scripture that this would be a great opportunity to do a study from Genesis to Revelation on the topic of *turning*. After 40 hours on this one study, I found some wonderful treasures from Scripture on the topic of “turning” that I believe will be helpful to you in your preaching and
counseling.

We will look at a number of areas on the topic of turning which include: 1) the causes for why people turn from God; 2) the negative consequences of turning from God; 3) the commands to turn; 4) the calls upon God for turning; 5) the causes for why God turns; 6) the positive consequences of turning to God; 7) the concentrations of our turning; 8) crucial turns in Scripture; 9) the course on turning to the Lord; and 10) the circumstances when Jesus turned.

I. THE CAUSES FOR WHY PEOPLE TURN

Why do people turn away from the Lord? Why do they turn back to the Lord? Some of the reasons I found will look familiar but other reasons will lead to further meditation, contemplation and enlightenment. Let’s take a look at why people turn or change directions in their life for the good or the bad.

A. Choler, Rage, or Passionate Anger can turn you.

Anger can cause a person to turn from the Lord. Some folks get angry at God for something they didn’t like and drift away from Him. Other folks get bitter and angry with other people and cool off spiritually. Esau’s anger was one of the factors that divided his family. Jacob and his mother’s deception was the other factor.

*Genesis 27:44,45* - And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

God warns us of the poison of bitterness.

*Hebrews 12:15* - Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

The poison of bitterness almost destroyed Charlotte Elliot of Brighton, England. Her health was broken and her disability hardened her. “If God loved me, He would not have treated me this way,” she muttered. A Swiss pastor, Dr. Cesar Malan, visited the Elliots in May of 1822, and was hoping to help Charlotte. During dinner, Charlotte exploded in anger and railed against God and her family. Her family was embarrassed and left the room, but Dr. Malan stayed and was left alone to speak with her. He asked Charlotte, “You are tired of yourself, aren’t you? You are holding to your hate and anger because you have nothing else in
this world to cling to. Consequently, you have become sour, bitter, and resentful?” Charlotte asked him, “What is your cure?” He replied, “It is the faith you are trying to despise.” Charlotte softened as they continued to talk. She asked, “If I wanted to become a Christian and share the peace and joy you possess, what would I do?” Dr. Malan told her to give herself to the Lord just as she was, with her fights, fears, hate, love, pride, and shame. Charlotte said, “I would come to the Lord just as I am? Is that right?” He agreed and Charlotte trusted Christ as her Savior. Her life was transformed and her life verse became John 6:37... All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Several years later Charlotte wrote a poem to raise funds for the children of poor clergymen. The poem was entitled, “Him that Cometh to Me Will I No Wise Cast Out.” This poem has become one of the most famous invitation hymns in Christian history.

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

The Lord healed Charlotte of her bitterness through the power of the Holy Spirit. Her life has touched millions since then through her poem. Don’t let bitterness rob you of being a blessing to others.

B. Curiosity, Research, or Peeping into matters can turn your direction.

Curiosity with that which is good can turn you into the right direction, but curiosity into that which is evil can lead you into sinful living. Moses’ curiosity led him to the leadership and the freedom of his people. Samson’s curiosity led him to disobedience and Eve’s curiosity for the forbidden tree in Eden led to death upon the human race.

*Exodus 3:3- And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

*Judges 14:8,9 - And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

*Genesis 3:6 - And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The challenge of the Scriptures is to have a curiosity about God and the things of God that will lead us and motivate us to know Him.
If we do seek the Lord, we will definitely be blessed and satisfied in our search. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6). We are to have a desirable, devoted, devout curiosity about the wonder of God, the Word of God, the will of God, and the warmth and love of God.

1. Curiosity About the WONDER of God

* Psalm 46:10- Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
* Colossians 1:10- That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God:

As Zaccheus sought the Lord, we ought to seek Him too. We should thirst to know the Lord and are challenged to do so.
* Jeremiah 29:13- And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.
* Philippians 3:10- That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; Are you curious about the Lord?

2. Curiosity About the WORD of God

We ought to be curious about knowing God through His Word. This was the attitude of the Berean Christians and ought to be our attitude.
* Acts 17:11- These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Their search indicates their curiosity to know the truth. Curiosity about the Word of God was exhibited even at the Cross. Those who heard the Lord cry out wanted to see if His Word would come to pass. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jonah had the same attitude and wondered if God would bring judgment upon Ninevah or spare it since they repented. So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city (Jonah 4:5).

People today wait to see if God’s Word will be fulfilled in matters of Bible prophecy and the Second Coming of Christ. They are also curious if there is anything to this matter of salvation in Jesus Christ. They are curious about God’s power and care over us like King Darius. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel:
and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (Daniel 6:20). As believers we are to be curious about God’s Word and the truths within it.

* 1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: The word “desire” carries the idea of being curious about the Word of God. As curiosity leads to craving, we should have a craving for the truth of the Word.

* John 5:39- Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

* 2 Timothy 2:15- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Do you have enough curiosity to search and study the Scriptures?

3. Curious About the WILL of God

* Psalm 143:8- Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning: for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

* Colossians 1:9- For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

* Ephesians 5:17- Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Do you want to know God’s will for your life?

4. Curious About the WARMTH or Love of God

* Ephesians 3:19- And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. The love of Christ will not only give you security and peace, but will give you a love for others. Are you curious about knowing the Lord in your life? This is one of the reasons He made us this way...so we would seek Him. God help us to be curious about Him.

C. Consternation, Reservations, or Panic can turn your path.

The power of fear is incalculable. George W. Truett preached on fear frequently because of his experiences with people. On one occasion, he was asked to speak at a highly respected college. When Truett inquired about what topic to address, he was told that the vast majority of the student body had signed a statement that read, “Let the visiting preacher tell us how we may conquer fear.”

Fear can turn your path quickly from courage to cowardice and weakness. God said He would use fear to protect His people from their
enemies.
* Exodus 23:27 - I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

Unfortunately, people turn away from serving the Lord because they fear the reproach of the crowd, problems, failure, or God’s will for their lives. Israel would not enter the Promised Land because of their fear of the giants in the land. Their problems looked bigger than God.
* Numbers 13:31- But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

God says we don’t have to be afraid.
* 2 Timothy 1:7- For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

D. Chastening, Reckoning, or Punishment can alter your path.

God endorses punishment for disobedient children to get them to turn or change their direction in life. Balaam chastened his donkey to get her to turn in the way.
* Numbers 22:23- And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

God will chasten us when we are disobedient in order to get us to turn to Him and grow spiritually in our life.
* Hebrews 12:11- Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

E. Chicanery, Ruse, or Prevarication can change your course.

People’s lives have been turned away from the Lord because someone has deceived them with lies or has led them down a false path. The nation of Israel went into idolatry after they were deceived.
* Deuteronomy 11:16 - Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;
* Isaiah 44:20- He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Jacob’s deception turned the course of his life. He had to flee from his home because of his brother’s anger. He never saw his mother alive after he left.
* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. We do reap what we sow. Jacob
reaped the deception he had sown with his father. He was deceived by his own sons too. Jacob’s life was difficult because he had learned what it meant to reap what you sow.
* Jacob deceived Isaac about his favorite son Esau, and his sons deceived him about his favorite son, Joseph.
* Jacob cheated Esau out of the blessing and Laban cheated Jacob for twenty years in wives and labor.
* Jacob was treacherous and deceptive and his sons grew up being the same way, especially at Shechem.
* Goatskins were used to deceive Isaac, making Jacob feel hairy like Esau, and the blood of a goat was used on Joseph’s coat to give the impression he was dead. You do reap what you sow.

I think of the story of the melon farmer whose crop of melons were disappearing fast from his field. Thieves were continually stealing the melons under the cover of darkness. The farmer finally became desperate and in an attempt to save his crop from the vandals, he decided to put up a sign. The sign had a skull and crossbones, and it read: “ONE OF THESE MELONS IS POISONED.” Only the farmer knew that it was not true. For two nights, not a melon was missing, but after the third night, the farmer noticed that his sign had been altered. Someone had scratched out the word “ONE” and replaced it with another word so that the sign now read, “TWO OF THESE MELONS ARE POISONED.” The thieves addeded their own poisonous melon to the field. Thinking to save his whole crop through deception, the owner lost it all. He could not take a chance at selling a poisonous melon. Being deceived and being deceitful can turn you away from the Lord.

F. Corrupt, Rotten, or Perverted friends have great turning powers.

God warned His people about the influence of wicked people. Solomon did not heed God’s warning. The man known for his wisdom became a fool because he would not listen to the Lord and choose his friends wisely.
* 1 Kings 11:2- Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

The intimidations and dares of a carnal crowd can exert great pressure on anyone who wants to do that which is right. The temptations from a woman or man can be so intense that a person will trash his family for an adulterous fling or give away his or her purity before marriage. Choose your friends wisely lest your heart be turned away from the Lord.
A person who becomes your spouse is normally your friend first. An unbelieving spouse can turn your heart away from the Lord. For this reason we are not to date or marry unsaved people. The wives of Solomon turned his heart from God. I also think of many Christian young people who turned from God when they started dating an unsaved boyfriend or girlfriend. God says we are not to do this.

* 1 Kings 11:2,4- And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

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

* Deuteronomy 7:4- For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. God instructed His people not to intermarry with pagans.

*2 Corinthians 6:14,15-Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

G. A Craving, Regard, or Pining for folly will turn your life.

Foolishness, frivolity, and recklessness have destroyed the testimonies of many Christians. Keep your focus on the Lord and don't go back to your old, sinful lifestyle. It is a fool that goes back to his sin.

* Psalm 85:8- I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

* Proverbs 26:11- As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

Keep your eyes on the Lord.

* Hebrews 12:2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

H. Covetousness, Rapaciousness, or Possessiveness will turn your heart away from the Lord.

Selfishness and greed turn the heart away from God. Material things tend to distract us from the Lord by becoming priorities in our life. They
almost become idols to us. "Crooked ways" is a good description of this attitude. It is ironic that people seek things to fill their empty hearts, but they are never satisfied and at peace.

* Psalm 125:5 - As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

* 1 Samuel 8:3 - And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Samuel’s sons were turned away from serving the Lord by their greed for money.

* 1 Timothy 6:10- For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. The love of money is a root of all sorts of sinful activity. Covetousness causes people to wander or turn away from the faith. This is the meaning of the word “erred.” Notice there is no peace, just sorrow.

* Haggai 1:6 - Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Greed will not satisfy you.

I. Contemplation, Reflection, or Probing your heart can turn your direction in life.

We are to constantly be examining ourselves to make sure that we are right with God and others. When we look at our life and see what is wrong, then we are on the way to turning it in the right direction.

* Lamentations 3:40 - Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

* Psalm 119:59- I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

* Acts 24:16-And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Maintaining a clear conscience requires self examination.

J. A Crooked, Reprehensible, Poor example can turn you from God.

The example of Israel’s fathers influenced God’s people into turning from the Lord.

* Psalm 78:57- But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

A poor example in the parent’s lives is terribly destructive. The example of friends is very powerful too. In fact, the major reason for teenage suicide, drug addiction, and alcoholism is that most young people are conformists. They tend to do what everybody else does. In many ways
most people are like sheep. A television documentary revealed a lot about the behavior of sheep. One scene showed a packing house where sheep were slaughtered. The sheep had to walk from their pen up a narrow ramp and then make a right turn. In order to get the sheep to walk up this ramp, a "Judas goat" was trained to lead them to their death. This goat was placed among the sheep and then walked confidently to the ramp as the nervous sheep watched. After the goat got about five feet up the ramp, the sheep began to follow. Near the top of the ramp the goat turned left as the gate was opened only for him and then closed again. The sheep, however, continued up the ramp and turned right to their death. As you look at your own life, is your example leading people to destruction or a better life now and for eternity.

K. Clouding, Regressive, or Pale faithfulness will turn your life from the Lord.

People turn from the Lord because they are unfaithful to Him. There is no dedication at all, unlike Daniel, who purposed in his heart he would not defile himself when he was in Babylon (Daniel 1:8).

* Psalm 78:57- But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

Double-mindedness is a key reason why people are unfaithful. They are very unstable in their Christian life. James addressed this issue.

* James 1:8- A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

It is interesting to note that the Latin word for doubt, *dubitare*, comes from an Aryan root word meaning "two." To believe is to be "of one mind" about accepting something as true; to disbelieve is to be "of one mind" about rejecting it. To doubt is to waver between the two, believing and doubting at once and thus be in "two minds." This is where the unfaithful, unstable believer finds himself, struggling between faith and doubt in his heart.

L. A Contrary, Resistant, Pigheaded attitude toward the Word of God will turn you away from Him.

Stubbornness toward the Scriptures and an unteachable spirit will strangle your Christian growth. What you do with the Bible will determine what God does with you.

* Jeremiah 32:33 - And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

* Jeremiah 11:10-They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have
broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.
* Proverbs 28:9- He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.
* 1 Timothy 1:6- From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling: The word “swerved” means “to miss the mark; deviate from the truth; fail, or error.”

M. A Callous, Stubborn, Pigheaded heart will turn your way.

Christians should be on their guard for a rebellious, hard heart in their lives. When your heart hardens, it turns you from spiritual matters.
* 2 Chronicles 36:13- And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.
* Isaiah 63:10- But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.
* Lamentations 1:20- Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.
* Hebrews 3:13 - But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

N. Conceit, Ridiculousness, Pride and Pointless pursuits will turn your path from the Lord.

People are so easily distracted from the Lord by vain matters. Some folks are consumed with what people think of them or being accepted by the gang. We waste so much of our life and time on petty matters. God help us all to stay focused on Him as David prayed.
* Psalm 4:2- O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.
* Proverbs 30:8- Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Someone said, “At twenty we worry about what people think of us. At forty, we don’t care what people think of us. At sixty, we find out that people have not been thinking about us at all.” Don’t let your pride rob you of the blessings that God wants to give you and the growth that needs to take place in your life. A proud person never really gets anywhere because he thinks he has already arrived. Just remember that your halo has to slip just a few inches to become a noose to strangle you.

O. Corrupt, Pagan Religion will turn the heart from God.

Idolatry turns a person from the truth to lies.
* Ezekiel 14:6 - Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away
your faces from all your abominations.

P. Concocting, Reprobate Prophets lead people astray from God.

False prophets confuse people by distorting the truth. They mix just enough truth with their lies to deceive and distract people from the Lord. God warns us to beware of their tongues.

* Deuteronomy 13:5- And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

* 1 John 4:1- Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Q. Contumacy, Revolt, or Persistent disobedience will turn you.

Disobedience will turn you from the Lord. Saul was disobedient to the Lord. God commanded him to do one thing and he did the opposite. The result was his whole life was turned around and he ended up loosing his kingdom. Jonah was disobedient and it almost cost him his life. We have a rebellious nature that bucks at being told what to do. I think of the Flagship Hotel in Houston, Texas. It is built right next to the water. Large plate-glass windows adorn the dining room, which is on the lowest floor. However, the windows kept getting broken by guests fishing from the balcony above. Heavy sinkers had to be used to cast to the water, but the lines were often too short and would crash against the windows below. Finally the management removed the “NO FISHING FROM THE BALCONY” signs from the rooms. The fishing stopped and the windows were safe at last. This story is a classic illustration of the rebellious, defiant attitudes that people have toward authority. Don’t rebel against God’s authority and turn away from Him.

* 1 Samuel 15:11- It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.

R. Customs, Rituals, & Past Practices can turn people from the truth.

Traditions can be truth killers. People will put more faith and dependence upon their traditions sometimes than the truth of God’s Word. Some traditions can turn you from the Lord.

* Galatians 4:9- But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Weak and beggarly
elements are the traditions of men.

* Titus 1:14- Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

S. The Control, Rule, or desire for Power over one’s self can turn you from doing God’s will.

There is a constant conflict between our will and God’s. When our attitude is “I’m the boss of my life,” we find ourselves in conflict with the Lord and on a path of destruction.

* Isaiah 53:6- All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
* Jeremiah 8:6- I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.
* Proverbs 14:12- There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

T. Complications, Rigorous Pain or Problems in your Health can turn you from your friends and the Lord.

Some of Job’s friends turned away from him when he was afflicted.

* Job 19:19-22... All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me. [20] My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. [21] Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. [22] Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Job, however, did not turn away from the Lord.

* Job 1:21,22- And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Here are some good things that make positive turns or changes in our life......

U. Communion with God, Reverence, & Praise for the Lord will turn your heart toward Him.

Sacrifice and worship will turn your heart. This is what Jeroboam feared when the kingdom was divided.

* 1 Kings 12:27- If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.
V. Calling upon God, Requests, or Prayer will turn your heart.

* Daniel 9:13- As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Daniel links prayer with turning from iniquity and understanding truth. Prayer will soften your heart and keep you tender. For this reason we are to pray for our enemies and those who have hurt us.

W. Curing, Restoration of health, or the Performance of a miracle can turn the hearts of people.

The miraculous healing of Aeneas caused the people of Lydda and Saron to turn to the Lord. When people see the power of God and answered prayers, it tends to wake them up to spiritual truth.

* Acts 9:34,35- And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

X. Convincing, Rational, Powerful Preaching turns people.

God uses the foolishness of preaching to change people’s lives.

* Acts 11:20,21- And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Y. Comprehension, Compliance, Respect, and Practical Application of Scripture will turn your life around.

The Bible is the most powerful book in the world. Preaching is not only important, but understanding and applying its truths will change your heart and life. The Word of God, in the hands of the Spirit of God, can turn the course of your life.

* Jeremiah 23:22- But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

* Romans 1:16- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

* Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
II. THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF TURNING FROM GOD

When you turn from God, you lose. You may gain what you want, but end up losing what you had in the first place. A survey of the Scriptures provides a thorough list of some of the possible negative, costly consequences of turning from the Lord.

A. The Deference & Deification of Idols.

Men tend to worship something, whether it is God, an idol, another person, or themselves. Turning from the Lord leads to serving something or someone else sooner or later. The vacuum in man’s heart must be filled.

* Deuteronomy 11:16- Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;
* Deuteronomy 30:17- But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

B. We’re Drawn away from the Lord

When you turn from the Lord, you open yourself up to the power of false doctrine and Satanic influence. Rejecting the Lord weakens you against Satanic attack and deception. One either accepts the truth and embraces it or rejects it and embraces deception. This is why so many cults are filled with people who use to be members of Baptist churches. They rejected the Lord and His Word.

* Deuteronomy 30:17- But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

C. A Deafness toward God’s Word

When people turn from the Lord, they don’t want to hear what God has to say in His Word. This is why they tend to get out of church. They become deaf to the Word of God. They don’t want to hear it at all!

* Deuteronomy 30:17- But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;
* Isaiah 30:9- That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:
* Zechariah 7:12- Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

D. Dishonesty creeps into your Life

* 1 Samuel 8:3- And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Samuel’s sons did
not walk in the ways of Samuel. They turned to corruption and vice.

E. A Deviation from Justice

When truth is rejected, then men tend to live by their own set of rules and ethics instead of God's guidelines. Corruption, greed, and an anti-God sentiment pollute justice and government.

* 1 Samuel 8:3 - And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

F. The Development of a Defective Heart

* 1 Kings 11:4 - For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. Turning from the Lord leads to a heart that is not “perfect,” not wholly devoted or sold out to the Lord. God wants all of our heart.

* Matthew 22:37 - Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

* 1 Samuel 12:20 - And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart;

H. You are Deceived & Your Dependability is Weakened

* Psalm 78:57 - But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. In the East, the bow rests in its natural form of a “C”. It must recurved like this “[]” in order to be properly bent or strung. If the bow is not properly strung, it can recoil and smack you hard. Ouch! If the string or bow itself is rotten or weak, it can break when you draw the arrow to the tip, discharging the arrow into the archer or it can recoil after you shoot the arrow. Ouch! If the bow is warped, it can send the arrow flying off into the wrong direction. A deceitful bow is one that is undependable. When we turn from the Lord, we have been deceived and are undependable for His service. As the deceitful bow is useless, we too become useless in the Lord’s work when we turn from Him. We are like the player sitting on the bench and not in the ball game.

* Isaiah 44:20- He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

I. The Defilement of God’s Temple

* Jeremiah 32:34- But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. When God’s people turned from the Lord, they defiled the Temple in Jerusalem and their bodies.
When people turn from the Lord, they tend to defile their bodies with immorality, drugs, and physical abuses. Have you noticed how pagan worshipers abuse their bodies? Body abuse is a trait of paganism or of someone who has turned from the Lord. If you are a Christian, your body does not belong to you. It is considered as God’s temple.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19,20- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

J. The Destruction of the Family

* Jeremiah 32:35 - And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

When people turn from the Lord, it has devastating effects upon the family, especially when the kids become teenagers. I have seen this cycle repeated over and over again. It is unfortunate that many children grow up not knowing the Lord their parents know because Mom or Dad turned from the Lord and got out of church. Parents rob their children of the opportunities they had when they were children. Wake up Mom and Dad!

K. Duress (bondage)

Turning from the Lord leads to bondage. It may be physical bondage, emotional, financial, or spiritual bondage. When you turn from the Lord, you open yourself up to duress. God sent His people into bondage when they turned from Him. He chastened them in order to bring them back to Himself.

* Jeremiah 32:36- And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

Sinful living enslaves you. The freedom to do what you want eventually enslaves you as sinful habits take their toll on your health and well-being. Because of the diseases contracted from sinful living, you are unable to do what you want to do because of health or physical limitations. Sinful addictions rob you of your joy, peace, and sanity, leaving you enslaved and dependent upon those addictions.

* Isaiah 5:18 - Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:
* Proverbs 5:22- His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be helden with the cords of his sins.
* Acts 8:23 - For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Peter said this to Simon the sorcerer.
* 2 Timothy 2:26- And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.
* Psalm 9:16- The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.
* 2 Peter 2:19- While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. False prophets are in spiritual bondage.

L. The Dishonoring & Degrading of God
* Psalm 4:2 - O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

When Christians turn from the Lord, they hurt the cause of Christ. Because we are God’s ambassadors, we hurt our testimony and people’s opinions of the Lord. We are to be more concerned about God’s reputation than our own.

M. Disturbances & Disorder plague our life.

If you turn from the Lord, don’t be surprised if trouble comes into your life. Sinful living does not lead to fun, but to sorrow and confusion.
* Psalm 25:16-18... Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. [17] The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. [18] Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.
* Isaiah 57:20,21- But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.
* Isaiah 59:8- The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

N. The Displeasure & Dander of the Lord

The Lord is not happy with us when we turn from Him. God still gets angry today when we disobey and turn from Him.
* Psalm 60:1- O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.
* Deuteronomy - For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.
* 1 Samuel 15:11 - It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for
he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night. We hurt others when we turn from the Lord as well as the Lord Himself.

* Isaiah 63:10 - But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

O. Discomfort and Dismal Circumstances in our Life

* Joshua 24:20- If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. The Lord may use pain to chasten you if you turn from Him.

P. The Desire for Vain things.

When you turn from the Lord, you tend to pursue that which is worthless. Only one life will soon be passed. Only what’s done for Christ will last.

* 1 Samuel 12:21- And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

* Ephesians 4:17- This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Q. Drastic Changes take place in your Circumstances

When people turn from the Lord, sometimes the Lord turns their lives upside down to wake them up. What was fun is no longer fun. What was celebrated as FREEDOM has become a noose around their necks or a chain around their lives. The sweetness of sin soon sours.

* Amos 8:10 - And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

R. The Depletion of God’s Blessings

When you turn from the Lord, you rob yourself of blessings and future reward.

* Jeremiah 5:25- Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

* 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.... Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. [14] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. [15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Many a Christian will watch their life go up in smoke at the Judgment Seat of Christ because they turned from serving the Lord.
* 2 John 1:8 - Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

S. Destruction in our life that is Sudden

   When people turn from the Lord, sometimes the rug is pulled out from beneath their lives and they are suddenly destroyed. Sin can put us in places where we should not be. Some of those places are very dangerous. If it was not for the grace of God, Jonah would have drowned at sea on the path he should not have been near. It is very dangerous to be out of the will of God.

* Job 34:25-27... Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. [26] He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others; [27] Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

* Psalm 146:9-The Lord preserveth the strangers; he reliевeth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

* Proverbs 29:1 - He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

III. THE COMMANDS TO TURN

A. Concerning IDOLATRY

* Leviticus 19:4- Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God.

* Ezekiel 14:6 - Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

B. Concerning INDIVIDUAL Examination

* Deuteronomy 11:16- Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. We are to beware and watch ourselves that we be not deceived and get away from God.

C. Concerning our INIQUITY

* 2 Kings 17:13- Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

* Jeremiah 25:5 - They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord
hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:
* Ezekiel 18:30- Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

D. Concerning the INCrimination of God
* Proverbs 1:23- Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

E. Concerning the IDEAS of the Wicked and their Path
* Proverbs 4:14,15- Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

F. Concerning our INTENTIONS
* 1 Samuel 12:20,21- And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. We should intend on serving the Lord with all our heart.

G. Concerning IMPATIENCE
* Hosea 12:6 - Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.
* Psalm 27:14 - Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

H. Concerning the INTENSITY of our Dedication
* Joel 2:12- Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

I. Concerning our INTEGRITY & INEXCITABILITY

We are to be patient or inexcitable when it comes to those who abuse us and hurt us. We demonstrate great character, integrity, and maturity when we remain calm and patient.
* Matthew 5:39- But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

K. Concerning INACCURATE Professors of Christ
* 2 Timothy 3:5 - Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

IV. THE CALLS UPON GOD FOR TURNING

What are the prayers for turning found in the Bible? What did people ask God to turn?

A. The Prayer for CONTROL
* Psalm 119:37-Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken
thou me in thy way. David was praying for self-discipline.

B. The Prayer for CLEMENCY (mercy)
* Psalm 25:16 - Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.
* Exodus 32:12-14... Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou warest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. [14] And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

C. The Prayer for COMPANIONSHIP
* Psalm 60:1 - O God, thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.
* Psalm 25:16- Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

D. The Prayer for COMMENCEMENT (revival & renewal).
* Lamentations 5:21- Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.
* Jeremiah 31:18,19- I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unacustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

E. The Prayer for CONSCIOUSNESS & the CONCLUSION of CONFLICT

This is a prayer for God’s attention and the end of trouble.
* Psalm 69:16-18 ... Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. [17] And hide not thy face from thy servant: for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. [18] Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

F. The Prayer for CONVERSION & CONSECRATION
* Psalm 80:3 - Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
G. The Prayer for the CEASING of God’s Anger
* Psalm 85:4 - Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

V. THE CAUSES OF WHY GOD TURNS
What causes God to turn from one direction to another or from one decision to a different decision?

A. Penitence, Resignation, or Submissiveness to the Lord
When we have a spirit of humility, it turns the heart of the Lord.
* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
* 2 Chronicles 12:12- And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.

B. Prayer, Requests to the Lord, or Supplications
Prayer can turn the Lord.
* Jonah 3:8 - But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.
* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
* Psalm 69:16-18 ... Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. [17] And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. [18] Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.
* Job 42:10 - And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. When we pray for others, God can turn our trials into blessings.

C. Prudence, Regard, or Scrupulousness for God’s Reputation
* Exodus 32:12-14... Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and
saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. [14] And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. We are to be more concerned about God’s reputation than our own. Moses reminded the Lord of His promises to His people. This was very effective in turning the Lord. When you pray, claim God’s promises and pray them to the Lord.

D. Penitence, Repentance or Sorrow for Sin will turn the Lord.

* Jonah 3:8-10... But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. [9] Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10] And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

* 2 Chronicles 7:14,15- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.

* Jeremiah 18:8 - If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

E. The Patience, Righteousness, and the Sparingness of the Lord will cause Him to turn.

* Psalm 69:16-18... Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. [17] And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. [18] Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. The mercy of God will cause Him to turn. He withholds punishment sometimes when we do deserve it.

F. The Passion, Regard, and Sympathy of the Lord will turn Him.

God’s great love for mankind will cause Him to turn at times from judgment, even though we deserve judgment.

* Micah 7:19- He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

* Deuteronomy 23:5 - Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.
G. Pursuing and Rigorous Searching for the Lord will turn Him.
   God can be turned by seeking His face.
* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

H. Paganism that is accepted and when the Lord is Rejected or Shunned will turn the Lord against you.
* Joshua 24:20- If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

I. Praising or Rejoicing in the Savior can turn the Lord.
* Isaiah 12:1- And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

VI. THE POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF TURNING TO GOD
A. Peace, Calm, and Rest in your Life
* Psalm 85:8 - I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
* Matthew 11:28- Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. God tells us to come to Him because we tend to go another direction. Many times the burdens of our own sins make us weary. Christ promises to give us rest when we come to Him.

B. A Pause, Conclusion, or Refraining of God’s Wrath
   God will turn away His wrath if we turn to Him.
* 2 Chronicles 12:12- And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.
* Jonah 3:10- And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.
* Jeremiah 18:8- If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.
* Psalm 85:4- Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

C. Pleasure, Contentment, or Relaxed Circumstances
   When we turn the Lord, things will go well for us.
* 2 Chronicles 12:12 - And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the
Lord turned from him that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.

When we are turned toward our parents, love, honor, and obey them, things will go well for us also.

* Ephesians 6:1-3... Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. [2] Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

D. Our Prayers, Concerns, or Requests will be heard by God.

* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

E. We have Pardon, Cleansing, or Remission for our Sins.

* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

* Psalm 80:3 - Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

F. The Purging, Cure, or Restoration of the Nation.

* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

G. The Pouring out, Cascade, or Rush of God's Spirit upon our Lives.

* Proverbs 1:23- Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.


When we turn to the Lord, He gives us understanding of His Word.

* Proverbs 1:23- Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

* Daniel 9:13- As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

I. Permanence, Continuance, or Resistance to Destruction.

God has promised eternal survival to those who turn to Him.

* Ezekiel 18:21- But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath
committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

J. Pity, Compassion, & Restraint in Oppressive Situations.
* 2 Chronicles 30:9- For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

K. Penitence, Contrition, and Repentance of Sins.
* Jeremiah 31:19 - Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Conviction and repentance lead to instruction in the Word and spiritual growth.

VII. THE CONCENTRATIONS OF OUR TURNING
What are we to turn? What does the Bible instruct us to turn in our life?
A. Our Ways to the Lord
* Lamentations 3:40- Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

B. Our Watching
* Psalm 119:37- Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

C. Our Wickedness
* Jonah 3:10- And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

D. Our Wrath & the Wrath of Others
* Proverbs 29:8- Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.
* Proverbs 15:1- A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

E. The World Upside Down
* Acts 17:6 - And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

F. The Wicked to Righteousness
* Daniel 12:3 - And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever
and ever.

G. The Will & Warmth of the Children to the Fathers

*Malachi 4:6 - And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. We too should follow Elijah’s example. Our preaching and teaching should draw children to their fathers and fathers closer to their children. A good youth pastor will point the kids in his youth group to love and obey his parents. He will not undermine the authority of the parents.

H. Your Will and Wants

*Matthew 5:39- But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

VIII. CRUCIAL TURNS IN SCRIPTURE

A. The Turn of Defiance & Disobedience....Jonah

*Jonah 1:2,3- Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord This defiance almost cost Jonah his life.

B. The Turn of Deference & Docility....Nebuchadnezzar

*Daniel 4:37- Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase. This proud king finally realized who was the boss and the true King of the universe.

C. The Turn of Deliverance from Sin...Saul

*Acts 9:17,18- And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Saul trusted Christ as his Savior and went on to be used of God in a powerful way as the Apostle Paul.

D. The Turn of Disrespect toward God...Israel & the Golden Calf

*Exodus 32:1 -And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for
as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

E. The Turn of Doubt & Despair... Israel & the Promised Land
* Numbers 14:2-4 ... And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! [3] And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? [4] And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. The result of this decision was a 40 year trip through the wilderness and funerals at a rate of one every twenty minutes seven days a week.

F. The Turn of Disobedience and Death....Adam and Eve
* Genesis 3:6 - And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. The result of this turn was death upon the human race.
* Romans 5:12 - Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

G. The Turn of Distrust or Jealousy....Joseph’s Brothers sell Joseph
* Genesis 37:18 - And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. God used the wrath of man to praise Him. He was able to turn the tables, bringing deliverance to Egypt and Jacob’s family years later.

H. The Turn of Desperation & Dependence in the Lord... the mother of Moses and the Brazen Serpent incident.
* Exodus 2:3- And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.
* Numbers 21:9- And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

When you personally trust Christ as your Savior, you have reached a crucial point in your life. The same holds true when you make the decision to trust the Lord with your life each day and let Him lead your life.

I. The Turn of Dauntlessness and Daring... Rahab and Esther
These two women made courageous decisions which affected the
lives of their people.
*Joshua 2:6,9-* But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.
And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. (Rahab)

*Esther 4:16-* Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. (Esther).

**J. The Turn of Disobedience, Distraction, & Desire....Solomon & Saul**

*1 Samuel 15:9,11,26-* But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

*1 Kings 11:1,2-* But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. Solomon’s disobedience corrupted his own family and eventually led to the division of Israel into two kingdoms.

**K. The Turn of Deliverance....Calvary**

At the Cross, man and God were reconciled through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The price for man's sin was paid in full.

*John 19:30-* When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

**L. The Turn of Deception... Rebekah & Jacob**

Jacob would never see his mother again after this deception. There would be hard feelings between Jacob and Esau's descendants for hundreds of years because of this decision.

*Genesis 27:8-14-* ... Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. [9] Go now to the flock, and fetch me from
thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth: [10] And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. [11] And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: [12] My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. [13] And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. [14] And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved.

M. The Turn of Dedication & Determination...Ruth
* Ruth 1:16-18... And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: [17] Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. [18] When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. Ruth’s decision eventually puts her in the family tree of King David and the Lord Jesus Christ.

N. The Turn of Disloyalty ....Demas
* 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

IX. THE COURSE IN TURNING TO THE LORD
How do we turn our lives around and restore our fellowship with the Lord? What are some steps we can take to get our life right with God and turn back to the Lord?

A. Pay attention to the Lord
Listen to what the Lord has to say in His Word and turn your attention to Him. Listening is vital in growing spiritually. Isn’t it interesting that the ears are first to develop in the womb?
* Psalm 85:8- I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
* Jeremiah 23:22 - But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.
* Zechariah 1:3- Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of
hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

B. Probe your Heart

We are to examine our lives for anything that will hurt our walk with God.

*Lamentations 3:40- Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

C. Penitence is mandatory

Humbling yourself before God and others will get you on the right path. If you need to make matters right with others who have been offended, humility will be needed.

*2 Chronicles 12:12- And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.

2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

D. Positiveness or faith in the Lord is vital

We are to trust the Lord always.

*Psalm 40:4 - Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

*Proverbs 3:5,6- Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

E. The Proud are not to be admired

*Psalm 40:4-Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

*Psalm 1:1- Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

F. Perverse People and Paths should be avoided

*1 Kings 11:2 - Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

*Proverbs 4:14- Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

*1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt
good manners.

G. The Provision of strength or help from the Lord is needed
* Lamentations 5:21 - Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be
  turned; renew our days as of old.

H. Persistence in repentance is essential
* Jonah 3:8-10 ... But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and
cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and
from the violence that is in their hands. [9] Who can tell if God will turn
and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? [10]
And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God
repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he
did it not.
* Ezekiel 14:6 - Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the
  Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away
your faces from all your abominations.
* Jeremiah 31:19 - Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after
that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even
confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

I. Praying or Pleading with the Lord
* 2 Chronicles 7:14 - If my people, which are called by my name, shall
  humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their
wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and
will heal their land.

J. Pursuing or seeking to know the Lord
* 2 Chronicles 15:4- But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord
  God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.
* Jeremiah 29:13 - And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search
  for me with all your heart.
* John 5:39- Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal
  life: and they are they which testify of me.
* Isaiah 55:6- Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him
  while he is near:

    The great desire of Paul’s life was to know the Lord intimately.
* Philippians 3:10-That I may know him, and the power of his
  resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable
  unto his death;

K. A Positive response to God’s reproof

    Preaching and discipline will do one of two things to you. It will
either harden you and make you more rebellious or it will soften your heart
and make you teachable. When we have a teachable spirit, God can work in our life and help us to become more like Him.

* **Proverbs 1:23** - Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

**L. Plenary or total surrender to the Lord is essential**

If you are going to be what the Lord wants you to be, you will need to be totally surrendered to the Lord. This is what He expects of us.

* **1 Samuel 12:20,21** - And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

* **Joel 2:12,13** - Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

* **Joshua 22:5** - But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

* **Mark 12:30** - And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

**M. Praising and worshiping the Lord**

* **1 Kings 12:27** - If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

* **Isaiah 12:1** - And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

* **Hebrews 13:15** - By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

**N. Patient waiting upon God**

* **Hosea 12:6** - Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

* **Psalm 27:14** - Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.
We tend to get ahead of the Lord in our life and make all sorts of mistakes. Waiting for God’s leading will help you in your walk with Him.

O. Persevere in suffering
* Psalm 44:18,19- Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.
* 1 Corinthians 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoving, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

P. Perform what is right in the sight of God
* 2 Kings 22:2- And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.
* 1 Kings 22:43 - And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

X. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN JESUS TURNED

What happened when Jesus turned?

A. He was Healing
* Matthew 9:22- But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

B. He was Rebuking
* Matthew 16:23- But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.
* Luke 9:55- But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

C. He was Inquiring
* Mark 5:30- And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?
* John 1:38 - Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

D. He was Marveling & Praising
* Luke 7:9 - When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and
turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

E. He was Teaching & Counseling
* Luke 7:44 - And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

F. He was Challenging to Discipleship
* Luke 14:25-27,33- And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, [26] If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. [27] And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. [33] So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

G. He was Looking & Reminding
* Luke 22:61- And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things in the past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye.
Chapter 4
A Plan that Backfired!
1 Kings 2:10-25

Have you ever set your heart upon a dream, goal, or plan, only to have it backfire in your face or where delight turned out to be distress? These times are very disappointing aren’t they? Our anticipation and expectations are left empty and void. We were not counting on our plans to backfire, but they did.

This is the case in our story today. The plans and schemes of a prince are not only going to backfire, but explode in his face. It will cost him his life. The background for this story begins in chapter two. David is on the borderline between time and eternity. He is about to die. He gives Solomon final instructions on matters that need to be taken care of when Solomon becomes king. Barzillai’s family is to be rewarded and Joab and Shimei are to be judged. Let’s pick up the story and find out about a plan that backfired.

I. THE CESSATION OF DAVID 2:10,11

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

As wonderful as David was and though he was a man after God’s own heart, he died. If Christ does not return in your lifetime, you will die too. Are you ready? Don’t make the mistake of thinking you have plenty of time to get saved. You don’t know that at all.

* Proverbs 27:1 - Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Many folks have seen their plans backfire in death as their lives end in fires, drowning, murder, crashes, poisonings, diseases, etc. Death is rude. It often barges into our life unwelcome and unexpected. When it
does, all our plans are lost in eternity. Trust Christ today if you are not saved!

* 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

II. THE CROWN OF SOLOMON  2:12

Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

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olomon waited for God’s timing. He is now the king. He did not try to jump the gun like Absalom or Adonijah by taking the throne away from his father. Our impatience and greed get us into trouble. The greedy plans we have set in our mind will often backfire in our face. Solomon came to the throne God’s way and his kingdom was established greatly which means it was “fixed, stable, and well prepared.”

III. THE CONFERENCE WITH BATHSHEBA  2:13-18

And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. [14] He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. [15] And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the Lord. [16] And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. [17] And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. [18] And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

A
donijah has difficulty accepting “No” for an answer. He is not the king and struggles with this position. He devises a plan that could still give him access to the throne. Adonijah approaches Bathsheba in order to get his own way. It’s a clever plan that is about to backfire. Notice several elements of this conversation.

A. The Conceit vs. 13-15a

Bathsheba asks if Adonijah comes in peace because she feared for her life earlier. If he had become king, he could have executed her and Solomon. Notice his conceit... “The kingdom was mine.” This was his opinion, not God’s. He says, “All Israel set their face upon me.” This was not true. All of Israel did not want him as king.
The root problem of cocky, conceited people is pride. Pride is what leads to their downfall as we will see in Adonijah’s life. The Bible warns us about our pride.

* Proverbs 11:2- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.
* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

B. The Comprehension vs. 15b

He says, “The kingdom is turned about…” In our terms, “My plans have backfired.” It was Solomon’s kingdom because the Lord gave it to him. At least he recognizes the Lord’s exaltation of Solomon. God is the one who does the exalting.

* Psalm 75:7- But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.
* Daniel 2:21- And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Notice again that it was from the Lord. Everything we have is from the Lord. Never forget that truth and never forget to be grateful and thankful for His blessing upon you.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

C. The Conspiracy vs. 16,17

Adonijah petitions Bathsheba for the hand of Abishag of the royal harem. He assumes that Solomon would not deny his mother. This was his plan and expectation but it is about to backfire drastically as we will see in a moment.

D. The Compliance of Bathsheba vs. 18

Bathsheba promises to speak to Solomon. So far, so good, but not for long!

IV. THE COMMITMENT OF SOLOMON 2:19,20

Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king’s mother; and she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.
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olomon shows great love and respect for his mother. By the way, do you?

* Ephesians 6:2,3- Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Bathsheba proceeds to ask a small petition, at least she considers it to be small. Solomon agrees to grant her request before hearing it. This was not very smart. In fact, Solomon wrote later this verse.

* Proverbs 18:13 - He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Solomon learned from that mistake. Do you learn from yours? A fool never learns from them. Have you learned to accept “No” for an answer? Adonijah couldn’t and his plan backfires.

V. THE CONDEMNATION OF ADONIJAH 2:21-25

And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. [22] And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. [23] Then king Solomon sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. [24] Now therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. [25] And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

B

athsbea presents the petition. The response of Solomon suggests that something is very wrong. Her request turned out to be bigger than she thought. This was not a little matter after all. This is so true in our own lives. Things we think are not a big deal may be a big deal to others. What we say and how we treat others may not seem important to us. However, they may be offensive to others. It is a big deal to them. Things that we think are small matters to God are actually very important to our King. Being faithful, living godly, giving, witnessing, obeying the Bible, etc., are all important matters to the Lord. The book of Exodus has a list of important things to God. We know that list as the Ten Commandments.

* Worship belongs to God alone.
* God is concerned about how His name is used.
* Our parents are to be honored.
* God is concerned about how we treat others. We are not to murder, steal, lie, or gossip.
* Sexual purity is important.
* God hates greed.

Solomon is upset with his mother’s request. He says, “Does he ask for the kingdom also?” Adonijah’s request was a conspiracy because the heir to the throne inherited the royal harem of which Abishag was a member. If Abishag becomes Adonijah’s wife, he can lay claim to the throne according to the custom of that day. In the eyes of the people, having a royal wife would give him claim to the throne. This is why Solomon is furious and says, “Does he ask for the kingdom also?” Solomon decides to once and for all deal with this troublemaker and has Adonijah executed. Adonijah’s plan mortally backfired. God chose Solomon for a reason. We can see why when we compare their lives.

**Adonijah**

1. Endued with beauty.
2. He had goodliness.
4. He loved himself.
5. He desired riches and honor.
6. He acted as if he were master.
7. He lost everything.
8. He sought to force events.
9. He repaid David with treason.

**Solomon**

1. Endued with wisdom.
2. He had goodness.
3. The Lord loved him.
4. He loved the Lord.
5. He desired none but a wise heart.
6. He remembered he was a servant.
7. He gained everything, wisdom, $.
8. Waited on the Lord’s timing & will.
9. He revered his parents.

The selfishness, greed, pride, impatience, and hard heart of Adonijah led to his schemes and plans backfiring in his face. The same thing will happen to us if we get hardhearted.

* Proverbs 29:1- *He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*
* Hebrews 3:12,13*- Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened
through the deceitfulness of sin.

Is your life in tune with God’s will? If it’s not in tune, don’t be surprised if your plans backfire. James tells us how to plan our life.

* James 4:14,15- Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

Sometimes when we get what we want, we are disappointed to find out it was not what we wanted.
Chapter 5
The Dream of a King
1 Kings 3:1-10

Are you a dreamer? Are there things that you dream about doing and accomplishing? Many folks are dreamers. Great ideas are usually dreamed about first. George Bernard Shaw said, “Some men see things as they are and ask why. I dream things that never were and say, why not?” Henry David Thoreau said, “Dreams are the touchstones of our character. For in dreams we but act a part which must have been learned and rehearsed in our waking hours. Our truest life is when we are living out our dreams.”

In this chapter, we will read about the dream of a king which will reveal the true desire of his heart, a desire that was honorable, worthy, and pleased the Lord. Let’s look at the dream of a king and learn from what was in his heart.

I. THE ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT 3:1

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh’s daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

Solomon makes an alliance with Egypt and seals it by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh. This was a very significant marriage. The Amarna Tablets of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty stated that no daughter of Pharaoh was to be married to a foreigner. By the 21st Egyptian Dynasty, Egypt was very weak and saw an advantage to making an alliance with Israel. Solomon treated her royally indeed. He built her a palace (7:8), and her dowry was the city of Gezer (9:16). The unfortunate truth of this marriage was it set a pattern for Solomon which led to his ruin. Solomon married heathen wives to form alliances with
other nations. These women turned his heart from the Lord to idolatry. He had hundreds of concubines and wives.

* 1 Kings 11:1-4 ... But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; [2] Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. [3] And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. [4] For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

The Bible gives us a New Testament principle for today that is related to this incident. Christians are not to date or marry unsaved people lest they turn their heart from the Lord. You are not to use dating or marriage as a mission project to get someone saved. Wait until they are born again first before you consider courting or marrying them.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14,15- Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

II. THE ADORATION OF THE LORD 3:2-4

Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord, until those days. [3] And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. [4] And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

S

olomon is around 20 and he starts his reign off right. He loved the Lord and walked in His statutes. The person who truly loves the Lord will want to obey His Word. He will not want to talk about obeying it only, but also walk it.

* John 14:15- If ye love me, keep my commandments. The word “keep” means “to guard or treasure.”
III. THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD  3:5-8

In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. [6] And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. [7] And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. [8] And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

The Lord appears to Solomon in a dream and offers him a "carte blanche," a blank check.... "Ask what I shall give thee." This is a better offer than Aladdin’s Genie. If the Lord asked you this question, what would you ask for? Would it be wealth, power, fame, long life, or the destruction of your enemies? Think about it. Did you know you can receive wonderful things from the Lord if you will ask Him?

* Matthew 7:7- Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
* John 14:13 - And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

God’s question was actually a test for Solomon. The Bible records several methods for testing a believer’s maturity, integrity, loyalty, sincerity, and stability.

1. By a Demand for Sacrifice. Genesis 22:1,2- And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

2. By a Difficult Path. Deuteronomy 8:2- And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

3. By Distress in Duty. Acts 16:23,24- And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

4. By allowing Distractions from Temptations.
*James 1:2,3-My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 5. By the Decisions we make. This is what is happening here.

Let me ask, “Is the Lord testing your life now?” Put Him first and trust Him. In his dream, Solomon expressed his true heart. In a dream, one is unable to disguise the true state of the heart. One is not controlled by reason or will to repress what is in his heart. Solomon’s heart was filled with gratitude for God’s mercy. It was filled with humility. He was conscious of his youth, his ignorance, and his inadequacy. God has a way, however, of using men who are dependent upon Him.

* Moses felt inadequate..... Exodus 4:10,13- And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

* Jeremiah felt inadequate.... Jeremiah 1:6- Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

* Paul also felt inadequate... 1 Corinthians 15:9- For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

These were all humble men whom God used. True humility is not self-degrading. It is self-forgetfulness and God-dependent. The humble man looks to the Lord for strength and ability. He gives God the glory for his accomplishments. That is what the Lord wants us to do too. Our Lord can equip us for the task He wants us to accomplish. Without Him, we will fail.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. The Lord can help you with your marriage, parenting, work, any area in your life.

Before we leave these verses, we want to note another observation. In this dispensation or period, God at times would speak to a person in dreams. He spoke to Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, the Apostle John, and Joseph, the husband of Mary. God does not speak to us through dreams and visions today because He doesn’t need to do this. His revelation of truth is complete. We have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to give us direction and guidance in our decisions. Those who claim doctrinal revelation from God are deceived or our deceivers. A religion or preacher can be judged by his attitude toward the Word of God.
Many cults have been started by men or women who claimed revelations from God in dreams and visions. These dreams contradicted Scripture. The dreams of Joseph Smith lead to the start of Mormonism. The visions of Mary Baker Eddy lead to the founding of the Christian Science movement. **Beloved, God NEVER leads us to contradict His Word!**

**IV. THE AMBITION OF SOLOMON  3:9,10**

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

It was 5 p.m. on April 12th, 1945, when Vice President Harry Truman ducked into Sam Rayburn’s private office in the Capitol. A message was given to Truman that the White House had called. Dialing National 1414, he reached the Press Secretary, Steve Early, who instructed Truman to urgently and quietly come to the White House.

Arriving at the White House, he was greeted by Eleanor Roosevelt who said to the Vice President, “Harry, the President is dead.” Truman groped for words and asked her, “Is there anything I can do for you Mrs. Roosevelt?” Eleanor replied, “Is there anything we can do for you? You are the one in trouble now.”

That night, Truman took the oath of office as President of the United States with his hand resting on a Gideon Bible that they borrowed from the desk of the head usher of the White House. The following Monday, Truman addressed a joint session in Congress. His speech lasted only fifteen minutes, but he closed with these words from this chapter, “At this moment I have in my heart a prayer. As I have assumed my duties, I humbly pray to Almighty God in the words of King Solomon: ‘Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?’ I ask only to be a good and faithful servant of my Lord and my people.” It wouldn’t hurt any of our Presidents if they prayed this prayer and meant it.

When it came to Solomon taking the throne, God gives Solomon a blank check and Solomon begins to fill it in. “Lord, here is my choice. I want an understanding heart. I need wisdom Lord to lead the nation.” Every parent, pastor, public leader, and business executive needs an understanding heart. An understanding heart means “a hearing heart or
teachable heart.” We need an understanding heart to hear God’s voice and obey it when He speaks to us through His Spirit. Hearing is so important to the Lord that the ear is the first sense organ to function in the womb and the last one to stop functioning in death. We need a heart that has patience to hear a case and understand it fully. Hearing is the door to discernment, blessing, and wisdom.

* Proverbs 8:34- Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

Solomon needs wisdom to make the right decisions. He asked for judicial wisdom to do his job. He did not ask God to do the job for him. God wants to work through us. Unfortunately, Solomon did not pray for spiritual discernment. If he had, many of his blunders could have been avoided in his home. May we learn from his mistakes and ask God for spiritual discernment, wisdom, and an understanding heart.

God wants us to have a wise and understanding heart. He wants us to have an understanding about life itself and links wisdom with understanding. Understanding recognizes cause and effect sequences. It sees the problem, the results, the causes, and the solutions. Understanding uses knowledge and wisdom to make practical applications in daily decisions.

* Proverbs 15:14- The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

Understanding takes the truth of God’s Word and puts it into practical applications for our lives in the areas of marriage, work, child training, spiritual service, government, finances, etc. If you want understanding, you need a knowledge of the character and nature of God. Who is He? What is God like? What does He expect? One takes this knowledge and applies it to their life. God is holy; we should be too. God loves us; we should love others. God hates sin; we should hate our sin too.

* Proverbs 9:10- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Understanding is necessary in order to obey God’s Word with our whole heart.

* Psalm 119:34 - Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

What steps do I take to gain a wise and understanding heart?

1. Salvation- Trust Christ as your personal Savior.

* Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
2. Supplication- Ask God for wisdom and understanding.
* James 1:5 - If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

3. Submission- Obey your parents and the authorities in your life. When Jesus was 12, he submitted to His parents. The result was described in Luke 2:52- And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.
* Proverbs 10:1 - The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

4. Scripture Meditation- Memorize and meditate on Scriptures.
* Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
* Psalm 1:2,3- But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

5. Sensibleness- Use discernment and good judgment for every decision.
* Proverbs 16:21- The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. The prudent person knows what is appropriate and acceptable, especially in his choice of words and recognition of moral danger. For example, he does not allow a situation to get him to lose control of himself in anger.
* Proverbs 14:29 - He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

   Not recognizing moral danger shows a lack of understanding.
* Proverbs 6:32- But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

6. Shun- Stay away from foolish people. Why?
* Proverbs 18:2- A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.
* Proverbs 13:20- He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

   If you need understanding, ask God for it.
Chapter 6
The Blessings From Right Priorities
1 Kings 3:10-28

Solomon has been given a blank check from the Lord. The Lord told him, “Ask what I shall give thee.” Solomon does not ask for wealth, health, power, fame, or honor. Instead, he makes a wise choice and joins the ranks of a few people who made right choices in Scripture. People like:
* Joshua- Joshua 24:15 .... And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
* Ruth- Ruth 1:16 .... And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:
* David- Psalm 119:30 .... I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.
* Moses- Hebrews 11:25 .... Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Solomon’s choice was for an understanding heart to lead the nation. His decision pleased the Lord. This ought to be our purpose in life too. Our goal should be to hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”
The Bible gives several insights about pleasing the Lord.

1. Pleasing the Lord brings peace in your heart and life.
   * Proverbs 16:7 - When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

2. Pleasing the Lord is the duty of every Christian.
   * 1 Thessalonians 4:1 - Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

3. Pleasing the Lord should be the desire of every preacher.
   * 1 Thessalonians 2:4 - But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

4. Enoch was an example of a man who pleased God.
   * Hebrews 11:5 - By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Are you pleasing the Lord in your life right now? Make it the priority of your life. Solomon asked for an understanding heart. Let’s see what God did for him.

I. THE ANSWERED PRAYER  3:11-15

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; [12] Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. [13] And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. [14] And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. [15] And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Because Solomon’s priorities were right, God gave him a wise and understanding heart, but also wealth and honor like no other man.

* Ecclesiastes 7:11 - Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.
Chapter 6...The Blessings from Right Priorities...3:10-28

There are some great truths here that we will note.
* Matthew 6:33- But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
* Ephesians 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Setting your sights on riches will leave you empty and never satisfied. Putting the Lord first in your life will satisfy the deepest needs in your life. Solomon received great wisdom, but it was up to him to apply that wisdom in all areas of his life. He was basically wise in governing the nation. He was foolish in governing his house. He did not always act wisely and neither do we. Wealth without wisdom and grace can damage your life. Because the condition of verse 14 is not heeded, he did not live a long life. He died around the age of sixty. Not all have great wisdom like Solomon. We do have the opportunity to be faithful to the Lord and that is really what true wisdom is all about. There is wisdom in serving Jesus Christ and putting Him first in your life.
* Colossians 2:3- In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
* 1 Corinthians 1:30- But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

II. THE ARGUMENT OF TWO HARLOTS 3:16-23

Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. [17] And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. [18] And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. [19] And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. [20] And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. [21] And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. [22] And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. [23] Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.
No sooner does God answer Solomon’s prayer when he faces a test. Solomon must do some quick detective work. Two harlots had come before the king. Both of them were nursing mothers. One child died in the night and one lived. Both of these women laid claim to the same baby. The problem for Solomon was “Who is telling the truth and who is lying?”

III. THE ANSWER FROM SOLOMON 3:24-28

And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. [25] And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. [26] Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. [27] Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. [28] And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

Solomon’s solution to the problem was to take a sword and cut the baby in half. As Sherlock Holmes would say, “It’s elementary Watson.” The true mother, even though a harlot, loved her baby unlike 1 ½ to 2 million women each year in the USA who abort their babies.

The true mother demonstrates elements of genuine love. Love is not selfish. It sacrifices self for the object loved. The true mother would rather see her baby live and do without her than see her baby die. The lying harlots attitude was, “If I can’t have it, nobody can.” It’s ironic that the lying woman did not love or care about this child. So why does she desire it? Why rear the child of another? Why take on an unwanted expense? What is her motivation?

* Fear of reproach and being mocked as a murderer?
* Envy and jealousy of her roommates?

Jealousy leaves a person empty and dissatisfied, never content. Jealousy caters to self, not others. Jealousy and envy count another person’s blessings instead of one’s own blessings. Jealousy resents the fact that others have what you don’t have. This is what the lying harlot did. She resents the other woman and looks at her as a rival.
There are a number of insights revealed in these two women and this famous incident.

* **First, these two women demonstrated levels of profession.** One profession is without reality. It is hypocritical. The lying woman’s actions and words revealed her unconcern, selfishness, and lack of genuine love. The real mother’s profession of love was genuine. It was unselfish and sacrificial. Let’s apply this to us. Many profess to love Jesus Christ, but their actions and words contradict their tongues. Eventually their words betray them. The cost of taking up the cross and following the Lord is too high a price for some.

*John 6:66 - From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

For some, the comforts of the world and crowd are more appealing than the reproach of Jesus Christ. Paul and the Lord encountered folks like this.

* Titus 1:16 - They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

* 2 Timothy 3:5- Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

* Matthew 15:7-9....Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, [8] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. [9] But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

God wants our profession to be genuine. Our walk is to match our talk because people read our lives.

* 2 Corinthians 3:2 - Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Is your profession genuine or hypocritical?

The second insight is this... “What brought the truth out into the open?” The answer is the sword. **The sword brought out the best in one woman and the worst in the other.** It revealed what was in each woman’s heart. The Bible does this too.

* Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**Bible preaching will bring out the best and the worst in people.** It reveals what is in their hearts. Some choke on the Word in church and
don’t stay because the pot gets too hot! Others stay and thrive spiritually. The Word of God changes lives. It is truth.
* Psalm 119:142- Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.
* John 8:32- And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The third insight is impurity leads to deceit. The sin against the body makes other sins easier to commit. Lies lead to more lies.

Fourthly, jealousy hardens compassion. It is as cruel as the grave. The lying woman said, “Let the baby die.”

As you look at your priorities, are you really pleased with them or does there need to be some adjustments made? You will reap blessings by having right priorities in your life.

Our aim should be service, not success.
Chapter 7
The Greatness of Solomon’s Kingdom
1 Kings 4:1-31

In the last chapter, Solomon began his reign as king of Israel and asked God to give him wisdom to lead the nation and judge his people. His wisdom was tested and demonstrated when two harlots claimed to be the mothers of the same baby boy. Solomon exposed the liar and the real mother by preparing to cut the real child in half with the sword. The real mother begged that the child be spared and given to the other woman. Solomon discerned the identity of the real mother.

Chapter four continues to give us details of Solomon’s wisdom, greatness, and organizational skills. A chapter which at first may appear ordinary is full of rich insights. Let’s find some treasures from Scripture.

I. THE PRINCES OF SOLOMON 4:1-6
So king Solomon was king over all Israel. [2] And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, [3] Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. [4] And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: [5] And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king’s friend: [6] And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

Verses one through six give a record of Solomon’s cabinet. They were the leaders of the nation. The names of these
men fit perfectly with the character of the kingdom and foreshadow the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

* Azariah= Jehovah is Help
* Elihoreph= My God is Reward
* Ahiah= Brother of Jehovah
* Jehoshophat= Jehovah Judges
* Benaiyah= Built up by Jehovah
* Zabud= Gift bestowed of God
* Abishar= Brother of Ability
* Adoniram= Lord of Heights

These men were princes or high-ranking officials. Many of these men were friends of David. Solomon demonstrates wisdom by relying upon men that David trusted. These were his father’s friends. Some sons do the opposite of what their father’s say or teach, thinking they know more than their fathers. An article printed in a Dutch magazine reflects the transition most of us have gone through in our assessment of our fathers:

* 4 years: My daddy can do anything.
* 7 years: My dad knows a lot, a whole lot!
* 8 years: Dad doesn’t know quite everything.
* 12 years: Dad just doesn’t understand.
* 14 years: Dad? He is hopelessly old-fashioned!
* 21 years: My dad is truly out-of-date. But what would you expect?
* 25 years: Dad comes up with a good idea now and then.
* 30 years: I must find out what Dad thinks about it.
* 35 years: Wait, I want to get Dad’s input first.
* 50 years: What would Dad have thought about that?
* 60 years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.

Solomon did not make mistakes when it came to choosing leaders for the nation of Israel.

* Proverbs 27:10- Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother’s house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.

Unfortunately, he did not follow the Lord like his father. Later in his life, Solomon got away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:6).

Do you respect and listen to your father or do you think you know more than him? Watch out if you think you do!

* Proverbs 30:17- The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.
As the return of Christ approaches, sons and daughters will be rebellious toward parents.

* Proverbs 30:11- There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. We are in this generation now.
* 2 Timothy 3:1,2- This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

Be a son of wisdom!

* Proverbs 15:20- A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

II. THE PROVISIONS FOR THE KING  4:7-19, 26-28

And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision. [8] And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: [9] The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan: [10] The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hepher: [11] The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: [12] Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: [13] The son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: [14] Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim: [15] Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: [16] Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth: [17] Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: [18] Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: [19] Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.

(26) And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. [27] And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. [28] Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

Twelve officers provided supplies for the king and his household, wives, servants, and children. Taxes were heavy upon the land, as each region provided one month of provisions. Judah was not mentioned. Their exemption would create rivalry and resentment
later on.

Verse number 26 has a copyist error. Forty thousand stalls reads as four thousand stalls in 2 Chronicles 9:25...And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

The reason for copyist errors in any translation of the Bible is Hebrew numbers are written with Hebrew letters, not numbers. Hebrew letters have a numerical value. Some letters look alike with minute differences. One little dot can change the value of a number too. If the scribe does not catch it or if the manuscript is worn or damaged, he can copy a number incorrectly. There are a small number of places this occurs in our translation. They do not affect any Bible doctrines. Here in this passage, we see an area of disobedience in Solomon’s life. It may seem small, but it was important to God. As Solomon disobeyed the Lord in having many wives, he disobeyed the Lord in having horses too.

* Deuteronomy 17:16,17- But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

Solomon was not perfect. His mistakes and disobedience caught up with him later on in his life. Even though he loved the Lord, his disobedience affected his life and eventually ruined him. Disobedience breeds more disobedience, which brings problems and repercussions. You may love the Lord, but when you violate Bible principles, you will pay a price in problems later on. You may not see the consequences for many years, but they eventually come. We do reap what we sow.

* Hosea 8:7 - For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece The Last Supper, he sought long and hard for a model for his Christ. At last, he located a chorister in one of the churches in Rome who was lovely in life and features. He was a young man named Pietro Bandinelli. Years passed, and the painting was still unfinished. All the disciples had been portrayed except one, Judas Iscariot. Leonardo started to find a man whose face was hardened and distorted by sin. At last he found a beggar on the streets of Rome with a face so villainous that he shuddered when he
looked at him. He hired the man to sit for him as he painted the face of Judas on his canvas. When he was about to dismiss the man, he said, “I have not yet found out your name.” The man replied, “I am Pietro Bandinelli. I am the one who sat for you as a model of Christ.” Sin takes its toll on our life.

III. THE PROSPERITY OF THE KINGDOM  4:20,21,24,25

Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphsah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

Solomon was a man of peace, not war. His desire to do what was right was blessed by God in the beginning of his reign over Israel. He desired to please God.

*Proverbs 16:7- When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

God prospered the nation. The people multiplied and families grew. There was great joy and peace in Israel. The Bible teaches that peace and prosperity are linked with obedience to God’s Word and the centering of our life around the Lord.

*1 Chronicles 22:13- Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

*Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

*Psalm 1:1-3 . . . . Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. [3] And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
God not only gives financial prosperity, but also physical, emotional, and spiritual prosperity.

*Isaiah 26:3* - Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

*Psalm 119:165* - Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

**IV. THE PROVISIONS FOR ONE DAY  4:22,23**

And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeeer, and fatted fowl.

Thirty measures of flour is equal to about 189 bushels. Sixty measures of meal is 378 bushels. Solomon had quite a cookout each day.

**V. THE PLENTY OF WISDOM  4:29-31**

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. [30] And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. [31] For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

God gave Solomon great wisdom, understanding, insight, discernment, and largeness of mind. His wisdom excelled the wisdom of men in the East and the wisdom of Egypt. We marvel today at the construction of the Egyptian pyramids and tombs. The Magi were devoted to the study of sciences and astronomy. Solomon’s wisdom was greater than these men.

*Ephesians 3:20-* Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Solomon was wiser than all men. He was wiser than Ethan, who was the author of Psalm 89. This psalm is a song of mercy and grace. It is about singing in dark times. It is used by those who saw the bright side in calamity.

*Psalm 89:1-* Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. Do you have a song in the dark times?
Solomon was wiser than Heman. He wrote Psalm 88 which was a psalm of despair. It is one of the saddest psalms. It was used when one was on the bottom in the circumstances of life. This psalm is about praying and crying out to God in troubled times. Solomon was greater in wisdom than both of these men. He was given wisdom in the basic issues of life, skill in business and government affairs, and wisdom in handling people. Unfortunately, the wisest man who ever lived did not live wisely toward the end of his life. Having insight into life does not guarantee one will CHOOSE to do what is right. We MUST make the right choices.

* Joshua 24:14, 15 - Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

**What choices will you make?** Will you choose to serve the Lord? Will you trust Christ as your Savior and enjoy God’s peace in your life?

The story is told of a young dock worker who heard a preacher named Henderson preach a message on Romans 5:1....Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Although moved by the truth that a person can have peace with God only through Jesus Christ, this man did not trust the Lord as his Savior.

The next day the man joined the crew of the steamship London and sailed away. A short time later it met with disaster on the sea. Several months passed and a sailor came to Pastor Henderson. He said, “I have come to tell you that I talked and prayed with a young man on board the London who heard you preach on Romans 5:1. He was concerned about his soul and did not quite understand the plan of salvation. I was able to finish what you started and lead him to Christ. A few minutes later, the ship wrecked. We were commanded to go to the lifeboats. He told me, “Mate, if I don’t make it to shore, tell Pastor Henderson I got saved.” The sailor continued to tell Pastor Henderson that somehow the convert did not make it to a lifeboat. They had to row away quickly from the ship lest they be capsized by the suction of the sinking ship. The sailor said, “The last I saw of him, he was up in the rigging of the doomed vessel, waving his hat and shouting to be heard above the noise of the waters, ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!’”
Chapter 8

Concepts from Creation

1 Kings 4:32-34

And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. [33] And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. [34] And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

Solomon’s kingdom was awesome. People prospered and there was peace and joy in the land. Solomon was wiser than any other man in the world. God gave him great understanding, insight, and discernment. His fame was so renowned among the nations that foreigners came to hear his wisdom (10:1-7, 24). People came to hear his proverbs and songs. Verse 32 says he wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. The book of Proverbs records 915 proverbs which deal with common issues of life.

**Concerning ANGER Solomon says:**

* Proverbs 14:17- He that is soon angry _dealeth foolishly_: and a man of wicked devices is hated.
* Proverbs 15:18- A wrathful man _stirreth up strife_: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.
* Proverbs 16:32- He that is _slow to anger is better than the mighty_; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
* Proverbs 19:11,19- The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. A man of great wrath _shall suffer punishment_: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.
* Proverbs 15:1- A soft answer turneth away wrath: but _grievous words stir up anger._
* Proverbs 22:24,25- _Make no friendship with an angry man_; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare
to thy soul.

**Concerning CHILD TRAINING Solomon says:**
* Proverbs 13:24- He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.
* Proverbs 19:18- Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.
* Proverbs 23:13,14- Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.
* Proverbs 29:15,17- The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

**Concerning FRIENDSHIP Solomon says:**
* Proverbs 17:17- A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
* Proverbs 18:24- A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
* Proverbs 27:10- Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not: neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.
* Proverbs 16:28- A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

**Concerning the TONGUE Solomon says:**
* Proverbs 25:11- A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
* Proverbs 21:23- Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.
* Proverbs 18:13- He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.
* Proverbs 29:20- Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.
* Proverbs 17:27- He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.
* Proverbs 27:1- Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

**Concerning WEALTH Solomon says:**
* Proverbs 10:22- The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.
* Proverbs 15:6 - In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in
the revenues of the wicked is trouble.
* Proverbs 22:4- By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life.
* Proverbs 3:9,10- Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
* Proverbs 11:28- He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
* Proverbs 15:16- Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.
* Proverbs 22:1- A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

Solomon was a man of great wisdom and knowledge. He was a botanist (flowers); dendrologist (trees); zoologist (animals); ornithologist (birds); ichthyologist (fish). He was well versed in all these areas. He would use object lessons from nature in expounding wisdom. He would use God’s creation to teach wisdom and insights.

**Creations speaks to us about God’s care (Matthew 6:25-34).**

*Matthew 6:25-34... Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? [26] Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? [27] Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? [28] And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: [29] And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? [31] Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? [32] (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. [33] But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. [34] Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Whether rich or poor, your attitude toward material possessions is one of the most reliable thermometers of your spiritual condition. Our treasures are either in this world or in Heaven. Keeping money and things in proper perspective is the key in maturing spiritually in Christ. Jesus wanted us to have our priorities right when it came to financial matters.
Of the 38 parables, 16 deal with money. One out of ten verses in the New Testament deal with money. The Bible contains 500 verses on prayer; fewer than 500 on faith, and 2000 verses on money. Money is a tool to be used to care for our needs, help others, and get the Gospel to the lost. There is nothing wrong when you are in control of your wealth. The problems come when your wealth controls you.

The heart of Matthew 6:25-34 is don’t worry. Don’t worry about money, things, food, clothing, etc. The phrase “take no thought” is a command that appears three times (vs. 25,31,34). This phrase means “to be drawn in a different direction or to be torn apart.” Worry pulls a person apart because the person is trying to live a life without a dependence and trust in God. The average person crucifies himself between two thieves: 1) the regrets of yesterday, 2) the worries of tomorrow. Dr. Charles Mayo says that worry affects the circulation, heart, glands, and entire nervous system. Studies have found that the most dangerous day for heart attacks is Monday. Monday seems to be the most stressful day of the week for most people studied.

We are not to worry because of the master we have as Christians.

* Matthew 6:25- Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The word “therefore” refers back to verse 24. God is to be our master. When He is our master, there is no need for worry. We are to “take no thought” which means “to stop it and never start again.” Worry is wrong because it demonstrates distrust in God’s promises and providence. Worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow’s troubles. If we worry, we can’t trust; if we trust, we can’t worry. Worry is opposite of contentment, which is the attitude we are to have in our life.

* Philippians 4:11- Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. True contentment is found in the Lord.

We are not to worry because of the Father we have as believers (Matthew 6:26-30). He cares for the birds and flowers and can take care of us too.

We are not to worry because of our faith (Matthew 6:31-33). Worry is inconsistent with our faith. It is a characteristic of unbelief. We are to seek His will and righteousness.

* 2 Peter 3:11- Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,
We are not to worry about our future (Matthew 6:34). We are to be concerned about today and what God wants us to do today. He will give us peace in our problems.

* Isaiah 26:3 - Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. The Hebrew reads “peace, peace.” God has double peace for our problems.

Three key words are connected to victory over worry: 1) faith, 2) Father, 3) first....seek God’s kingdom first.

Solomon spoke of the cedar tree when he was imparting his wisdom. What wisdom can we glean from the cedars of Lebanon?

* Psalm 92:12- The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

A. The Cedar is a tree of durability, it keeps on living. It is a very long lived tree. Some cedars are 3000 years old. This tree does not decay quickly because it is not eaten by insects. It is evergreen. The cedar challenges us to be durable in our Christian life and to keep growing in the Lord.

* 1 Corinthians 15:58- Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

* Galatians 6:9 - And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

* 2 Timothy 2:3- Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

How do we keep from decaying in our Christian life?

1. Have one master.

* Matthew 6:24 - No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

2. Have a greater love for the Lord than this world.

* 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

*1 John 2:15- Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

3. Have spiritual goals.

* Philippians 3:14- I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
4. Remove any hindrances to spiritual growth.
   * Hebrews 12:1,2—Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

5. Exercise self-control and discipline.
   * 1 Corinthians 9:24-27—Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. [25] And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. [26] I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: [27] But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

6. Be grounded in the Word of God.
   * Matthew 13:19-23—When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. [20] But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; [21] Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. [22] He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. [23] But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

B. Cedar is a beautiful and fragrant tree.

The cedar exudes a gum or oil which has a very fragrant smell. It was used in the construction of the Temple. It reminds us that the beauty and fragrance of Jesus Christ should be seen in our lives.

* Psalm 90:17—And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.
* Matthew 5:14-16 ... Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. [15] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. [16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

* Romans 10:15 - And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Do others see Jesus Christ in your life?

C. Cedar is a mountain tree that thrives at high levels of over 6000 feet and grows over 120 feet in height.

The cedar reminds us to keep in touch with Heaven and walk close with the Lord of Heaven.

* 2 Corinthians 5:7- (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

* Galatians 5:16 -This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

* 1 John 1:7- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

* Psalm 116:9- I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

D. Cedar is soft, yet, a solid wood that is easy to work with and polish. It is free from imperfections. We are to have a soft and tender heart. Our attitude is to be teachable. Don’t let your heart knot up and get hard.

* Psalm 51:17- The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

* 2 Kings 22:19 - Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou hearest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.

* Proverbs 28:14 - Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

* Hebrews 3:13- But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Is your heart hard or bitter?

E. The leaves and the tops of the cedar tree stimulate the bodies immune system. They have anti-fungal and anti-viral properties. For example, they are good for treating warts. The Christian should be anti-
sinful, having a hatred for sin in his heart.
* Psalm 119:104- Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.
* Psalm 119:113- I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.
* Proverbs 8:13 -The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

We can strengthen our spiritual immune system with the Word of God.
* 1 Peter 2:1,2- Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

God help us to live for Christ. Oswald Chambers put it this way, “Many people think that God can’t use them where they are. But it is certain God can’t use them where they aren’t.” A young man accepted for the African mission field reported for passage at New York. Upon further examination it was determined that his wife could not handle the African climate. The man was heartbroken, but he prayerfully returned to his home and made up his mind to make all the money he could to spread the Gospel across the globe. His father, a dentist, had started to make on the side an unfermented wine for church communion services. The young man took the business over and developed it until it assumed vast proportions. His name was Welch, whose family still manufactures grape juice. He has given literally hundreds of thousands of dollars to the work of missions. It is amazing what God can do with frail vessels who are yielded to Him.
Chapter 9

The Impact of a Loving Life

1 Kings 5:1-4

Have you ever made or built anything such as a table, shelf, house, garage, furniture, artwork, or model car? Do you remember the preparation for the project; the intensity to details; the concentration it took; the sweetness from a successful project; or the sourness of mistakes?

In this section, Solomon is about to undertake the most important construction project of his life....the building of the Jewish Temple.

Chapter five gives the events leading to the starting of this project. The events of this chapter will yield important insights for the Christian on building relationships with God and with others. It demonstrates the impact of a loving life.

I. THE RESPECT OF A KING 5:1

And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

Hiram was the king of Tyre. The word “Tyre” means “rock.” The city was built upon a rocky island. Hiram was a Phoenician. The Phoenicians produced purple dye and fabrics; metal goods in silver, gold, iron, tin, and lead. The wealth of the world flowed in and out of Tyre. Great warriors defended this place.

The Phoenicians were not worshipers of Jehovah God. Yet, David’s love had an impact on this king’s life. This king loved David. Out of love for David, he expresses his love for David’s son, Solomon. Even though David is dead, his life and love continues to have an impact on Hiram.

We note a great truth here. Your life has an impact on the lives of others. Your love for others can continue to impact and influence people’s
lives beyond the grave. Our lives have been changed because of the love that Christ demonstrated 2000 years ago when He lived among men and died on the Cross. Consider for a moment how many friends and loved ones have been saved after a godly Christian went home to be with the Lord.

Jesus stressed over and over, “Love people, love people, love people.” Get out of your shell. Talk to people and do things for them. Encourage folks and pray for them. Tell them about the Lord.

1. **We are commanded to love.**
   * John 15:12 - *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* We are commanded to love because our natural tendency is not to do so. We all have room to grow in this area.

2. **Jesus tells us how to love.**
   * Matthew 22:39 - *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

3. **We are told why we should love.**
   * John 13:35 - *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

   Husbands are to love their wives; children are to love their parents. We are to love those people that hurt us or drive us crazy.
   * Matthew 5:44 - *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

   People do not care how much you know, till they know how much you care. When you stop focusing on yourself and being selfish; when you start investing your life into others, Christ can make something beautiful of your life. Your love for others can have an impact for Christ on their lives.

II. **THE ROYAL MESSAGE**

Several elements are involved in this message. First, Solomon mentions his father.

A. **The Parent 5:3**

   Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet.

   God did not want David to build His temple because he was a man of war. This did not prevent David in the preparation process.
   * 1 Chronicles 29:2 - *Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for
things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

David began purchasing building materials from Tyre and stocked the supplies until they were ready to begin construction. Technically speaking, the building should be called David's Temple. God gave the blue-print to David.

* 1 Chronicles 28:19 - All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.

David passed the plans to Solomon.

* 1 Chronicles 28:10-12- Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. [11] Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, [12] And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:

B. The Peace 5:4

But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

God gave peace and rest to Solomon. God gives His children rest. Do you realize the value of rest? What good is wealth, fame, prestige, power, or possessions if you can't enjoy them? Without peace and rest you will not enjoy these things.

Some people are desperate to find peace and rest. Guilt from sinful living works like an acid on the soul.

* Isaiah 57:20,21- But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Peace and rest are not found in liquor or drugs, but in Jesus Christ. Your burden is too heavy for Jim Beam, Budweiser, and Seagram 7. Your burden is too heavy for marijuana, heroine, crack, or cocaine. It's not too heavy for Christ. He can lift your burden and give you rest.

* Matthew 11:28,29- Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

* 2 Thessalonians 1:7- And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
When you truly put your faith in Christ, you can say, "He has given me rest."
* When problems come, "He has given me rest."
* When trials come, "He has given me rest."
* When disappointments come, "He has given me rest."
* When heartaches come, "He has given me rest."
* When loneliness comes, "He has given me rest."
* When chaos and confusion come, "He has given me rest."

Christ suffered so we could have rest. His life is still having an impact on the world today.

When a man finds no peace within himself, it is useless to seek it elsewhere.
Chapter 10  
Pick Up the Baton  
1 Kings 5:5-18  

The impact of David’s life and love had left its mark on Hiram, king of Tyre. Hiram has sent servants to Solomon and Solomon responds with a wonderful letter. Solomon begins by testifying why David could not build a house unto the Lord because of the wars, but now God has given Solomon and Israel rest. Notice first of all...

I. THE ROYAL MESSAGE CONTINUES 5:5,6  

And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

In high school, I competed in track and field competitions. One of the events I participated in was the 440 yard relay. This event consisted of four runners who would run 110 yards each. We would pass the baton we were running with to the next runner at the end of our 110 yard section of the track. If we were going to be successful, we had to work as a team. We had to practice intensely, making sure we passed the baton smoothly in our boundary zone, and not drop it. It is not as easy as it looks on television when you are watching the Olympics. The key to winning the race is knowing how to pass that baton. In our story here, we find Solomon is ready to pick up the baton and build the Temple. Solomon says, “I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord.”

There is a great truth here. What God started in David’s heart, Solomon would now pick up the baton and continue the work. The reason we have the Gospel today is because Christians have picked up the baton and continued the work of God when others died or became unfaithful. When people die, move away, or get away from God, they leave a gap in
the ministry that needs to be filled. If the gap is not filled, the ministry is hindered.

* Ezekiel 22:30- And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

If a church is going to run a good race for Christ, it needs the help of all the members of the team. We are to stay in the boundaries of God’s Word if we are going to run a good race. Any weights or hindrances in our lives must be removed if we are going to run well. If we mess up and drop the baton, then pick it up and keep running till the race is over. The race is over when you are dead or when Jesus comes back for us.

The attitude of every Christian should be, “I purpose to build.” Every Christian should have spiritual goals and a spiritual purpose in life. We should have a desire to build. The question is, “Build what?”

**We are to build our lives around the Lord Jesus Christ.**

* Colossians 2:6,7- As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

The word “built up” describes a house built upon a solid foundation. The tense means “continually being built up.” Building our lives around Christ is like building a house on a rock. The wise man does this.

* Matthew 7:24 - Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul describes a good and bad way to build your life. This chapter describes our service or lack of service to Christ and the right and wrong motives for serving. How do I build a close relationship with the Lord and revolve my life around Him? God’s Word is the key.

* Acts 20:32- And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

One effect of building my life around the Lord is described by Peter.

* 1 Peter 2:2-5 ... As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: [3] If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. [4] To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, [5] Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Will you purpose to build your life around the Lord?
We are to build something else. We are to build a close relationship with other Christians.
* Ephesians 2:19-22... Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; [20] And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; [21] In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: [22] In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Christians have something in common. We have the same Savior, same foundation, and same cornerstone. As the cornerstone was the anchor of the building, the standard, the guidepost, Jesus Christ is our anchor, our standard of right and wrong, our guidepost for direction. In Ephesians 2:21, the building is us. We are fitly framed together. This phrase is formed from two words.
* Harmos = a joint.
* Lego = to pick out. It means “to join closely together.” This word refers to the careful joining of every component of a piece of furniture, wall, or building. It is not thrown together. Like a puzzle, every part is precisely cut to fit snugly, strongly, and beautifully with every other part. We need each other. The shy need the outgoing; the young need the old; the rich need the poor; the strong need the weak; the loud need the quiet; and the positive need the discouraged. We all are an important part of the puzzle. We are members one of another.
* Ephesians 4:25- Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.
* Romans 12:5 - So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

What makes a reunion, whether family or high school, so special? Is it the food, the location, or the people? It’s the people! Heaven will be very special, not only because of the Lord, but also the relationships you have made here with other believers, friends, and family. These relationships are to be nurtured now. How? Let me illustrate.

It was a cold, winter day when an old man walked out onto a frozen lake, cut a hole in the ice, dropped in his fishing line and began waiting for a fish to bite. He was there for almost an hour without even a nibble when a young boy walked out onto the ice, cut a hole in the ice not too far from the old man and dropped in his fishing line. It only took about a minute and WHAM! A largemouth bass hit his hook and the boy pulled in the
fish. The old man couldn’t believe it but figured it was just luck. The boy dropped in his line and again within minutes he caught another fish. This went on and on until finally the old man couldn’t take it any more since he hadn’t caught a thing all this time. He went to the boy and said, “Son, I’ve been here for over an hour without even a nibble. You have been here only a few minutes and have caught about a half a dozen fish. How do you do it?” The boy responded, “roo raf roo reep ra rums rarm.” “What did you say?” asked the old man. The boy again said, “Roo raf roo reep ra rums rarm.” The old man responded, “Look, I can’t understand a word you are saying.” So the boy spit into his hand and said, “You have to keep the worms warm!” How do you nurture your relationship with the Lord and others? You have to keep your heart warm and tender toward the Lord and other people.

II. THE RESPONSE OF KING HIRAM  5:7-10

And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. [8] And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sendest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. [9] My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. [10] So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

Hiram rejoices and praises the Lord for Solomon’s wisdom. David’s testimony may have won him to the Lord in the midst of an idolatrous people. Are people encouraged by your wisdom? Wisdom should be a trait of ours, for the Bible is a book of wisdom and our Lord gives us wisdom when we ask for it.

*James 1:5,6- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

Hiram says, “I will do my best.” He is a good example for us to do our best for our king.

*Colossians 3:23,24- And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the
reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Lebanon is very mountainous and rocky. It is great for cedars, but not food. Hiram swaps out food for trees.

III. THE REMUNERATIONS  5:11

And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

Twenty thousand measures of wheat equals about 125,000 bushels. Twenty measures of oil equals about 115,000 gallons of oil.

IV. THE RATIONALITY FROM GOD  5:12

And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

V. THE RAISING OF A WORK FORCE  5:13-18

And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. [14] And he sent them to Lebanon ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy. [15] And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; [16] Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. [17] And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. [18] And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

How would you feel if Uncle Sam said, "You have to work for the nation by serving one month and staying home two months. Thirty-three percent of the tax was forced labor. This is what Solomon did. The people resented it too.

* 1 Kings 12:4- Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.
* 1 Kings 12:18 - Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

The prophet Samuel warned the people that this would happen.
* 1 Samuel 8:16- And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

Notice the stones for the foundation in verse 17,18. They were great, costly, and hewed stones. The stones came from quarries north of Jerusalem. They were so precisely cut that mortar was seldom used. The stones can be seen today at the southeast angle under the Temple area. One stone was just under twenty-four feet long and other stones were seventeen to twenty feet in length. For the building to be strong, the foundation had to be strong. The same is true with your life. Is your life grounded upon Jesus Christ? Will you pick up the baton and serve Him, filling in the empty gaps others have left behind? Will you be like Paul? Notice what he said.

* 2 Timothy 4:7,8- I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The trouble with some people is that during trying times they stop trying.
Chapter 11

A Temple Under Construction

1 Kings 6

Chapter six of 1 Kings gives us details of the construction of the Jewish Temple under the leadership of Solomon.

1 Kings 6:1 - And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

This verse is very important because it gives a time post to us for dating events in history. Construction began 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign. This would place the building of the Temple at 966 B.C. and the Exodus at 1446 B.C. The time of the year was the month of Zif, the second month. Zif means “splendor” and it is during our April and May. It is the time of the year when nature bursts forth in all its splendor and beauty.

1 Kings 6:2 - And the house which king Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

The size of the Temple is recorded here. A cubit was considered from the tip of the hand to the elbow which was about 18 inches.
* 60 cubits in length= 90 feet
* 20 cubits in width= 30 feet This would be a total of 2700 sq.ft.
* 30 cubits in height= 45 feet

These dimensions were double of those of the Tabernacle. The proportions were the same. The porch adorned the entry of the Temple and was accented by two huge pillars.
* Jachin= means “steadfastness”
* Boaz= means “In Him is strength”

The remainder of this chapter gives a beautiful description of this
building. In 1980, Robert Boyd computed the cost the Temple if it was to be built today. At that time he computed it to be 240 billion dollars. The description of the Temple gives us understanding of the cost and Solomon’s attitude in doing his best for God.

The building was made from white limestone supplied from the quarries north of Jerusalem. They had so much respect and reverence for God that the stones were pre-cut. This would eliminate hammering at the Temple site. Notice verse 7.

* 1 Kings 6:7- And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

**The inside of the Temple was magnificent.** The walls were lined with red boards of cedar and floors of fir wood. Engraved on the wood were angelic cherubims, palm trees, and flowers. Thin sheets of beaten gold were laid over the wood on the walls and the floors.

* 1 Kings 6:21- So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

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

These verses are a wonderful reminder of Heaven where the streets are of gold. Gold is the emblem of God’s glory and righteousness. Not only was gold on the walls, but beautiful precious stones were inlaid into the wood and gold.

* 2 Chronicles 3:6- And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim.

The entire project took 7 ½ years to complete.

* 1 Kings 6:37,38- In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif: And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. The month of Bul is the eighth month which corresponds with our October and November.

When we look at the purpose of the Temple, we find insights for us as Christians on how God wants us to live our lives and the purpose He has for us.
* Insight 1- The Christian is God’s dwelling place or temple. Jesus compared His body to a temple (John 2:19-21). We are a temple too.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19,20- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

* 2 Corinthians 6:16

   And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

* 1 Corinthians 3:16,17- Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

* Romans 8:9- But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Not only are individual believers His temple, but the body of Christ, all born again believers, are His temple.

* Ephesians 2:20-22.... And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; [21] In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: [22] In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The Temple was the visible sign of God’s presence. God promised to dwell among them if they would obey Him.

* 1 Kings 6:12,13- Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

This same promise applies to us. We are to live in such a way where others can see God’s presence, holiness, and influence in our lives.

* 2 Corinthians 3:2,3- Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.
Chapter 11....A Temple Under Construction...1 Kings 6

We are walking Bibles as we yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him construct us to make us more like Christ each day. Reporters and city officials gathered at a Chicago railroad station one afternoon in 1953. The person they were meeting was the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner. A few minutes after the train came to a stop, a giant of a man, six feet four inches tall, with bushy hair and a large mustache stepped from the train. Cameras flashed as city officials approached him with hands outstretched. Various people began telling him how honored they were to meet him.

The man politely thanked them and then, looking over their heads, asked if he could be excused for a moment. He quickly walked through the crowd until he reached the side of an elderly black woman who was struggling with two large suitcases. He picked up the bags with a smile and escorted the woman to a bus. After helping her aboard, he wished her a safe journey. As he returned to the greeting party he apologized, "Sorry to have kept you waiting."

The man was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the famous missionary doctor who had spent his life helping the poor in Africa. In response to Schweitzer’s action, one member of the reception committee said with great admiration to the reporter standing next to him, "That’s the first time I ever saw a sermon walking."

May God help us to realize we are being watched by others. May we be good ambassadors of Christ. Because we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, we are to live in a way that pleases, honors, and glorifies God. We are to be people of character. If our character is right, our reputation and testimony will be right. There is a difference between character and reputation.

* Character is the one thing we make in this world and take with us into the next.
* The circumstances amid which you live determine your reputation; the truth you believe determines your character.
* Reputation is what you are supposed to be; character is what you are.
* Reputation comes over one from outside circumstances; character grows up from within you.
* Reputation is what you have when you come into a new community; character is what you have when you go away.
* Reputation is made in a moment; character grows like an oak tree....for a long time.
* Your reputation is learned in an hour; your character does not come to light for years.
* A single newspaper report gives you your reputation; a life of toil gives
you your character.
* Reputation makes you rich or makes you powerful; character makes you happy or makes you miserable.
* Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone; character is what angels say.

Do you have character?

* Insight #2- One purpose of the Temple was to be a place of SACRIFICE.

Offerings were made to the Lord. We are to offer sacrifices in our life to the Lord.
* 1 Peter 2:5- Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

* Offer the sacrifice of your body and life.
* Romans 12:1- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The story is told of a Chinese Christian who was moved with compassion when many of his countrymen were taken to work as laborers in South African mines. In order to be able to witness to his countrymen, this man sold himself to the mining company to work as a coolie for five years. He died there, still a slave, but not until he had won more than 200 men to Christ. He was a living sacrifice in the fullest sense.

* Offer the sacrifice of prayer.
* Psalm 141:2 - Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Few people spend time praying because they are too busy or feel they have no time to pray.

* Offer the sacrifice of a broken, tender heart.
* Psalm 51:17- The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

* Offer the sacrifice of praise to the Lord.
* Psalm 107:21,22- Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.
* Hebrews 13:15- By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Why is praise considered a sacrifice? How often do you hear praise for God? How often do you praise the Lord to the lost? Many folks are worried about being considered “nuts,” so they are shy when it comes to talking about the Lord. God loves our praise for Him. He wants our
1. He wants our praise daily.

* Psalm 72:15 - And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

2. He wants our praise continually.

* Psalm 71:6 - By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.

3. He want our praise while we are alive.

* Psalm 146:2 - While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

* Insight #3- The Temple was the place of Unity & Fellowship with God and one another.

The tribes of Israel ignored their jealousies when they came to the Temple. Jeroboam saw that two separate kingdoms could not exist as long as there was one Temple. He set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel to divide the people further. We are to be united and in fellowship with one another.

* Ephesians 2:22 - In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

If you have a problem with someone, get over it. Forgive them and forget it. Life is too short to be bitter with others.

* 1 Corinthians 12:25,26 - That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

* Insight #4- The Temple was a place for remembering the Law of the Lord.

If we are to be godly temples, we must be focussed on the Word of God. The Bible must play an important role in our lives.

1. Search the Word daily.

* Acts 17:11 - These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2. Hide the Word in your heart.

* Psalm 119:11 - Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
3. Delight in God’s Word.
   * Psalm 1:2 - But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

4. Love God’s Word.
   * Psalm 119:97 - O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

5. Make the Word a part of your life.
   * Colossians 3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

6. Obey the Word of God.
   * James 1:22 - But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

   We are all under construction. Yield to the Holy Spirit, the master carpenter in your life.

Bible verses will save you from spiritual reverses.
Chapter 12
Principles from the Pillars
1 Kings 7:1-20

But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. [2] He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. [3] And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. [4] And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks. [5] And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks. [6] And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them. [7] Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other. [8] And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch. [9] All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. [10] And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. [11] And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars. [12] And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the Lord, and for the porch of the house. [13] And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. [14] He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work. [15] For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. [16] And he made two
chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits: [17] And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter. [18] And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapiter. [19] And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits. [20] And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapiter.

After Solomon completed the Temple, he began construction on his own house. Verse one indicates it took thirteen years to complete the task. Solomon was involved in construction for a total of twenty years.

* 1 Kings 9:10- And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house,

Attached to his home were other buildings.

1. The House of Lebanon. It was named for all the cedar pillars in this home. There were four rows of pillars. It was a huge place, the length being half a football field....150 feet. The width was 75 feet and the height was 45 feet.

2. The Porch of Pillars.

3. The Porch for the throne where the affairs of state could be handled.

4. The House for Pharaoh’s daughter.

These buildings were made of costly stones. Verse 9 indicates these stones were cut with saws. How was this possible? Palestine limestone is soft when it is quarried and mined. It hardens when it is exposed to the elements. The foundation stone was 12-15 feet in length according to verse ten. Solomon hired Hiram of Tyre who was very creative, cunning, and wise in working with brass or copper according to verse fourteen. When yielded to the Lord, He can use you for His glory no matter what you do. Hiram was a worker in brass, yet, he is honored by having his name recorded in the Bible.

Hiram cast two pillars of brass in the porch of the Temple. These two pillars will be the focus of this chapter. These pillars teach important lessons and principles. We are taking a look at these pillars because Christians are compared to pillars. Paul said the church is a pillar.
* 1 Timothy 3:15 - But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The Ephesians could understand the imagery of the pillar used in this verse. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Temple of Diana, was located in Ephesus. It contained 127 pillars, every one of them being a gift from a king. All were made of marble and some were overlaid with gold and studded with jewels. Each pillar was a tribute to a king who donated it. The church, the body of Christ, is the pillar and ground of truth. This word “ground” is the foundation on which a structure rests. The church holds up the truth of the Gospel. If we don’t do this, no one else will. **So what lessons do these pillars teach us?**

**A. Pillars remind us to have strength and stability in our life.**

* Boaz= It means “strength or in Him is strength.”
* Jachin= It means “stability or He will establish.”

Our strength is in the Lord Jesus Christ. These pillars are object lessons of this truth. They are not made of wood or stone, but of metal (copper). They were huge pillars. The shaft was 27 feet and the capitals at the top were seven feet making the total height 34 feet. The circumference was 18 feet, making the diameter about six feet across. The pillar was hollow. The metal was three inches thick. These pillars are a reminder that the strength from the Lord is like a pillar in our life.

* Psalm 46:1- To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
* Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
* 1 Peter 5:10 - But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

We need strength because we get weak, worried, woozy, wobbly, and the willies. Without the Lord’s help, life is a bear.

* John 15:4- Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Our stability comes from the Lord too. He is the one who helps us not to quit when we want to git, split, or feel like the pits. When life gets shaky, uncertain, doubtful, confusing, dangerous, or unstable, the Lord establishes us and gives us stability and balance to go forward.

* Psalm 27:5- For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.
* Psalm 40:2 - He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
* Matthew 16:18 - And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We become shaky when we don't make up our mind to trust and serve the Lord.
* James 1:8 - A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

B. Pillars remind us of saintliness.

The columns and chapiters bore a rough resemblance to a lily. The column was the stalk of the flower and the chapiter was the flower itself. The lily was the emblem of purity to the Jewish people. We too are to adorn our lives in the beauty of holiness.
* Psalm 29:2 - Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Our lives should portray purity.
* Ephesians 5:27 - That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
* Ephesians 1:4 - According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

We need to have a balance of strength and beauty in our lives. Balance gives strength to a pillar. It is stronger if it is at a 90 degree angle than if it was leaning at an 80 degree angle. We too need the balance of strength and beauty, steel and velvet.
* Psalm 96:6 - Honor and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Strength needs beauty to adorn it, such as the oak tree that is adorned with ivy. Beauty also needs strength to support it. The strength of the truth of Scripture is to be spoken in love. Love (beauty) without truth (strength) is compromise. The courageous man must be gentle and the sweet girl must be morally strong.
* Titus 2:12 - Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Our goal should be to strive to have a balance in our Christian life.
C. Pillars speak of service that is fruitful.

The chapters were engraved with 400 pomegranates. When engraving pomegranates, Israel used six petals which formed the emblem known as the Star of David. If you cut the pomegranate in half, you will see the Star of David inside. Pomegranates are a symbol of fruitfulness and remind us that we are to be fruitful and productive for Christ.

* John 15:8- Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The reason it is a symbol of fruitfulness is because of the hundreds of seeds floating in its red, sweet syrup. This is not factual, but the Jews traditionally said it contained 613 seeds. They related the seeds to the Torah which had 613 commandments. The seeds were seen as God’s commands that were to be obeyed and would thus make one fruitful in the service of God. We are to be bearing fruit in our lives.

* Philippians 1:11- Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

How do we do this?

* John 15:5,7- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

D. Pillars remind us of the sacrifices of others.

Pillars played a part in construction. Men made great sacrifices in the mines, digging out the ore. The taxes from the people were used to pay the wages of the artists, craftsmen, smelters, and master designers. All of these people worked together to build the pillars.

You are a product of people who sacrificed, preached, prayed, paid tithes and offerings, witnessed, taught, sang, picked up people in cars, etc. Being a pillar is a team effort.

* 1 Corinthians 3:3-9 .... For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? [4] For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? [5] Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? [6] I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. [8] Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. [9] For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's
husbandry, ye are God's building.

Are you doing your part in trying to reach others for Christ and help them grow in the Lord? An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolate area. Fortunately, a local farmer came to help with his big, strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, “Pull, Nellie, pull!” Buddy didn’t move. Then the farmer hollered, Pull, Buster, pull!” Buddy didn’t respond at all. Once more the farmer nonchalantly said, “Pull, Buddy, pull!” And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The driver was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name several times. The farmer said, “Oh, Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn’t even try!” Christians are like this too. Many times I have heard, “I won’t go or do this if so and so doesn’t go or do it.” It is easier when everyone helps carry the load.


Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.
Chapter 13
A Pattern of Prayer from Solomon
1 Kings 7-9

We found a description of the Temple’s construction in chapter seven of 1 Kings. It was an immaculate, gorgeous building overlaid with gold on the inside floors and walls. It was highlighted by beautiful stones. A description was also given of a huge laver of water, capable of holding over 16,000 gallons of water. This was constructed for the priests so they could cleanse themselves before they offered up a sacrifice to the Lord. Verse twenty-three says it was fifteen feet across, seven and a half feet high, and forty-five feet in circumference.

Chapter eight records the transport of the ark to the Temple. The ark contained the Ten Commandments (vs.9). It was missing Aaron’s rod and the pot of manna. The longest prayer in the Bible is recorded in this chapter. It starts at verse 23 and goes to verse 53. Afterwards, in his Temple dedication prayer, Solomon makes five basic requests to the Lord that provide a pattern for us in prayer.

A. Solomon prayed for God’s presence. 8:57

The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

This is where prayer begins…. asking for the presence of God in your life. This happens by asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart, forgive you of your sins, and trusting Him and only Him to take you to Heaven when you die. When a person puts their faith in Christ, God’s presence indwells that person the moment they do this.
* Romans 8:9- But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer the moment he is saved.

* Ephesians 3:11,12- According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. When we trust Christ as our Savior, we have access to the presence of God in our life. The High Priest of Israel used to be the only one who could come into God’s presence in the Temple. When Christ died on the Cross, the veil was rent in two by the Lord indicating that we now have access to the presence of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Hebrews 10:19,20- Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

Because the Holy Spirit indwells us, He will always be present with us.

* Hebrews 13:5- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

B. Solomon prayed for the desire to do God’s will. 8:58

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

The psalmist prayed that the Lord would teach him His will.

* Psalm 143:10- Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Our relationships with the Word of God affect our desires.

* Psalm 40:8 - I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

C. Solomon prayed for help with his daily needs. 8:59

And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:
Many have no desire for God’s help. They make decisions without prayer and without seeking direction in Scripture. They have a “Do my own thing” attitude. We should pray for God’s help and take it when He gives it.

*Psalm 71:12* - O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

*Psalm 46:1* - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

*Psalm 121:2* - My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

**D. Solomon prayed for the desire to obey the Word of God. 8:61**

Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

It is our duty to obey the Lord.

*Acts 5:29* - Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

God wants our obedience. He wants it more than what we might offer to Him in sacrifice.

*1 Samuel 15:22* - And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

God has given us the ability and the power to obey Him.

*Philippians 4:13* - I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

*2 Corinthians 9:8* - And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

**E. Solomon prayed for the spread of God’s kingdom in the world. 8:60**

That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.

We are commanded to teach all nations.
* Matthew 28:19,20- Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father; and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
* Matthew 6:9,10- After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

In chapter nine, the Lord appears to Solomon a second time and informs Solomon that he has heard his prayers.

* 1 Kings 9:3- And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

Does God hear our prayers all the time? The answer is “No.”

There are conditions where the Lord will refuse to listen to our prayers.

1. Sin in our life-
* Psalm 66:18 - If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
* Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

2. Selfishness in our life-
* James 4:3- Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

3. Shunning God’s Word-
* Proverbs 28:9- He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

4. Stubborn disobedience in our life-
* Proverbs 1:24,25,27,28- Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

If you want to be successful in your prayer life, then you must comply with God’s conditions.

1. Contrition-
* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall
humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2. Complete surrender of your heart to the Lord-
   * Jeremiah 29:13 - And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

3. Confidence or faith in the Lord-
   * Mark 11:24- Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

4. Consecration to Christ-
   * James 5:16- Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

5. A Compliant or obedient attitude-
   * 1 John 3:22- And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

God gives Solomon His conditions for blessing.

A. Obedience brings blessing. (Positive principles)
   * 1 Kings 9:4,5- And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

B. Disobedience brings judgment. (Negative principles)
   * 1 Kings 9:6,7- But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

As this chapter continues, the Bible indicates that Solomon gives Hiram a present of twenty cities in the land (9:12). The gift creates a problem. First of all, Solomon was not to do this because the land belongs to the Lord.

* Leviticus 25:23 - The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

Second, this mistake brings shame, discredit, and conflict. Hiram
does not like the land at all (9:13). He names the land Cabul which means “good for nothing.” Hiram failed to recognize the worth of this land. What Solomon valued, Hiram did not. We find the same predicament today. **What God’s people value, the world does not.**

* The world says that the Bible is good for nothing and there is no need for it in our schools, our government, or our lives.
* They claim that Jesus is good for nothing too. He was a nice man, but He can’t help me.
* The Church is said to be a joke. Instead, go shopping, fishing, golfing, working, or stay in bed.
* Godly living is said to be a waste. The world says it doesn’t make a difference how you live. When you die, you go to the grave and that’s it. The Bible, however, makes it clear that to die without Christ is to spend eternity in Hell.
* This world does not fully understand our values because men without Christ are lost. They do not understand the value of a soul.

* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

* 2 Corinthians 4:3,4- But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior, then ask Him to come into your heart right now and forgive you of your sins. Trust Him to take you to Heaven. Christian, how is your prayer life? Be contrite in your heart, completely surrendered, consecrated and compliant to the Lord and put your confidence in Him. Prayer will change your life.
Chapter 14
The Queen of Sheba
1 Kings 10:1-13

The fame of Solomon is spreading all across the world by the word of the mouths of traders and travelers. The queen of Sheba hears of Solomon’s splendor, grandeur, power and wisdom. Her curiosity is sparked and her thirst for wisdom motivates her to see for herself what she has heard. Her visit and relationship with Solomon reveals insights in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE ROYAL VISIT  10:1,2

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

See the dust clouds hover over the sands of the desert. Something is coming! Look closer through the heat waves that dance off the desert floor and we find a long caravan of camels and donkeys laden with bundles and packages. These packages are filled with spices, gold, and precious stones. Notice the soldiers carefully guarding this caravan from robbers and thieves. This is not an ordinary caravan. No, it is a caravan of a queen, the Queen of Sheba.

Where is Sheba? It is in S.W. Arabia near Yemen. It is known for its gold, gems, and spices. The journey to Solomon would be a 1200 mile journey or two months in length. The trip was a grueling one. It would be characterized by blazing sun, burning sand, a boring, monotonous desert, and the threat of Bedouin raiders.
This must have been an important trip for this queen to endure so much hardship. She came with a purpose. She came to prove or test Solomon with hard questions or riddles to see if he was as wise as people claimed. She was in search of true wisdom. All that was on her heart she shared with Solomon. She hungered for God’s wisdom. I wonder what she asked? What would you ask Solomon?

Jesus referred to her desire for wisdom and used her as a rebuke to the Jews who did not have to travel 1200 miles.

* Matthew 12:42 - The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Solomon was great, but a greater than Solomon was in the midst of the Jews. Solomon was one of the wisest of men, but Christ was the wisdom of God. Solomon was a great king in his early reign, but Christ was the King of all kings. Sheba went to Solomon, but Christ came to us and gave His life for us.

**The Queen of Sheba is a challenge to us to thirst for God’s wisdom.**

* Proverbs 4:5, 7- Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

We need wisdom. God will give it to us if we ask for it.  
* Proverbs 2:6 - For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

* James 1:5- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

God’s wisdom is more important than gold.

* Proverbs 16:16 - How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

God’s wisdom gives joy.  
* Proverbs 3:13- Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Getting God’s wisdom begins with the Lord.  
* Proverbs 1:7- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

As the queen opened her heart to Solomon, God wants you to open your heart to Him. Invite Him into your life.
II. THE RESPONSE OF SOLOMON  10:3

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

Solomon answered all the questions of the queen. Nothing was hid from him. Nothing is hid from Jesus Christ either. He knows the hearts of all men. He knows all things.

* Acts 1:24- And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

* John 16:30 - Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

* Jeremiah 16:17- For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

Because the Lord knows all, it makes Him the perfect judge.

* 2 Timothy 4:8- Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Christian, are you ready for the Judgment Seat of Christ?

* 2 Corinthians 5:10- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

III. THE REPORT IS CONFIRMED  10:4-8

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, [5] And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his asent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. [6] And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. [7] Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. [8] Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

The queen is left breathless and speechless after she sees Solomon’s kingdom and his life. Solomon was filthy rich. His navy brought him gold from Ophir. In a 1977 U.S. Geological Survey, Ophir was said to be in Saudi Arabia between Mecca and Medina. His navy brought him 420 talents of gold which would be about 32,000
pounds (9:26-28). Solomon used some of this gold to overlay his ivory
throne, drinking vessels, and 300 shields for his soldiers. Solomon
accumulated great wealth by opening new trade routes to new and
unfamiliar lands. His ships were sent to faraway countries loaded with
copper and they returned with millions of dollars worth of gold.

The central location of Israel benefited the nation too.
Numerous trade routes passed through Israel. He charged huge taxes for
goods that were coming through the land. Nations that were defeated by
David paid tribute to avoid further conflict with Israel. Heavy taxes were
levied upon the people too. They had to work one month out of every
three to pay these taxes.

In verse seven, the queen states that the reports were true. She did
not believe the reports until she had seen with her own eyes what she had
heard. She stated that the half was not told to her. Solomon’s wisdom and
prosperity exceeded his fame.

This leads us to some valuable insights.
1. Many people will not believe unless they see. If you want to spend
eternity in Heaven, then by faith trust Christ as your Savior. If you are
going to keep your sanity during times of trouble, then by faith trust the
Lord to lead the way. We don’t have to see to believe. We are to live by
faith.
2. The half was not told to Sheba. The splendors of Heaven are beyond
our comprehension too. The half has not been told. The same holds true
for the Lord Jesus Christ.

* I Corinthians 2:9 - But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath
prepared for them that love him.

* Ephesians 3:8 - Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this
grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable
riches of Christ;

In Heaven, you will see how your life affected others. You will find
out about the people won to Christ because of your testimony.

IV. THE REVERENCE FOR GOD 10:9

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the
throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he
thee king, to do judgment and justice.
V. THE ROYAL RATIONS 10:10-13

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. [11] And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. [12] And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. [13] And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

The queen gives Solomon 120 talents of gold which is about 4 ½ tons. The spices are from the Balsam tree. Diodorus was a spice that could be smelled out at sea. Almug trees were brought too. Almug wood was a very antiseptic wood. No insects could live in it. It contained tannin. Mixed with sap it makes a red dye for wool or silk. It had a very sweet, perfume smell. This wood was very fine and durable. It was black on the outside and had a ruby red center. It was used for making musical instruments, support beams, and stairs. It compares to red sandalwood.

Solomon gave the queen all her desires. Whatever she asked she received. God does the same for you and me.

* Ephesians 3:20 - Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
* Philippians 4:19 - But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
* Matthew 7:7 - Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
Chapter 15
The Tragedy of a Turned Heart
1 Kings 10:14-11:8

Watching a Christian grow in the Lord and serving Jesus Christ is such a challenge and a blessing to me. I have been blessed through the years to meet many outstanding Christians. One of the most disappointing and discouraging things I face as a Christian is watching someone who was once faithful to the Lord, get away from God and go off into a life of sin. The result is they waste their life away. Everyday in America, the Lord witnesses the tragedy of a turned heart…a heart that has turned away from the Lord. Such is the case in this portion of Scripture as we find Solomon’s heart turning away from God. How did this happen? Why did this happen? How do we prevent this tragedy of a turned heart from happening to us? Let’s take a look.

I. THE WEALTH OF SOLOMON 10:14-23, 26-29

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold. [15] Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. [16] And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target. [17] And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. [18] Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. [19] The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. [20] And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. [21] And all king Solomon’s drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of
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Solomon. [22] For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. [23] So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. [26] And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. [27] And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. [28] And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. [29] And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

The annual revenue of gold was 666 talents which would be about 50,000 pounds of gold (vs.14). Additional revenue was accumulated from trade and taxes (vs.15). Two hundred targets were made of beaten gold. Targets were large shields that could cover and protect the entire body of a person. Six hundred shekels or 7 ½ pounds of gold was used on each shield (vs.16). An additional 300 shields were made of beaten gold. These were small shields worn on the arm. They contained 3 3/4 pounds of gold. The purpose of these shields was for parade use, not for battle, because gold is very soft. In 926 B.C., Shishak, king of Egypt, will take these shields away (1 Kings 14:26).

Wealth was also reflected in Solomon’s throne. The throne of a king reflected his glory (vs. 18-20). Solomon’s wealth was also seen in the drinking vessels made of gold (vs.21). The navy displayed his wealth too. Every three years the navy would bring gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Solomon’s wealth exceeded the wealth of all the kings of the earth. He also had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (vs.26). Silver was so abundant that it was greatly depreciated. It was worth almost nothing. Everything seems to be going great. Solomon is on top of the mountain it seems.

II. THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON  10:24,25

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.
People came from all over the world to hear Solomon’s wisdom. They came bringing gifts and tributes each year.

III. THE WIVES OF SOLOMON  11:1,3A

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: ..........

All seemed to be going well for Solomon. He had peace, provisions, power, and prestige. There was a problem, however, on the horizon. A problem that would eventually ruin him. Many times Satan strikes when we are on top of the mountain. We tend to be less dependent upon the Lord and sometimes get overconfident and proud. Paul issued a warning about this attitude.

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
* 1 Corinthians 9:27- But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Solomon had a problem in lusting after many strange women. These women were heathen unbelievers. The Bible says he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Polygamy was not a part of God’s design for marriage. A look at the homes of Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah, and David reveal the problems associated with polygamy.

Solomon not only had a lust for women, he also had a problem with pride. In that time, the size of a king’s harem reflected the greatness of that king. Solomon took the daughters of kings as wives to secure treaties between his country and theirs. Because Solomon was so powerful, foreign kings wanted to be on Solomon’s good side. Triumph eventually led to tragedy because of Solomon’s disobedience.

IV. THE WAYWARDNESS OF SOLOMON  11:3B-8

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. [4] For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. [5] For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. [6] And
Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. [7] Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. [8] And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Notice the downward slide of Solomon into sin.

A. His wives turned away his heart from the Lord (vs.3).
B. His wives turned away his heart after other gods (vs. 4-7)

1. Ashtoreth= This was the goddess of sex and fertility. Worship of this goddess involved immorality and the worship of the stars. She was represented by the moon.

2. Milcom= Molech= This was the fire god. Worship involved human sacrifices, especially children. They were burned in fire.

* Leviticus 18:21- And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.

3. Chemosh= Chemosh was the sun god and god of war. Worship of him was cruel and lewd. This was done in a hill before Jerusalem known as the Mount of Olives. Jeremiah called this area the Tophet.

* Jeremiah 7:31- And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. This place was also known as the Mt. of Corruption (2 Kings 23:13).

What a tragedy to see a king whose heart was yielded to the Lord in the beginning, and now is turned in his latter years. What happened? How did Solomon get to this point in his life? There are a number of lessons here that we can apply and learn that will help us to avoid the same mistakes and the tragedy of a heart turned from God. Notice the warnings from God in the next point.

V. THE WARNINGS OF GOD 11:2

Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

There are four key lessons that we will make note of concerning the tragedy of Solomon’s turned heart.
A. Lesson 1- Solomon’s little compromises and consistent surrender to sin led to his spiritual defeat, ruin, and the tragedy of a turned heart.

God’s instruction for kings was, “Don’t multiply horses or your wives (Deut. 17:16). Solomon disobeyed in both of these areas. What the Lord said would happen, did happen. God gives us commands for a reason and for our protection. He knows our weaknesses. The Lord warned, “Don’t multiply gold and silver (Deuteronomy 17:17). Solomon disobeyed this command. God said, “Don’t take heathen wives (Deut. 7:3,4).” Solomon would not listen.

When we disobey God’s Word, we surrender areas of our heart over to Satan. Paul warned us about surrendering to Satan.

* Ephesians 4:27- Neither give place to the devil. We are not to surrender ground to Satan in our heart. He will build strongholds in areas of our life we yield to him. Surrender your thought life and he will endeavor to corrupt your thoughts continually with the raids of temptation. Surrender your appetites to him and he will pressure you to take things into your body that will harm you or hurt your testimony for Christ. Sinful habits that develop in our life are the result of little daily surrenders one at a time. Sinful habits and addictions will turn your heart away from the Lord so stop compromising your life away.

B. Lesson 2- Solomon’s involvement with the wrong crowd turned his heart from God.

God intended that the wife be a helpmeet to her husband. Solomon’s wives hurt him by turning his heart from the Lord. How many times has an ungodly wife or husband turned their spouse’s heart from the Lord by their attitudes, actions, or words? I think of Job’s wife when Job was going through a severe trial in his life. Her counsel to Job was to curse God and die (Job 1). Can you imagine your wife telling that to you? You will find that the greatest pressures to compromise may come from those who are closest to you because of your desire to please those you love. For this reason Christians are NOT to date, marry, or go into business partnerships with unbelievers because of the influence they can have upon our lives. God makes this very clear in His Word.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14- Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

We are not to be running around with the wrong crowd of people.

* 1 Corinthians 5:11- But now I have written unto you not to keep
company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

The Bible warns us of the effects of the wrong crowd.

1. It can bring shame to our parents.
* Proverbs 28:7- Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

2. It can lead to denying Christ. Peer pressure can turn your heart from God.
* John 18:17- Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.
* John 18:25- And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

3. It can lead to inconsistency and backsliding.
* 2 Peter 3:17 - Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

4. It can corrupt our character.
* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Is your heart being turned by the crowd with whom you are spending time? Is a girl or boy turning your heart from God? God promises us a blessing if we will not follow the wicked.
* Psalm 1:1- Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

C. Lesson 3- If Solomon was so wise, why did he turn from God?

Solomon did not apply wisdom to his personal life. He knew what was right, but did not have the will to do what was right. He had a heart problem.
* Mark 7:21- For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

If you are going to avoid the tragedy of a turned heart, there must be the desire and will to obey the Lord. The desire to live for the Lord comes from a close walk with Him and yielding your life to the Holy Spirit’s control.
* Ephesians 5:15-21.... See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, [16] Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. [17]
Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. [18] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; [19] Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; [20] Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; [21] Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

* 1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

D. Lesson 4- Solomon fell in his senior years.

David sinned with Bathsheba when he was around 50. Beware of self-confidence, pride, and a know-it-all attitude. Is your heart in tune with the Lord or is it turning? If you have turned away from the Lord, get your life right with Him immediately.

Falling down does not make you a failure, but staying down does.
Chapter 16
How to Make the Lord Mad
1 Kings 11:9-25

Does God get angry? If He does, what does He do and what actually makes Him mad? In the last study, Solomon had turned his heart away from the Lord. The multitude of the pagan wives of Solomon turned his heart to idols. Solomon allowed in the land, sexual perversion and human sacrifices to these idols. Children were offered in the fires of Molech. Solomon knew better! The questions that arise at this point are, “Will Solomon be punished for his disobedience? Will God do anything?” The answers to these questions are, “Yes!”

I. THE REASONS FOR GOD’S ANGER 11:9,10

And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

God was angry with Solomon. Why? His heart was turned from God. The Lord appeared unto him twice. He still forsook the Lord and disobeyed His commands. God gets angry at our rebellion and resistance to His Word. He wants His commands obeyed.

* 1 John 5:3 -For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.
* John 14:15- If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Solomon adopted the philosophy “I can do my own thing. I don’t have to obey God.” He became a fool in doing so.

* Proverbs 28:26- He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
Pride and cockiness destroyed Solomon. Paul warned us about having this kind of attitude.

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

When we live sinfully, God gets angry with us too. Is the Lord angry with you? Are you involved in immorality, drunkenness, idolatry, stealing, lying, disobeying your parents, coveting, etc.? If God doesn’t want you to do something, then don’t do it. Don’t cover up your sin. Confess it and forsake it. Your health will be destroyed by the worry of getting caught.

* Isaiah 57:21- There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

II. THE RENDING OF THE KINGDOM 11:11,12

Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father’s sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

Anytime we violate Bible principles and commands, we will reap the consequences of those decisions. Satan tries to get us to believe several lies.
1. Nothing will happen to us.
2. We will get away with our disobedience.
3. God doesn’t really mean that command.
4. God will not punish me for my sin.

The Scriptures are very clear that we will reap what we sow.

* Galatians 6:7,8- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Ask Adam and Eve if you reap what you sow. They were driven from the Garden of Eden. Jacob sowed deception with his father and reaped deception from his own sons. Joseph’s brothers treated Joseph unfairly and cruelly when he was young and they reaped the same treatment later in their lives in Egypt. Solomon was a servant of God and rebelled against the Lord. Jeroboam was a servant of Solomon and in the future will rebel against Solomon. Solomon’s rebellion and ungratefulness will be punished by rebellion and ingratitude toward him. You reap what you sow! If you reject Christ now, He will reject you one
day.
* 2 Timothy 2:12- If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:
* Matthew 10:33- But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

God's judgment is real; Hell is real!

1. If you die without Christ, you will go to a place called Hell.
* Psalm 9:17 - The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

2. If you go to Hell, you will go there forever.
* Matthew 25:46 - And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

3. Hell is a place of torment.
* Luke 16:23 - And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

4. Hell is a place of fire.
* Revelation 20:15 - And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

5. Hell is a place of worms.
* Mark 9:44 - Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

6. Hell is a place of unsatisfied desires.
* Luke 16:24- And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

7. Hell is a place of tormenting memories.
* Luke 16:25- But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

8. Hell is a place of unheard prayers.
* Luke 16:27-29... Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: [28] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. [29] Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

When God warns of judgment for disobedience, mark it down, it will come.

* Psalm 111:7 - The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.
III. THE RESTRAINT OF THE LORD  11:13

Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

God in His grace gives us what we don’t deserve (salvation). God in His mercy doesn’t give us what we do deserve (Hell). God delays the division of all the kingdom for David’s sake. The tribe of Judah would remain, enabling Jerusalem to be the capital.

IV. THE RAISING OF RESISTANCE  11:14-22

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

God chastised Solomon by stirring up an enemy against him. Does God spank and discipline His children? Yes, He does.

* Hebrews 12:6- For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

He will use hardship and affliction as a means of discipline. His punishment is for correction and prevention of further disobedience.

* Psalm 89:30-34... If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; [31] If they break my statutes, and keep not my
commandments; [32] Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. [33] Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. [34] My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

God disciplines us to draw us closer to Him. No matter what any culture tolerates, none of God’s people have a prerogative to sin. Are you being spanked by the Lord? If so, determine why and get rid of the sin in your life.

V. THE REIGN OF REZON  11:23-25

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

Losing control of Damascus would be a splinter in Israel’s side for thousands of years to come. The Syrians would be a constant menace. They are still enemies of Israel today. Why did God stir up another adversary against Solomon? The answer is he turned his heart from God. Your disobedience and sinfulness has far reaching effects, more than you will ever realize. Keep your heart right with God!
Chapter 17
The Crack-up of a Kingdom
1 Kings 11:26-12:19

Because Solomon has turned his back on God, the Lord has stirred up opposition against him to discipline him for his disobedience. Outward resistance is seen in the rise of Hadad and Rezon. God also stirs up inward resistance within the nation through a hardworking, sharp, young man named Jeroboam. Jeroboam was a servant to Solomon, helping in the construction of Millo, the northern defense of Israel. He was also in charge of taxes and tribute from the powerful tribe of Ephraim, of which he was a member.

Jeroboam’s hands use to help Solomon. Now those hands hinder him. Jeroboam is met by a prophet named Ahijah. Ahijah takes off his very important, new, outer garment, which kept him warm at night and he tears it up into twelve pieces in front of Jeroboam. He gives Jeroboam ten pieces and prophesies that Jeroboam will be the ruler over ten tribes of Israel. God is tearing apart the kingdom because Solomon forsook the Lord, worshiped false gods, and did not do that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. Sin does have consequences. It divides and destroys.

Jeroboam is reminded that if he will listen to God, obey Him by doing right, and walk in God’s ways and commandments, he would be blessed. We have the same promise too.

Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam and Jeroboam fled to Egypt for refuge until Solomon died after reigning for forty years. Solomon was not quite sixty years old. There was no repentance or remorse from Solomon here. Yet in Ecclesiastes chapter twelve we see important insights about Solomon.

* Ecclesiastes 12:1 - Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;
* Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 - Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Solomon wasted his life in his latter years. What a tragedy! May we not make the same mistake! Upon the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam begins to reign, bringing us to chapter twelve.

I. THE CORONATION OF REHOBOAM 12:1

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

Rehoboam is the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible. He travels to Shechem in Ephraim, to be crowned. Coronations were normally done in Jerusalem. This was possibly done to promote goodwill among the disgruntled tribes. Shechem was also the ancient location for making covenants.

II. THE CALL TO JEROBOAM 12:2,3

And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

Jeroboam is summoned from Egypt. It looks like he is the appointed spokesman for Israel.

III. THE CONDITIONS FOR SERVICE 12:4,5

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

Jeroboam got honest with the king. Your father’s yoke was grievous which means it was “severe or cruel.” His yoke was also heavy which means “severe, difficult, or stupid.” Rehoboam at this point has an opportunity to keep the kingdom intact and appease these angry people. Their conditions for service would be for Rehoboam to lighten the yoke, the taxes and burdens. Rehoboam asks for three days to consider the matter. At this point his pride is on trial and is being tested. The people are requesting a change in government and taxation.
IV. COUNSEL IS SOUGHT  12:6-11

And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? [7] And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. [8] But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: [9] And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? [10] And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. [11] And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Seeking counsel in order to make a decision is a good thing to do. There is safety and security in doing so.

* Proverbs 11:14- Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

It is wise to seek counsel from wise people.

* Proverbs 12:15- The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Counsel helps to tie up loose ends, unconsidered problems, or questions and clarifies plans.

* Proverbs 15:22 - Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established.

These principles apply for the right kind of counsel. There is such a thing as foolish counsel.

* 1 Corinthians 3:19- For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

* Romans 1:22- Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

There is such a thing as ungodly, wicked counsel too.

* Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Be careful where you get your counsel and advice.

Rehoboam approaches the old men first for advice. They tell him to be a servant and serve the people. He should speak tenderly with them and lighten their load as they requested. Rehoboam forsakes this advice.
He did not take good counsel well. He did not want to hear it at all. Let me ask, “Are your parents or pastor giving you advice and are you forsaking it?” You better watch out!

Rehoboam then consults the gang, his buddies or peers. Their advice to him is totally different. They tell him to be more oppressive. This is what Rehoboam really wanted to do. Their confirmation gave him courage to do what he selfishly wanted to do. For this reason, you need to be careful about the people you run around with and the advice you listen to.

The counsel of the gang had a sting in it.... “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist.” This meant that his rule would be more oppressive and powerful. The whips referred to here were single, leather straps. The term “scorpion” referred to a whip with many strands of leather with metal, knobs, and barbs imbedded into the leather. These words were hateful and proud. The Bible warns us of this kind of behavior.

* Proverbs 15:1- A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.
* Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Rehoboam’s greed led to destruction and ruin. He wanted more than his father. The motto of our generation is “More! More!” Be thankful for what you have!.

V. THE COCKY KING 12:12-15

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. [13] And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men’s counsel that they gave him; [14] And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. [15] Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Rehoboam’s decision was deliberate. He did as God predicted for the “cause was from the Lord.” God knew what he would do, but the choice was Rehoboam’s. God’s Word is sure!

VI. THE CRACK-UP OF THE KINGDOM  12:16-19

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. [17] But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. [18] Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. [19] So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

The phrase, “to the tents” means “go home.” Rehoboam doesn’t get the message. He does not comprehend what has happened. He sends a tax collector and the IRS man is killed. The kingdom is now divided. Ten tribes in the north were now under the leadership of Jeroboam. This division could have been avoided if good counsel had been heeded.

Nothing intoxicates some people like a sip of authority.
Chapter 18
There Was a Man of God
1 Kings 12:20-24

A new king sets upon the throne of Israel. His name is Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, yet, also the biggest fool. If you look in the book of Proverbs, you will see his wisdom. If you look in Ecclesiastes, you will see his foolishness. His foolishness affects his son. Our foolishness affects our kids too.

Chronicles and Kings cover the same events only with one big difference. Kings looks at the events from man’s point of view and Chronicles looks at the events from God’s viewpoint. For this reason, the sin of David and Solomon are not focused upon in Chronicles because God forgave and blotted out their sin. The book of Kings, however, tells the story as it is. The kingdom is going to split because of Solomon’s sin. The split would come during the reign of his son.

Rehoboam tightens his grip on Israel when the people have asked him to ease the tax burden. He rejects the counsel of the old men. The people rebel, execute the tax collector, and the kingdom divides. Unfortunately, he commits an error that cannot be repaired.

What unfolds next is the beginning of the end for Israel. Their long downhill path to ruin, defeat, and destruction is recorded for us. The beginning steps to ruin are flashing red lights to us on what NOT to do and what NOT to believe. That is why they are recorded here.

The Bible is written with a purpose.
1. One purpose is to warn us with the mistakes of others.

*1 Corinthians 10:11,12- Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take
2. To give us hope.

* Romans 15:4 - For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

3. To point men to Christ.

* John 20:31 - But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

4. To give us knowledge of eternal life.

* 1 John 5:13 - These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

For these reasons, we should read and study the Word of God so that we can be the man or woman that God wants us to be. As the story unfolds in this chapter, we will first see Jeroboam becoming a king.

I. THE CORONATION OF JEROBOAM 12:19,20

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

Rehoboam is rejected and Jeroboam is accepted and exalted. Only the tribe of Judah remains loyal to King Rehoboam. He is of the tribe of Judah. The roots of Jeroboam’s reign, however, are founded in rebellion and the fruit of his reign will be the fruit of rebellion too as we will see later in this chapter. What Israel sows, they will reap. The same truth applies to us. If you rebel against authority, you reap rebellion in your own life. Teenagers reap rebellion against their parents in the lives of their own kids many times.

* Ephesians 6:1-3... Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. [2] Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Judah stood alone with the rightful king of the house of David, even though he was unpopular. Standing alone is not easy to do. Going against the grain is difficult. Your effectiveness as a Christian will be partly determined by your ability to stand alone for Christ.
* Romans 10:11- For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Standing alone requires conviction and courage to do what God says, no matter what the cost. The most difficult time in standing alone is when you take a stand against other Christians who are not doing what is right. I have never felt badly when I stood for what was right. I have felt lousy when I didn’t. Taking a stand for Christ will challenge and inspire others to do the same.

At the University of Chicago Divinity School each year, they have what is called “Baptist Day.” It is a day when all the Baptists in the area are invited to the school. The school would invite special speakers to speak in chapel. One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich. He spoke for two and a half hours endeavoring to prove that the resurrection of Christ was false. Afterwards, he asked if there were any questions. After about 30 seconds, an old, dark-skinned preacher with a head of short-cropped, wooly, white hair stood up in the back of the chapel. He stood and spoke with all eyes focused on him, “Docta Tillich, I got one question.” He reached into his sack and pulled out an apple and began to eat it. “Docta Tillich ....” CRUNCH, MUNCH .... “my question is a simple one,” CRUNCH, MUNCH .... “I ain’t never read the books you’ve read,”.... CRUNCH, MUNCH and finishing his apple .... “all I want to know is the answer to my question. The apple I just ate, was it bitter or sweet?” Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in a scholarly fashion, “I cannot possibly answer that question for I have not tasted your apple.” The white-haired man of God dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, “Neither have you tasted my Jesus.” The one thousand people in attendance could not contain themselves. The chapel erupted with applause and cheers. Dr. Tillich thanked his audience and promptly left the platform. God help us all to stand for what is truth, even when that truth contradicts tradition or what everyone else is saying.

II. THE CONGREGATION OF WARRIORS 12:21

And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

The kingdom slips through the fingers of Rehoboam. He desperately tries to regain power and control by mustering an
army of 180,000 men. He had it all planned out. Notice the next word... “but.”

III. THE COMMAND OF THE LORD 12:22-24

But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, [23] Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, [24] Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord.

Rehoboam did not consider the “God factor” in his plans. God has a way of intervening when we least expect it. The Word of God was the message and Shemaiah was the messenger. Shemaiah means “heard of the Lord.” A great compliment is given to him. He is called “the man of God.”

God is looking for men today who will be men of God, committed to the Word of God, glorifying Christ, and preaching, “Thus saith the Lord.” This is the great need of today. You don’t have to be a preacher to be a man of God.

Notice the message of Shemaiah.

A. Restraint

He tells them, “You will not fight your brethren.” God does not want us to do this today.

* 1 Peter 1:22- Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

B. Return

He tells them to return to their homes.

C. Recognize

God wanted them to realize the breakup was from Him. The Lord said, “This thing is from me!” The breakup was part of God’s judgment upon the nation under Solomon. He was sending the trial upon Israel. The Lord may bring intense trials into our life to strengthen and develop us too. There is a legend concerning an old violin maker who was much envied by his fellow artisans because of the superior quality of the instruments he produced. Finally, he revealed the secret of his success. While the others went into protected valleys to cut wood to make their violins, the master climbed the rugged cliffs of a nearby mountain in order
to secure trees which had become severely twisted and gnarled by the storms. From these weather-beaten trees, he fabricated his violins, famous for their tone and beauty. The mountain storms caused these trees to strengthen and toughen their fibers. The dense grain of the wood produced deep, colorful tones when the instrument was played. So too, the Lord allows difficulties into our lives that we may be drawn closer to Him and bring forth the music of His love and grace in our lives. Trials are sent so we will trust the Lord even though we can’t trace Him.

The message that Shemiah preached took courage to deliver because it was an unpopular message being delivered to an angry king and people. The same thing holds true for us too. It takes courage to deliver the Gospel, but it needs to be done.

They believed Shemaiah. He had credibility and a good testimony. They believed his message was true. Again, we see the importance of a good testimony. Sometimes people don’t believe the message of Christ because they don’t believe us. Our life needs to match our message. An ungodly life hurts the cause of Christ. If you are living in sin, clear your conscience and get right with God.

The people recognized that the message was from God. Do you recognize the Bible as God’s Word and message to you? Your eternal destiny depends upon it. Jesus died on the cross between two thieves for our sin so we could have eternal life.

Three guys were tried for crimes against humanity.
Two guys committed crimes. One guy didn’t.
Three guys were given government trials.
Two guys had fair trials. One guy didn’t.
Three guys were whipped and beaten.
Two guys had it coming. One guy didn’t.
Three guys were given crosses to carry.
Two guys earned their crosses. One guy didn’t.
Three guys were mocked and spit at along the way.
Two guys cursed and spit back. One guy didn’t.
Three guys were nailed to crosses.
Two guys deserved it. One guy didn’t.
Three guys agonized over their abandonment.
Two guys had reason to be abandoned. One guy didn’t.
Three guys talked while hanging on their crosses.
Two guys argued. One guy didn’t.
Three guys knew death was coming.
Chapter 18...There Was a Man of God....12:20-24

Two guys resisted. One guy didn’t.

One, two, three guys died on three crosses.

Three days later, two guys remained in their graves, one guy didn’t.

That man of God was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Are you ready if death should come to you today? H.L. Duncan was mowing his lawn while his wife and two kids watched. All of the sudden, Duncan grabbed his left side, walked a few steps, staggered, collapsed, and died. A half -inch piece of wire, no bigger than pencil lead, had been hurled into his heart by the lawn mower. Death came suddenly to him. Are you ready to meet the Lord?

Are you truly a man of God?
A young man was walking through a supermarket to pick up a few things when he noticed an old lady following him around. Thinking nothing of it, he ignored her and continued on through the store. Finally, he went to the checkout line, but she got in front of him. “Pardon me,” she said, “I’m sorry if my staring at you has made you feel uncomfortable. It’s just that you look just like my son who just recently died.” “I’m very sorry, is there anything I can do for you?” asked the young man. She replied, “Yes, as I am leaving, can you say ‘Good- bye mother!’ It would make me feel much better.” As he stepped up to the checkout counter, the young man saw that his total was $127.50. “How can that be? I only purchased a few things!” he asked. The clerk replied, “Your mother said that you would pay for her groceries.”

Satan is in the deception business too. As the clerk was deceived by the counterfeit mother, Satan uses his counterfeits to deceive, distract, and destroy God’s people and the lost.

God has told Rehoboam and his army to go home. He told them that they will not fight their own people. Rehoboam complies and obeys the Lord. Meanwhile, Jeroboam is busy creating counterfeits to confuse and corrupt God’s people.

I. THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS 12:25
Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

Jeroboam fortifies Shechem and Penuel. He prepares his defenses just in case of an attack.
II. THE CONCERN OF JEROBOAM 12:26,27

And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

Jeroboam worries that he will lose his power and his throne. He fears that if the people return to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, the nation will re-unite, follow Rehoboam, and kill him. God promised to bless Jeroboam’s reign if he would obey the Lord. God gave him the ten tribes to rule.

* 1 Kings 11:31 - And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

God promised stability and blessing.

* 1 Kings 11:37,38- And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

Jeroboam does what many others do. He disbelieves or disregards God’s promises. He was not willing to obey the Lord and meet God’s conditions of blessing. Does this describe you? Is your life messed up because you won’t keep God’s conditions for blessing? Realize this is where Satan wants you. Jeroboam feared the people’s return to the Lord. Satan fears this too! He fears the revival of the Christian. He will do all he can to oppose God’s people.

III. THE COUNSEL OF TWO CALVES 12:28,29

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

Jeremiah gets ungodly counsel which leads to an ungodly nation.

* Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the
scornful.

Jeroboam does the opposite of this verse. He walks in the counsel of the ungodly. This leads to him standing in the way of sinners. It then leads to him sitting in the seat of the scornful. Don’t get caught in this trap. **Ungodly counsel is the counterfeit of God’s Word.** Jeroboam offers up a Satanic counterfeit to keep his power and control over the people. Satan offers the same counterfeits and stumbling blocks to sidetrack us.

False gods or idols are erected, getting their attention off of God. They were two golden calves. Satan wants us to have idols in our lives too. These calves reveal the influence of Egypt. The sacred bull was worshiped in Egypt as the symbol of the goddess Hathor. The bull was the symbol of strength and fertility.

Jeroboam is either ignorant or ignores the past. Five hundred years earlier in Exodus 32, God’s people were judged because Aaron fashioned a golden calf and the people worshiped it. Moses broke the tablets containing the Ten Commandments. **Fools do not learn from the mistakes of the past.**

*Proverbs 13:19- The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.*

These calves become objects of worship. Hosea cries out against them.

*Hosea 8:5,6- Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off: mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.*

**Calves were erected in Dan and Bethel.** Dan was located at the far northern part of Israel. Bethel was located ten miles north of Jerusalem. Three times yearly, Jewish men travel to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. The altar constructed in Bethel was to lure the people away from Jerusalem. Hosea called it Bethaven, just next to Bethel.

*Hosea 10:5- The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.*

Bethel means “House of God.” Bethhaven means “House of Emptiness.” Jeroboam was trying to lure God’s people with that which was counterfeit and artificial. Our artificial fixations may be best epitomized by the guy who tried to rid his house of mice. He bought a
mousetrap but had no cheese. To remedy the problem he went to a magazine and cut out a picture of some cheese. He re-loaded the trap with the artificial cheese and went to bed. When he checked the mousetrap the following morning, he was quite surprised to find a picture of a mouse in the trap. **A counterfeit lifestyle produces artificial results.** When we follow Satan's counterfeits, it leaves us empty... in Bethhaven. Bethel was so close, but yet, so far away. This was not God's choice for worship. God wants 100% obedience from us, not 90%. Some folks are so close to obeying God, yet, miss the mark. If you have a 100 foot well and let down 99 feet of rope, you will come up empty.

Notice the excuse Jeroboam offered, “It's too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. We will make it convenient for you by erecting two places.” Christianity in America is becoming a religion of convenience. Many Christians resist sacrifice, commitment, conviction, inconvenience, hard work, and service to Christ. Some say, “It takes too much time, money, and crowds my schedule.” For these reasons people think you are crazy when you go to church on Sunday night or Wednesday night or go to revival meetings for two weeks like we do in our church. Our excuses for not serving God are destroying our churches.

**One pastor decided to have “No Excuse Sunday” for missing members.** He said, “To make it possible for everyone to attend church next Sunday, we are going to provide the following items.
1. There will be cots in the foyer for those who say that Sunday is their only day to sleep in.
2. There will be a special section with lounge chairs for those who feel the pews are too hard.
3. Eye drops will be available for those whose eyes are tired from watching TV late on Saturday night.
4. We will have steel helmets for folks who think the roof will cave in if they walk into the church.
5. Blankets will be provided for people who think the church is too cold and fans will be provided for those who think it is too hot.
6. Scorecards will be available for those who wish to list the hypocrites present.
7. One section will be devoted to trees and grass for those who like to seek God in nature.
8. Doctors and nurses will be present for folks who plan on being sick Sunday.
9. The auditorium will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and
Easter lilies for those who have never seen the auditorium without them.
10. We will provide hearing aids for individuals who can’t hear the preacher and cotton for those who can! Hope to see you there!
Have you been relying upon excuses for not serving God?

IV. THE CORRUPTION OF GOD’S PEOPLE  12:30, 31
And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

Jeroboam’s religion was the epitome of man-made worship. It contained counterfeit gods and priests. The priests were to be from the tribe of Levi, but these were of the lowest of the people.
* 2 Chronicles 13:9- Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

Counterfeit worship draws worship away from God. Man-made religion takes the focus away from the Lord and His Word. Notice the chart that compares the two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man-Made Religion</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Salvation is by works.</td>
<td>1. Salvation is by grace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is based on man’s abilities.</td>
<td>2. It is based on God’s abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Someone other than God is the mediator: a priest, Mary, an idol, the Pope.</td>
<td>3. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Mediator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is made complex and difficult.</td>
<td>4. It is simple, by faith in Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do right in your own eyes.</td>
<td>5. It demands obedience to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Focus is on music, drama, and entertainment.</td>
<td>6. Focus is upon the Word of God.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Jeroboam’s counterfeit became a snare to the people. His roots of rebellion yielded the fruit of rebellion. You will never grow spiritually with a rebellious heart. Your areas of resistance will hinder further spiritual growth. The place where you get out of God’s will is the place where you get back in it. If not tithing got you out of God’s will, then tithing and restoring your back-tithe will get you back into His will. If
bitterness got you away from God, then forgiveness will get you back on track.

V. THE COUNTERFEIT FEAST  12:32,33

And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Jeroboam institues a counterfeit feast. The Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the seventh month. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated for seven days after the Day of Atonement. People lived in temporary booths made of branches to commemorate the dwelling in tents for forty years in the wilderness. God did not want them to forget about their deliverance from Egypt and the reason they did wander in the wilderness for forty years. The reason, of course, was disobedience to the Word of God. Jeroboam now disobey's the Word of God, instituting his own feast, on his schedule, in the place of His choosing, and in his own way. He did what he wanted to do, and what he devised in his own heart. Those who were righteous had enough and left the northern tribes.

*2 Chronicles 11:14-16... For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord: [15] And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. [16] And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.

Before we get tough on Jeroboam, don’t we sometimes do the same with the Lord, implementing our own will instead of God’s?  **Do you find yourself doing things your own way instead of the Bible’s way?**

1. We get angry and bitter toward those who offend us, but God says we should forgive them.
2. We are selfish sometimes, but God says we should be sacrificial.
3. We may be unfaithful at times, but God says we should be faithful.
4. God says we should be patient and wait upon Him, but we sometimes get ahead of the Lord.
We are constantly being enticed, lured, and sometimes hooked by Satan’s counterfeit lures that he throws at us. Paul warned us about Satan’s tactics.

*1 Timothy 3:7- Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

Don’t fall for Satan’s counterfeits. Don’t be enticed away from the Lord by the lures of this world. William Hinson tells why animal trainers carry stools into the lion’s cage. They have whips, a pistol, and a stool, the stool being the most important tool. The stool is held by the back and the legs thrust toward the lion’s face. The lion tries to focus on all four legs at once and a paralysis overwhelms the animal. It becomes tame, weak, and disabled because its attention is fragmented. Satan distracts us to get our focus off the Lord. We get weak, disabled, and ineffective when this happens. Are you being distracted by counterfeits?
Chapter 20
The Cry Against the Altar

1 Kings 13:1-2

There has been a split in the nation of Israel. Ten tribes seceded from the dozen tribe union and Jeroboam has been crowned as their king. These northern ten tribes in the remainder of Scripture are known by the name Israel or Ephraim. The southern kingdom is known as Judah.

God told Jeroboam He was giving these tribes to him. God was judging Solomon for his sin. The judgment came through the son, Rehoboam. The Lord promised to bless Rehoboam if he would obey the Lord, but he was not willing to do this. Jeroboam also ignores God’s promise. In fact, he disobeys the Lord and does the opposite of His Word. Jeroboam builds his own temples, erects his own calf gods, gets his own places of worship, secures his own priests, makes his own plans, and gets his own way..... for now.

Jeroboam THINKS he is in control. He thinks he is calling the shots in his life and in the nation. He feels he doesn’t need God. His actions describe what we see even today in our own nation. Jeroboam is about to get a rude awakening. If we adopt the same philosophy, we too, will be in for a very rude awakening. Let’s see how God wakes him up. Notice the prophet and the prophecy.

* 1 Kings 13:1,2- And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.
Jeroboam is at his altar preparing to burn incense to his golden
calf. Worshipers have gathered, and all is ready, when out of
nowhere comes the pin that pops his balloon, the nail in the tire, or the fly
in the ointment. It’s a man of God proclaiming, “Thus saith the Lord.”
Jeroboam’s world, dreams, and plans are brought back to planet earth. He
is about to get a reality check and finds that he is in trouble with God.

God has a way of re-shuffling our plans, especially when those plans
contradict His Word and will. James gives a warning to us.

*James 4:15- For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and
do this, or that.

Yes, God has a way of popping our bubbles, not for the purpose
of hurting us, but to get our attention back upon Him. He desires to
teach us that true joy, happiness, peace, satisfaction, and fulfillment are
found only in Jesus Christ.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me,
and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do
nothing.

Things looked pretty bleak in Israel as the people hardened their
hearts against God and turned from Him to the calf of gold. Circumstances sometimes look pretty bleak even today. God, however,
always has a man for the most desperate situations.

* Joseph and Moses were used in Egypt.
* Elijah confronted Ahab and Jezebel.
* John the Baptist stood up to Herod.
* Paul confronted Felix.
* He has His men for today all across the globe.

**God has his men.**

* In a day when right is declared wrong, and wrong is exalted as right,
  God has his men.
* In a day where we butcher our babies at a rate of 4000 per day in
  America, God has his men to cry out.
* In a day where divorce is becoming the norm for the American family,
  God has his men.
* In a time where homosexuals have come out of their closets of
corruption and have intimidated society to accept their abominable filth
and lifestyle, demanding privileges and protections for their practice of
perversion because they claim they can’t help it or it’s in their genes, God
has his men to declare the truth, the fallacy, and lies of their message.
* In a day where gambling is sponsored and promoted by a government
that should be protecting the family from the destructiveness of this addictive habit and its effects on the family financially, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, *God has his men* to expose the hypocrisy of politicians who proclaim, "Gambling money is for the children and for education." Yet, they do not comprehend the very fact it hurts the same children they are trying to educate. How many marriages have been ruined by gambling? How many children go to bed hungry or do not have clothes they need because a parent gambled away a pay check?

In the face of tyranny and corruption, there is no choice for silence! God’s people must speak up for what is right and declare God’s truth. Don’t be intimidated into silence. Abe Lincoln said, “You cannot have the right to do what is wrong.”

**The golden calf of America is money.** The motto of our politicians is “It’s the Economy, Stupid.” The answer to our national woes is not the economy, it is Jesus Christ and His impact upon the spiritual and moral condition of our nation. Correct the character of a nation and the economy will boom. Taxes would be cut as people would get to work instead of refusing to work and collecting a welfare check for doing nothing. Correct the character and less tax money would be needed to support unwed, pregnant, teenage women; to pay for the murder of babies in abortion mills; to pay for the treatment of venereal diseases. Correct the character and less money would be needed for prisons and police officers. Correct the character and less tax money would be needed to pay for people who have contracted cancers from smoking and drinking much of their lives.

**The problem is not a money problem, it is a character problem and the solution to that problem is Jesus Christ.** It is not religion that forgives and cleanses of sin. It is not religion that empowers us to do what is right and develop godly character. It is Jesus Christ. This is the message we are to get out today.

Our country has been blessed with freedom like no other. Men have bled on the battlefields of Europe, Vietnam, Korea, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East for us to have our freedom. If we practice that freedom without restraint and responsibility, it will lead to the ruin of our homes, cities, states, and country. In the book of Judges we find that every man did that which was right in his own eyes. This destroyed Israel and robbed her of her freedom.

**Americans also worship the god of “Rights.”** We do not have the right to do anything we please because if we act that way, we will end up
rejecting the authority of the source of our freedom... God. As Christians, we don’t have the right to live any way we want to live because we do not belong to ourselves. We have no business living like the heathen. 

* 1 Corinthians 6:19,20- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

The freedom we have as Americans requires discipline, responsibility, self-control, and the restraint of our passions. Passions and desires that are out of control can harm others. People live in fear today, lock their doors, arm themselves, because people do not exercise self-control, discipline, restraint of passions and their freedoms. People are concerned about being robbed, raped, and murdered. The economy will not change and cleanse the heart of people, but Jesus Christ can.

This unnamed man of God cried against the altar in the Word of the Lord. Notice several things about him.

A. His Courage

He is alone on Jeroboam’s turf and outnumbered by Baal worshipers. He is an unpopular prophet delivering an unpopular message to a popular king. He was totally surrendered to the Lord and is a challenge to us to follow his example. True surrender to the Lord is illustrated by signing your name at the bottom of a blank sheet of paper and allowing the Lord to fill in the details. Are you willing to do this? This man of God was willing.

B. His Confidence

He knew he was in the majority, though alone. He was on God’s side, delivering God’s message.

* Romans 8:31- What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

C. Consider the Confusion

These folks were probably wondering, “Who is this guy?” He was an un-named prophet. He was nobody to them but somebody to God.

* 1 Corinthians 1:27,29- But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; That no flesh should glory in his presence.

D. Consider His Conviction

A person of cowardice would ask, “Is it safe to do this?” A person of vanity would ask, “Is it popular to do this?” A person of conscience would ask, “Is it right to do this?” He spoke up because it was right.
Notice the prophetic message, "Your dream Jeroboam will become
a nightmare one day. The priests would be killed and their bones would
be burned upon the altar. Josiah, of the house of David, will destroy the
altar." All wrongs will be made right. Three hundred years later, Josiah
was born and he fulfilled this prophecy as God said. He reigned 31 years
and led one of the five great revivals recorded in Chronicles. As Jeroboam
is a type of Anti-christ, Josiah is a picture of Jesus Christ, of the house of
David, who will one day make all wrongs right. As the prophecy in 1
Kings 13 came true and was fulfilled to the detail, the prophecy of Christ's
return will be fulfilled too. Are you ready for His return? Until He
returns, stand up for Him.

In 1858, a great revival swept across Philadelphia. One of the
most powerful preachers was Dudley Tyng, a bold, fearless,
uncompromising preacher. He served as an assistant to his father, and
then took over the church after his father resigned. The fashionable
members of the church could not handle his straightforward preaching. He
resigned, started his own church, which grew quickly. He started noon
services at the YMCA. On Tuesday, March 30, 1858, over 5000 men
came to hear him preach on Exodus 10:11....go now ye that are men and
serve the Lord. Over 1000 were saved in the service.

In the message, Dudley said he would rather lose his arm than fail
to deliver God's message to the men. The next week he visited a farm and
was watching the operation of a corn thrasher and accidentally got his
loose sleeve caught in the cogs, mangling his arm severely. Four days
later, infection set in. The shock and loss of blood killed him on April 19,
1858. On his death bed, he was asked by friends and preachers for a final
statement. He whispered, "Let us all stand up for Jesus." Dudley's good
preacher friend, George Duffield, preached that Sunday from Ephesians
6:14 on standing for Christ, and then read a poem he had written in honor
of his friend. The poem was distributed among churches and George
Webb composed the music of the song, "Stand Up for Jesus." Are you
standing up for Christ?
Chapter 21
When God Changes Your Tune
1 Kings 13:3-10

Getting your bubble popped or having your schemes or plans ruined is not a whole lot of fun. Such was the case for king Jeroboam. Just as he is about to offer incense to his golden calf at his new temple, a courageous man sent from God speaks up out of the crowd. He prophesies the birth of a king that will one day destroy his altar and his priests, a man named Josiah. God will give a sign to prove His message was true. Jeroboam’s heathen altar would be broken and the ashes poured out.

What takes place next demonstrates the protection of God, the problems with pride, the power of prayer, and the importance of principles and convictions in one’s life. It shows that when we proudly resist the Lord, God can change our tune.

I. THE PARALYSIS OF THE KING 13:4

And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

Jeroboam is infuriated by this man of God. He felt the same way as unsaved people feel about Christians today. Paul addressed this issue in the book of 1 Corinthians.

* 1 Corinthians 4:13- Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the
filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

The king could not refute the message. He resorts to violence to shut him up. As Jeroboam gives the command to have the prophet seized, his hand shrivels up and becomes paralyzed to the point that it remains in a pointing position. This powerful king becomes humiliated and impotent. The punisher is punished and God is about to change his tune and his attitude. This king, who prided himself in his accomplishments, not needing God, now finds himself suddenly out of control and helpless to solve his problems. He needs God’s help. Circumstances in life can change very quickly. Wealth can vanish and health can flee quickly, can’t they? Solomon warned sinners who stiff-arm the Lord in their lives.

*Proverbs 29:1- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* The words “suddenly destroyed” indicate that death can come swiftly and in strange ways. Let me illustrate. Mario Cianca entered a funeral parlor and saw a man rise from a coffin with a satisfied smile on his face. Mario died of shock. Pedro Fernandez, owner of the parlor had been measuring the coffin for a client his size. The shock of what he thought he saw was too much for Mario Cianca.

You better think twice if you don’t think you need the Lord in your life. God has a way of turning the tables and pulling out the rugs beneath us. He can change our tune very quickly.

*I Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

On a flight from Johannesburg, a middle-aged, well-off, white, South African lady found herself sitting next to a black man. She called the cabin crew attendant to complain about her seating arrangement. “What seems to be the problem, Madam?” asked the attendant. “Can’t you see?” she said, “You’ve set me next to a kafir. I can’t possibly sit next to this disgusting human. Find me another seat!” “Please calm down, Madam,” the stewardess replied. “The flight is very full today, but I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I will go and check to see if we have any seats available in club or first class.” The woman cocks a snooty look at the outraged black man beside her, not to mention many of the surrounding passengers too. A few minutes later the stewardess returns with good news, which she delivers to the lady. She cannot help but look at the people around her with a smug and self-satisfied grin. The stewardess said, “Madam, unfortunately, as I suspected, the economy and club sections are full. However, we do have one seat available in first class.” Before the lady has
a chance to answer, the stewardess continues, “It is most extraordinary to make this kind of upgrade. I had to get special permission from the captain, but given the circumstances, the captain felt that it was outrageous that someone should be forced to sit next to such an obnoxious person.” Having said that, the stewardess turned to the black man sitting next to the woman and said, “Sir, if you’d like to get your things, I have your seat ready for you in the first-class section of the plane.” Having said this, the surrounding passengers stood and gave a standing ovation while the black man walked up to the front of the plane. Pride has a way of turning the tables on us and making us look like stupid fools. Beware of your pride, beloved.

The withered hand of the king teaches us again how, in a moment, God can turn the strength used against Him, into weakness. The gallows of Haman destroyed Haman. Pharaoh’s army ended up dying in the Red Sea and accusers of Daniel ended up being a meal of the lions. The king was going to shut this prophet up! Men, however, cannot shut up, lock up, or back up God’s plans when He wants us to giddy up and open up the Bible and speak up for Him. God took care of this prophet and He will take care of you too. This prophet was doing God’s work and was under God’s care.

* Matthew 15:13- But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.
* Acts 5:38- And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

II. THE POURING OF THE ASHES 13:5

The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

Not only does Jeroboam’s hand become paralyzed, but the prophecy, God’s Word, is fulfilled. The lavish altar is broken in two and the ashes are poured out, showing the sureness of the Word of God.

* Matthew 5:18- For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. The plans of those who rebel against God will be frustrated.
* Psalm 33:10- The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.
III. THE PRAYER REQUEST OF THE KING  13:6

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

With his life falling apart, insecure, out of control, and with fear gripping his heart, Jeroboam realizes he needs God after all. His tune is changed real quick. He cries, “Pray for my hand to be restored!” This is tragic because he could have avoided all this heartache by obeying the Lord. The same holds true for us today. Instead of learning hard lessons of heartache from running your own life and running away from God, just submit to Him now and obey Him.

Jeroboam says, “Intreat the Lord” which was a term of endearment. It means “smooth or stroke the face of the Lord.” Notice, he also says, “thy God.” He is acknowledging he is an unbeliever. This would be a great opportunity for the prophet to take revenge, wouldn’t it? Instead, he responds by showing good for evil. He responds with compassion.

* Romans 12:20,21- Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
* Matthew 5:44 - But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

The prophet’s response demonstrates the power of God. It shows God’s power by responding with grace and not hate. It shows that God was working in the prophet’s life. He is still working in you too. Amen!

* Philippians 1:6- Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

God’s power was also demonstrated in the fact that the withered hand of Jeroboam was healed. Unfortunately, Jeroboam does not ask for forgiveness of his sin, he asked only for physical deliverance. Our most important need is our spiritual need which is met in Jesus Christ.
IV. THE POLITENESS OF THE KING 13:7

And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

The command was return, refresh yourself, and I will reward you. The king has changed his tune, hasn’t he? God can humble us and change our tune too from:

* “I did it!” to “The Lord did it!”
* “I don’t need anyone!” to “I need the Lord’s help!”
* “I want my way!” to “I will do it God’s way!”

Does your tune, your attitude, need changed? How is your attitude toward your spouse, parents, teacher, boss, etc? If it is rotten, change it now before the Lord gives you an attitude adjustment and changes your tune.

V. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PROPHET 13:8-10

And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: [9] For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. [10] So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

The men who have moved the world have been men whom the world could not move. David Livingston said, “I will go anywhere provided it be forward.” The prophet knew the fellowship with the king would be a step backward. Eating a meal and taking a gift was considered an act of fellowship or an alliance. This act would associate the prophet with the king and his idolatry and weaken his message. This is why Abraham refused the gifts of the king of Sodom in Genesis. It was for this reason the Hebrews would not eat with the Egyptians or the Samaritans. This custom also explains the shock that came from Jesus eating with publicans and sinners.

God wants us to be concerned not only about the threats of this world, but also the favors this world offers us. When it comes to the people you fellowship with, use much wisdom and discernment. The wrong crowd is usually the number one reason why people get away from God.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14- Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
Be careful and alert to the temptations on your path. God said, "No fellowship!" The prophet obeys the Lord and resists the invitation to see the President at the White House, if you please. This was a great honor, but the prophet declines it. This was a rare invitation, but he declines. What prestige and notoriety he would have, yet, he declines. He obeys the Lord and resists the temptations.

* Proverbs 1:10- My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.
* 2 Peter 3:17- Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

**Do you have the determination to do what is right?** Do you want to do what is right or does the Lord need to change your tune? God help us all to stay in tune with Him and respond immediately to His leading in our lives. May we hunger for the Word of God like a man in Kansas City who was severely injured in an explosion. This man lost his hands, his eyesight, and much of his face. He was a new Christian and was grieved that he could not read his Bible. He was encouraged though, when he heard about a woman in England who read Braille with her lips. He tried to do this but the nerves in his lips were ruined by the explosion. He kept trying and one day he put the Braille letters to his tongue and discovered he could feel the letters. From that point, he learned to read the Braille Bible by using his tongue. At the time of the interview with this man, he had already read the Bible through four times. May we have the same hunger for the Word of God as this man.
Great victories at times are accompanied or followed by tragic failures because the victor fails to keep his or her guard up. Such will be the case in this section of Scripture. A prophet from Judah has preached against Jeroboam’s idolatrous altar to a calf god. In his attempt to seize the prophet, Jeroboam’s hand is withered and paralyzed by an act of God. He changes his tune and requests prayer from a Judean prophet. His hand is miraculously healed.

When Jeroboam invites this man home to dine and refresh himself, he refuses in obedience to God’s command. This was another victory for this prophet…a victory in character. The prophet returns home. Meanwhile, news of what took place at the Temple of the Golden Calf spreads throughout the region. The events that succeed this man’s victory give us steps, a path, or *tracks to getting sidetracked* from God’s will in our lives.

I. THE INFORMING SONS 13:11

Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

Dwelling in Bethel is an old prophet who is informed by his sons of the events at the Temple of the Golden Calf. This is a surprise. What is he still doing in Bethel? My opinion is that this old man was a prophet who had compromised his convictions. He was a man
who was trying to serve two masters.

* Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The compromise of this old prophet is seen in several ways:

1. His sons are permitted to attend the worship of the golden calf god, yet, he does not sanction this false worship with his own presence.
2. The molten image, the temple, the priesthood have been established, yet, there is no protest from him as far as we can tell. He is a man that is caught in the middle. Trying to serve two masters is a track that will get you sidetracked.

* James 1:8- A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Who are you trying to please or be like? Is it the crowd or Christ? Realize you can’t please both. Don’t fear the names or the intimidations of the crowd. It is time for Christians to be the soldiers that Christ intended us to be. We need the attitude of a man who wrote an article entitled “A Soldier in the Army of God.” Here is what it says.

I am a soldier in the army of my God!
The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer.
The Holy Bible is my code of conduct.
Faith, prayer and the Word of God are my weapons of warfare!

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire!
I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity.
I will either retire in this army at the Rapture or die in this army; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out!
I am faithful, reliable, capable, dependable, and available.

I am a soldier and not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, or pepped up!
I am a soldier! No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me or entice me.
I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to. I am committed.

I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around!
I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside.
I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.
When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing!
If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even. I will win!
My God will supply all my needs. I am more than a conqueror.

I will always triumph! I can do all things through Christ.
Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me.
Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me.
Battles cannot beat me and money cannot buy me.
Governments cannot silence me and Hell cannot handle me.
I am a soldier, marching Heaven bound! Here I stand!

II. INQUIRIES OF THE PROPHET 13:12-14

And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. [13] And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, [14] And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.

The old prophet seeks after the Judean man of God and finds him sitting under an oak tree. He asks a sobering question, “Are you the man of God?” How would you answer that question if you were asked, “Are you a man or woman of God?” Would your answer match your life? This is the test we face every single day. Can people see the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives? If you want to be a man or woman of God, it begins by first trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. We are to ask the Lord to come into our hearts and forgive us and cleanse us of all our sins and we by faith are to trust Him, and only Him, to give us eternal life and take us to Heaven. Have you put your faith in Christ to take you to Heaven?

III. THE INVITATION TO DINE 13:15

Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

Satan is very persistent in trying to get us sidetracked. He wants us on the track to getting sidetracked. After a great victory and resisting the king’s temptations, a more subtle temptation follows. This temptation he is now facing, and will be ensnared by, could have been avoided if he did not linger near the scene of the temptation. He rested too close to Bethel instead of getting home. This is another of those tracks that get us sidetracked. The reason why Christians struggle with
various temptations is because they put themselves on a tempting path. Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that you can handle any temptation. Stay away from drugs, pornography, immorality, alcohol, tobacco, etc.

IV. THE IMPERATIVE OF THE LORD 13:16,17

And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

The Judean man of God repeats the same answer to the old prophet, “The Word of the Lord says ‘NO!’” Up to this point, the Word of God had been his guide and God blessed all that he did. When he forsakes it, he gets into trouble. The same will happen to us.

V. THE INSINCERITY AND THE IMPOSITION OF THE OLD PROPHET 13:18,19

He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

As the stinger is in the tail of the scorpion, the sting is in the tale of the old prophet’s invitation. The old prophet lies to the man of God. He tells him an angel gave him a message for him, “You are to return with me.” The man of God follows.

This brings us to this question, “Why did the old prophet lie and deceive the man of God?” There may be several reasons.
1. Jealousy could be a factor. Is he trying to tear the prophet down to make himself feel better about his own failures?
2. Is the old prophet feeling guilty because he did not cry against Jeroboam’s altar? By getting the man of God to compromise, he could reason, “I’m not the only one who has failed.”
3. Is he desperate to talk to the man of God because he needs encouragement? Our answers are speculations which may be close to the real answer.

What we do know is the man of God yields to temptation because, in a nutshell, he disregards the Word of God. He makes the same mistake as Adam and Eve. Disregarding the Bible will create major
problems for your life. It will put you on a track to getting sidetracked. You can end up establishing bad relationships, marrying the wrong person, or making bad business decisions. There is an important lesson here. **When a man’s message contradicts the Word of God, it is not of God.** God never contradicts His Word. Satan is in the deception business. Paul issued a warning in Corinthians.

* 2 Corinthians 11:13,14- For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

**People fall into the trap today of worshiping men instead of God.** Men will give their allegiance to preachers of large churches, even when their philosophy or preaching is unscriptural. Success is equated with the size of their church instead of their obedience to the Scriptures. Beloved, this is WRONG!!!

The old prophet gave a distorted message and it led a good man astray. Is your life message distorted, a lie, a stumbling block, or a hindrance to the Gospel? Whether you like it or not, your life is preaching. What is it saying? Is your message, “For me to live is Christ” or is it “Every man should do what is right in his own eyes.”

Our life is to reflect the truth. The importance of truth is seen in the Hebrew word for truth, the word **emet.** The first letter is the letter aleph (א) and the last letter is the letter tav (ת). The truth is equated with A to Z. Truth demands total accuracy from start to finish, from A to Z. God help us to get the truth to our loved ones and to our city and to stay on a track that will not get us sidetracked on trivial, unimportant matters.

One day a woman named Louise fell asleep in her bed and dreamed a frightening dream. She dreamed that someone in Hell wrote her a letter and it was to be delivered to her by a messenger. The messenger passed between the lakes of burning fire and brimstone that occupy Hell, and found his way to the door that would lead him to the outside world. Louise dreamed that the messenger walked to her house, came inside, and gently, but firmly, awakened her. He gave her the message saying only that a friend had written it to her from Hell. Louise, in her dream, took the letter with trembling hands and read this message:

*My Friend,*

*I stand in Judgment now, and feel that you’re the blame somehow.*

*On earth, I walked with you day by day, and never did you point the way. You knew the Lord in truth and glory, but never did you tell the story. My knowledge then was very dim; you could have led me safe to Him.*
Though we lived together on the earth, you never told me of the 2nd birth. And now I stand this day condemned, because you failed to mention Him. You taught me many things, that's true, I called you "friend" and trusted you. But I learn now that it's too late, you could have kept me from this fate. We walked by day and talked by night, yet, you showed me not the Light. You let me live, and love, and die, you knew I'd never live on high. Yes, I called you a "friend" in life, and trusted you through joy and strife. And yet on coming to the end, I cannot, now, call you "My Friend."

Marsha

After reading the letter, Louise awoke. The dream was still so real in her mind. Sweat dropped from her body in pools. She swore she could still smell the acrid smell of brimstone and smoke from her room. As she contemplated the meaning of her dream, she realized that as a Christian, she had failed in her duty to witness to others. She promised herself that the next day she would call Marsha and invite her to church. The next morning she called Marsha only to find that during the night she was killed in a terrible car accident. Louise was too late. Beloved, when we get on a track that gets us sidetracked, we will be late in serving the Lord.
Chapter 23
The Tragedy of Getting Sidetracked
1 Kings 13:20-34

Have you ever heard the expression, “Face the music?” Here is the background history of this phrase. Many years ago, a man wanted to play in the Imperial Orchestra, but he couldn’t play a note of music. Since he was a person of great wealth and influence, he demanded to be allowed to join the orchestra so that he could perform in front of the king. The conductor agreed to let him sit in the second row of the orchestra. Even though he couldn’t read or play music, he was given a flute, and when the concert would begin, he would raise his instrument, pucker his lips, and move his fingers. He went through all the motions of playing, but he never made a sound.

This deception went on for two years. Then one day, a new conductor took over the Imperial Orchestra. He told the orchestra that he wanted to personally audition all the players to see how well they could play. The audition would weed out all those who were not able to meet his standards. The unqualified would be dismissed from the orchestra. One by one the players performed in his presence. Frantic with worry, when it was his turn, the phony flutist pretended to be sick. The doctor was ordered to examine him and he declared him perfectly well. The conductor insisted he appear before him and play. Shamefacedly, the man had to confess that he was a fake. That was the day he had to “face the music.” We will face the music one day when we stand before the Lord.

In our story here, the man of God has disobeyed God’s command in returning with the old prophet. He is now going to face the music and reap
the consequences of his actions. His life will teach us *the tragedy of getting sidetracked.*

I. THE INSPIRATION OF THE LORD 13:20

And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back:

The Word of the Lord came unto the old prophet. God had a message for both of these men.

II. THE INCRIMINATION OF THE OLD PROPHET 13:21,22

And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers.

When the man of God returned to Bethel, he diluted the ban that God had placed upon the city. By returning, he is guilty of the same sin as Jeroboam, the sin of forsaking the plain commands of God for the ordinances of men. He listened to the tempter and ate forbidden fruit. He now becomes an example of disobedience. This was Satan’s goal, to get the man of God sidetracked from God’s will. He has succeeded. How quickly we can go from victory to defeat. Paul warned us in Corinthians.

*1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

The old prophet delivers a message from God to the disobedient man of God. He cried unto him. Now think about what is happening here. First of all, think about the old prophet. Imagine how uncomfortable it was for the old prophet to deliver God’s message, knowing he was responsible. He lied and deceived the man of God. He now pronounces judgment and punishment on the person he led astray. His deceptive message about the angel ended up being a message of death for the man of God. I wonder how many preachers today are preaching messages of death? They know the truth and know what is right, but lie to people, lead them astray, and approve or allow sinful living in the church or in their own life. By not speaking up, they watch the lives of their people destroyed by sin. How many will go to Hell because they were afraid to
tell them the truth about Hell and salvation in Christ?

Think about the man of God. Imagine the shock he felt when he heard this message from the old prophet who had lied to him. Don’t you think he felt betrayed, deserted, tricked, trapped, hopeless, and scared? God still held him accountable. He had given him instructions and he disobeyed.

We are accountable too. Our instructions are in the Word of God. We are accountable for commissions and omissions.

* Romans 14:12- So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
* 1 Peter 4:17- For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The man of God would meet with sudden death and not be buried with his father. Burial among family was very important to the Jews; not to have this done was considered a judgment. This man of God lost this privilege.

III. INIQUITY IS PUNISHED  13:23,24

And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

The lying tongue of the old prophet deceived the man of God. Lies are one of Satan’s most effective weapons in his arsenal. He uses it over and over again.

* John 8:44- Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
* 2 Corinthians 4:4 - In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The lion slays the man of God and then the lion and donkey stand as sentinels over his body. What a tragedy that resulted from being sidetracked. The wills of these animals were yielded to the sovereignty of God. It was a miracle that the lion didn’t devour the man of God or the donkey. It was a miracle that the donkey didn’t run away. This incident
is a reminder of several truths.
1. Satan as a roaring lion roams the earth seeking whom he may devour. It would be a tragedy if he ruined you and got you sidetracked.
2. Sin brings a penalty... death.
* Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
3. God’s Word is true and will be fulfilled. Judgment was promised to the disobedient prophet. Judgment is promised upon those who reject Christ.
* Ephesians 5:6- Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
* Revelation 20:14,15- And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

   When God’s people are disobedient, they will be judged.
* 1 Samuel 12:15- But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.
4. Satan’s goal is to make us ineffective and useless. Paul was concerned about wasting his life.
* 1 Corinthians 9:27- But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

   Death was necessary for the man of God in order that his mission be not invalidated. His death becomes a sign to Israel. How? If eating food against the command of God brought severe punishment against a righteous man, then what was in store for those who forsook the Lord and worshiped calves? It was a message of doom for the unfaithful people of God.

IV. THE INFORMERS TO THE CITY  13:25

And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

The men saw the carcass in the street but didn’t go near it because of the lion’s presence.
V. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEAD PROPHET 13:26

And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him.

The man of God is identified and so is his sin. These folks know why he is dead. This is the first place in the KJV where the word “disobedient” appears. *(See the Special Study at the end of this chapter on “The Details on Disobedience” on page 178.)*


And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. [28] And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. [29] And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. [30] And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!

The old prophet has got to be feeling guilty from what he has done. He retrieves the body and respectfully buries it in his own tomb. It is a cruel courtesy to kill a man and then help him to his grave. We never know where our sin will lead us, do we? Whatever the motive was of the old prophet for deceiving the man of God, I’m sure it was not worth it now. Think twice before you wreck your life or the life of someone else and run down the trail that leads to a tragedy from getting sidetracked.

VII. THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERNMENT 13:31,32

And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

The old prophet plans ahead. He wants to be buried with the man of God. Though he is dead, the man of God preaches from the grave. Three hundred years later, when Josiah comes to Bethel
to extend his reforms to the northern kingdom and destroy the altar of Jeroboam, the men of the city identify the prophet’s grave.

* 2 Kings 23:17- Then he said, What title is that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulcher of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

If a message could be inscribed on your grave, what message would you want on it?

VIII. THE INCESSANT INIQUITY OF JEROBOAM 13:33,34

After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

Jeroboam is persistent and consistent in his sin. He disregards the message and does not repent. His family is going to be eventually destroyed.

* Proverbs 26:11- As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

Let me ask you, “Are you sidetracked? Are you heading for tragedy because of your disobedience? Are you clinging to the things of this life and missing out the treasures God has for you?” Don’t sacrifice your future on the altar of the immediate.

** Special Studies**

* The Details on Disobedience*

What does the Bible say about disobedience? From Genesis to Revelation, we have tried in this study to give you a good grasp on this topic. The material will be of great benefit to you in your counseling and preaching.

I. OUR CONDITION BEFORE SALVATION

Before we were saved, we were under Satan’s domination.

* Titus 3:3- For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

* Ephesians 2:2 - Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course
of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit
that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISOBEDIENT
A. Duped & Deceived-
   The Eskimo uses a deceptive tactic to hunt and kill a wolf. He coats
his knife with blood and lets it freeze. Then he adds another coat of blood
and then another. As each coat freezes, he adds another smear of blood
until the blade is coated over by layers of frozen blood. He then buries the
knife in the frozen tundra with the blade facing up. The wolf catches the
scent of fresh blood and begins to lick it. He licks it more feverishly until
the blade is bare. Then the wolf keeps on licking harder. Because of the
cold, he never notices the pain of the blade on his tongue. His craving for
the taste of blood is so great that he licks the blade till he bleeds to death,
swallowing his own life. The wolf is deceived. He gets what he wants
but loses what he had, his own life. Satan implements the same method
upon men and women without Christ. They have been duped and deceived
by Satan and by deceptive men and women.
   * Ephesians 5:6- Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of
these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
   The word “cometh” is in the present tense indicating that God’s
wrath is certain and imminent.
   * 1 Timothy 2:14- And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being
deceived was in the transgression.
B. Distracted & Disregardful-
   * Nehemiah 9:17a- And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy
wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in
their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage:....
C. A Denseness about the Lord & the things of God-
   * Job 36:12 - But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they
shall die without knowledge.
   * John 7:17- If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Obedience brings
about discernment in the things of the Lord.
   * Exodus 5:2- And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey
his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.
   People without Christ are blinded by Satan.
   * 2 Corinthians 4:4- In whom the god of this world hath blinded the
minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of
Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

D. Doomed-
* Romans 6:16- Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Those who will not obey the Lord and turn to Christ will die in their sin.
* Joshua 1:18- Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

E. Delayed-
* Galatians 5:7- Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? When we disobey the Lord, we are hindered, delayed, knocked backwards, blocked or cut off in our Christian growth and effectiveness for Christ. This is the meaning of the word “hindered.” Don’t let Satan hinder you and cut you off in your race for Christ.

F. Deaf to the Truth-
* Jeremiah 17:23- But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. When a person gets away from the Lord, he tends to be stubborn and unteachable.

G. Distant from the Lord-
* Zephaniah 3:2 - She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. Judah did not receive correction and continued to repeat the same sin. She trusted in herself instead of the Lord, getting further away from Him. When we are disobedient to the Lord, our fellowship is broken with the Lord and many times with God’s people too. We don’t want to be near either of them.

H. Disrespectful toward Word of God and the Man of God-
* Nehemiah 9:26- Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. God led them and blessed them with victory, providing for their needs, yet, they still rebelled against the Lord. They turned their backs on the Lord and sunk lower and lower into their depravity, reaping the consequences of their wickedness.
* Ezekiel 23:35- Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

I. Discrepant in their lifestyle-

In any great forest, you will find many huge, towering trees. They appear to be very strong and mature trees. Loggers, however, will sometimes not even bother to cut these huge trees down even though you would think there would be a lot more wood contained in them. The reason loggers leave some of these trees is because they are rotten on the inside. They are often hollow and are blown over in huge wind storms. This is the essence of hypocrisy.... appearing strong on the outside but hollow and rotten on the inside. Such is the case of those who are disobedient to the Lord.

* Titus 1:16 - They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Disobedience to the Lord leads to hypocrisy and inconsistency in your life and an ineffectiveness and disapproval for doing a good work for Christ. Reprobate means “tested but disapproved.” Profession and performance should not contradict.

J. Distressing & Draconian-

* Zephaniah 3:1,2 - Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. When people become disobedient to the Lord and assert their wills against God, they tend to be harsh, tyrannical or difficult with other people.

When I think of King Saul, I am reminded of his oppression toward David, time and again, endeavoring to kill him.

K. Deceitful, Defaming & Defiant-

* Isaiah 30:9- That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: They were willing to listen to lies but not to the truth. Such is the case of those who are disobedient.

* Jeremiah 6:28- They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. Brass and iron represent impi duness, stubbornness and obstinacy.

* Hosea 7:13- Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me. When people are disobedient toward the Lord, they tend to attack those who do what is right or take a stand against their sin. Some do this because it makes them feel
better about themselves or they try to justify their disobedience. The attacks against others can be most vicious.

III. THE CONFLICT WITH GOD’S AUTHORITY

The captain on the bridge of a large naval vessel saw a light ahead of him on a collision course. He signaled, “Alter your course ten degrees south.” The reply came back, “Alter your course ten degrees north.” The captain signaled again, “Alter your course ten degrees south. I am a captain.” The reply: “Alter your course ten degrees north. I am a seaman third-class.” The furious captain signaled, “Alter your course ten degrees south. I am a battleship.” The reply: “Alter your course ten degrees north. I am a lighthouse.” This story amply illustrates the conflict of man’s will, the captain, with God’s will, the lighthouse.

Men who disobey the Lord find themselves in conflict with God’s authority and His Word. Two wills clash together, man and God’s. Disobedient men are determined to have their own way, do their own will, and follow their own leaders instead of following the Lord. They substitute God’s authority and God’s way with their own way and their own god. They hate and reject God’s Word because they do not accept His authority over their lives and resist the Lord or anyone else telling them what they can do or cannot do. It was like this in Jeremiah’s day and people are still like this today.

* Jeremiah 17:23- But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. When the neck is stiff, it is hard and it won’t turn easily.

* Isaiah 30:1- Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

* Zechariah 7:12- Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

* Isaiah 65:2- I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

* Nehemiah 9:17- And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of
great kindness, and forsookest them not.
* I Sam 8:19- Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;
* 1 Pet 2:8- And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
* Psalm 119:158 - I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.
* Jeremiah 11:10-They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

IV. THE CAUSES OF DISOBEDIENCE
A. Ignorance of the Lord-
* Exodus 5:2- And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.
B. Insurgency or rebellion-
* Jeremiah 5:23 - But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.
C. Insidious temptations of Satan-
A small boy was being cared for by a nurse-maid. When he saw a beautiful vase in a china cabinet, he wanted it. When he was refused, he began crying, screaming, and kicking. His mother, hearing the fuss, came into the room to find out what in the world was wrong. Picking up her child, she said unto him, “What do you want darling?” He pointed to the vase, so she gave it to him. This did not satisfy the boy and he started crying again. “What does my little darling want now?” the mother asked. He replied, “I want, I want,” said the boy between sobbs, and then he blurted out, “I want anything I’m not supposed to have!” The attitude of this little boy is a clear picture of many men and women today. People want what they are told they cannot have. Such is the nature of sinful, disobedient man and adequately portrayed in Scripture.
* Genesis 3:4,5- And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.
* James 1:13-15... Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and
enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

D. Ire (anger) & Incredulity (unbelief)-

* Numbers 20:10-12... And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. We do things when we are angry that we would never do any other time. Moses’ irritation, anger, and unbelief spurned his disobedience and his loss of future opportunity.

V. THE CONTROL & CLOUT OF THE DISOBEDIENT

As a boy, John Mitchell was familiar with the mountains and mine pits around his home. One night, his Boy Scout troop was on a midnight hike. Since John knew the mountains and where the dangerous pits were, he took several private hikes away from the troop. The scoutmaster admonished him saying, “Although you know where the mine pits are and how to avoid them, when you go to them, you make a path that others may follow to their death. Those who are disobedient do the same thing. They blaze a path that others tend to follow to their destruction. Disobedient people can be very intimidating and influential in their wickedness. Facial expressions, mocking, threats, hateful words and their terrible example are tools the disobedient use to control others and get their own way. The Scriptures indicate the power and control that the disobedient can have over others.

* Romans 5:12- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:
* Romans 5:19- For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
* 1 Kings 11:4- For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.
* Ezekiel 2:6- And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost
dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

* Ezekiel 3:9 - As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

God has instructed us to keep away from the clout and control of the wicked.

* Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
* Proverbs 4:14,15 - Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

VI. A CONDITION OF THE LAST DAYS

* Titus 3:3 - For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.
* Romans 1:30 - Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
* 2 Timothy 3:2 - For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

VII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEEDIENCE

A. Destruction-

Disobedience brings destruction and ruin.

* Jeremiah 12:17 - But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.
* Isaiah 1:20 - But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.
* Jeremiah 32:23 - And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:

B. The Denunciation of the Lord-

God said He would curse His people if they would not obey Him.

* Deuteronomy 11:27,28 - A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye
have not known.

* Dan 9:11- Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

C. Difficulty & Distress in your life-

The St.Petersburg Times once carried a news item about a hungry thief who grabbed some sausages in a meat market, only to find they were part of a string fifteen feet long. Tripping over them, he was hindered in his getaway and the police found him collapsed in a tangle of fresh sausages. This is what happens when we are disobedient to the Lord. Our sin causes us to come away with more than we expected and tends to entangle us with distress and trouble until it brings us down, leaving us in bondage.

* Jeremiah 7:23- But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. If we don’t obey the Lord, things will not go well for us.

* Jeremiah 42:6 - Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

* Jonah 1:3,4- But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

* Ephesians 6:2,3- Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

* Proverbs 28:14 - Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

D. The Delivery of that which you Dread-

* Jeremiah 42:13-16... But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into
Egypt, and go to sojourn there; Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

E. A Dispute with the Lord-

*1 Sam 12:15- But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers. When we are disobedient to the Lord, we find ourselves in opposition with Him and subject to His chastisement.

F. Division in our Fellowship with the Lord-

Born in 1765, in France, James Smithson was the illegitimate son of a prominent English duke and a direct, lineal descendant of King Henry VII through his mother. Branded as a bastard, James was refused British citizenship and denied a rich inheritance through his true father. Due to this rejection the young Smithson felt constrained to succeed at whatever he did. He became one of England’s leading scientists and a member of the Royal Society (the chief association of leading scientists) at the age of twenty-two.

In 1829, Smithson, who never married, died and left his considerable fortune to a nephew. Rumor had it that the terms of Smithson’s will stipulated that his entire estate was to go to one recipient upon the nephew’s death. The English scientific community hoped that he had made sizeable grants to their favorite institutions. But when the terms of the will were made public, they were shocked!

Smithson had written: “Just as England has rejected me, so have I rejected England.” During Smithson’s lifetime, England had fought two bitter wars with the colonies in America. So, to show his utter contempt for those who had mistreated him, he gave everything to the United States Government for the establishment of a scientific institution in the young nation’s capital. To this day the Smithsonian Institute is recognized as one of the most prominent institutions of its kind in the world. England made the tremendous mistake of thinking that she had no need of this man, from whom she might have benefited greatly. People make the same mistake today with God. Those who are disobedient feel they do not need God or have to do what He commands in His Word. When we disobey, we hurt our walk with God and our close fellowship is strained or broken. The wonderful blessings we could have had are lost to our detriment.

* Acts 7:39- To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,
* Jeremiah 18:17 - I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.
* Micah 3:4 - Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

G. The Disappointment of the Lord with us-
* Colossians 3:20- Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.
* Ephesians 6:2,3- Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

H. Disgrace & Dishonor-
When we disobey the Lord, we hurt our testimony for Christ and bring reproach upon ourselves.
* 2 Thessalonians 3:14- And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

I. The Discouragement and Distressing of others-
When we are disobedient, we hurt and grieve others, especially those who care about us and are our authorities, such as parents and pastors. We also grieve the Lord.
* Hebrews 13:17- Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.
* Isaiah 63:10 - But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

J. A Drain and Deficiency in our life-
* Psalm 68:6- God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Getting your own way by disobeying the Lord is not as great as it is portrayed to be. The disobedient may prosper materially, but their things have sorrow attached to them. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich and He addeth no sorrow with it (Proverbs 10:22).

K. The Depletion & Deprivation of opportunities-
In the days before modern harbors, a ship had to wait for the flood tide before it could make it to the port. The term for this situation in Latin was ob portu, that is, a ship standing over against a port, waiting for the moment when it could ride the turn of the tide into the harbor. The
English word *opportunity* is derived from this original meaning. The captain and the crew were ready and waiting for it, that one moment, for they knew that if they missed it, they would have to wait for another tide to come in. **When you disobey the Lord, you rob yourself of opportunities to be used of God in greater ways because you are not in the position or place God wants you to be or you are not paying attention to the opportunities at hand. You especially lose leadership opportunities when you disobey.** This is what happened to Moses and to Saul when they disobeyed the Lord’s instructions.

* Num 20:10-12. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.  

* 1 Kings 13:26 - And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him. His ministry ended because he was disobedient to the Lord.

* 1 Samuel 15:22,23 - And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

**L. The Deafness of the Lord to our prayers**

A young boy saw a pack of cigarettes on the ground and decided to try them. He went to a field near his home and lighted one up. It didn’t taste good at all. It burned his throat and made him cough, but it did make him feel grown up. Then he saw his father coming and he quickly put the cigarette behind his back and tried to be casual. Desperate to divert his father’s attention, the young boy pointed to a nearby billboard advertising the circus. He asked, “Can we go, Dad? Please, let’s go when it comes to town.” The father quietly but firmly replied, “Son, never make a petition while at the same time you are trying to hide a smoldering...
disobedience.” When we are disobedient to the Lord, our prayer life is hindered and the Lord will not hear us.

* Jeremiah 11:14 - Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

* Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

M. Duress & Detention

Disobedience leads to bondage and confinement. It may be the bondage of sinful habits or addictions, or the bondage from imprisonment for crimes we have committed. Jonah’s disobedience led to a loss of freedom to do what he wanted to do. Sin does not liberate you, it puts you into bondage and robs you of that which you use to have. You may get what you want, but lose what you had, especially your health, wealth, family or friends. Sinful disobedience does not give, it takes.

* Jonah 1:17 - Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

N. Delightful blessings are lost

We not only miss out on opportunities when we disobey, we miss out on the blessings of God. Our disobedience leaves us apathetic toward God’s promises and unprepared to for His blessings. How many have lost out on God’s provisions because they would not tithe and take God at His Word that He would open the windows of Heaven and bless them. When we disobey the Lord, we are not where we ought to be and not in a position to receive His blessings. God will not bless our disobedience.

* Luke 5:4-6 ... Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. [5] And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. [6] And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. God told him to let down the nets, but he put down one net and lost what God had given him.

* Jeremiah 18:10 - If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

O. Doom and Death

* Ephesians 5:6 - Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

* Job 36:12 - But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.
Proverbs 30:17- The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

1 Peter 4:17- For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Joshua 1:18- Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

Because of Israel’s disobedience at the Promised Land, they wandered for 40 years. The result was a funeral rate of one funeral every 20 minutes, 24 hours a day, for 40 years. Disobedience is deadly.

VIII. THE COMPASSION OF GOD FOR THE DISOBEDIENT

At the end of a fruitful life of caring, William Booth of the Salvation Army was buried with high honor. Royalty attended his funeral. Next to the queen sat a shabbily dressed woman who placed a flower on the casket as it passed by. The queen asked, “How did you know him?” The woman’s answer was simply, “He cared for the likes of us.”

In spite of our disobedience, God still cares about us and is trying to draw us toward Himself.

Psalm 78:37,38- For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Rom 10:21- But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Isaiah 65:2 - I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Nehemiah 9:17 - And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Isaiah 9:17- Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.
* 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

IX. THE COURSE IN DEALING WITH THE DISOBEDIENT

A. Appeal to them & Arouse them.
   * Isaiah 1:18 - Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
   * 2 Timothy 4:2- Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

B. Admonish them
   * 1 Thessalonians 5:14- Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

C. Avoid close fellowship with them
   * 2 Thessalonians 3:14- And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
   * 1 Corinthians 5:11- But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

D. Acquit or Absolve them.
   Napoleon's triumphant attitude toward his enemies had softened by the time his French forces defeated the Russians at the Battle of Borodino. Losses on both sides were heavy. As Napoleon walked the battlefield the next day, taking a count of the dead, he heard a cry of pain from a fallen soldier and ordered a stretcher. One of his aides pointed out that the wounded man was a Russian, but Napoleon retorted, "After a victory, there are no enemies, only men." Napoleon had a gracious attitude toward his enemy. We are to have the same type of attitude toward those who are repentant. When those who are disobedient seek forgiveness, we are to forgive them.
   * Luke 17:3- Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
   * Ephesians 4:32- And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

E. Assist and Assure them.
   We are not only to forgive those who are disobedient, we are to try
to restore them and encourage them to follow the Lord.
* Galatians 6:1 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
* 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 ... But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. [6] Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. [7] So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. [8] Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. This man had been disciplined in the church and was in need of restoration.

Delayed obedience is the brother of disobedience.
Chapter 24

The Discovery of a Disguise

1 Kings 14:1-6

Trials have a way of revealing what we truly believe, especially when it concerns matters about the Lord. In this section, Jeroboam and his wife are faced with a serious problem which reveals what this king truly believes about his gods and the Lord of Heaven. Problems have a way of discovering our disguises and revealing what we really are and what we truly trust and rely upon. Jeroboam’s problem surfaces in the first verse.

I. THE SICKNESS OF JEROBOAM’S SON 14:1
At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

Abijah becomes sick. Some contend that God was judging Jeroboam’s family because of his sinfulness. Such opinions are a good possibility.

*Deuteronomy 7:15- And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.*

Abijah’s name means “Jehovah is his father.” In the beginning or at the birth of Abijah, Jeroboam did not intend to desert the worship of Jehovah. The names of children in that day reflected the attitudes of the parents. Unfortunately, pride, power, peer pressure, and persistent disobedience drew Jeroboam far away from the Lord. He turns his back on God and puts on a disguise of being a calf worshiper. His actions, however, reveal his heart. His disguise is discovered. His son is in deep trouble. Jeroboam reveals his true colors and seeks out a man of God.
II. THE SCHEME OF JEROBOAM 14:2,3

And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

Jeroboam’s scheme involves telling his wife to disguise herself and go see the prophet Ahijah in Shiloh. She is to take provisions to him and he will tell her the future of their son. This would be very traumatic for a mother who would rather be at the side of her child.

This scheme provokes many questions and comments. First of all, why would he go to the prophet of God about his son? Why did he not pray to his calf gods? The answer is his golden calves gave him no relief. He knows that his calf gods are not real. He knows who is God and that the calf gods are not real. Jeroboam’s actions are described in Romans 1.

* Romans 1:21-25... Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, they were not thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. [22] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; [23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. [24] Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Jeroboam had one religion for wealth and health, and another religion for sickness. He is guilty of the same actions as Joab, who turned to God in adversity, but scorned and shunned Him in prosperity. Does that describe your relationship with the Lord? Do you seek the Lord only when you get into trouble?

* Isaiah 26:16- Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

Does God allow constant problems in your life in order that you seek Him? The Lord wants us to have a daily walk with Him where we will spend time in His Word and talk to Him in prayer. Unfortunately, many Christians don’t get close to the Lord. Don’t let this happen to you. Let me ask, “How would you feel if a person came to you only to get something? Would you feel used? Would you be resistant? If so, how do
you think the Lord feels when we talk to Him only when we want something?” Now is the time to turn to the Lord. Don’t wait until you are in trouble or dead.

* 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

**Why doesn’t Jeroboam renounce his idols?** The answer is he is not ready to repent of his sin as we will see. He may be fearful of losing his power as king. When he is in trouble, he seeks God and the man of God. Let me say at this point, to be a king or a president is a step down when you are called to preach. Notice the king comes to the man of God for help and for answers.

**Why does he come to the prophet Ahijah?** He was once a messenger of good tidings. He informed Jeroboam of the split in the kingdom and that he would be king. Jeroboam is seeking a welcome prophecy.

**Why should the queen disguise herself?** If people observed the queen’s departure to visit a prophet, it would diminish the credibility of calf worship. Jeroboam may have felt that if the prophet knew the woman was the queen, he would denounce Jeroboam’s sin. At this point, we are reminded that sin seeks to disguise its message and final outcome. Satan does not want you to see the end of the road you are traveling upon. On the other hand, the truth needs no disguise. Truth thrives out in the open. Truth has nothing to be ashamed of or to hide. It is displayed. Truth is beautiful, consistent, and harmonious. Sin seeks to be hidden, covered, closed, and concealed. It has a lot to be ashamed of and hide. Sin is ugly. It contradicts and creates disunity. Are you living in sin? Get right if you are doing so.

It is ironic that Jeroboam expects the prophet to see the future but not through his disguise. He sends honey, bread, and cracknels which was bread or cake that had become dry. Notice closely what he wants to know. He wants to know what will happen to the child. Is this what you would want to know if your child was deathly sick? Time will reveal this answer. Jeroboam does not ask to know what he must do to make the child well. He does not ask what he should do about his sinfulness. He loves it too much. He would be much better off to repent of his sin and idolatry, ask for forgiveness, and pray for the restoration of his life and his son just as his hand was restored. Jeroboam is like many people who would rather be told his fortune than his faults. Jeroboam reveals that when we get away
from God, our priorities get out of wack.

Jeroboam knew the prophet would tell him the truth about the future of his son. A true man of God tells the truth about the future. He tells the truth about Heaven, Hell, and the Second Coming of Christ, etc.

III. THE SIGHTLESS PROPHET 14:4

And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

The queen arrives at Shiloh and she finds a blind Ahijah. He is suffering from amaurosis. This is where the pupil is set and does not contract with the light. He is physically blind, but not spiritually blind.

IV. THE STATEMENT OF THE LORD 14:5

And the Lord said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

God was not finished with the old prophet. Ahijah was old, blind, but was still in tune with the Lord. God was not finished with him yet.

It’s not our weaknesses that hinder our fellowship with the Lord, it’s our worldliness and disobedience. If you are willing and obedient, God will use you. If you are weak or old, realize God is not done with you!

* 1 Corinthians 1:27- But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

When you look at the life of Fanny Crosby, you will find that her blindness caused millions to see the Lord and she brought comfort to those who were discouraged by her songs.

This verse shows that God sees through our disguises.

* Psalm 94:9 - He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?
* Proverbs 15:11- Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?
People who try to deceive the Lord only deceive themselves. All will be brought to light one day.

* 1 Corinthians 3:13- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

* 1 Corinthians 4:5- Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

When the drone of airplanes sounded over Germany’s ancient town of Freilburg the night of May 10th, 1940, scarcely a person looked up. They knew their city was of no military significance. Suddenly, bombs whistled down. Freilburg’s beautiful, old city was heavily damaged. The next day, Adolph Hitler screamed that the Allies had violated an agreement to spare open cities. He vowed, “Five German bombs will fall for every enemy bomb!” and tried to live up to his promise. Nazi planes wiped out Rotterdam, swept across the English Channel to pulverize Dover and Portsmouth. London’s inner city and Coventry were in flaming rubble. The words “blitz” and “total war” were added to military language.

After prolonged insistence by the Western Allies that none of their planes went near Freilburg, the truth has finally come out. German officials digging into the archives of the Institute of Current History at Munich found that the bombers that hit Freilburg were German planes. Field Marshal Herman Goring had ordered them from Landsburg for a raid on Dijon, France. Lost in heavy clouds Goring’s bombers had dumped their load on Freilburg by mistake. Goring and Hitler had covered up the facts and used the incident to help justify the Nazi invasion of the Low countries. The truth that is concealed will eventually come out.

V. THE SHOCKING SURPRISE  14:6

And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.

Imagine the queen’s shock when she arrives and he calls her by name. Her disguise is discovered by a blind man. She thought she was sent to him, but the Lord has sent a message to her through him. There will be a day of discovery one day. Sinners in the garb of saints will be stripped of their camouflage.
* Matthew 7:21- Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Fakes will be found out one day. The shrouds of hypocrisy will be shelled. Masquerades will be manifest and ruse will be removed. Be genuine, be real, and stop pretending to love the Lord if you are doing this.

* Matthew 15:8 - This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

The tidings of hypocrites will be heavy or hard tidings.

* Proverbs 13:15- Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Realize you can’t fool God. Disguises will be discovered and hypocrisy will be exposed.

A hypocrite never intends to be what he pretends to be.
Chapter 25
Heavy Tidings For
a Heathen King
1 Kings 14:7-20

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10. These guys were stinkers, always getting into trouble. If there was mischief in the town, usually these boys were involved. The parents were at the end of their ropes and very frustrated in knowing what to do about their boys. Then the mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past, so she asked her husband if the boys could speak with this preacher. He said, “We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper.” The preacher agreed to meet with the boys, but asked to see them individually. The eight-year-old boy met with him first. The Pastor sat the boy down and asked him very sternly, “Where is God?” The boy made no response, so the Pastor asked him again, “Where is God?” The boy was silent again so the Pastor raised his voice even more, shaking his finger in the boy’s face, “WHERE IS GOD?” The boy bolted from the room, ran home, slammed his door and hid in his closet. His older brother asked him, “What’s wrong? What happened?” The younger brother replied, “We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it!”

Jeroboam is in big trouble too. The hammer of God’s judgment is about to fall upon the home of Jeroboam. Jeroboam’s son is very sick. The king does not pray to his golden calf gods. Instead, he seeks an answer about his son’s future from the prophet of God, Ahijah. He instructs his wife to disguise herself for fear of discovery by the people and by the prophet.

God sees through our disguises, our camouflage, and pretending. The Lord informs the blind prophet of the queen’s arrival and gives him a message to give to the king and queen. When the queen arrives, he greets her by name. Oops! The prophet then says, “Why are you disguised as another person? I am sent to you with heavy tidings.”
Jeroboam got himself into a mess.

A big-game hunter went on safari with his wife and mother-in-law. One evening, while still deep in the jungle, the wife awoke to find her mother gone. Rushing to her husband, she insisted on them both trying to find her mother. The hunter picked up his rifle, and started to look for her. In a clearing not far from the camp, they came upon a chilling sight. The mother-in-law was backed up against a thick, impenetrable bush, and a large, male, lion stood facing her. The wife cried, “What are we going to do?” “Nothing,” said the husband. “The lion got himself into this mess; let him get himself out of it.”

Jeroboam has gotten himself into a mess that he won’t be able to get out of because he won’t repent.

I. THE SOVEREIGN’S MESSAGE  14:7-16
A. The Exaltation of Jeroboam  14:7

Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

God was the one who promoted and exalted Jeroboam into the position of king.

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

Notice, the Lord calls himself “Lord God of Israel.” He has not forsaken Israel though they had forsaken Him.

*Hebrews 13:5-  Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

B. The Expulsion of David’s House  14:8A

And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee:

Because of Solomon’s sin, and the pride of Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided. The northern ten tribes were given to Jeroboam by the Lord.

C. The Expostulation Concerning the Evil of Jeroboam  14:8,9

And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to
provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

God’s message for the king stated, “You have not obeyed Me as David did. You have done evil above all that were before you.” His actions are worse than Saul’s, David’s failure, and Solomon’s sins. Jeroboam made other gods, provoked the Lord to anger, forsook the Lord, and cast Him behind his back. Before we get tough on Jeroboam, let’s consider the fact that we may be doing the same thing. That which comes before the Lord is an idol whether it is a person or a possession. **Are we not forsaking the Lord and casting Him behind our back when we:**

1. Reject and disobey His Word and neglect to hear it?
2. Refuse to do His will?
3. Run headlong into sinful living and have our own way no matter what?

    God help us to be like Christ, love Him, and not forsake Him. A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.’” Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, “Ryan, you be Jesus!” This is what God wants us to be. He wants us to be like Jesus.

When we throw the Lord behind us, we reap the consequences of our sins.

* Ezekiel 23:35- Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms. * Jeroboam is about to find out the truth of this verse.

**D. THE EXTERMINATION OF JEROBOAM’S HOUSE** 14:10

Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

Jeroboam had the opportunity to make a sure house, but threw away the opportunity. He wasted it. His house was cut off.
E. THE ERADICATION OF THE BODIES 14:11

Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it.

The descendants would die violent deaths, being eaten by scavenger dogs and birds. This was a horrifying disgrace to the Jews.

*Proverbs 13:21- Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid.

F. THE EXPECTATIONS 14:12-16

1) Death- 14:12.... Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

Get home, your child will die when you enter the city. For the second time, a prophet gives Jeroboam a sign the same day. The mother would be the factor in the time of death.

2) Despair- 14:13.... And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

All Israel shall mourn and bury the king’s son. Jeroboam’s son would be the only one in the family who would be buried. Why? He was a righteous, young boy which was a miracle of God’s grace considering the home he grew up in. This boy’s attitude toward the Lord was not in agreement with his father.

3) A Destroyer- 14:14.... Moreover the Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now.

God would raise up a king to cut off the house of Jeroboam. In a few years, Baasha would cut off the seed of Jeroboam.

* 1 Kings 15:27-30 - And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. [28] Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. [29] And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: [30] Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger.
4) The Destruction of Israel- 14:15,16.... For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

Jeroboam led the nation into captivity because of the worship of Asherim, carved wooden images symbolizing fertility. They would be scattered beyond the river Euphrates. This represented the land of the Assyria through which the Euphrates flowed. Israel was taken captive by them in 722 B.C.

It is ironic that Israel got what they wanted, but lost what they had. They got Jeroboam as their king because of their impatience with Rehoboam’s taxation. They got no relief, however. They had to build palaces and sustain wars. They became idolatrous and immoral and lost their freedom. Paul issues a warning in Galatians.

* Galatians 6:7,8 - Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

The rules of a particular university were such that if the professor was not present in the class by 15 minutes past the hour, the class could leave without penalty. The rooms were equipped with wall clocks which jumped ahead each minute in a noticeable fashion. In fact, the students found if they threw an eraser next to the clock, it would cause the clock to jump forward a minute. So it became a daily practice for these kids to take target practice at the clock since the teacher was not very punctual and also absent minded. A few well aimed erasers and it would be fifteen minutes past the hour.

Well, when the day for the next exam rolled around, the professor strolled into the room, passed out the exams, and told them they had one hour to complete the test. He then proceeded to collect erasers from around the room and cheerfully took aim at the clock. When he had successfully jumped the clock forward one hour, he closed the class and collected the exam papers. Life does teach some lessons the hard way. Israel had to learn some very hard lessons from their sin.
II. THE SURENESS OF GOD'S WORD 14:17-20

And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died; [18] And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet. [19] And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. [20] And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

Like any mother, the queen's love for her child hastened her steps home in order to see her son before he died. She was in a race with death, yet, each step toward home was a stride of death. Think about this... each day we step closer to death. Are you ready?

Death wins the race and the boy dies. The death of the child, though heartbreaking, may have been a blessing in disguise. God may have removed this good boy before judgment came upon the nation and family. He was taken away from the evil to come.

* Isaiah 57:1,2- The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

He dies a natural, peaceful death, not a violent one. He is the only one buried in a grave. If he had continued to live, he may have been influenced by the wickedness of his father. God brought him home to Himself.

* Philippians 1:23- For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

If he continued to live, he would witness the death, murder, and dishonor of those dear to him. Judgment comes speedily on Jeroboam's home. Two years later he dies. Nadab becomes king and two years later he is killed by Baasha. The extermination was complete. Sinful living shortens your life.

* Psalm 55:23 - But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

God's Word was fulfilled exactly as stated. We need to heed His warnings. Use your time and life for the Lord.
Chapter 26
The Stings From Substitute Living
1 Kings 14:21-31

Events in our lives can change so quickly. In one moment, we are enjoying life and in another moment, we are suffering from the death of a loved one. In one moment, we are financially secure.; in another moment, we may have lost everything. For years we may be healthy and then boom, we lose our health, get in an accident or contract a disease.

In this section we find how quickly our life can go down the drain when we turn our back on God and substitute Him with people, possessions, or personal power. The story opens with the reign of Rehoboam, the king over the southern kingdom of Judah.

I. THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM 14:21

And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother’s name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

The mother of Rehoboam was Naamah an Ammonitess. The influence of his mother would be a factor in the reign of Rehoboam. Ammonites worshiped the false god Molech. Idolatry will surface during Rehoboam’s reign.

Mothers need to realize that they wield great influence upon the values and character of their children. Ladies, what are you teaching your kids with your life? Are you seeking first the kingdom of God or are you doing that which is right in your own eyes.
II. THE REBELLION OF JUDAH 14:22-24

And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. [23] For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. [24] And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

According to 2 Chronicles 11:17, God’s people were faithful to the Lord for three years.

* 2 Chron. 11:17- So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

When Rehoboam felt secure after the split in the kingdom, he turns his back on the Lord.

* 2 Chronicles 12:1,14- And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him. And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.

Pride, cockiness, or over-confidence create apathy toward the Lord. God-dependence is substituted with self-dependence or independence from the Lord. How many times have we seen Christians follow this pattern when they graduate, get married, or get a promotion at work? They feel they have no need for the Lord anymore. Beloved, don’t forget who is blessing you! Realize when you get away from the Lord, it leads to ruin. Let me ask, “Are you seeking the Lord now? Are you obeying the Bible? Do you find yourself having no time for God in your life?

C.D. “Bigboy” Blalock, a boxer in the 1930's, had the fight of his life against a boxer from Mississippi State. Bigboy was a powerful man with a devastating roundhouse swing. He decided to try this move, but at that very moment his opponent stepped too close. Bigboy’s arm wrapped around the man’s head and swung all the way around. He ended up hitting himself in the face instead of his opponent. He fell back and was down for the count. He is the only boxer in the history of boxing known to have knocked himself out. When Christians forsake the Lord, they too, knock themselves out of God’s service and a close walk with Him. Don’t let this happen to you.

Notice that Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. God sees what we are doing, good or bad, naughty or nice, glad or sad, sick or well,
happy or hurting. He sees us.

*Job 34:21- For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

*Psalm 34:15 - The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

*Proverbs 15:3- The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

I enjoy watching my sons play baseball. I rejoice when they get a hit and feel badly for them if they make a mistake. The Lord feels the same about us. He enjoys watching us and I believe cheers for us too. He wants us to do well. He knows who you are and where you are. He is watching you.

The evil Judah did was idolatry and immorality. The images, high places, and immorality were substitutes for the Lord. They were to fulfill their lives, but it didn’t work. People today rely upon substitutes for their salvation: good works, church membership, the Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, baptism, praying to idols, confirmation, or communion. Salvation is in Jesus Christ alone. He is the only one who can take you to Heaven.

The land of Judah was corrupted by sodomites. Our nation has been corrupted by the sin of sodomy. The emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic has been switched to topics on sex education, evolution, and abortion. Our schools have taught that sex among consenting adults is nobody’s business. At the time of this writing, we are about 40 years into the sexual revolution and we are reaping the consequences of sex education. We are plagued with rampant adultery, divorce, increasing child molestation and rape, organized pedophilia, incest, wide-spread prostitution, pornography, militant homosexuality, feminist lesbianism, over 60 sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and over 50 million unwanted pregnancies that have led to abortion in the United States alone. As a nation, we have substituted man’s way for God’s way and are feeling the sting of substitute living. Doing your own thing leads to the inability to do your own thing. For this reason, we need to live life God’s way.
III. THE ROBBERY OF JUDAH’S TREASURE  14:25,26

And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

Five years after Solomon’s death, almost everything is lost. For three years they were faithful. In the fourth year they turn their backs on God and in the fifth year, judgment comes. How quickly the glory, the power, and the wealth disappears.

* Glory is changed to gloom.
* Power is turned to puniness.
* Wealth is now exchanged for woe.

When corruption sets in, they lose everything. They feel the sting of substitute living. Satan is in the robbing business. He is out to rob you of your testimony, confidence in the Lord, peace, joy, power for service, and usefulness. These things can be lost quickly! Like dynamite, sin can explode in your face. When you reject the Lord in your life, all else becomes useless, no matter how valuable it seems. All the defense cities that Rehoboam built were useless.

* Psalm 127:1- Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

The alliance that Solomon made with Egypt now backfires upon Israel. Israel depended upon Egypt for protection instead of God. Egypt became a substitute for God. Now they are plundered by Egypt. Their security was insecure and they feel the sting of substitute living. It is ironic that God used the Jewish nation to plunder Egypt for their idolatry in Exodus 14. The tables are now turned. God uses Egypt to plunder Israel for their idolatry. This is the first time the Egyptian army crossed the borders and invaded the land. Pharaoh’s grip was on the throat of God’s people.

Are you making the same mistake that God’s people made here? Is your security in something other than the Lord? Understand that when you replace the Lord in your life with other things, you will feel the sting of substitute living.
IV. THE REGRESSION OF THE SHIELDS  14:27-31

And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. [28] And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber. [29] Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [30] And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. [31] And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

Imagine the heartache that forced laborers felt when they saw that their treasured shields were gone. All that work was for nothing. Sin reduces the gold of our lives to brass. Sin leads to decline or regression. Rehoboam substitutes these ceremonial shields used to escort the king to the Temple with brazen or copper shields. Why? It is to cover up the loss to the people? Is it to keep up an appearance that all is well when it is not. Is it a desire to have things as they were before their defeat? Well, it is not the same. The glory of the gold shields is gone. The shields were stored in the guard house instead of the house of the forest of Lebanon.

When you turn your back on God, you can’t cover it up. It will come out into the open.

* Proverbs 28:13- He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

You can try to perfume it, but it will stink. You can put on a ruse, but the wrinkle of sin will show. You can’t fool God. You can hope to have matters as before, but sin leaves scars. There is forgiveness, but there are scars from sin too. You can’t get your purity back when you give it away. Don’t give in to Satan’s substitutes. They sting!
Chapter 27  
Two Decades  
From Solomon  
1 Kings 15:1-15

Time flies so fast! The older I get, the faster it seems to go. Where did the 80's and 90's go? James felt this way. He told us that life is a vapor. It is here and gone. The average man lives 74 years. That is 888 months, 3848 weeks, 27,010 days, 648,240 hours, 38,894,400 minutes, or just over two billion heart beats. What we do with our time, not only affects us, but those who follow behind us.

Solomon has been dead for almost two decades, yet, the ripple effect of his life continues to influence his family and his nation. What you do now, how you live now, will affect not only you, but those around you and those who follow behind you. Your life will affect people you will never meet personally. If Jesus tarries, two decades from now, what will be the condition of your life? The decisions you are making now, how will they affect others? Take a good look at your life right now. Where are you heading? Are you on the road of rebellion? If so, you are on a road of ruin. Are you on the road of obedience to the Lord? You are on a road of blessing. Two decades from now, will you be serving the Lord? Will you be in church? Will you be preaching if you are a preacher? You can be! How? Take one day at a time and keep putting the Lord on the throne of your life each day and 7300 days later you can still be on track! Two decades from now, will you be in glory? It’s possible, isn’t it? By the grace of God, make each day count for the Lord!

Yesterday is a canceled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Only today is cash in hand. Spend your day wisely.

As the curtain opens in this chapter, we will see the effects of Solomon and David's lives, decades after their deaths.
I. THE REIGN OF ABIJAM  15:1,2

Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

After the death of Rehoboam, Abijam rules in Judah. Abijam indicates a Canaanite influence. His name means “My Father is Yam.” Yam was the Canaanite sea god. Abijam was not Rehoboam’s oldest son. He was the son of his favorite wife Maachah. Rehoboam had 18 wives, 60 concubines, 28 sons, and 60 daughters.

Polygamy was practiced by David, Solomon, Rehoboam, and now Abijam. Abijam marries 14 wives and has 22 sons and 16 daughters (2 Chronicles 13:21). Isn’t it sad that our children pick up our bad traits and habits but have a tendency to not to pick up our good ones like faith, dedication, convictions, and love for God?

II. THE RUINED OPPORTUNITY  15:3

And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father.

Abijam walked in the sins of his fathers, polygamy and idolatry. His heart was not perfect toward the Lord. The word “perfect” means “friendly, satisfied, quiet, at peace.” Does this describe you? Is your heart cool and distant toward God? Are you dissatisfied with Jesus or wrestling with the Lord? Confess your indifference to Him. Remove the bitterness, obstacles, and idols that seem so important. Rebuild your life before you lose precious blessings and opportunities to serve the Lord. Abijah’s reign lasted only three years. He abused and wasted his opportunities and was quickly removed.

III. THE REASON FOR ABIJAM’S REIGN  15:4,5

Nevertheless for David’s sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Abijam deserved judgment. Because of God’s grace and God’s covenant with David, he was allowed to rule three
years, even though he was a wicked king. God could have ended the Davidic line, but He promised David He would not end it. God keeps His promises. God promised to give David a lamp which is a reference or term for "descendant." To have a lamp put out meant the removal of a family line. God allowed Abijam to rule because of the merits of David. I look at my own life and am blessed because of my parents and grandparents. I have faith, family, and friends.

May we live in such a way that our loved ones will be blessed because of our relationship with the Lord. You may wonder if your life really makes a difference in the world. Let me assure you it does! Your life has a ripple effect on people you rub shoulders with and people you have never met. Our life and decisions have a domino effect. There is no telling whose life you will affect. Live it for God!

David was faithful to the Lord, except for the matter of Uriah the Hittite. The truth of that statement is sin leaves a stain on a good man. God did not cloak it, did He? Avoid the stains of sinful living. Keep the slate of your life clean by living for Christ.

IV. THE RESISTANCE WITH ISRAEL  15:6-8

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. [7] Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. [8] And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

Abijam had constant problems with Israel.

V. THE REIGN OF A RIGHTEOUS KING 15:9-11

And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. [10] And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. [11] And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.

The next king in line was Asa. His name means "Who will heal?" For the next 41 years, Asa begins to bring healing to the nation. Eight of the nineteen kings of Judah were good kings. Four of them led in great revivals. Asa was one of them. He was the first to do right in the eyes of the Lord. The land rested for the first ten years of his
reign (2 Chronicles 14:1).

Even though he was reared in a wicked home, Asa does not follow evil. The grace of God touched his life. This makes one wonder, "Why does one child follow his parent’s ways and why does another reject them? Why do kids reject the teachings of Christian parents? Why does one turn from God and the others follow the Lord?" The reasons will vary. Do you follow or reject your parent’s godly instructions, teachings, or beliefs? Think about this. If your parents think it is important enough to live a certain way, shouldn’t you? Listen, if their way doesn’t contradict the Bible and is not evil or wicked, then take heed to their instructions. Asa rejected the instructions of his mother for he knew idolatry was wrong and wickedness was wrong.

VI. THE REMOVAL OF STUMBLING BLOCKS 15:12-14

And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. [13] And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. [14] But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.

Asa removed the sodomites, the idols, and his own mother from the royal court. All were factors that led to corruption. Reform begins with his own family. Asa knows if the royal court is corrupt, then the people will not follow behind him. This was not easy for Asa. Sometimes your obedience to God may alienate your family or others around you. If revival is to come to the USA, it must begin with the church, with God’s people.

* 1 Peter 4:17- For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Asa’s mother made an idol in a grove. This was an obscene image of Asherah. The term “idol" is derived from a verb which means “to shudder.” This was a horrible, repulsive image suggesting a shocking, sexually explicit idol. This idol was burnt and ground to powder in the Kidron valley. Asa knew that attending worship services of the Lord were not enough to secure God’s peace. The same holds true for us. We must remove that which is offensive to God. We must eliminate the sinful practices in our lives. Asa removed idols and his mother from leadership.
To leave the evil alone and unrebuked would mean that he would share in the guilt of the evil. Removing his mother demonstrated to the people that he meant business and was no respecter of persons. Do you mean business?

VII. THE RELATIONSHIP OF ASA WITH THE LORD 15:15

And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels.

Asa knew how to stand alone for God and be steadfast. He was more concerned about God’s opinion than man’s. He began to undo what Solomon started. What a contrast between the two.

Solomon, the wisest king at the height of his prosperity and peaceful reign, ended up building altars of abominations. Asa, a young prince, unknown to fame, having no special abilities and surrounded by obstacles, was the first to stem the tide of sin and shame that Solomon started. Solomon built altars for his wives and Asa burnt the idols of his mother. Solomon was a strong king who was brought into subjection by weak and foolish women. The little known king humbled the proudest, and strongest woman of his time. He resolved to do what was right! Do you have the same resolve to live for God for the next two decades?
Chapter 28
Flopping at the Finish Line
1 Kings 15:16-24

A great revival has been taking place in the southern kingdom. King Asa has been cleaning house. The sodomites, and the idols have been removed and he has expelled his own mother from the royal court for her idolatry. The high places where sacrifices were offered, were not removed. God’s command was to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem. Failure to correct this problem created problems down the road. This may have seemed trivial to Asa, but disobedience is not trivial to God. Nevertheless, Asa’s heart is perfect with the Lord all his days. The silver and gold vessels are dedicated to the house of the Lord.

Asa was on the right track, going in the right direction, yet, in this next portion of Scripture, we find him making a mistake that hurts his testimony and displeases the Lord. He flops at the finish line. These verses are a warning to keep up your guard and to be careful about slipping into sin. Paul warned us about this matter.

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

I. THE BATTLES 15:16
And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

There was constant conflict between the two kingdoms all the days of Asa and Baasha. The key issue was the worship of God vs. the worship of idols; truth vs. lies; reality vs. fantasy; obedience to the Word of God vs. rebellion toward God. Nothing has changed. We face those same conflicts today.

Reality says, “There is a Heaven, a Hell, and Jesus is the Savior!” Fantasy says, “The grave ends it all. There is no God, Heaven, or Hell! Man is his own savior, his own god, and will create his own utopia.”
Which world do you live in....reality or fantasy? Obedience says, “I will yield and submit to God’s will.” Rebellion cries, “Do that which is right in your own eyes and live your own way. Don’t tell me what to do.” Which choice will you make?

Some people are like Asa and Baasha, battling and warring all their days because bitterness has anchored itself into the hearts of the people. They refuse to forgive or seek forgiveness. Does this describe you? If so, is this really what you want to do? Let go of the hate and put your hurt behind you. Life is too short to waste it on anger. Forgive those who hurt you and go onward for Christ. If you don’t remove the bitterness, you will eventually flop at the finish line. You will be like two deer that lock horns in battle and both end up dying.

II. THE BLOCKADE  15:17

And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

With the reforms that Asa is making, the people in Israel who hungered for the Lord pulled up stakes and moved or traveled to Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

* 2 Chronicles 15:8,9- And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.

The exodus from the northern kingdom was so great that Baasha feared a loss of power and control over his kingdom. He fears that his people are getting right with the Lord. He tries to contain the revival and the exodus of the people fleeing to the South by constructing the city of Ramah, four to five miles north of Jerusalem. He does this to choke out supplies from the northern trade routes. Ramah was the Berlin Wall of that time.

Two great truths are found here. First, Baasha failed to understand that man’s greatest need is his spiritual need. Those people hungered for the worship of the Lord and were willing to risk all to do what was right. Even today, we find people traveling many miles to go to a Bible preaching church. We have one family in our church that travels
over 150 miles to come to our church. Why do families do this? They are spiritually hungry for the Word of God. Do you hunger for the Lord and His Word? That hunger will help keep you from flopping at the finish line.

* Matthew 5:6- Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Secondly, Satan desires to prevent your spiritual growth by placing obstacles in your path. Paul issued warnings in his epistles.

* 2 Corinthians 2:11- Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

* 2 Corinthians 11:3- But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

* 1 Thessalonians 3:5- For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain.

Realize that Satan wants you to flop at the finish line!!!

III. THE BRIBE 15:18,19

Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasuries of the house of the Lord, and the treasuries of the king’s house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

Asa makes a serious blunder here. He forgets about the power of God that delivered him from the Ethiopian army.

* 2 Chronicles 14:9-13.... And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. [10] Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. [11] And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. [12] So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. [13] And Asa and the people that were
with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.

Asa makes the mistake of putting his security and confidence in Syria instead of the Lord. He puts his faith in something that he can see. He makes the same mistake as Solomon. Sometimes we are just as guilty as Asa. God gives us a warning in Psalms and Jeremiah.

* Psalm 118:9- It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. *(This is the center verse of the Bible)*

* Jeremiah 17:5- Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

God sometimes allows trials in our lives to teach us to trust Him.

* Proverbs 3:5,6- Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Asa gives that which was dedicated to the Lord, that which belonged to the Lord, to someone else... the king of Syria. When a Christian doesn’t tithe, he does the same thing. He robs God of that which belongs to Him.

* Malachi 3:8-10 ... Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [9] Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. This promise is just as relevant as John 3:16. The church is not to be supported by garage or rummage sales, fund raisers, cake bakes, or bingo games. It is to be supported by the tithes and offerings of God’s people. This is God’s way.

If you live your life for yourself instead of the Lord, you do the same thing as Asa. Your life, as a Christian, belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, not yourself.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19,20- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. If you live for yourself, you will flop at the finish line.

Asa’s decision to put his confidence in the Syrians instead of the Lord brings a rebuke and an uncharacteristic response. The man of God
hits him right between the eyes with truth.
* 2 Chronicles 16:7-10... And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa
king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of
Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king
of Syria escaped out of thine hand. [8] Were not the Ethiopians and the
Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because
thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. [9] For the
eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew
himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.
Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have
wars. [10] Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison
house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa
oppressed some of the people the same time.

Asa did not want to hear the truth and lashes back at the
prophet. What a sad ending for a man who started well, ran well, but did
not finish well. God help us to run our race for God and finish well. May
we not flop at the finish line. The writer of Hebrews tells us how to run.
* Hebrews 12:1,2- Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with
so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin
which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is
set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the
shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Paul shows us how to finish our race.
* 2 Timothy 4:6-8.... For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my
departure is at hand. [7] I have fought a good fight, I have finished my
course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a
crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me
at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his
appearing.

IV. THE BETRAYAL OF BENHADAD. 15:20,21

So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts
which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and
Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. And
it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of
Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

The Syrian king smote a number of cities and the tribe of
Naphtali. Baasha’s plans to continue building Ramah cease.
Asa’s plan works, but the long-range effects are destructive.

V. THE BOUNTY FOR BUILDING 15:22

Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

There is a hidden truth we want to address here. Asa builds from the ruins of Ramah. He takes that which was made to stop and ruin him and makes something positive out of it. Your Ramah may be sin, failure, a test or trial. Why not learn from it and draw closer to the Lord? Use your Ramah to develop a dependence upon God. Grow in faith, humility, compassion, and love. Learn the truth of Romans 8:28.

* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Learning from your obstacles, your mistakes, can help you not to flop at the finish line.

VI. BAD HEALTH AND BURIAL 15:23,24

The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

Asa did not seek the Lord for protection. He does not seek Him for healing.

* 2 Chronicles 16:12-14.... And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. [13] And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. [14] And they buried him in his own sepulchers, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries’ art: and they made a very great burning for him.

Asa’s dependence upon the Lord waned and was weak at the finish line of his life. Is this happening to you? Why do people get this way?
1. The death of a loved one causes people to get bitter at God.
2. A prayer was not answered the way they wanted it to be answered.
3. Some feel the Lord has failed them or doesn’t care about them.

The Lord does care about you! He wants you to come to the point where you totally trust Him. If you won’t trust the Lord with your life, you will flop at the finish line. You will look back at your life with regret over your bad decisions and wasted opportunities. Don’t flop at the finish line!

The reason some men don’t go very far in life is that they sidestep opportunity and shake hands with temptation.
Chapter 29
God’s Word Comes True
1 Kings 15:25-16:14

The ripple from Solomon’s idolatry and disobedience continues to affect the land of Israel. The southern kingdom has enjoyed revival under Asa’s leadership, who has just died and was followed by his son Jehoshaphat. In the northern kingdom, trouble continues to plague the northern ten tribes because they won’t get right with God. They have turned their backs on God for some golden calf idols. The result was instability, destruction, heartache, agony, torture, and death. The same thing will happen to us too if we turn our back on the Lord.

We find in 1 Kings 15:25…. And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. Nadab, Jeroboam’s son, is ruling, but not for long. He reigns only two years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord and follows his father’s sinful lifestyle. He has a sinful influence upon the nation. Again, we are reminded of the influence that parents have upon their children.

God keeps His promise of judgment upon Jeroboam’s household. Ahijah the prophet told Jeroboam what God was going to do to Jeroboam and his family (1 Kings 14:10-14). Imagine the effect this had upon Jeroboam when this message was delivered. He was notified that his kingdom would be overthrown. He realizes he is the author of his own ruin. His family would be disgracefully erased out of existence, swept away like dung, and devoured like carrion. If you were told this, would you do what you could to change God’s mind and get your life right with God?

The prophecy of judgment was fulfilled. Notice 1 Kings 15:28-30...
Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. [29] And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: [30] Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger.

God’s Word is sure! God’s predicted judgments never fail!

* Matthew 5:18- For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.


This world is heading for seven years of Tribulation described in the book of Revelation. The worse nightmares of people will come to pass in this time period. When they die without Christ, they will spend eternity in Hell.

With the assassination of Nadat, Baasha takes control of the kingdom for the next 24 years in Israel. He was a wicked king.

* 1 Kings 15:34- And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

This brings us to chapter sixteen of 1 Kings. It opens with .....  

I. A MESSAGE FROM GOD  16:1-7

Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, [2] Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; [3] Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. [4] Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. [5] Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [6] So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. [7] And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.
Jehu must deliver a difficult message to this wicked king. He is the bearer of bad news. Have you ever been in this position? Maybe the news was, "You’re fired. You weren’t hired. You didn’t pass. You didn’t make the team. Your loved one died.” It is not easy speaking the truth sometimes, especially when it involves judgment. The message from God addresses several issues.

A. Exaltation - 16:1,2

Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

I exalted you out of the dust. He had a poor background and humble beginnings. God says, “I made you prince.”

B. Imitation - 16:2B

... and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

God’s message, “You have lived like Jeroboam. You have influenced the nation to sin and provoked God to anger. You are no different than Jeroboam.”

C. Extermination - 16:3-7

Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. [4] Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. [5] Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [6] So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. [7] And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

God says, “What I did to Jeroboam, I will do to you.” Baasha could have repented here, but he doesn’t.

II. THE MURDER OF ELAH 16:8-10

In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. [9] And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.
[10] And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

Basha’s son, Elah, reigns after his death, but not for long. He reigns for only two years. While in a drunken stupor, Elah is assassinated by the commander of half the chariots. His name was Zimri.

How many lives have been ruined and shortened by alcohol? Thomas Edison said, “To put alcohol in the human body is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine.” Alcohol makes a man colorful: it gives him a red nose, a white liver, a yellow streak, and a blue outlook. Statistics show that for every 10,000 people killed by liquor, only one is killed by a mad dog. Yet, we shoot the dog and license the liquor. What sense is there in this? People claim they can’t help it. They blame their drunkenness on the disease of alcoholism. Listen, if alcoholism is a disease, it is the only disease that is contracted by an act of the will. It is the only disease that requires a license to propagate. It is the only disease that is bottled and sold. It is the only disease that requires outlets to spread. It is the only disease that produces revenue for the government. It is the only disease that provokes crime. It is the only disease that habit forming. It is the only disease that is spread by advertising. It is the only disease that brings death on the highway. It is the only disease that is not caused by a germ or virus. To say alcoholism is a disease is a cop-out for not taking responsibility for one’s actions. Alcoholism is a sin. That is God’s label for this behavior.

Zimri betrayed his king. Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? The tendency is to be hurt or bitter. The remedy is to pray, forgive your offenders, and go forward for the Lord.

*Matthew 18:15*- Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Elah’s judgment was sudden and unexpected. Judgment can come swiftly as well as slowly.

*Proverbs 29:1*- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

*Ecclesiastes 9:12*- For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

*I Thessalonians 5:1-3*- But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye
have no need that I write unto you. [2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. [3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

* Matthew 24:44- Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

The door of Israel’s throne room is like a revolving door. During Asa’s reign in the South, the northern kingdom went through seven kings: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab.

III. THE MESSAGE FULFILLED 16:11-14

And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. [12] Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, [13] For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities. [14] Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri fulfills the prophecy of Jehu (16:3,4). He kills all the house of Baasha, his relatives and friends. Over and over again, the Bible stresses judgment for sinful living. God’s Word comes true! Jesus is coming. This too will be fulfilled. May He find us ready.

* 1 John 2:28- And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

* 1 Timothy 6:12,14- Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unreproveable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

* Matthew 24:44- Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

* Titus 2:13 - Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;
Chapter 30
That’s the Way the Cookie Crumbles
1 Kings 16:15-22

When I was a boy, a common phrase was used to describe your life or plans that caved in, fell apart, or turned out to be a disappointment. We would say, “That’s the way the cookie crumbles!” This is the subject of this section of Scripture. The cookie is crumbling in Israel. The nation is falling apart and on a downward spiral. It is on a roller coaster to Hell! Why? We will look at some reasons why Israel is falling apart. These same reasons will explain what causes the cookies in our life to crumble and fall apart.

I. THE SCHEME OF ZIMRI 16:15,16

In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

Zimri has assassinated King Elah while he was in a drunken stupor and takes control of the throne of Israel. His reign would get rained upon, for he will not be king for long. He reigned seven days which was the shortest reign of the kings. It was a week, however, that was bathed in blood.

* 1 Kings 16:12-Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

The word of his conspiracy and treachery reached the infantry that was in battle with the Philistines. Their choice for a new king was not Zimri. They wanted their commander to be Omri. Omri was popular with the men. They made him king on that very day. There were no primaries,
no pauses to think about the decision, and no time to pray about the matter. He jumped into making the decision.

There are two things I see here that will cause the cookie to crumble and cause your life to fall apart. **First of all, basing your decisions or choices on that which is popular is not always the best choice.** In high school, some students would not talk to you unless you were popular. They would only date someone if they were popular with the other kids. Many times, the reason for their popularity was their wickedness. Some were involved with drugs, drunkenness, or sexual immorality. God values the character of a person, not their popularity. We should too. Adultery, immorality, drunkenness, drug abuse, sensuality, and divorce are popular today, but very destructive. They will cause your cookie to crumble.

**Secondly, making rash decisions without praying about them will cause your cookie to crumble.** Your worst decisions will usually be the ones you rush into and don’t take to the Lord in prayer.

II. THE SIEGE OF TIRZAH 16:17

And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

Omri and his men do not accept Zimri as king. The support of his army gives him confidence to attack the capital city of Tirzah. Do you think he would be attacking if the people did not support him as king? No way! The clamor and cheers of the crowd inspires him to attack. The crowd we hang around with has a powerful influence upon our lives.

There is a third insight we will address here that is a reason why our cookies crumble. **Following the wrong crowd can cause your cookie to crumble.** The dares to do wrong, the chants of “Chicken,” or the slanders of “Scaredy Cat” can intimidate and enrage a person to prove himself differently. The cheers and acceptance of the gang are very strong too. The Bible warns us about the kinds of friends we keep.

* Proverbs 28:7 - Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.
* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

The wrong crowd will lead you down a dark, destructive path.

* Proverbs 4:14,15- Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.
In December, 1985, a 70 foot-wide sinkhole swallowed one home, a carport, and forced the evacuation of four homes in a retirement community in Florida. The hole was about the size of a pickup truck when it was discovered. Within three hours it had grown to 40 feet and had swallowed half of a small house. Two hours later the house was gone. The owners escaped with only their coats and were glad to be alive. The path of the wicked is like a sink hole that will swallow you up in sin.

III. THE SUICIDE OF ZIMRI 16:18-20

And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, [19] For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. [20] Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri's cookie began to crumble. His plans are going down the drain. He finds out he is not as popular as he thought. With the city under siege, he feels all is lost and hopeless. He puts into practice the philosophy that says, "If I can't have it, neither can you." He commits suicide by burning the palace along with himself.

Some people feel the same way as Zimri. All is hopeless and lost. The cookie has crumbled and their solution is to kill themselves. Americans have drastically changed their thinking about suicide. In 1977, 39% said it was OK to kill yourself if you had an incurable disease. The percentage is now up to 49%. Suicide has tripled among teenagers over the last thirty years with 10 per 100,000. It has become the second leading cause of death among teens with accidents coming first. There are certain warning signs that a teenager may be suicidal according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

1. Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
2. Withdrawal from friends, family, and activities.
3. Violent or rebellious behavior, running away.
4. Drug or alcohol abuse.
5. Changes in hygiene.
6. Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating, decline in school work.
7. Frequent stomach aches, headaches, fatigue.
8. Inability to accept praise.
10. Giving away favorite possessions.
11. Verbal hints such as, “I won’t see you again.”

**SUICIDE IS NOT A SOLUTION!**

Men have faced hopeless situations before and continued to keep on trying instead of giving up. The men who occupied the Alamo in 1836, did not give up in spite of the overwhelming odds against them. They chose to fight for the freedom of Texas. With their lives they gave Sam Houston and the Texas militia the ability to mobilize and eventually defeat the army of Santa Anna. They gave their lives so others might be free. The Lord Jesus Christ did the same for you and me. He gave His life on the cross so that we might be free from the bondage and penalty of sin.

Several more reasons are given in this section on why our cookie crumbles, why our life falls apart. **The fourth insight is the fact that Zimri died because of his sinfulness (vs.19). Sin causes your cookie (your life) to crumble.**

*Psalm 34:21- Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

*Proverbs 11:3- The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.*

**Zimri walked in the way of Jeroboam, the way of idolatry and sensuality.** People’s lives do influence other people whether we want to admit it or not. This leads us to an important question, “If people walked in your ways, where would they go, what would they do, and what would they believe?” May our life point them to Christ at school, at work, at home, and at church! The story is told of Thomas Beecher, who could not bear deceit in any form. Finding that a clock in his church was habitually too fast or too slow, he hung a placard on the wall above it which read, “Don’t blame my hands. The trouble lies deeper.” That is where the trouble lies with us when our hands do wrong, our feet, our lips, or our thoughts. Sin indeed goes deep, but Christ goes deeper.

**A fifth reason why our cookie crumbles is we reap what we sow.**

*Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Zimri sowed treachery and reaped treachery. He sowed violence and hatred and reaped violence and hatred. He sowed sudden death and destruction and then he reaped it. Is your cookie crumbling? Is your life falling apart because you are reaping what you have sown? Are others hateful, unloving, mean, rude, unfair, or unforgiving with you because you have been that way with others? Paul issued a warning in Ephesians.
* Ephesians 6:1-3....Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. [2] Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

IV. THE SPLIT IN ISRAEL  16:21

Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

The nation of Israel is now divided into two parts. Half of the nation sides with Omri and the other half with Tibni. The sinfulness, jealousy, and rivalry of the nation was tearing Israel apart. That’s what sin does! It creates weakness, instability, disunity, and division.

* Matthew 7:26,27- And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The cookies are crumbling in homes and churches because sin dominates the lives of people instead of the Lord Jesus Christ. When they live this way, it is like building their houses on the sand.

V. THE SUPREMACY OF OMRI  16:22

But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

Omri’s forces overcome the followers of Tibni and he becomes the reigning king. He has the throne, but as we will see, he will waste his power, authority, and opportunity to turn the nation around, back to the Lord. In fact, he will become the worse king of Israel up to this point. Nothing will compare, however, to the son he rears, a boy named Ahab, who becomes the king one day. Ahab will grow up to be like his father, only worse. Not spending time with your kids, loving their mother, and being the right example to them can cause your cookie to crumble with your kids later on in your life.
Chapter 31
The Spiral Staircase of Sin
1 Kings 16:24-34

After the civil war in the northern kingdom, Omri, the commander in the infantry, has overcome the followers of Tibni and is now king of Israel. He will reign for twelve years and will become the worst king of Israel until his son takes the throne after his death and does even more damage. This passage paints a background of King Ahab, the king who will be a key player throughout the rest of the book of 1 Kings. First, let’s take a look at his father and then a look at him and his famous wife, Jezebel, as Israel continues her journey down the spiral staircase of sin.

I. THE ROOTS OF SAMARIA 16:23,24

In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

Omri moves the capital from Tirzah to Samaria. It serves as the capital until the fall of the Assyrians in 722 B.C. He paid Shemer two talents of silver (150 lbs.). The city was his personally. He had control. It was built upon a hill and was almost impregnable because of its elevated position on a 300 foot hill. It was a strategic location near a busy trade route.

Omri died before completing the city. Ahab finished the construction. An ivory palace and temple dedicated to Baal was constructed. Samaria was Israel’s crown of pride. The northern kingdom
was eventually called Samaria (1 Kings 21:1). Omri thought he was buying ground for a town. Little did he know the impact of his decisions upon future events. **Little do we understand how our present decisions affect future events too.** God help us to make the right decisions and do God’s will. We need to have the same attitude as James.

*James 4:1- From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

Samaria was an important place in Bible history. When we look into the future, we will find the story of a woman from Samaria in John chapter four. From this event in John 4, comforting and challenging truths are given to us, especially the truth about reaching out to others like Jesus did. Notice these verses in John 4.

A. John 4:14- But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. We are to reach inward by opening the door of our heart.

B. John 4:24- God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. We are to reach upward in worship.

C. John 4:35- Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. We are to reach out to save the souls of others. When we look at Luke 10:30-37, the story of the good Samaritan, we find we are to reach down and pick up others who have fallen. Have you reached inward, upward, outward, or downward?

**II. THE RANCOR OF OMRI  16:25-28**

But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him. [26] For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities. [27] Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [28] So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

Omri was the worst of all kings up to this point. He was worse than Saul and Jeroboam. The worst is still yet to come. Omri’s sinfulness provokes God to anger. Does God still get angry? Yes! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What makes the Lord angry?
1. Our unbelief.
* Psalm 78:21,22 - Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

2. Our disobedience.
* Joshua 7:11 - Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

3. Our idolatry.

4. Not following God’s directions.
* 2 Samuel 6:7 - And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

5. Not following the Lord’s will.
* Numbers 32:10,11 - And the Lord’s anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:

These things still anger the Lord. For these reasons, judgment is coming personally to people and to the entire world. There will be a Great Tribulation one day and there is a place called Hell for unbelievers who die without Jesus Christ as their Savior.

III. THE REIGN OF AHAB  16:29,30

And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

For the next 22 years, Ahab will rule over Israel. He will do more evil than those before him. Israel continues to spiral downward into the depths of sin. It is going down the spiral staircase of sin. That is the nature of sin. Sin continually spirals downward because it is never satisfied for long. Ahab uses his influence to promote idolatry.
IV. THE REBELLION OF AHAB 16:31

And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him.

Ahab considered it trivial or a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. That is the effect sinful habits have upon a person or a nation. Sin hardens and numbs a person. It can cause a person to become apathetic toward evil. Paul described this condition as having a seared conscience in 1 Timothy 4:2.

* 1 Timothy 4:2- Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

With a numbed conscience, a person will continue down the spiral staircase of sin. We use to be shocked at nudity, adultery, filthy language, murder, and scandal before the 1960’s. Now it is seen everyday on television programs or the news. Criminals are protected, with some getting book and television contracts. It’s crazy!

Ahab scorned God’s Word. The Scriptures forbade marriage with the heathen (Deuteronomy 7:2,3). Yet, Ahab marries Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. Who are these folks?

Ethbaal means “Baal is with him.” He was a priest of Tyre. He assassinated the Tyrian king and took the throne. He worshiped the sun god, Baal. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal and was a terrible influence upon Ahab. She was a wicked woman.

* 1 Kings 21:25- But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

The land was ruled by Ahab and he was ruled by Jezebel. Jezebel made Samaria the center of Baal worship. She had the prophets of God slaughtered. Further down the road of the future, Ahab and Jezebel have a daughter, Athaliah, who ends up marrying Jehoram, the king of Judah. Through a series of events and deaths, Athaliah seizes the throne, destroys all the royal descendants of Judah except for one boy, who was hidden from danger, Joash. If she had been successful, she would have destroyed the line of Jesus Christ.
V. THE REARING OF AN ALTAR  16:32,33

And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

Ahab promotes a cult in Israel. Altars, temples, and groves are constructed for pagan worship. Wickedness has a strong foothold in Israel. These events are a reminder of the pattern of evil. **Evil seeks to be allowed and permitted on a basis of tolerance, freedom of expression, rights, and equal time.** Evil was tolerated with the golden calves.

* 1 Kings 12:28 - Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Once evil gets a foothold, you can count on it changing its tune about tolerance, equal time, and rights. Evil will then become intolerant and competitors will be whipped into submission. Tolerance is replaced with totalitarianism. Look at the events of today.

* In China, Communism started with tolerance. The communist wanted tolerance and equal time. Once in power, the communist ended tolerance and killed any protestors or imprisoned them.

* Consider evolution. When Creation was taught, evolutionist wanted tolerance and an equal voice. Now that it is dominant in the schools, Creation is not tolerated in many schools.

* Consider sex education in the schools. Abstinence was replaced with so-called “safe sex.” Now abstinence is forbidden to be taught in many school systems.

* Homosexuals cried out for tolerance for years, then equal rights, and now they demand special rights and protections. If they get into power, they will persecute and oppress those who differ with a cruel viciousness. Already opponents to homosexuality are intimidated by demonstrations and being labeled as unloving or homophobes. In Canada, protestors to homosexuality are imprisoned.

Worldliness and wickedness crept into Israel and destroyed the nation. It went down the spiral staircase of sin. Today, churches are encouraged to become more worldly in order to relate to the world. They are to soften their message and harden their music. They are encouraged to entertain instead of exhort and the result to all of these compromises is
the church is losing its power because it is so much like the world. Becoming worldlier darkens the church. Our job is not to make sinners comfortable in their sin.

* Romans 12:2- And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

* James 4:4- Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

VI. THE REALIZATION OF GOD’S WORD 16:34

In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

People became so ignorant of the Word or developed such a defiance to it, that the city of Jericho was rebuilt in spite of the curse pronounced upon its rebuilding.

* Joshua 6:26 - And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. This curse was pronounced about 500 years earlier.

All knowledge or respect for the Word was gone because Israel had gone down the spiral staircase of sin. Hiel didn’t care about the curse and was determined to do what he wanted to do no matter what. God’s Word was fulfilled. Hiel laid the foundation at the cost of his firstborn son, Abiram, and the gates of the city at the cost of Segub. You do not defy God’s Word and get away with it. His Word comes to pass. Are you on the spiral staircase of sin? Get off of it.
Chapter 32
Confrontation
With a Corrupt
King
1 Kings 17:1

We now enter upon a portion of Scripture that introduces us to one of the greatest prophets who ever lived, a man called Elijah. Elijah was honored by God. He was the only other man who had the honor of Enoch, the honor of not passing through the valley of the shadow of death. He was honored with Moses, attending the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain. The Jews still honor Elijah. At Passover, the Jews leave the door open so Elijah may enter if he should suddenly come. When a Jewish baby is circumcised, a vacant chair is left for Elijah. The Greeks honored Elijah by naming a mountain after him. The music world honors him. Mendelssohn wrote an oratorio called “Elijah.” Why is he honored now when he was not honored when he lived? Let’s open the curtain on his life and learn from Elijah’s life message. Let’s see how his life radiated for God at the midnight hour of the nation of Israel. Let’s see how he stood alone in the gap. We will then understand why he is honored today.

I. THE MAN 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah comes upon the scene out of nowhere like a thunderbolt across a Texas sky. It was a desperate scene too. Ahab was
on the throne. No other king had a penchant for perverseness like him. Ahab had an addiction for evil. He and Jezebel wallowed in wickedness and lewdness. He was the worst of all kings.

Ahab and Jezebel promoted the worship of Baal throughout the whole land of Israel. It was so bad, the Phoenician version of Baal worship was considered evil by other pagans. When the Romans encountered Baalism at Carthage, a Phoenician colony, they were utterly grossed out by it. Baal worship glorified every sensual perversion people could conjure up. It was a filthy, perverted, devilish, wicked religion. Children were sacrificed on the altar of Baal. Lewd dancers performed sexual acts.

It was not a good day for Israel. The land was blanketed in the ebony of evil. Someone said, "The steel of the character of an individual is forged on the anvil of one’s times. Often, the darker and more difficult the times are, the brighter the soul shines that stands against them." It was Abe Lincoln who steered us through the darkness of the Civil War. Churchill rallied the world and England against Hitler and Nazism. Times were bad, but God looks for and raises up special people in desperate, difficult times to stand in difficult gaps and situations.

*Ezekiel 22:30- And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

God raises up a burning firebrand from the wasteland of the wilderness, a man illuminated by indignation against the evil blackness of his times. Elijah was like a meteor that flashed across the inky blackness of Israel’s spiritual darkness. Elijah was God’s scalpel to cut away at the moral and social decay that was consuming Israel like gangrene in an injured limb.

We find in our own country that all our doing without God has finally undone us. We have reached a state where common decency is no longer common. People with virtue, purity, integrity, and conviction for right are considered strange and those who are perverted are normal. God help us! God is looking for men and women to speak up and cry against wickedness. He is looking for Christians who will let their lights shine before men so their good works might be seen and the Lord glorified in their lives. He is looking for people willing to stand in the gap where no one is standing!

Elijah was not afraid to shine the light of God’s truth into Ahab’s eyes. He was a man of courage and conviction because of his close
relationship with God. Elijah means “Jehovah is my God.” He was a Tishbite which means “a converter.” That’s interesting because that was the purpose of his ministry... to convert and turn people to the Lord. This is our purpose too! Are you a converter?

II. THE MESSAGE  17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

The message was, “It’s not going to rain until I say so!” This confrontation would be headlines in the papers and on prime time news today. The king is confronted and the confronter lives to tell about it. God promised to withhold the rain.

* Leviticus 26:18 - And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

* Deuteronomy 11:16,17 - Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you.

God gave Elijah great courage to deliver a dreadful message to a ruthless, God-hating king and queen. Israel was plagued with a bad king, but blessed with a great prophet. Ahab sinned with defiance and boldness. Elijah reproved with boldness. It was the best of times and the worst of times. Elijah spoke with authority because He spoke the Word of God.

* Matthew 7:29 - For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. When you speak the Word of God, you too will speak with authority. God’s Word is true.

Ahab and the nation made the mistake of thinking that God’s delay of punishment was His exoneration of their evil. God was giving His people time to repent. Don’t make the same mistake as Ahab if you are away from the Lord and living in sin. Elijah straightens out the thinking of Israel and corrects their assumption that all is OK. Ahab is about to learn the truth of Proverbs 13:15.

* Proverbs 13:15- Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Jehovah was the God of Israel. The worship of Baal was a challenge to God’s sovereignty. God’s judgment would expose Baal as fake and powerless since Baal was considered the lord of the rains and crops. Such
a message was very unpopular. Out of millions there were only 7000 prophets of the Lord in hiding. Jezebel was enraged, yet, truth is truth, no matter how many worship Baal or hate God’s message. God’s Word is not popular today, but the Bible is still the Word of God. Hell, Heaven, and the Second Coming of Christ are all real. God is looking for people who will believe His Word and proclaim it boldly just like Elijah. Elijah faced the same problems we do and overcame them.

*James 5:17- Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. Will you stand for God?
Chapter 33
Life at Cherith Brook
1 Kings 17:2-7

Are you willing to go wherever God leads you or do whatever the Lord wants you to do? Such questions strike terror in some people. They fear if they say “Yes” that the Lord will send them off to the jungles of Africa where it is scary. What would you do if the Lord told you to go to the President and tell him that it is not going to rain until you say so because America is so wicked? After you tell him, you are to go into the desert of Death Valley and hide because the government is going to try to kill you. What would you do? While in the desert, the Lord tells you that you will have running water from a little stream. Your food will be delivered to you, not by Meals on Wheels or Dominoes Pizza, instead by Rations from Ravens Catering Service. Our ravens will give you prompt air-catering, delivering every morning and evening. The menu will be limited, with bread and meat for each meal. The meals are free, however. How would you respond to such directions? Would you be hesitant and scared? Let’s be honest, most of us would be scared.

With these questions in mind, you can now begin to get an idea of what kind of man Elijah was because this is what God directed him to do and he did it. God directs Elijah to Cherith Brook. From his experience here, we will note valuable insights that will help teach us how to live today.

I. REFUGE AT CHERITH BROOK 17:2-5

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, [3] Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherish, that is before Jordan. [4] And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. [5] So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherish, that
is before Jordan.

Elijah has informed Ahab that it will not rain until he says so. God instructs Elijah to hide at Cherith Brook, an unusual place with unlikely providers. Elijah obeys the Lord. Why hide? Ahab may have scoffed at the message, but as farms begin to fry and valleys turn into dust bowls, God would get Ahab’s attention. God knew Ahab would seek revenge instead of repent. Elijah was sent to Cherith Brook for his protection. Elijah would be on Ahab’s “Most Wanted” list.

The hiding of Elijah was actually a judgment upon the nation. The nation needed Elijah. If people refuse God’s blessings and His message, He will take it away. Don’t squander God’s blessings and opportunities for service. During WW2, a British newspaper editorial addressed the issue of the squandering of blessings.
* We have been a pleasure-loving people, dishonoring God’s day.
* We have preferred motor travel to church going, and now there is a shortage of gasoline.
* We have ignored the ringing of church bells, and now the bells ring to warn us of invasion.
* We have left our churches half-empty when they should have been filled with worshipers, and now many of them are in ruins.
* The food we refused to thank God for is now unobtainable.

* John 11:53,54- Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

God gave Elijah his new assignment to go to Cherith Brook because he completed his first one in going to Ahab. Arthur Pink said, “God does not grant fresh revelation until there has been compliance with that which has been already received.” If you are confused about the will of God today, it may be the result of not obeying the will of God yesterday. People do not grow in the Lord because they do not put into practice truth already taught. Are you growing spiritually? Are you applying Biblical truth in your life?

God sends Elijah to Cherith. Cherith means “a cutting place.” God had this in store for Elijah. God puts us through those cutting times to prepare us for future service. Cherith comes before the Mt. Carmels of our life. The cross comes before the crown. Trials come before blessings. At Cherith Brook God will cut off the rough edges of Elijah’s life. Cherith was the place of loneliness, uncertainty, waiting, and hardship. God uses
these elements to develop our character and knock off our rough edges.

At Cherith, Elijah would develop his relationship with the Lord. He would grow in faith, prayer, patience, and humility. He would grow in humility because this was a humble place. It was a brook, not a river. It was a wilderness, not a castle. The Lord uses our Cherith Brooks to keep us level-headed instead of big-headed and proud.

The temptation for Elijah could be, "Look at me! I told the king off! It hasn’t rained just like I said!” Elijah’s first assignment was public and prominent. His second was an obscure one. Pride could be Elijah’s worst enemy and it can be ours too. Pride ruins husband and wife relationships. Couples won’t admit their wrongs and won’t compromise. Pride ruins preachers when they get big-headed and cocky. Pride ruins teenagers when they get unteachable, rebellious, and disobedient.

Before God exalts, He humbles. God will exalt Elijah at Mt. Carmel. The Lord allows Cherith Brook experiences in our life because He wants us to realize that our usefulness to Him is not dependent upon our station in life or upon the honors of men. It is dependent upon our willingness to walk humbly before God at all times. This is what the Lord was endeavoring to teach Elijah and this is what He tries to teach us too! If you can’t walk with God in the shadows, you won’t be able to survive the limelight. Pride will ruin you.

God not only develops humility, He develops patience at Cherith Brook. Patience is needed to overcome evil.

* Psalm 37:7- Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

* Psalm 37:9 - For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

Elijah would need patience for the waiting ahead. If we do not learn to wait upon the Lord, then we have a tendency to get ahead of Him. The result is disastrous. Saul found this out in his own life. His impatience with Samuel ruined him (1 Samuel 13:8-13). It ruined Abraham too. God uses Cherith Brook to get us alone with Him and dependent upon Him.

* Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
II. THE RAVEN CATERERS  17:6

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Ravens are naturally shy birds, yet, they obeyed God’s directions in feeding Elijah. God was in control. Ravens are scavengers and are considered unclean because they feed upon carrion and garbage. They are known to neglect their own young, but they did not neglect Elijah.

*Job 38:41- Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Ravens were considered bad omens. They were believed to be the messengers of tragedy or death. In Elijah’s case, however, they became a blessing to Elijah by providing food and fellowship for Elijah. They are fierce birds, picking out the eyes of men or animals and mauling the sick and dying. Their fierceness fashioned one of our most forceful English words... “ravenous.” As fierce as they are, God used these birds to meet Elijah’s needs. **It is amazing what the Lord can do with a man or a creature yielded to His will. What a blessing we can be to others.**

Another lesson here is God can provide for us from unexpected sources and meet our needs. God uses our Cherith Brooks to teach us the truth of Philippians 4:19. He can meet our needs.

*Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

The Lord wants us to trust Him one day at a time. This is the next lesson. **Where the Lord leads us, He provides for us.** Notice the word “there” in verse four. THERE is where God’s will is for you. Are you where God wants you?

*Matthew 6:33-But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. God has promised to be with us at all times. He never promised we would not have problems, trials, or death.

John Brenz, a friend of Martin Luther, remembered verse six while he was hiding from the Spanish Cavalry. Emperor Charles V had repeatedly tried to kill him and on one occasion almost succeeded. Brenz barely heard of the dangerous plot when he quickly grabbed a loaf of bread and hid in his neighbor’s hayloft. For two long weeks he concealed himself in the loft. The bread did not last long at all, but the Lord sent a hen who showed up and laid an egg each day for fourteen days, keeping...
Brenz alive. The chicken did not show up on the fifteenth day, but from the streets Brenz heard the shouts of the people, “The cavalrymen are gone at last!” God miraculously cared for his servant.

In a similar way, a dog provided for the needs of another reformer, John Craig, who was arrested during the Spanish Inquisition. On the eve of his scheduled execution, John escaped. While fleeing through the Italian wilderness, John ran out of provisions. Suddenly, a dog approached him with a purse in its mouth. John tried to drive the dog away, but he persisted in bringing the purse to Craig. In the purse was enough money to take John to freedom.

God used a spider to protect Robert Bruce of Scotland. He was running for his life, fleeing persecutors. He hid in a small cave and a spider immediately appeared and began to spin a web over the entrance of the cave. Bruce’s pursuers searched the countryside. Two of them approached the cave, but when they saw the unbroken web of the spider, they concluded he could not be hiding in the cave. Bruce breathed this prayer, “O God, I thank Thee that in the tiny bowels of a spider, you can place for me a shelter.” All of creation is at God’s disposal to take care of us and our needs.

*Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

III. THE ROASTED LAND 17:7

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

The brook dried up. They do this at times. Why does God allow our brooks to dry up? Let me share several insights.

1. God wants to teach us not to trust in His gifts, but in Himself. He wants us to wait and depend upon Him. Your job may not last forever. Your friendships with others may wither and your popularity may dry up. Your health can wither away quickly.

2. Our dried up brooks are not an indication that God is forsaking us. Instead, God is changing the source of His help. The result of this lesson is faith in the Lord, and our dependence upon Him is strengthened.

3. Dried brooks remind us that the One who provided the water can choose to take it away. The same God that gives a mate, child, career, or ministry, can take them away for His glory and His will.

4. Dried brooks can also be an indication that God is changing directions for you by closing one door and opening another. Such was the case in
Elijah’s life.

You may be sitting by a dry brook at Cherith in your own life. It may be the dry brook of faded popularity, fleeing health, finicky friendships, failing finances, or the face of death. Beloved, let me assure you that our Lord has not forsaken you or forgotten you. Trust Him no matter what happens.

* Isaiah 49:14-16... Bu: Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. [15] Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. [16] Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.
Chapter 34
Scraping the Bottom of the Barrel
1 Kings 17:8-16

There are times in our life when we face desperate situations; situations in which we find our resources, strength, health, or friends are depleted. Sometimes we find ourselves scraping the bottom of the barrel of our lives. Why does God allow us to get into the barrel-scraping business? Why does the Lord allow the barrel of our lives to reach rock-bottom where we are depleted, desperate, discouraged, or depressed? We will find some of the answers to these questions in this next portion of Scripture as we deal with the topic Scraping the Bottom of the Barrel.

I. THE PROPHET’S POSITION IS CHANGED 17:8,9

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

At Cherith, the song of the brook was hushed. The rippling music of the brook that served as a lullaby, luring the prophet to sleep, was now silent. The drips had ceased. The pools of water were replaced with sand and stone. Elijah is scraping the bottom of the barrel if you please. He has done what God had asked. What’s next for our courageous prophet?

The Bible says, “The Word of the Lord came unto him.” When you are scraping the bottom of the barrel, God knows where you are and where
you are going. The will of God for Elijah was revealed to him by the Word of the Lord (vs.9). It was time to move. Do you want to know God’s will? Get into the Word of God. Churches have become weak, wimpy, wobbly, and wayward because they have wandered away from the preaching of the Word of God!

**Notice that God revealed His will one step at a time.** He was told to go to Cherith and now to Zarephath. We must learn to be patient and take one step at a time. Jeremiah taught this truth.

* Jeremiah 18:2- Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

The will of God is like the headlights of a car. They give just enough light to go forward safely. God tends to do this for us too. Elijah was scraping the bottom of the barrel and God gave him direction. **God is always on time. His timing is accurate. He comes through in the nick of time. This pattern is seen over and again in the Scriptures.**

* When Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac, God spoke up and gave Abraham directions.
* When the three Hebrews were in the fiery furnace, the Lord walked with them through the fire.
* When Daniel was cast into the lions’ den, the Lord shut the mouths of the lions for that moment.
* When Moses and the children of Israel were pursued by the Egyptian army and had their backs to the Red Sea, God in His timing parted the waters and guided them to safety.
* When Jonah was cast off the boat during the storm, the Lord had a great fish prepared to care for Jonah.
* On the eve of Peter’s execution, the Lord has him freed from prison.
* On the night before the execution of Mordecai, a sleepless king finds out that Mordecai saved his life and was not rewarded. He is rewarded the next morning.

**God’s timing is always on schedule.** For this reason we need to wait on the Lord when we are scraping the bottom of the barrel. In the early days of Dallas Theological Seminary, there was a serious financial crisis. They were scraping the bottom of the barrel financially. If a large amount of money was not received on a certain day, it would seriously endanger the existence of the school.

In those days, the president of Dallas Seminary, Lewis Sperry Chafer, would often be visited by a great Bible teacher who taught part-time at the seminary....Dr. Harry Ironside. Dr. Ironside happened to be at
the school on that crucial day of the financial deadline. Chafer, Ironside, and other men of the school gathered in Chafer’s office for a prayer meeting. They were asking the Lord to meet the financial need. Dr. Ironside prayed what came to be known as one of his famous prayers. He said, “Oh God, you own the cattle on a thousand hills. Lord, won’t you sell some of those cattle and send us the money?”

The secretary came from the office and said, “Dr. Chafer, there is someone here to see you.” Dr. Chafer told her to send him into the office. The man asked, “Are you Dr. Chafer?” He said, “Yes, I am.” The man proceeded and said, “Sir, I am a cattle rancher, and I don’t know what came over me, but God told me to sell some of my cattle and give you the money.” He handed Dr. Chafer the money and the amount was exactly what the school needed to meet their financial need and alleviate a crisis. Amen!

God met Elijah’s need by changing Elijah’s circumstances. He changed his location and his method of provision. God takes care of His people. He is the Need Meeter.

*Philippians 4:19* - But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Are you scraping the bottom of the barrel? Rest in His promises! Realize He can change your location or provide for you by giving you a new job or an unexpected blessing. God gives directions through Bible verses, sermons, a word from a friend, an answer to prayer, or by a change in circumstances. You are to wait and trust His leading in your life. When one crosses the higher Alps, it has to be along narrow ledges that are broad enough only for a mule to get a foothold. Ledges skirt the cliffs that drop thousands of feet to the valley below. The safest way to travel these ledges is to not grab the bridle of the mule. The slightest tug could lead the mule over the cliff. Keep your hands off the reigns and let the mule go and lead you along. When scraping the bottom of the barrel, let the Lord open and close your doors. Be patient and He will direct you if you will seek Him and let Him lead.

Elijah was instructed to go to Zarephath which means “melting and refining metal.” Elijah’s faith and obedience are tested and refined again at Zarephath. God was removing the dross of pride, impatience, independence of God and fear. God told him to travel 100 miles northwestward during a time of famine and hunger where risk of detection was great. He was traveling to the region of Jezebel’s hometown. Sidon was eight miles away which happened to be Ethbaal’s city. He was the
leader of Baal worship. It was a most dreaded place. So Elijah basically is going to the backyard of the enemy.

God allows those times of scraping the bottom of the barrel to refine our faith, develop our trust in the Lord, remove the dross of disobedience, pride, rebellion, sin, impatience, and doubt.

* Job 23:10 - But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

* Isaiah 48:10 - Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

* 1 Peter 1:7- That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

* Psalm 66:10 - For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

In a smelting furnace, coal is placed underneath earthen, clay vessels which contain silver and impurities. These vessels are enclosed in a stone furnace. You may feel enclosed, surrounded, and under fire. God is refining you and developing you like a picture. When a picture is taken, the shutter opens and the film has the impression of the image. The film must pass through the “dark room” treatment for the image to fully develop. When you are saved, your life is exposed to the light of Christ. His image is developed through the “dark room” process, through trials and times of scraping the bottom of the barrel. You will find that God grinds the axes He intends to use.

II. THE PROMISE OF PROVISION 17:10,11

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

God promised to meet Elijah’s need through a poverty-stricken widow during a time of famine. He can meet your need too from the most unexpected, illogical places. When Elijah arrives, the widow just happens to be at the right place at the right time. Is this luck? No! God was directing the steps of both of them. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. God has a way of putting people in our paths at the right time and at the right place to meet our need and encourage us. He did the same thing for Abraham’s servant when he was
looking for a wife for Isaac. Rebekah was at the well when he arrived.

Will you have a divine appointment this month or this year? Will God put someone into your life to help you? Will he put you into someone else’s life to help them? Be sensitive to the Lord’s leading in your life. Don’t underestimate divine appointments.

Chaplain Robinson shares a true story about his grandmother that took place in 1949. His father had just returned home from World War 2. On every American highway, you could see soldiers in uniform hitchhiking home to their families, as was the custom at that time in America. Sadly, the thrill of his reunion with his family was overshadowed by the illness of Robinson’s grandmother. The problem was her kidneys. The doctors told Robinson’s father that she needed a blood transfusion immediately or she would not live through the night.

The problem was that his grandmother’s blood type was AB negative, a very rare type of blood even today, but even harder to get back then because there were no blood banks or air flights to ship blood. None of the family members had matching blood. So the doctors gave the family no hope of her surviving through the night. Robinson’s father left the hospital in tears to gather all the family members so they could say “Good-bye” to Grandmother.

As Robinson’s father was driving down the highway, he passed a soldier hitchhiking home to his family. Deep in grief, the father had no inclination to do a good deed at that moment. Yet, he felt strongly impressed to stop and pick up the stranger. Robinson’s father was so upset that he did not ask the soldier’s name. The soldier, however, noticed the tears in his eyes and asked what was wrong. Through the tears Robinson’s father told this stranger about his dying mother in the hospital because they could not give her a transfusion of AB negative blood because they did not have any. She would be dead by morning. It got very quiet in the car. Then this unidentified soldier extended his hand out to Robinson’s father with the palm upward. Resting in the palm of his hand was his army dog tags with his blood type engraved on them, AB negative. The soldier told Robinson’s father to turn the car around and get him to the hospital where she was given a transfusion of this man’s blood.

Robinson’s grandmother lived until 1996, 47 years later, and to this day no one in the family knows the soldier’s name. Robinson’s father wonders if he was a soldier or an angel in uniform. Sometimes we never know who God will bring into our lives to carry out a special mission nor do we know whose lives the Lord will have us touch and bless.

Elijah requested water and bread which were valuable in a time of
famine. His request was a test for the widow. It would demand sacrifice, faith, and unselfishness. When you are scraping the bottom of the barrel, you will find you will be tested in these same areas. When you scrape the bottom of the barrel there is a tendency to:
1. Be selfish
2. Doubt and be discouraged.
3. Rationalize and offer excuses why you should not sacrifice and serve the Lord.

III. THE PITIFUL PLIGHT OF THE WIDOW 17:12

And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

Here is why Elijah’s request demanded sacrifice. This widow was in bad shape. She is scraping the bottom of the barrel herself. Elijah’s faith would be tested here. I wonder if his first impression was, “Did God make a mistake? How can she care for me when she can’t care for herself?” I don’t know. I believe Elijah knew God was God and He could do the impossible. God uses weak things to confound the mighty. The widow needed to learn this lesson too.

If this widow is obedient and unselfish, she would be a great blessing to Elijah. As God provided for her, He would be providing for Elijah too. God was trying to teach her faith, trust in the Lord, compassion, and unselfishness. She also needed encouragement. The reason God may allow you to scrape the bottom of the barrel is to develop compassion for others, grow in unselfishness and faith in the Lord. Selfishness is a huge reason why people do not serve the Lord. Their attitude is “It’s MY life!” God was also trying to develop courage in the widow. Keeping Elijah would be a dangerous task because he was a wanted man. Harboring him would involve risking her own life.

The widow needs to learn and grow in the Lord. She presently feels helpless, hopeless, and discouraged. Scraping the bottom of the barrel can leave you that way. She is overwhelmed with discouragement and is preparing to die. Discouragement is caused by several factors such as:
1. The difficulty of everyday circumstances.

* Numbers 21:4- And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was
much discouraged because of the way.
2. Endless problems where no end is in sight.
* Nehemiah 4:10 - And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.
3. Delays in unfulfilled dreams.
* Proverbs 13:12 - Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

IV. THE POSITIVE OUTLOOK OF ELIJAH 17:13,14

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

Elijah’s message was “Fear not!” He wanted the widow to rest in God’s promise. The meal would not waste or the oil fail. If you are scraping the bottom of the barrel, this message is for you too. Don’t be afraid to trust the Lord and His promises.

V. THE PERFORMANCE OF GOD’S WORD 17:15,16

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

The widow trusted God’s promises by faith and God kept His word, meeting her needs. She is tested and challenged to put God first, to sacrifice, and she did. The Lord, in turn, multiplied the little that she had. The first meal she yielded turned to two years of meals. Little is much when God is in it. In John 6, we find that the Lord used a little boys lunch of five loaves of bread and two fishes to feed over 5000 people.

We are challenged over and over again to put the Lord first in our life.
* Matthew 6:33- But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

If you live for the treasures of this life, you will leave them behind when you die. If you live for the treasures of Heaven, you will meet them
at the Judgment Seat of Christ and enjoy them for the rest of eternity. We are not here to make a living. We are here to make a life and this is done by putting the Lord first. Are you scraping the bottom of the barrel? Put the Lord first in your life.

The power of God met the need of the widow and it will meet our need too. The power of God:

1. Strengthens us.
   * Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
2. Makes grace abound toward us.
   * 2 Corinthians 9:8- And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:
3. Performs above our expectations.
   * Ephesians 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
4. Saves souls.
   * Hebrews 7:25- Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
5. Keeps our souls.
   * 1 Peter 1:5- Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The power of God never fails, especially when you are scraping the bottom of the barrel. The flour that was used is a great reminder of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bread of Life. The oil is a reminder of the Holy Spirit. They never fail. The meal and oil strengthened Elijah and the widow. The Word of God and the Spirit of God strengthens us. When we put the Lord first, He will multiply the little we have and meet our needs.

Years ago, a package was sent from England to South Africa. A man received this package, but refused to pay the delivery charges. For 14 years this box was used as a footstool in the post office. The man finally died and this box was auctioned off with other boxes. A curious man bid on the box at a low price. When he opened it, he found it was filled with thousands of pounds of English bank notes. Because of his unwillingness to sacrifice a little, the man who was supposed to get this package missed out on great blessings and a fortune. Our unwillingness to sacrifice for the Lord robs us of blessings too.

Are you scraping the bottom of the barrel? Realize that God knows where you are and your situation. He will give you direction at the right
time if you will seek Him and wait for His direction. Rest in God’s promises and don’t be afraid. Realize that the Lord may be refining you, removing the dross of doubt, impatience, pride, selfishness, or disobedience from your life. He may be trying to develop your faith in Him, compassion, maturity, unselfishness, and sacrifice in your life. Put the Lord first in your life.

* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
Chapter 35
When Lightning Strikes in the Same Place Twice
1 Kings 17:17-24

One of the difficult aspects of the Christian life are those times of trial and suffering, especially when we face the death of a loved one, a spouse, parent, or even our child. When trials come into our lives, many times they hit like the strike of a lightning bolt, quick and unexpected. If you have been a Christian for some time, you know that believers don’t go through one trial and that’s it! To say we will have no more worries or troubles is not realistic. You will find that the lightning bolt of trials strikes our lives over and over again .... twice, thrice, again and again.

The question is “Why?” Why does God allow lightning to strike in the same place two, three, four, five or more times? The next question is, “How do I survive when this happens?” The third issue is, “What is God trying to teach me and accomplish through my trial? What mistakes do I avoid and need to be alert about in my circumstances?” Such questions and issues will be addressed in this chapter as we learn what to do when lightning strikes in the same place twice.

I. THE SICKNESS OF THE WIDOW’S SON 17:17

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

God has been blessing and providing for Elijah, the widow and her son each day. In spite of God’s provisions, something is wrong. The son is sick. Like the sands flowing through the
hour glass, the strength and health of the son is flowing away. Each day he weakens more until death grasped the life of the boy with its icy, cold fingers.

**Lightning strikes in the same place twice.** The widow has lost her husband in death and now her only son dies. It has been one trial after another for these two.

* Elijah has been sought out by Ahab. He is on the “Most Wanted” list.
* Elijah faced the trials of Cherith Brook.
* He faced the trial of a dangerous trip to Zarephath.
* The widow lost her husband.
* She faced the stress of a depleting food supply and then was asked to choose between her life or Elijah’s.
* Now the widow’s son dies.

Even though this mother was doing her duty and the man of God was being cared for in her home, her son still died. Our age, location, circumstances, or spiritual maturity do not exempt us from trials. Trials and trouble will show up in places you don’t expect even though you are obeying the Lord, serving Him, and being blessed by God.

* Psalm 34:19- Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

**II. THE SCOFFING OF THE WIDOW  17:18**

And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

When things were going well, the widow responded to the message of truth. When her circumstances began to sour, she began to doubt and point the finger of accusation at Elijah. She blamed him for her plight. She is grieving and bitter. Bitterness can appear in the early stages of the grieving process. To resolve grief, a person must work through the stages of grief if he is to get on with life.

**A. Stage 1- Denial and Numbness**

The pain is so intense that sometimes you don’t sense God’s presence in your life. Some make the mistake of seeking escape by finding ways to deaden the pain. They fill the void with busy activities and some turn to drugs or alcohol. This is not the answer to your pain.

**B. Stage 2-Anger and Bitterness**

The tendency of people when they are suffering or when they are in sorrow is to forget the goodness of friends, family, or God. The anger may
come like a tidal wave out of nowhere. Some folks lash out at those nearest to them like this widow does toward Elijah. In this stage people may blame others, God, or themselves. Affliction spurs examination of self. Unresolved sin may be brought to remembrance. Realize also that not all trials are caused by sin. The drain on emotional energy in this stage leads to the next step.

C. Stage 3-Depression

Depressed people tend to go into an emotional or social shell. Depression becomes very acute about ten days after the death of a loved one when friends and family have returned to their everyday lives. Going into a shell is a mistake. Shared grief is bearable grief. Don’t shut people out when you are grieving.

D. Stage 4-Acceptance

This is the stage where you go on with your life with peace and joy. How do you get to this point? You work through the grief by seeing God as He is and that He knows what is best for you. He loves us!

*Job 1:21-* And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

**Realize people grieve differently.** Give them space and be patient with them. In John 11, we find Mary was passive and withdrawn (vs.20) and Martha was verbal, almost hostile (vs.21). In the acceptance stage, we may discover the vast purpose of God. A common question that may come up at this point is “Why did God allow this to happen?” We ask this because we desire meaning in what happens to us. When we look at our trials from our viewpoint, it tends to leave us angry, frustrated, discouraged, proud, jealous, or greedy. When we spend time with the Lord in prayer and in His Word, we can begin to look at our trial from God’s point of view and find encouragement, patience, faith, and joy.

*Isaiah 55:8,9-* For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Realize this truth, that grief can be conquered.**

*2 Corinthians 2:14-* Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.

Acceptance of our circumstances can be achieved by helping others who are struggling with grief over the death of a loved one. God can give birth to new ministry through the death of someone you dearly love.
*2 Corinthians 1:3,4- Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

III. THE SUPPLICATION FOR THE SON  17:19-21

And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. [20] And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? [21] And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

Elijah’s response gives us insight into how to help those who are grieving. Elijah got involved in her grief. He took the burden of the widow and made it his own burden. It’s hard to know how to comfort people sometimes. You feel so helpless in many situations. One of the greatest ways to comfort is to sit beside the person on their mourning bench and become a mourning partner.

Being a mourning partner requires coming close to the person and feeling their pain, hurt, and desperation. A mourning partner weeps with those who weep. Your tears are salve on their wounds. A mourning partner stands with the person in their grief and patiently accepts the grieving one wherever they are in their grief. He moves the person along in the grief process. A mourning partner comforts the mourner by letting the person know they are hurting and that you care they are hurting.

How we respond to trials has a great deal to do whether the trial makes or breaks us. Elijah knew what to do in this trial. He doesn’t complicate the situation with drinking or drugs. He was patient with the widow and he took this problem to the Lord in prayer. We need to do this too. Sometimes it is the only thing we can do. Learn to pray!

*Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Elijah prayed earnestly, crying to the Lord and pleading. He prays specifically for an answer. He prays boldly in verse 21, “Let this child’s soul come in to him again.” Bold praying honors God. It indicates great faith and confidence in the Lord and His power. It indicates a closeness to the Lord too. Elijah prays privately. This is when we do our best
praying and really get down to business.

Elijah was a man of strength and beauty. His concern demonstrates his compassion for the boy and his mother. He strains for a miracle that has never occurred, the raising of a dead person. Elijah believed God could do it. When lightning strikes in the same place twice, it can bring out the worst, but also the best in people. It can bring out their faith, hope, love, and courage.

IV. THE SIGN OF GOD’S POWER 17:22,23

And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

God hears Elijah’s prayer and the boy’s soul returns to the boy because the soul leaves at death. Paul said, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

We have great promises to cling to as we pray.
* Isaiah 65:24- And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.
* Luke 11:9- And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
* Jeremiah 33:3 - Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.
* John 15:7- If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

There are several insights we find about trials here.

1. Notice the trial brought great blessing. Trials are in essence a source of blessing. The butterfly needs the trial of struggling out of the cocoon if it’s going to fly. The trial of surgery is needed for health. The trial of Calvary yielded our salvation in Christ.
2. This trial brought forth life more abundantly.
3. Trials are great revivers, drawing us closer to the Lord as we seek comfort and strength.

* 1 Peter 4:12-14.... Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: [13] But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. [14] If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken
of, but on your part he is glorified.
4. Trials produce joy (vs.23).
* James 1:2- My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
5. This trial opened an opportunity for service and preparation for future service. The answer to this prayer would strengthen his faith for the great showdown at Mount Carmel. Paul’s trials had the same effect upon his life.
* Philippians 1:12,13- But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

V. THE STATEMENT OF SATISFACTION  17:24

And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

The widow says, “Now I know you are a man of God!” God’s Word is true! How was she convinced? It was through this trial. Notice what David says in Psalm 119.
* Psalm 119:71- It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

The world may not believe your claim as a Christian or their need for Christ until they see how you act under the stress of a trial, when the lightning strikes in your life. Zarephath means “refining.” God put the faith of these two people through the fiery furnace of trials to refine it. He used the barrel of meal to refine their faith. How would you like to put your last meal on the table every time you sit down for dinner? Now the Lord uses the death and resurrection of her only son to give life-changing faith.

The death and resurrection of God’s only Son gives us life-changing faith too. Elijah was great, but Jesus Christ was greater. His resurrection proved He was the Son of God. Elijah proved to be a man of God. Jesus proved to be the God of men. If lightning trials are striking in your life, realize they are not a mistake or a waste. God is trying to refine your faith and draw you closer to Himself. Grow and learn when lightning strikes in your life.
Chapter 36
The Consequences of a King’s Actions
1 Kings 18:1,2

Do the actions of a king affect the nation he rules? Does the behavior of the President influence or affect America? Some contend, “Not at all!” The Bible, however, teaches that the example of a king is very important. The Bible illustrates that the actions of the king do affect his kingdom. Pharaoh’s actions brought judgment upon Egypt. Belshazzar’s actions brought judgment upon Babylon. Here, Ahab’s actions brought judgment upon Israel. His leadership led his people further away from the Lord, bringing the judgment of God upon the land and people.

I. THE COMMAND TO RETURN 18:1
And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

For the third time, the Word of the Lord comes to Elijah. It was in the third year of the famine. We know the actual famine lasted three and a half years.

*Luke 4:25- But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Elijah has not heard from the Lord for about two and a half years. Now God speaks up, giving His man direction on His timetable. God has His own time and does things His own way.
* Isaiah 55:8 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

Waiting for so many days would again be a great test for Elijah. It would be a test on his patience especially because Elijah was a man of action. If you had to wait for 2½ years to hear from the Lord, what questions do you think would come to mind as weeks, months, and years passed? What do you think you would be thinking if you were in Elijah’s sandals? One thought might be, “Has God forgotten that I am here?” Another might be, “When is the Lord going to give me direction and show me what to do?” A third thought could be, “Has the Lord shown me and did I miss it?” I think of the story about the man trapped in a flood. He was approached by a rescue helicopter but he told it to go on. He was approached by a boat but he waves it away. He finally drowns and when he gets to Heaven, he asked the Lord, “Why didn’t you answer my prayer?” The Lord replied, “I did. I sent two groups of people to rescue you!” The man missed the message, didn’t he. All of these thoughts may have passed through Elijah’s mind.

We hate the insecurity of uncertainty or stillness. We feel many times that we have got to do something, especially when we are going through a trial in our life. God says we should be patient.

* Romans 12:12 - Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

* James 1:4- But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

God uses the still times, the waiting times, to rest, refresh, and strengthen us for future service. He anchors our souls and deepens our roots into the Lord.

* Psalm 4:4- Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

*Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. Slow down and spend time with the Lord. Get into the Word of God! Realize that God is not in a hurry.

God commands Elijah to go back into the jaws of the lion or into the frying pan. He tells him to show himself to Ahab. This was directly opposite of the first command to hide himself. “Show yourself” meant he would be leaving the boy, the widow, and the food. It was a difficult and dangerous command followed by God’s promise too. The pattern of Scripture shows that a difficult command is followed by a promise of
blessing.
* Genesis 12:1,2- Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
* Exodus 4:12 - Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.
* Matthew 28:19,20- Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Some get stuck when God's commands are difficult and they stop growing. I think of the story of the agnostic that fell off of a cliff. About half way down, he caught hold of a bush sticking out from the cliff. There he was hanging, momentarily spared, but still too far from the ground to let go! He begins to yell, "Is there anybody up there?" A voice answers him, "Yes, this is the Lord!" The man yells frantically, "Help me! Help me!" There is a moment of silence and then the Lord answers, "Let go of the bush and I will save you." There is another pause of silence as the man looks down at the ground thousands of feet below. Finally he yells, "Is there anybody else up there?" Many are like this man. If they don't like God's way or want to trust the Lord, they search for something or someone else to solve their problems or make themselves happy.

II. THE COURAGE & COMPLIANCE OF ELIJAH 18:2
And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1). Elijah boldly and courageously obeys the Lord. Going to Ahab the second time would be harder than the first time because Ahab has been searching for Elijah for 3 1/2 years. Elijah doesn't debate with the Lord. He goes to the king with his eyes on God's promises, not the problem.

Imagine his journey back to Samaria. Everywhere he looked was utterly desolate and barren. The bubbling brooks were silent. They were now empty trenches of sand and sticks. The rich pastures carpeted with green grass were scorched to a dark, brownish tan color. The plowed fields were baked, barren, and brick hard from the scorched heat of the sun. The trees and bushes are shriveled and dead. No laborers are
working in the fields. The rejoicing of the harvest has been silenced and replaced with death wails of frail, faint, grieving mothers, fathers, children, husbands and wives. The market places were no longer busy hubs of activity. They are now abandoned and silent. The bright, plumaged birds have left. Their carols are no longer heard. The only common birds in the area are vultures, ravens, or others birds that feed on the dead. Their handiwork is evident from the bleached-white skeletons that litter the landscapes. What animals that were still alive were most likely skin and bones as the ripples of their rib cages would be clearly seen. The people were most likely sick, weak, tired, and depressed. Their bellies may have looked like they swallowed a bowling ball. The burial of the dead was a daily, routine event. Daily bread was scarce, but the bread of life was scarce too as God’s prophets were killed or in concealment.

Why has this happened? God is trying to get the attention of Ahab and Israel. Sometimes God spanks His people so they will listen. **God spanks or chastises us because:**

1. He loves us.
   * **Proverbs 3:11,12-** My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.
2. We belong to Him.
   * **Deuteronomy 8:5-** Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.
3. He wants to bless, correct, and teach us His Word.
   * **Psalm 94:12,13-** Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.
   * **Hebrews 12:11-** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

**Is God chastising you to correct you, get your attention, or draw you back to Himself?** Yield to Him if He is doing this. Are you heading for God’s woodshed now because of the way you are living? Stop what you are doing! Ahab’s actions and decisions determined God’s treatment of the nation. Let me ask, “If your life or your actions determined how God would treat the United States, the Philippines, India, or Africa, would there be a famine in the land because of your sinfulness or would there be showers of blessings from your obedience to the Lord?” I’ve got news for you! Your actions as a Christian do affect your nation.
2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Our major problem is the provision we make for sinful living in our lives. Such was the case of a little boy who scraped a chair across the kitchen floor and climbed on it to reach a cookie jar on top of the shelf. His mother heard the noise and called out, “What are you doing in there young man!” With his hand in the cookie jar, the child replied, “I’m fighting temptation!” We lose the battle with temptation because our hand is in the cookie jar. We make provision for the flesh to sin. May God use us to serve Him and reach our nation for Christ.

A person who lives right, and is right, has more power in his silence than another has by words.

Phillip Brooks
Chapter 37
Serving the Lord
Behind Enemy Lines
1 Kings 18:3-16

A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strutted through the backyard, wearing his baseball cap and toting a baseball and bat. “I’m the greatest hitter in the world,” he announced. Then he tossed the ball into the air, swung at it, and missed. He yelled, “Strike One!” Undaunted, he picked up the ball and said again, “I’m the greatest hitter in the world.” He tossed the ball into the air and when it came down he swung again and missed. He cried out, “Strike Two!” The boy then paused a moment to examine the bat and ball carefully. He spit on his hands and rubbed them together. He straightened his cap and said once more, “I’m the greatest hitter in the world!” Again he tossed the ball up into the air and swung at it. He missed and said, “Strike Three! Wow! I’m the greatest PITCHER in the world!”

Your attitude determines how your circumstances impact your life. The little boy’s circumstances hadn’t changed, but his optimistic attitude prompted him to give an encouraging meaning to what had happened. In this passage, we find a man who was in a difficult situation, behind enemy lines, but his positive attitude enabled him to accomplish a courageous work for the Lord. Later, his fearful attitude almost defeated him. Let’s see how one man serves the Lord behind enemy lines.
I. THE CALL TO OBADIAH  18:3-6

And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly: [4] For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) [5] And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. [6] So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

God has a way of putting His people in unexpected places. Working for the most wicked king in the history of Israel is a man named Obadiah. He was serving the Lord behind enemy lines in a difficult, wicked place. Others have done the same thing. Moses served under Pharaoh, Daniel served under Belshazzar, and Christians served in Caesar’s household.

Obadiah was the governor of Ahab’s house which meant that he was the second or third man in the kingdom. This was a very important and powerful position. He was a good man. Wicked men prefer good men to work for them for they can trust them and find they are better off with them.

Obadiah means “servant of Jehovah.” He seems to have lived that way. He was a spiritual rose among thorns, serving the Lord behind enemy lines. He feared the Lord greatly.

* Proverbs 8:13- The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Courageously, when Jezebel was slaughtering the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah hid 100 prophets in caves and fed them bread and water. It was a dangerous, difficult, and expensive task in a time of famine. Obadiah did not cave in to the worship of Baal even though false religions are notorious for using threats of force to gain worshipers. Nebuchadnezzar told the people of Babylon they must worship his image or be burned in the fiery furnace. In preserving the prophets, Obadiah does a great deal in preserving the witness of God. We do the same when we provide for our missionaries so they can be a witness for Christ on foreign soil.

When I read that Obadiah feared God greatly, two questions came to mind.

1. Why is he working for Ahab? Why put up with the idolatry,
immorality and wickedness of this man? Surely this vexed or grieved him as Lot was grieved in Sodom.

* 2 Peter 2:7,8- And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) It is his association with Ahab that subjects Obadiah to criticism. 2. Did Ahab and Jezebel know Obadiah was a worshiper of Jehovah? It’s unclear if they did know. With Jezebel on a rampage, it would seem his life would be in danger and he would have to keep silent about his faith in the Lord. He would have to be silent about protesting the king’s wickedness too. Keeping silent would in essence be an endorsement of what the king was doing. Obadiah’s association would be compared to being an associate of Al Capone or Adolph Hitler.

* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 ... Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? [15] And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? [16] And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

It is possible that Ahab did know of Obadiah’s stand, but considered him so valuable that the king protected him from Jezebel’s rage. The reason for the possibility of the king’s knowledge comes from vs. 13

Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord’s prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

We are not given the reasons why Obadiah stayed and served the Lord behind enemy lines. He felt they were valid reasons though. I’ll give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he felt he could do good or make a difference. Perhaps his parents or family were in Samaria and he could not move. He may have believed that he could protect God’s men from Jezebel’s rage just as people sheltered the Jews from the Nazi’s in WW 2. I do know this, what he did for the 100 prophets took guts and sacrifice. Would you put your life on the line like he did? Would you feed 100 preachers for months, knowing you could be executed for doing so?

What does Ahab need Obadiah to do? He wants him to hunt for grass for the animals. This action reveals phenomenal insights.

1. The king is in the grass-hunting business. He is the king but sin has
robbed him of glory, bounty, and blessings.

2. Ahab is more concerned about his horses than his people. This was a trait of paganism. Paganism has little regard for life. America has become very pagan in its beliefs. God has been rejected in her schools and churches. The murder of babies in abortion clinics is accepted and life has become cheap. In fact, our kids are killing kids. Euthanasia is also being promoted in the nation. When the Author of life is rejected then the lives of others are no longer valued or considered important.

3. **Ahab refuses to deal with the source of his problems.** His sin and the sin of Israel has caused the famine. Ahab and God’s people have become hard-hearted toward the Lord. Let me ask, “Is your heart hard toward the Lord right now? Is there a famine or emptiness in your life because of your disobedience and rebellion toward God? Are you willing to deal with it?” If you are not willing, your problems will never get solved. Blaming your problems on something or someone else will not resolve the emptiness in your life. Satan wants you to think that he has so much to offer you and you are missing out if you don’t live it up. As Ahab found out, the grass is not greener on the other side.

**III. THE CONFERENCE WITH ELIJAH 18:7-11**

*Notice..*

**A. The Consideration & Courtesy vs. 7**

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

Elijah meets Obadiah while he is searching for grass. The two highest officials after 3 ½ years are looking for feed. Israel and Ahab got what they wanted, but lost what they had. They lost the beauty of the land for the ugliness of sin. They lost the bounty of God’s blessings for the emptiness of sinful living. They traded security for the instability of a wicked life. Ahab failed to consider that God was calling the shots. He was in control of the weather. Praise the Lord, He is watching over us and our circumstances too.

*Psalm 47:2* - For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

When Elijah meets Obadiah, Obadiah recognizes the prophet.

**B. The Command vs. 8**

And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.
The command is simple, "Tell the king Elijah is here."

C. The Consternation of Obadiah vs. 9

And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

This simple command has a complex response. We see another side of Obadiah now. He is terrified at Elijah's request. There is an attitude change here. He is no longer bold and courageous as he was when he hid the prophets. He is very afraid. He was not the only one afraid in the Bible. Peter was terror stricken before a damsel. Serving the Lord behind enemy lines can be frightening.

It is good that we recognize our limitations and weaknesses. We can avoid becoming cocky, proud, and over-confident. It can also motivate us to pray, "Strengthen my faith Lord." Obadiah expresses fear and defensiveness by the words "What have I sinned..." In other words, "What sin have I done that you ask this of me?" Obadiah is terrified to deliver this simple message. Why? He begins to paint a picture for us. Before we judge him for his hesitancy over a simple message, put the shoe on your own foot. How bold are you in giving the simple message of the Gospel to the lost?

D. The Careful Search vs. 10,11

As the Lord thy God livest, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

Obadiah knows the king has looked for Elijah everywhere. He most likely fears that if he delivers this message, the king will think that he has known where Elijah was all the time.

V. THE CONFLICT FOR OBADIAH 18:12-14

And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. [13] Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? [14] And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay
Obadiah also fears death from Ahab if he delivers this message for other reasons.
1. If he delivers the message without bringing Elijah with him, it could mean death for him. Elijah was on the “Most Wanted” list.
2. If he delivers the message, he may worry that the king thinks that he actually harbored him and took care him.
3. If he delivers the message and Elijah doesn’t show up at all but disappears, then the king may kill him for letting him slip through his fingers. Obadiah may have believed that God took him away in the first place.
4. If he delivers the message, Elijah could be killed by the king. He may feel that he will be Elijah’s executioner or his own executioner.

Verse thirteen sounds like Obadiah is saying, “I have done my part already and put my life on the line. Why should I do this again?” Don’t fall into this trap or in this way of thinking. Some feel, “I don’t need to serve the Lord because I have done my part already.” The Bible makes it clear that we are to occupy until Jesus comes again or until we die.

**If Jesus Came Today**

Would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines, and put the Bible where they’d been?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush Him out?

And I wonder....if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing, the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying, the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know, the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person, to spend some time with you.

*Author Unknown*
VI. THE COMMITMENT OF ELIJAH  18:15,16

And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Elijah alleviates Obadiah’s fears. He assures him that he will show up. Obadiah delivers the message as commanded. His worries never came to pass and usually they don’t. Satan loves it when we worry and are afraid because many times it hinders our service for Christ. We tend to keep our mouth shut about the Lord. Fear is one of the greatest obstacles you will face as you serve the Lord behind enemy lines or in those difficult places.

The Bible addresses the issue of fear.

1. The Problem with fear.
   * Proverbs 29:25- The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

2. Our Partner during fear.
   * Hebrews 13:6- So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
   * Psalm 23:4 - Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

3. His Promise for facing fear behind enemy lines.
   * Revelation 2:10- Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

   * Isaiah 41:10- Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
   * 2 Timothy 1:7- For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

In what situation do you need to move with courage, trusting the Lord and His Word?
* Do you need to witness to a person?
* Do you need to take a stand?
* Do you need to make restitution to someone you have wronged?
* Do you need to make a decision to obey God’s will? Do what God commands. Courage is trembling obedience. May we obey Him always.
Chapter 38
The Crippled Christian
1 Kings 18:17-21

There are a number of things in life that will get your heart beating fast, get your fear gauge going into orbit where your legs shake, your voice trembles and your mouth dries. One of those things can be standing alone for Christ among your peers. If you ever had to stand alone for Christ in a crowd of people, you probably know what I am talking about.

In this passage, we find Elijah standing alone for God before a king and a hostile crowd. He does it with great courage, boldness, and faith in the Lord. The issue at stake is to wake up his people, to wake up Israel spiritually and call them back to God. His goal was to bring healing to a people crippled by compromise, carnality, and indecisiveness toward the Lord. The condition of Israel describes the condition of many Christians today. They are crippled, wobbly, and unstable in their Christian walk because of their compromise and indecisiveness. As we travel through this passage, I want you to examine yourself and address these questions, “Am I a crippled Christian? Am I willing to correct what’s crippling me spiritually?”

I. THE CONFRONTATION & ACCUSATION 18:17
And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

When the king meets Elijah, he uses the familiar tactic of intimidation and falsely accuses Elijah of troubling Israel. The word “troubleth” is a word which means “to mess up or disturb,” and was used to describe the stirring up or muddying of water. He was saying, “Elijah, you have messed up the nation!” Ahab fails to realize he was the troubler of Israel. He is playing the blame game.
Blamers do not take responsibility for their own actions. It is always someone else’s fault. Blamers do not recognize God’s standards of right and wrong. They are ignored, creating problems. Those same problems are then blamed upon someone else. **The result of blaming is the problem never gets solved or resolved.**

The blame game started in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, Adam blamed God and his wife Eve.

*Genesis 3:12-* And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Eve blamed the serpent.

*Genesis 3:13-* And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

**Blaming creates tension in the family.** Marriages are crippled and crumbling like dried crackers as husbands and wives blame one another for problems in the home. Blaming creates tension in the church. Preachers blame their people and the people blame the preacher for problems in the church family. Mistakes are made on both sides. We find several examples in the Old Testament of the blame game.

*Exodus 32:22* - And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.

*1 Samuel 15:21* - But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. Saul blamed the people for his disobedience.

In this section, Ahab blames Elijah for the famine in the land. The world constantly blames Christians for its problems. Christians were hated in Paul’s time.

*I Corinthians 4:13* - Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Paul and Silas were accused of troubling Thyatira.

*Acts 16:20* - And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.

When Rome was burned by Nero, Nero blamed the Christians. Researcher J. Hammond said, “The first Christians were called the enemies of the human race.” Even today, the news media and some in the Republican Party are blaming their woes on the *Christian Right*. The problems in the Republican or Democratic Party in the United States are not the fault of Christians. Anytime you compromise the truth or
compromise with evil, you are going to have problems.

The blame of this world and its hostility toward Christians are some of the reasons why Christians become crippled spiritually. They fear the reproach, the jeers, and the mocking of this world for being a Christian. The intimidation of this world embarrasses and makes them feel ashamed. Beloved, you have nothing to be ashamed of at all. Let me ask, “Do you blame others for the famines, the problems in your life? Are you ashamed of Christ and crippled by embarrassment of the Lord?”

II. THE COUNTERING ARGUMENT 18:18

And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Elijah is not intimidated but boldly counters Ahab’s false accusation. He firmly takes this king head on. He tells the king, “You are a troublemaker king!” Ahab was the troublemaker and Elijah was the trouble shooter. Elijah continues to explain “why” and “how” Ahab has troubled Israel.

A. Reason 1-The Forsaking of God’s commandments.

This is where the trouble begins. A troubler forsakes the Word of God and the God of the Word. If you forsake the Lord and His Word, you will bring trouble into your life. You will mess up and muddy up the waters of your life and be crippled spiritually.

Why do people forsake the Lord? The Bible gives the answer.

1. The Reproach and fear of the world.

*Matthew 26:55,56- In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

2. The Resistance toward the Lord....apathy and unbelief.

*John 6:64-66- But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. [65] And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. [66] From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

3. The Riches of this world.

*Matthew 19:21,22- Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and
sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

4. The Relationship with this world & the Romance with worldliness.
   * 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

B. Reason 2- Following Baal
   They were following the wrong thing because they had forsaken the truth. We get into trouble too when we forsake the Lord and follow the wrong crowd and things. We become crippled Christians.
   * James 1:8 - A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.
   The forsaking of the Lord in our public school systems has not solved any problems, it has created and invited more problems than we can handle or solve. As a nation, we are following the lies of foolish, secular educators that believe we came from apes and should behave like apes sexually.

III. THE COMMANDING ADMONITION 18:19
   Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

Elijah is the teacher and Ahab is the student. Elijah gives him a homework assignment. Elijah is requesting a confrontation with the prophets of Baal and the Asherah prophets...850 people in all. Ahab is not use to being told he is a troublemaker and taking orders from a preacher. Elijah is purposely stacking the deck against himself and God. He is defying all odds, 850 to 1. Ahab would have a distinct advantage numerically from a human perspective. Mt. Carmel was regarded by the Phoenicians as a sacred dwelling place of Baal. This was Baal’s home turf. Baal had the home-court advantage, the home team crowd and their cheers.

Elijah is not crippled. He is a man of faith and he knows he is really in the majority because he is on the Lord’s side. God has been teaching Elijah “faith lessons” and he has learned them well. Cherith Brook and Zarephath have prepared him for this event. Elijah has learned the truth of Hebrews 11:1,6.
* Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
* Hebrews 11:6 - But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God puts us through trials to teach us faith too.

IV. THE COMPLIANT Ahab 18:20

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

Ahab doesn’t say, “Are you talkin’ to ME!?! Who do you think you are, telling me what to do?” No, he obeys Elijah. Why does he obey Elijah? He is the king, not Elijah.

1. He has a famine problem and Elijah has the solution.
2. Curiosity...he wants to see what he is going to do.
3. The power of God is working in the situation.

V. A CHOICE IS ASKED FOR 18:21

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

Elijah speaks to the people and confronts them about their doublemindedness, indecisiveness, and unreasonableness. He asks, “How long do you hesitate between two opinions?” In the Hebrew it can be rendered, “How long will you limp along between two crutches or twigs?” This word “halt” also carries the idea of “waveriing, tottering, swaying, or limping.” God’s people were crippled by indecisiveness. They were tottering back and forth between Baal and God. They were desiring the best of both worlds. They were not sold out to Baal, but not loyal to the Lord either. They enjoyed the sexual rituals of Asherah and Baal worship, but doubted Baal’s power. There had been no rain for 3 ½ years. Where is Baal? Baal was considered the Lord of the rain and harvest. He was the farm god. When there was lightning and thunder, the people would say, “There is Baal.” The famine created debates, doubt, confusion, and emptiness in the people.

The price of compromise crippled the people. Their sin was expensive, as food and water were scarce, the nation was destroyed, and
people were dying. God’s people were crippled by doublemindedness and indecisiveness. They were straddling the fence and it was time for them to make a choice. This was the purpose of the showdown. There is no middle ground with God. There is no straddling the spiritual fence with Him.

* It makes Him sick. Revelation 3:16 - So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

* Two masters is a No No!.... Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

* He wants us to make up our minds and choose Him.

* Joshua 24:15- And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

* Mark 10:21- Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

You will remain crippled, tottering, and a limping Christian as long as you are double-minded, trying to serve two masters. The remedy is Romans 12:1,2- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Do you make God sick by your lukewarmness? Are you a crippled Christian that is weakened by indecision, lack of commitment, doubts, lack of faith, and a love for this world? If so, why not surrender your life to the Lord right now. Elijah had full confidence in the Lord. He knew who God was and who Baal was not. He was confident in the Lord.

The people responded with silence. The fear of Jezebel and Ahab may have made them afraid to voice their opinions. They may have not wanted to make a decision yet because they were waiting to see what was going to happen. Don’t make this mistake. Choose the Lord and speak up for Him. Don’t be a crippled Christian.
Chapter 39
The Clash of the Titans
1 Kings 18:22-29

Have you ever seen a fight? Perhaps you saw a fight at school or maybe a boxing match on television. I remember a fight in junior high school. Two of the school’s big-shots met after school on the baseball diamond. The fight was over a girl and the winner was supposed to get the girl. It was a bloody fight. What was really funny is she dumped both guys and the boys became good friends.

I also recall a boxing match between Holyfield and Tyson. They were two titans of boxing. Tyson was getting beat and ended up biting Holyfield on the ear two times. Tyson was disqualified. He brought humiliation and shame upon himself. One thing about a fight, there is usually never a dull moment. You never know what is going to happen next and you don’t easily forget what happens.

In this section of Scripture, we will read of one of the most historic, memorable showdowns in history. It is a clash of the titans. A titan is a person of colossal size, strength, and achievement. In one corner we have the God of the universe and Elijah, a titan of faith and courage. In the other corner we have the reputation of Baal and his worshipers. King Ahab and Jezebel were the titans of wickedness. The lessons we learn from the clash of these titans are lessons we can apply in our lives today to be better Christians. They are lessons that we hopefully won’t soon forget.

The clash of these titans takes place on top of Mt. Carmel. I have been at the place where it is believed the clash took place. It’s located in a thirty-mile mountain range. Its highest point is 1742 feet high. This range has a series of rounded peaks and valleys and has a beautiful view of the Mediterranean Sea. The place of this contest has a plateau where a large amount of people can assemble. With this setting, let’s look at the lessons we can learn from the clash of the titans.
I. THE CHALLENGE 18:22-24

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. [23] Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: [24] And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

The whole purpose of this contest was to examine and expose Baal as a fraud. Elijah was out to prove to the people who was the true God. The New Testament teaches the same truth. We are to examine religious claims in light of the Scripture.

* 1 John 4:1- Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
* 1 Thessalonians 5:21- Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

False religions put their faith in good works, self, baptism, memberships, idols, false gods, or the Virgin Mary in order to go to Heaven. The Bible makes it clear that these paths are not the way.

* John 14:6- Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

It is tragic that cults are populated by former Baptist church members who are ignorant of the Word of God or have rejected it. Study the Word and seek God’s truth! No land prospers when the truth is not honored. The truth invites examination and is honored by testing. Error shuns examination for it reveals its faults.

Elijah sincerely believes he is all alone (vs.22). I am not sure of the purpose of this statement. Why did he share this information? Perhaps, to demonstrate the fact that if he could take a stand, they as a people could take a stand for the Lord too. Elijah is trying to get them to see the difference one person can make. That is an important lesson for us too. One person standing for the Lord can make a huge difference.

* Deuteronomy 32:30- How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? Elijah now challenges the people. The challenge involved a sacrifice, a summons, and a scorching.

A. A Sacrifice - vs. 23... Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on
wood, and put no fire under:
In the clash of these titans, two altars with a bullock would be prepared. One would be for Baal and one for Elijah. Elijah says twice, "Don't put fire under the altar." This statement contains nuggets of truth. Putting fire under the altar was a practice of Baal worshipers. Some pagan altars had dug-out trenches where people could secretly set flames to the altar and make it look like Baal answered by fire. Elijah was saying...
1. Don't tamper with that which belongs to the true God.
2. Don't rob God of His glory by setting the fire yourself.
3. Don't get ahead of the Lord.
4. Wait on the Lord to light the fire.

These are good lessons for us as we study the clash of the titans.

B. A Summons & Scorching- vs. 24.... And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

Call upon your god and the true God will answer by supernatural fire. For the first time the people speak up, "It is well spoken." The voice of the people makes it impossible to get out of the contest. Baal would seem to have the advantage again in this situation. Why? Baal was the fire god. Baal was embodied in the fire of the sun. Our English word "bonfire" is a corrupt rendering of the Saxon word "Bael-fyr." The image of Baal was the bull which was being offered on the altar. The bull was the emblem of fire, red in color. The curled hairs on its head were emblems of flames. The horns were considered as darting rays of light.

II. THE CALLS TO BAAL  18:25,26
And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

Elijah gives the Baal worshipers the first chance. Someone said, "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions." These people were sincere, but sincerely wrong. Sincerity does not guarantee truth.

* Romans 10:2-4 ... For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. [3] For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have
not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. [4] For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Hear their cries as they call out to Baal morning to noon. This is a long prayer meeting. Isn’t it sad that cults or pagan religions are more dedicated sometimes than Christians? As their prayers echoed with a silent response, they began to leap upon the altar. They are embarrassed by Baal’s lack of response. These were very zealous worshipers. It was quite exciting and entertaining to watch. The problem, however, is they were empty of the truth. Excitement without truth is dead, empty, and unfulfilling. Truth, without excitement, without entertainment, can be very fulfilling. God’s truth is what changes a person’s life. Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”

**Truth does not have to be boring.** Truth becomes boring when it is not applied in one’s life. The reasoning of a bored person is, “Why do I need this?” This leads to the boredom in their life. Truth is boring when it is not understood. For this reason we must listen carefully and seek to understand truth. When truth is applied, it can be very exciting, very entertaining, because it is life changing. The Holy Spirit takes the truth of the Word of God and gives us joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction that entertainment or a temporary, conjured-up excitement cannot give to us.

The Baal worshipers were crying, leaping, jumping, and screaming. Imagine Elijah as he silently watches them for hours making fools out of themselves. When you reject the Lord, you make a fool out of yourself by your actions and by the decisions you make.

*Psalm 14:1 - The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

Are you making foolish decisions because you have rejected the Lord and His Word?

**III. THE CONTEMPT OF ELIJAH 18:27**

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

Elijah has responded with silence so far, now he increases the pressure and becomes sarcastic. He exposes the deception of Baal. He mocks them.

1. Baal is talking.
2. He is pursuing which means “he is hunting his food or going to the restroom.”
3. He is on a journey or a vacation. The Phoenicians believed that Baal
traveled with them to the sea.

4. He is sleeping. It was the siesta time of day.

Elijah shows we are not to fear exposing the hypocrisy and fraud of false religion.

IV. THE CRIES & CUTTING OF BAAL WORSHIPERS 18:28,29

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

The worshipers take Elijah’s mocking advice. Maybe Baal is asleep or on a journey. Perhaps he is talking. They lose their reason. The pressure is intense and they begin to cry, leap, and cut themselves. Why? Men feel that by their actions they can get God’s attention or get closer to God, especially by suffering. The Bible teaches, however, that we get close to the Lord by trusting Christ as our Savior, yielding to God’s will for our life, and being controlled by the Holy Spirit each day. If our actions got us close to God, then how would someone who is paralyzed get close to the Lord? God is looking at our heart and faith in Him. A right heart will produce right actions.

Blood was everywhere as these Baal worshipers cut themselves. It must have been a horrifying sight with some possibly dying. Cruelty and a disregard for life is a common trait among pagan religions. When the Lord is left out of the religion, then men have a tendency to become oppressive and cruel. In the Tribulation, man will be at the zenith of his cruelty as the Anti-Christ beheads those who will not take his mark. The anti-God religion of communism has demonstrated its cruelty in the massacre of millions in countries like Russia, China, North Korea, and Vietnam. The reason for their cruelty is Satan is behind their unbelief and hate.

The Baal worshipers demonstrate another truth...allegiance to a false god brings desecration to the body. Pagans desecrate the body but worshipers of Jehovah were not to do this at all.

* Deuteronomy 14:1- Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

When we are unwilling to follow the Lord, when we fail to realize we are God’s creation, when we refuse to acknowledge that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we belong to Him, then we have a
tendency to desecrate our body with things like drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual immorality, and tattoos (Lev. 19:28). The body of the Christian belongs to the Lord.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19,20- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Baal was silent. When we start depending on people or things to meet the needs only God can meet, those things will be silent when we need them, just like Baal.

**Have you learned the lessons from the clash of the titans?**

* The importance of seeking the truth in God’s Word.
* One person standing for God can make a difference.
* The importance of glorifying God and not yourself.
* The importance of waiting on the Lord and not getting ahead of Him.
* The value of applying God’s truth in your life.
* The foolishness of our decisions when we reject the Lord and His Word.
* Your body belongs to the Lord.
* When you depend on things, they will be silent when you need them and they will leave you empty.
Chapter 40
How to Deal With a Drenched Dream
1 Kings 18:30-37

In the last message, we began reading about the great contest on top of Mt. Carmel between Elijah and God vs. Baal and his prophets. Elijah issued the challenge to the Baal worshipers. The god who answered by fire would be declared the winner, the true God. The prophets of Baal went first. They prayed all day, crying out to Baal. Elijah’s taunts and sarcasms increased the frenzy and frustration of these prophets. They began to cut themselves, hoping to get Baal’s attention, but to no avail. The time is now close to 3 p.m. After the prophets of Baal get no response and have lost the attention of the people, Elijah speaks up. It’s God’s turn now to prove Himself to His rebellious people.

He will prove Himself when the odds are against Him and the circumstances seem impossible. This is when the Lord really shines and shows His power. We can see His hand clearly when He performs the impossible. When our dreams and desires are drenched and ruined, God has a way of fulfilling them in His own time and way. So how do we respond when our dreams are drenched? Let’s find out.

I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALTAR 18:30
And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

Elijah’s message was “Come unto me!” He had a message of truth and had nothing to hide at all. He wanted the people to examine the facts closely. Truth invites examination. It says, “Come near.” This was the message of Jesus concerning His Word.

*John 5:39- Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.
Elijah’s message was a message of grace. They have been wicked for many years. The invitation to come near is still offered no matter what you have done or who you are. God’s grace says to you today, “Come.”

* Matthew 11:28 - Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

* Hosea 6:1 - Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

* Revelation 22:17 - And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

**God’s invitation will not always be offered.** The day will come when grace will not be available. Those who refuse and reject Christ and die without the Lord will no longer have the invitation to come to Christ.

* Matthew 25:41 - Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Notice Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was damaged. This altar existed before they came up for the contest. Before the days of the tabernacle and temple, men made sacrifices to the Lord throughout the land. Baal worshipers destroyed these altars throughout the land of Israel.

* 1 Kings 19:10 - And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

**False religions are destructive.** They destroy a person spiritually because they put their faith in the wrong things. On the other hand, we are reminded that God’s truth is in the business of repairing, restoring, and healing lives just as Elijah restored this altar. This is what Jesus Christ can do for you. He can repair your damaged life. Is your life messed up from following the wrong things? Are you getting away from God? Have your dreams been drenched? Then return to the Lord and let Him put your life back together. Let Him restore the joy of your salvation.

* Psalm 23:3 - He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

* Joel 2:25 - And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

* God can restore what you have damaged!

* He can repair what has been broken.
* The Lord can reinforce what we have weakened.
* He can revive what we have devastated or even destroyed. He can do anything. With God, nothing is impossible.

II. THE CONDITIONS THAT SEEM IMPOSSIBLE 18:31-35

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: [32] And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. [33] And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. [34] And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. [35] And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

Elijah takes twelve stones and uses them to rebuild the altar of the Lord. The twelve stones were actually a rebuke of the division of the nation, a division that had its roots in idolatry started by Solomon. The stones are surrounded by a trench that could hold two measures or four gallons of water. Very neatly, Elijah lays the wood, sun-bleached white like bones, and heaps it high upon the black rocks of the altar. This is a reminder of a New Testament truth.

* 1 Corinthians 14:40- Let all things be done decently and in order.

God not only does things decently and orderly, but His truth brings order and stability into your life, especially when your dreams have been drenched. Our sin brings confusion and disorder. The Lord Jesus is the one who can straighten your life out. Living for Christ and obeying the Word of God gives stability. Don’t make the Bible a stranger in your life.

A bullock was cut into pieces and laid upon the wood of the altar. The bullock was a sin offering for the people. The people needed mercy and atonement for their sins. Approximately 940 years later, Jesus would lay Himself upon a wooden cross to become the final sin offering for the sins of the world. As the blood of the bullock was shed, the blood of Christ was shed upon the cross to atone for the sin of mankind.

* Hebrews 10:10- By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
* 1 Peter 1:18,19- Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation
received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

After the meat is laid upon the altar, Elijah does something that defies logic and the laws of nature. Imagine the tension as he drenches the altar with twelve barrels of water. Where did the water come from?
1. The Mediterranean Sea?
2. A nearby spring that ran in dry times?
3. The Brook Kishon which also ran during dry times?

Why does he drench the wood? God instructed Elijah to do this (vs. 36). Elijah was proving to the people that there were no tricks being used here in this contest. There would be no deceptions in what was about to happen. With the altar soaked, it would seem impossible for Elijah’s prayer to be answered.

Let me stop here for a moment. Have your dreams, goals, or plans been drenched? Does it seem your dreams or desires will never come true and your prayers will never be answered? Does your situation seem impossible such as a broken marriage, serious health problem, financial pressures, or conflicts with people? Let me give you some encouragement. God specializes in those situations! He loves to work when conditions are impossible because He gets the glory when the problem is solved. He has a way of fulfilling us when our dreams are drenched. When we are faced with impossibilities, with dreams that are drenched, our question should not be, “What can I do?” but “What can God do?” We are overwhelmed by the size of our problems rather than the size of our God.

Many times we may ask someone, “How are you doing?” How often have you heard the response, “I am pretty good under the circumstances.” Beloved, God doesn’t want you to live under your circumstances or problems, but above them. Overwhelming problems are circumstances to which faith has thrown up the white flag of surrender. This is not what the Lord wants for us. We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as unsolvable problems. Look at your problems as opportunities for God to work. When Moses was at the Red Sea, he saw the opportunity for God’s deliverance, not unsolvable problems. When Joshua and Caleb went into the Promised Land, they saw opportunities for God’s blessings, not the problems from giants. Unbelief blinds us to opportunities. When we think it can’t be done, it usually isn’t done.

* Matthew 13:58 - And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.
Elijah did not look at an impossible situation, but what God could do in this circumstance. God uses a man or woman who does not focus his thoughts on his strength and ability, but rather on God’s strength and his personal availability to the Lord. He understands the truth of Philippians 4:13.

* Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

If Elijah could do great things for God, so can we. He is just like us.

* James 5:17- Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Elijah knew how to pray. This was the key secret to his strength and in dealing with drenched dreams.

III. THE CALL TO THE LORD 18:36,37

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

It’s about 3 p.m. and Elijah calls upon the Lord. He doesn’t scream and jump for hours like the Baal prophets. His prayer is very simple. It just over sixty words. Imagine the hush that blankets the crowd as they and the exhausted, bleeding prophets listen to this man of God pray boldly and unashamedly to the Lord.

A. Lord, You are Sovereign

He asks the Lord to show them that He is God and to glorify Himself. Our prayers should be of this nature too! Got a drenched dream? Pray that God be glorified.

B. Lord, I am your Servant

Elijah wanted all to know that he was a servant of the living God. He was not ashamed of the Lord. Are you? Our prayers should be, “Lord, help me to be a good servant and let others know about you. May I not be ashamed of you.” Do you have a drenched dream? Purpose to be a servant of the Lord no matter what happens.

C. The Submission of Elijah

Elijah has obeyed the Lord and His words. This should be our desire too.
* Psalm 119:11 - Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. When your dreams are drenched, yield to the Lord’s will in your life.

D. Spiritual Revival

They needed revival before rain. Revival comes before rain, not rain before revival. Pray for revival in your own life. When your dreams are drenched, the tendency is to doubt and get discouraged. Don’t let this happen to you! You stay close to the Lord! Does God overcome impossible situations or drenched dreams today? You better believe He does!

Elijah calls down fire from God!
Chapter 41

The Lord, He is God!

1 Kings 18:38-46

In the last section, we left Elijah voicing his prayer to the Lord.
The altar of the Lord was constructed and drenched with twelve
barrels of water. Elijah is doing this at God’s command. It is a command
that defies logic and common sense, but that’s the norm many times with
God. God’s ways are often not our ways. We don’t think alike.
* Isaiah 55:8,9- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your
ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the
earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your
thoughts.

I believe with a silence that was deafening, and a suspense so thick
you could cut it, the king, the people, and the bleeding, exhausted prophets
of Baal looked on as Elijah boldly voiced his simple, short prayer to God
Almighty. He is out to prove that the Lord is God! What happens next
changes the lives of millions and turns a nation back to the Lord.

I. THE CONSUMING FIRE 18:38

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the
wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the
trench.

God answers Elijah’s prayer. The fire fell and consumes the
sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water.
There was to be no doubt who was the Lord. Even the stones were
burned. Have you tried to burn any rocks lately?

Five things were consumed. Five is the number of grace in the
Bible. Because of God’s grace we are saved. Because of His grace, He
answers our prayers; He doesn’t have to, but wants to. He is still in the
prayer-answering business.
II. THE CONSECRATION OF THE PEOPLE  18:39
And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

The people respond and a decisive statement is proclaimed. “The Lord, He is God!” There is no indecision here. So much heartache could have been avoided if they had done this much sooner! God has been preparing Elijah for a lifetime for this event. He wanted to use him to bring a nation back to the Lord. Throughout his whole life, God has been using Elijah in unique ways.

Beloved, God is trying to prepare you to use you in a special way too! Perhaps He wants to use you to win someone to Christ, to reach a family, a community, a state, or even a nation for God.

* He prepared Moses to deliver His people from Egypt.
* He prepared Joshua in the conquering of much of the Promised Land.
* He prepared David as a shepherd boy to become king.
* He prepared John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord.

Our message to the world is Jesus is Lord! Jesus Christ is God! The Lord He is God! This is where the battle is today. People deny the deity of Jesus Christ claiming He was only a good man. People reject the lordship of Christ in their life claiming they are their own master. Make sure that Christ is the Lord of your life. Can you say that the Lord is the God of your life?

III. THE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OF FALSE PROPHETS  18:40
And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

The false prophets are exposed as frauds. The Word of God states that what they have done is a capital offense. They should be executed.

* Deuteronomy 13:5 - And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord
your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

These prophets are taken to the Brook Kishon where their blood is mingled with the rippling water of the brook. The crimson flow headed downward toward the azure, blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Ahab is unable to save his prophets. Elijah is calling the shots! These men brought harm to the land, sacrificing children to Baal. No crime is as serious as leading a soul to a Christless grave. Heavy, heavy will be the judgment upon preachers who do not preach the truth of the Gospel.

The prophets are executed. Debate over the issue of capital punishment still rages today. God has given the government the power to punish evil and execute criminals.

* Romans 13:3,4- For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

* Exodus 21:14,15- But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

* Genesis 9:6- Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

People who are anti-capital punishment would most likely change their tune if someone murdered their child, wife, husband, mother, or father. They would be furious if the person was released in seven years! When the situation affects you personally, you will understand and agree with God’s truth and change your tune. Capital punishment is a strong crime deterrent when properly implemented. Free room and board for twenty years is not much of a deterrent. The immediate implementation of the death sentence would be a fearful deterrent to murderers.
IV. THE COMMAND TO AHAB  18:41
And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

Once the sin that is causing the problem is dealt with, then you remove the obstacle to blessing. Elijah tells the king he hears the sound of the abundance of rain. He hears with ears of faith. Ears of faith hear when you cannot see.
* Hebrews 11:1- Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Elijah tells the king to get something to eat and drink. Ahab is for that idea! He is unmoved by what God has done and by the death of his prophets.

V. THE CONTEMPLATION ON CARMEL  18:42-43
So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

While Ahab feeds his face, Elijah is praying. The fire has fallen and now it is time for the rain to fall. Elijah has gone up the mountain to fall down before God and ask for rain. Elijah is persistent in his faith. Persistency in spiritual matters is vital if we are to reap the spiritual seeds we have sown. We are to be persistent in prayer, obedience, faithfulness, service, giving, patience, and in witnessing. Many Christians are not persistent in their service to the Lord because they have a short attention span spiritually speaking. If they are not excited, thrilled, or entertained, they are gone. Your attention span in spiritual matters reveals where you are in your spiritual maturity. A short attention span indicates immaturity.

Elijah sends his servant a grand total of eight times to see if the rain is coming. The first seven times seemed hopeless. “There is nothing!” was the report. Eight is the number of new beginning. This was a new beginning for Israel. Rain is coming and revival has come.

This incident with Elijah and his servant teaches us three key things about Elijah’s effective prayer life. He knew how to wait upon God.
* Psalm 37:7- Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
* Psalm 40:1- I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Elijah was expecting God to answer. Most people don’t and when God does answer they are shocked. We are to put our expectations in the Lord.

* Psalm 62:5- My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

* Proverbs 24:14- So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off. If you expect nothing, you will seldom be disappointed.

Elijah did not let the reports of the servant or the delays in the answer discourage him. He earnestly prayed and the Lord answered. Delays reveal our sincerity to pray and our tenacity. Elijah opened his heart to God and prayed. Heaven was moved by his prayers. A new convert came to a Wednesday night prayer meeting at the church he was saved. He asked his friend, “Do you think they would mind if I prayed?” His friend said, “No they won’t mind. This is what we are here for!” The new Christian said, “I have a problem though. I can’t pray like everyone else does.” The friend told the new Christian, “That’s no problem. Thank God for that.” Several people prayed in the meeting and then the new convert spoke up in prayer. He said, “Lord, this is Jim. I’m the one that met You last Thursday night. Forgive me, Lord, because I can’t say it the way the rest of these people do, but I want to tell You the best I know how that I love you Lord. Amen.” This new Christian ignited the prayer meeting with his honesty, simplicity, and love. This is the way we should pray too.

VI. THE CLOUDBURST 18:44,45

And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

Elijah’s perseverance paid off. The rain came in a torrent. The word “rain” is the Hebrew word geshem which means “heavy rain” as in the Genesis Flood. If these songs existed back then, the folks might have started singing “Showers of Blessing” or “I’m Singin in the Rain.” The prayer that brought down the fire brought down the flood
because of a persistent prophet and a faithful God.

We are constantly challenged in Scripture to be persistent and persevering in our service and faithfulness to Christ.

* Galatians 6:9- And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

* Revelation 3:11- Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

* Hebrews 12:1- Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Are you persistent in your service to Christ or do you quit easily. Praying can be uncomfortable, but God has a way of getting us involved in what we pray for. Sometimes the answer to your prayer may demand a beginning with you. If you are praying for someone’s need, He may use you to meet it.

VII. THE CONTEST 18:46

And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Recorded in the closing of this chapter is a great feat of the feet. As Ahab is returning in his chariot, Elijah runs ahead of the chariot to Jezreel. This was the winter capitol half-way between Mt. Carmel and Samaria. This was about a twenty-mile run. Elijah was not in training and he had eaten very little all day. How did he do this? The hand of the Lord was upon him. **The lesson here is God can enable His servants to do the difficult and what we would consider impossible.** Why did Elijah run? It was customary in that time for kings to have runners before their chariots. Elijah was demonstrating humility and loyalty to his king by rendering this service. He did this feat with the help of God and removing any hindrances in his life. He girded his loins for this task. We need to do this too in our Christian race.

* Hebrews 12:1- Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Many Christians have crippled their effectiveness for Christ because they are loaded down with obligations, pursuits, and other interests. Are your priorities right in your life? Can you say with Israel, “The Lord, He is God of my life.”
Chapter 42
The Vulnerability of Victory
1 Kings 19:1-4

Have you ever been in a situation where you experienced exhilarating joy, happiness, or victory, only to find yourself a day or two later being depressed, blue, or down in the dumps? Perhaps your victory was in sports, or an "A" in school, a promotion at work, public recognition or honor. Why does this happen? Why are we vulnerable after a victory?

Success and victory have a tendency to excite or elate us to the point that we are caught off balance or drop our emotional guard against depression and discouragement. When this happens we are open to Satanic attack and are vulnerable to moral attacks, temptations, and also emotional attacks.

In this story, Elijah shows us how quickly one can go from the mountain top to the valley. He shows us how vulnerable we are after a victory. We will see in chapter 19 how he flew to the blues, got down in the dumps, and how God got him out of this emotional mess. It all begins with ....

I. THE REPORT TO JEZEBEL 19:1

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

Jezebel was not present at Mt. Carmel. When Ahab returned to Jezreel, he began to talk with his dominant queen. Imagine this possible scenario.

Jezebel: How did it go today? What happened? Did fire consume the altar?
Ahab: Yes!
Jezebel: Way to go honey! That will show that pesky prophet and any
who might be Jehovah worshipers. Did you get rid of that nut?

**Ahab:** No.

**Jezebel:** Why not?

**Ahab:** The fire fell Jez, but it was the God of Heaven who did it, not Baal. I need to also tell you that 450 prophets of Baal are dead. Elijah had the people execute them. There was nothing I could do!

**Jezebel:** They are all dead!?

**Ahab:** Yes, they are all wiped out!

At this point Jezebel’s face may have become flushed with anger. Perhaps she begins to pace back and forth with her fist clenched. She screams for the Jezreel Federal Express man.

**II. THE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT  19:2,3**

Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

**A. The Response of Jezebel**

Jezebel’s response shows hardness, defiance, and blindness to the truth.

* Proverbs 30:20- Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.
* Romans 1:28- And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Jezebel send out a warrant for Elijah decreeing his destruction within the next 24 hours. She calls forth her death from her gods if she doesn’t kill Elijah. This is easy for her to say considering the fact that her gods do not exist. There is debate of whether she is sincere or bluffing. Some believe she wants him to flee the land and get out of her hair. If she was sincere, why send a messenger instead of an executioner? The answer is God turned her counsel into confusion.

* Job 5:13- He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

Jezebel ends up warning Elijah of her intentions. A hot head will not make cool, calm decisions. Nevertheless, her message has its desired consequence, one way or the other. Elijah is gone.

Elijah has won the great battle and victory on Carmel, but the war is not over! The war is not over for us either! Opposition and persecution
come to godly people.
* 2 Timothy 3:12- Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
* Proverbs 29:27- An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

B. Elijah’s Response

Elijah flees for his life. This was a knee-jerk reaction. All this time, how has Elijah known when and where to move from one place to another? It was through prayer and the word of the Lord. He is given no direction from the Lord here and he has not prayed about this decision.

Elijah is known for what character trait? Most people would possibly reply that it was his boldness and courage. This is the man who went to the king and told him it would not rain until he said so. This is the guy who returned to the king and said, “Behold, Elijah is here!” This is the one who withstood 450 prophets of Baal and boldly ordered the execution of these false prophets. So the question that arises at this point is, “Why is Elijah running from Jezebel?”

The best of men are only men at best. Elijah is human. God shows both sides of this great man. He shows his weaknesses too. For Elijah, running from Jezebel was not part of God’s will for his life. He flees to Beersheba which is about 120 miles away. Beersheba was in the boonies, in the wilderness. He leaves his servant for he will have no need of him anymore. He is quitting, but why? The answer begins to focus in verse 4.

III. THE REQUEST TO DIE 19:4

But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

Elijah goes another 15-20 miles into the desert. He is all alone. His attitude is “Lord, I have had enough. It’s not worth it. I want to die.” Have you ever been there? This really is not a very wise prayer, is it? How strangely we pray when we are depressed. Elijah is facing a very deep bout of depression. Elijah prays for death but doesn’t mean it. Depression has a way of confusing our thinking. If Elijah really wanted to die, then why did he run? All he had to do is stay where he was and Jezebel would have killed him.
Many of God’s men have been deeply depressed. Elijah is under a juniper tree which grows to about 12 feet. It has small leaves and fragrant flowers. Elijah is alone in the desert under this tree and he wants to die. This happened after a great victory. We are vulnerable after a victory too.

**The same thing happened to Jonah.** He had just experienced one of the greatest revivals in world history.

*Jonah 4:3,8- Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.*

**Moses became depressed from the complaints of the people.**

*Numbers 11:13-15.... Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. [14] I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. [15] And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.*

**The health problems of Job drained him physically and emotionally.**

*Job 6:8,9- Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! *Job 10:1- My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*

**David’s troubles, especially with King Saul, depressed him.**

*Psalm 42:6 - O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*

**Jeremiah struggled with depression to the point that he wished he had never been born.**

*Jeremiah 20:14-18 .... Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. [15] Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. [16] And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not; and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; [17] Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. [18] Wherefore came I forth out of the womb
to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

John Wesley, one year after his victorious ministry at Aldersgate Street, became depressed and doubtful. He wrote, “I am not a Christian.” Wesley rode one quarter of a million miles on horseback, preached 40,000 sermons and saw 100,000 professions of faith. Spurgeon struggled with depression too. He called it the Minister’s Fainting Fits. Spurgeon’s success appalled him and cast him into depression. He said, “Who am I to lead so great a multitude.”

Yes, God paints his men, warts and all. He tells the whole story about the men he uses in Scripture. He uses them to warn us of the vulnerability of victory.

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

It is interesting that Elijah’s point of greatest strength in chapter 18, his faith, became his most vulnerable point in chapter 19. Elijah had won the war but lost the peace, but why? How did Elijah get to this point? What are some of that factors that may have led to Elijah’s depression.

* Factors of Elijah’s Depression

A. Factor #1- Fatigue

Elijah was drained physically. He went through the Mt.Carmel conflict, ran twenty miles, and had little food intake. When you are weak or sick, it is easier to become depressed. You are very vulnerable. Satan tempted Jesus after a forty-day fast (Matthew 4). Lack of rest creates a physical imbalance which can lead to emotional depression. God has a law in Scripture that we are to rest every seventh day. If you violate it, it begins to catch up with you. Resting is as important as working. Be careful about having too many brands in the fire. Don’t neglect your quiet time with the Lord or your service to Christ. Let me ask, “Is there someone you can offer refreshment too and help take a load off of them?

B. Factor #2- Floundering Feelings

Elijah was also emotionally drained. Extreme emotional highs lead to deep lows. The adrenaline is gone. Elijah was let down, run down and broken down. Be prepared for emotional lows which may come after exciting, victorious times such as graduations, accomplishments, and marriage. Get rest so you don’t become emotionally drained. If possible, take a break to collect your wits. Listen to soothing music. Have a special quiet time with the Lord in the Word and in prayer. Plan times like these.

C. Factor #3- Focusing on Trials and Troubles

Elijah forgot about the blessings of the past. He forgot about God. He did not dwell upon the promises of God, but upon the promise of
Jezebel to kill him. We have a tendency to magnify our problems and lose sight of the Lord and His care. We feel overwhelmed, surrounded, or sinking into the quicksands of our circumstances. Do you remember Peter? The disciples saw Jesus walking upon the water toward their ship. Peter wanted to walk on the water. The Lord told him to come on out and he did! When Peter began to focus on the wind and storm he began to sink and the Lord saved him (Matthew 14:22-33).

If you are not careful, your problems can get you down. If you take your eyes off your source of courage, you begin to lose it. Remember what Paul said in Philippians.

* Philippians 4:4- Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Do you remember where Paul said this? It was from a prison cell. Paul rejoiced though all things were not going his way. We are to trust the Lord with our lives.

* Proverbs 3:5,6- Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

D. Factor #4- Flourishing Pride

Pride can lead to depression. Pride stalks a person after they have won a victory or attained an accomplishment. Pride makes us think we are something or somebody when we are not. When we have deceived ourselves and then realize our deception, we get depressed.

* Proverbs 29:23- A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Jezebel popped Elijah's bubble. Elijah's negative evaluation of himself made him feel like a failure and he got depressed. God warns us to keep our head level and humble. When expectations are not fulfilled, realize the Lord is not done with you yet. Trust the Lord with your life, goals, and work.

E. Factor #5- Fellowship is Lacking.

Depression feeds on loneliness. Elijah has been alone through much of his ordeal. He has left his servant behind in this situation. This reminds us of the importance of church. It plays an important role of fellowship. We need one another.

* Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.... Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. [10] For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. [11] Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? [12] And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
When you get depressed, there is a tendency to evade people. That's when you need them the most. Are you dealing with depression right now?
* Get some rest.
* Evaluate your priorities.
* Don't neglect your walk with the Lord.
* Invest your life in others.
* Commit your goals, life, and expectations to the Lord.
* Keep your focus upon the Lord and not your problems.
* Prepare for those times of vulnerability, especially after a victory.

The Difficulties of Life are Intended to Make Us Better, not Bitter.
Chapter 43
What Are You Doing Here?
1 Kings 19:5-18

Have you ever gone somewhere to a place you do not frequently visit? Maybe it was a visit back home and during that visit you ran into old friends, who, when they saw you asked, "What are you doing here?" They asked that question because your appearance is out of the ordinary. It is not the norm and you are also known for usually being somewhere else.

In this episode, we find Elijah in a place where he doesn’t belong. He is doing something that is out of the ordinary for him. He is supposed to be somewhere else because his boss, the Lord, has told him where he is to be. So it is the Lord who asks him the question twice, "What are you doing here?"

Elijah is out of position, out of character, and out of bounds. His condition is a description of many a Christian today who is out of God’s will. If the Lord was to speak directly to these backslidden Christians, He might ask them, "What are you doing here?"

How did Elijah get to this point?
* He is physically and emotionally drained.
* He is focused upon his circumstances.
* He has forgotten about God’s promises.
* An element of pride and unfulfilled expectations led him to believe he was a failure. He is on the run and he quits.

What effect does this have upon Elijah and the nation? What does God do to get this man started back where he belongs.... in the will of God.
I. THE RECHARGING OF ELIJAH'S SPIRIT  19:5-8

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. [6] And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. [7] And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. [8] And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

Elijah is sleeping under a juniper tree which is also known as a broom bush. It is here that the Lord is going to start sweeping "stinkin' thinkin'" out of Elijah's life and get this man back on his feet physically and spiritually. He is awakened by the angel of the Lord. Some scholars believe this was a theophany, an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ. Elijah thought he was alone, but he wasn't. You may think you are alone, especially when you are depressed. You are not alone!

The Lord tells Elijah, "Get up now and eat!" Our Lord knows exactly what we need. Elijah needs physical strength and the Lord tells him, "Eat boy!" For the third time, Elijah is fed by a miracle. He was fed by ravens, the widow of Zarephath, and now the Divine Care Catering Service. The miracle of this meal will be seen in a moment when we see the supernatural strength it gives Elijah.

Remember now that Elijah has prayed to die! Aren't you glad that God doesn't answer all our prayers, especially the stupid ones? God is merciful to us. Be careful what you pray for! Elijah lies back down to rest and the angel of the Lord comes back and touches him again. He tells him to arise and eat for the journey is too great. There are some great insights here!

1. In mercy, the angel speaks to him again because he knows Elijah is not prepared and equipped for the journey. The Lord knows you better than you do! When God calls, don't resist Him.
2. The Word of God is our supernatural spiritual food. It gives strength to the believer.
3. Life's journey is too great for us. We cannot be victorious in our own strength. We need the strength of the Word in our own life. Rarely do I find a depressed Christian who walks with God each day, carefully reads the Word of God, and gives his burdens to the Lord. When we see Elijah, we see that the Lord fed him so he would walk!
4. God wants us to walk with Him and for Him.

A. Walk by faith- 2 Corinthians 5:7- (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

B. Walk in love- Ephesians 5:2- And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.

C. Walk in the Spirit- Galatians 5:16 - This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

D. Walk cautiously- Ephesians 5:15- See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

E. Walk with consistency- Ephesians 4:1- I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

F. Walk with Christlikeness- 1 John 2:6- He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Elijah heads toward Horeb. Notice carefully that God did not tell him to go there. He chose to go there. The word “Horeb” means “to dry up; to lie in waste.” This is what happens when you get out of position or out of the will of God. When you are depressed, you begin to dry up spiritually and waste your life. Does this describe you? Are you drying up spiritually and wasting your life away? Are you out of the will of God? Let me ask, “What are you doing there? Why are you out of God’s will?” Get back in the Word of God and walk with God. If you have fallen down, then get back up!

Why is Elijah heading toward Horeb? Horeb was the ancient name of Mt. Sinai. This was the place of the burning bush where Moses was called by God (Exodus 3). God gave Israel water from the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17). Moses received the Law of God here (Exodus 19). I believe Elijah hopes to receive something from God in this place.

It takes forty days to get to Horeb which is about a 200-mile trip. Normally this would take about 15-20 days. Elijah’s problem, however, is he is not at full strength, not as effective or enthusiastic. Remember, this guy ran 20 miles and beat horses and chariots. When you get out of the will of God, you are not as effective, especially for the Lord. You make more mistakes and waste more of your life.

Your life also affects others too when you get out of God’s will. By running, the Jehovah revival will lose some momentum with its leader AWOL. Elijah’s departure would surely discourage his converts. However, it would delight Jezebel. When we get out of God’s will, we
discourage Christians, especially new Christians, and we delight the enemies of God.

II. THE REASONING OF ELIJAH 19:9,10

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah has gone from prophet to cave man. The Lord speaks to him and hits him in the bull’s eye. He gets right to the point, “What are you doing here?” Depression can get a person into the wrong place. A person can get out of church, runaway from home, or divorce his spouse. God did not want Elijah in this cave. Remember now that he has been led by the Lord up to this point. Elijah begins to give his credentials, excuses, and accomplishments of the past. Notice all the “I’s” in verse ten. Fear and loneliness still have a grip on Elijah. He does not remember what God did for him in the past. Instead, he focuses on his problems.

Elijah says that Israel forsook:
1. The Word of God (covenant)- When you forsake the Word it leads to the next point.
2. The Worship of God (altars)- When people leave God’s will, they blame their problems on the third point.
3. The Workers of God (prophets)- The pastor or other Christians are blamed for problems when the real problem is found in point 1 and 2.

III. A RESEARCHING QUESTION 19:11-14

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: [12] And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. [13] And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? [14] And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets
with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah is told to stand upon the mount and the Lord passes by him. A strong wind divides the mountains and rocks but the Lord is not in the wind. The earth quaked but the Lord is not in it. Fire or lightning falls but the Lord is not in that either. He is in a still small voice. God speaks to Elijah in this voice and Elijah is humbled before God. In a still small voice, the whisper of a wondrous God asks again, “What are you doing here Elijah?”

The voice of the Lord scared and convicted Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:8. In Ezekiel 43:2, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty and power. Here, the voice of the Lord quietly whispers and brings conviction. The Holy Spirit continues to quietly speak to the Christian today, especially when he or she is out of position. He is asking, “What are you doing here?” When they are in a place of wickedness He asks, “What are you doing here?” Is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about your life or are you going so fast and making so much noise that you cannot hear Him?”

The fact the Lord spoke in a still, small voice teaches several truths.
1. Just because something is small and quiet does not mean that God is not in it.
2. Bigness does not necessarily mean God’s presence. It is not the criteria by which we are to judge a work whether it is of God or not.
3. A work is not to be measured by wind, earthquake, fire, by the bombastic and sensational. It is to be measured by the Word of God. God is not interested in turning heads, but in turning hearts.
4. God can use a small church yielded to Him and His Word. He can use the small, quiet Christian who speaks up for God when it is time to speak.

If you are facing depression and discouragement, you will find the Lord will speak to you in those quiet times with Him if you will let Him. Get alone with God!

IV. THE RETURN TOWARD HAZAEL 19:15

And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

God said Elijah should go back the way he came and anoint Hazael king of Syria. Hazael would be a rod that God would use to punish Israel for worshiping Baal. He would be a brutal
butcher according to 2 Kings 8.
* 2 Kings 8:12- And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

God got Elijah out of the depression by getting him busy with a new assignment and goals. New goals can help get you out of the dumps too.

V. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LORD 19:16-18

And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. [17] And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. [18] Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Jehu was to be anointed too. He would be the tool of chastening upon Ahab’s house. He will kill Ahab’s son, Jehoram.

* 2 Kings 9:24- And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

Jehu will order Jezebel thrown out of a window (2 Kings 9:33-35) and he would have the remainder of Ahab’s family and friends destroyed.

* 2 Kings 10:11- So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kins folks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

Elisha would be anointed as Elijah’s successor. After the Lord gives Elijah his assignment, He encourages him by telling him he is not alone. There are 7000 prophets left who have not kissed or worshiped Baal.

One of the best ways to get out of depression or discouragement is to get busy and set new goals. Don’t spend time alone. Fellowship with others. God knew that Elijah needed Elisha’s fellowship. You need fellowship too! Are you backslidden? Get back on track! Listen for God’s still, small voice in the quiet times and do what He says.
Chapter 44
Elisha, the Bridge Burner
1 Kings 19:19-21

At Normal Community High School, I competed on the football team and the track team. I was involved in the 440 yard relay. This race involved passing a baton or stick from one runner to another. The passing of the baton was the secret to winning the race. It had to be passed smoothly and quickly and done within a certain distance within the lane that you were assigned to. You also had to be careful not to drop the baton. No matter how fast the runner was, it would make no difference if the baton exchange was flubbed up. It was a team effort with everyone doing their part.

In this section, Elijah is going to pass the baton of God to a young man named Elisha. In this transition stage, Elisha will show us the importance of burning our bridges behind us in our service for God. Elisha will teach us that when it comes to serving the Lord, there is no turning back, there is to be 100% commitment, and there is one direction for us to go....forward. Our bridges of retreat are to be burned.

1. THE DISCIPLINE OF ELISHA 19:19

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

After the Lord encourages Elijah that he is not alone and there are 7000 faithful prophets of the Lord, he commences to find and anoint Elisha as he was commanded to do by the Lord. He finds Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen and casts his mantle upon him.
The curtain now opens upon another great man of God in the Scriptures. Elisha is called a man of God about 29 times, more than anyone else in the Bible. God uses different kinds of men. These two men are very different.

**Elijah**

1. Outdoors, wilderness man.
2. Rugged & forceful in preaching.
3. Wore camel’s hair.
4. Had a ministry of judgment.

**Elisha**

1. Lived in homes in the city.
2. Reasoned and was more tactful.
3. Dressed like everyone else.
4. Had a ministry of grace.

Their ministries were very similar. Both of them parted water miraculously, worked in a famine, multiplied the food of a widow, raised a boy from the dead, and brought the judgment of death. Their names were also similar. Elijah means “God is Jehovah.” Elisha means “God is Salvation.” Elisha’s name sends a message that salvation is not in man, government, idols, or superstitions. His message to his generation was: God is the salvation of mankind. This is our message too! Salvation is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Elisha will spend ten years under the tutelage of Elijah. Elisha will serve the Lord at least 64 years.**

* He was anointed five years before Ahab dies.
* He serves through Ahaziah’s 2- year reign. (1 Kings 22:51)
* He serves through Jehoram’s 12-year reign. (2 Kings 3:1)
* He serves through Jehu’s 28- year reign. (2 Kings 10:36)
* He serves through Jehoahaz 17- year reign. (2 Kings 13:1)
* He serves through Joash 16- years. He dies during the reign of Joash. (2 Kings 13:9-20)

When Elijah encounters Elisha, we find Elisha was working hard, plowing fields. God never calls idle, lazy men. Instead, He calls men who are faithful, diligent, and hardworking and are faithful in everyday duties.

* Luke 16:10,11- He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Shaphat was a wealthy farmer. The twelve yoke of oxen in the field indicated this fact. Yet, he did not spoil his son or allow his son to stand around idle while the servants did all the work. Elisha’s father knew the importance of building character through hard work. It is good for young
people to learn how to work.
* Lamentations 3:27- It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Don’t spoil your kids by giving them everything on a silver platter. Teach them the value of possessions by learning to work for those possessions. When they get out on their own, there will be no silver platters out there for them.

Elisha was plowing. This was very strenuous work. Ancient plows were tree trunks with branches forming in opposite directions. During the times of the kings, plows were made of iron. In war time, Joel said the plowshares were built into swords. The plows were pulled by oxen. Twelve teams of oxen were in this field. Elisha is guiding the last team of oxen.

Elijah casts his mantle upon Elisha. Why? The cloak or mantle was the large outer garment or cape that was worn in that day. It served a number of purposes.
1. **Protection**... against the hot sun and frigid desert nights.
2. A **Pillow**...
3. As a **Place** to sit. At dinner time, honored guests were seated on the mantle.
4. For **Packing**... supplies and seeds were wrapped in the cloak.
5. It indicated **Provision**. When a man spread his cloak over a woman, it symbolized that he would care for her. Ruth requested this of Boaz (Ruth 3:9).
6. It indicated **Pain or Plight**. When the mantle was torn into shreds, it indicated grief.
7. **Power**... tossing the cloak over the shoulder of another indicated a transfer of power or position. Elijah did this to Elisha. Elisha knew what this meant.

II. THE DEVOTION TO PARENTS 19:20

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

Elisha leaves his oxen and runs after Elijah. With enthusiasm, excitement, and zeal he runs after Elijah, requesting that he kiss his parents farewell and then follow him. Elisha’s response was immediate obedience. It should be our response too.
The response of Elijah was, “What have I done to thee?” Elijah was saying, “This is between you and God, Elisha. I’m not forcing you into service. You make up your own mind.” When it comes to serving God and answering His call, we are not puppets. We choose to obey or resist. Elisha was willing to burn his bridges behind him. He was willing to cut his parent’s apron strings. He was saying “Good-bye” to wealth and comfort. Comfort and wealth happen to be the two main reasons why Christians spurn God’s call.

In Luke 9:59-62, we find a similar incident with different results.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. [60] Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. [61] And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. [62] And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

In verses 59 & 60, we find an excuse of indefinite delay. The father was not dead yet. He did not want to leave home until his father died and he received his inheritance. This could take as long as 30-40 years. He was not ready to follow the Lord. In verses 61 & 62, Jesus knew the heart of the young man was not in bidding his parents farewell and rebukes him. Elisha’s attitude was much different. He wanted to express love, gratefulness, and consideration for his parents.

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGES 19:21

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

Elisha takes one yoke of oxen, perhaps his own, and has a barbeque to celebrate God’s calling in his life and to say “Good-bye” to his friends and family. He then followed and ministered to Elijah. Elisha was not ashamed for others to know about God’s calling in his life. You will find that it is difficult to follow the Lord’s will without others knowing about it. Secret agent Christians have no place in God’s service.

*Matthew 10:32,33- Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.
*Matthew 5:15- Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

When I was a boy, I went swimming periodically at a place in Illinois called Lake of the Woods. At that time, they had a twenty foot high-diving board with a lot of spring in it. When I climbed that ladder I wasn’t demonstrating commitment. When I walked to the edge of the diving board, I wasn’t demonstrating commitment. Commitment came when I jumped off the board. There was no room for return or retreat.

God wants total commitment from us, beloved. He wants us to burn our bridges with no turning back.

*Luke 18:22,23- Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

**There is no effective service without sacrifice.** Some sacrifice ships and nets, houses and lands, the fellowship of family and friends. You will not be an effective Christian if you are not totally committed to the Lord. **When times get tough, when the pressure is on, when people hurt or betray you, when you are deeply discouraged, your commitment to Christ will help see you through and keep you steadfast for the Lord.** Frank Boreham said, “We make our own decisions and then our decisions turn around and make or break us.”

Many believers are ineffective and powerless because they are unwilling to commit their lives to the Lord, to sacrifice, to surrender their lives to the will of God, or to be uncomfortable. Meanwhile, the world goes to Hell while they pamper themselves. Hudson Taylor said, “God is looking for wicks to burn. The oil and the fire come free.” Will you become a wick and burn for the Lord Jesus Christ? This should be our attitude.

*Philippians 3:8- Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

We should be willing to burn our bridges in order to go forward for God. Notice what Jesus said.

*Luke 14:33- So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Those who surrender their lives and burn their bridges will be rewarded by the Lord.
* Luke 18:29,30- And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Living your life for Christ is a great privilege and opportunity to express your love for Him. True sacrifice is the thrill of giving and yielding the best we have to the one we love the most. You are not doing God a favor by serving Him. He did you a favor by calling you to serve Him.

Elisha's first responsibility was to pour water over Elijah's hand. He was to perform the functions of a slave. Character and humility are developed by starting low and working up to greater responsibilities. In God's kingdom, the way up is down. If you want to be in authority, you must first submit to authority. If you submit, you serve. If you serve, you rule. Are you willing to serve the Lord and submit to His will for your life?

We die by living to ourselves; we live by dying to ourselves.
Chapter 45
The Syrian Sponge
1 Kings 20:1-6

Chapter twenty provides a temporary break from the adventures of Elijah. It is inserted here before we pick up Elijah’s life again in chapter 21. The focus of this chapter is upon two kings, Ahab, and Benhadad, the king of Syria. From the conflict between these two kings, we will glean vital lessons about the Christian life. These lessons will warn us what to do and what not to do.

The story begins with the first of three battles fought in 1 Kings. Ahab is under attack. Benhadad, is the Syrian Sponge, who endeavors to suck the life out of Samaria. He is a reminder of how Satan desires to sponge our lives of blessing and victory. He robs us of blessing and joy.

I. THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA 20:1

And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

What has been going on up to this point in the two kingdoms? In the Southern Kingdom of Judah, the people were tottering back and forth spiritually under the leadership of two good kings and two bad ones. In the Northern Kingdom of Israel, we find the record of eight bad kings in succession. Because of their indifference, iniquity, and indecisiveness to follow the Lord, God spanks His people by allowing her enemies to gain strength so they could afflict God’s people. Over the next 200 years, the Lord would use three chastening rods, three nations, to spank His people....Syria, Assyria, and Babylon. Syria would be the threat here.
From Syria comes Benhadad with 32 subordinate kings or vassals to war against the capital city of Samaria. We may have seen him before 57 years earlier. Judah’s King Asa made a league with a King Benhadad to destroy Baasha king of Israel. We are not sure if this is the same man or his son. We do know that he attacks Samaria with an overwhelming force of men and chariots.

II. THE SELFISHNESS OF BENHADAD  20:2,3

And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.

Messengers are sent to Ahab with a message. Look at the brass of the Syrian king, “Thy silver and gold are mine. Your wives and children are mine, especially the goodliest (the most beautiful ones).” The *Syrian Sponge* wastes no time in getting what he wants. What would you do if someone threatened you with a message like this? How would you respond to, “I’m taking your money, your wife, your kids!” I believe I would feel led to fight! Some things are worth fighting for. Your family and your freedom are worth fighting for and defending. Thank God for the soldiers who have fought and shed their blood for us so that we could be free, especially free to worship the Lord.

We are in a war now for the soul of America. We are fighting for the freedom to continue to worship God, pray, and proclaim our faith in Christ, and to stop the slaughter of unborn babies. This war is not fought with bullets, it is fought at the ballot box, by backbone and bravely speaking out against injustice and corruption. It is fought by boldly coming before the throne of God’s grace in prayer and begging for God’s intervention.

The strength of our nation has been weakened because our nation has forsaken the source of what made it great... the Lord.

*Proverbs 14:34- Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.* The sin of a nation will sponge the strength out of it, robbing it of its greatness.

Benhadad expects Ahab to be another royal vassal like the other 32 kings. He expects Ahab to surrender his harem which was considered a surrender of the throne, his manhood, and his respect for himself. Ahab prepared his silver and gold for Baal as Hosea 2:9 mentions. Now he is about to lose it.

There is a great truth here. If God doesn’t rule over us, sin will.
Sin takes what God has blessed you with or given to you. Satan is a sponge, like Benhadad, and wants our possessions, health, our family, and our lives for the purpose of wasting and destroying them.

* 1 Peter 5:8- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Use your talents, financial resources, abilities, and your life for the furthering of the Gospel and helping Christians grow in the Lord. Dedicate the abilities that God has given you to the Lord. Use them or lose them. This was the message of the Parable of the Talents in the New Testament.

The greed and covetousness of Benhadad is going to get him into trouble. Greed always leads to trouble. It brought trouble to Achan who took the garment and gold and was executed. It troubled Saul who wanted the best sheep and ended up losing his throne. It troubled Judas who betrayed Jesus for silver and he ended up hanging himself. It troubled Ananias and Sapphira who lied about their gift to the Lord and they were smitten by God Himself.

**Covetousness and greed are destructive and terrible.** God calls it idolatry.

* Colossians 3:5- Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Popularity, fame, money, and material things can become priorities in our life. They can become idols. Paul issued a warning in 1 Timothy.

* 1 Timothy 6:9,10- But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

**A grasping spirit leads to compromise or corruptive actions in order to gain money.** This creates further problems, guilt, and a ruined life. Greed and covetousness are like sponges which blind us to what we already have and cause us to forget what God has blessed us with already. Covetousness and greed make us discontented and unable to enjoy what we have and dissatisfied with who we are or what we have because we are always looking for more. W.R. Hearst was a very wealthy newspaper publisher who had a phenomenal collection of art. His mansion in California is a testament to his desire for art treasures. He learned on one occasion of some artwork that he was determined to obtain. He sent his
agents abroad to search for the treasure. After months of investigating, the agent reported that the treasure had been found and the relic would not cost Hearst a dime. He already owned it. The artwork was in his warehouse with many other treasures that had never been uncrated. Beloved, the desire for acquiring more can blind us to what we already possess. Solomon issued a warning about greed.

* Proverbs 27:20- Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Greed creates problems in the home.

* Proverbs 15:27- He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

One way the house is troubled is the children learn from the attitude and actions of the parents. They learn to be dissatisfied because their parents are not content. A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from high school. The custom of this affluent neighborhood was the bestowal of a car once the student graduated from high school. The boy fully expected this custom would hold true for him. He had spent months talking about cars and looking at them with his father. Just a week before graduation, this father and son found what appeared to be the perfect car. The young man was certain he would see the car in the driveway. Yet, when he opened his father’s graduation present, it was a Bible. The son was so mad that he threw down the Bible and stormed out of the house. He never reconciled with his father and remained estranged until the day his father died.

As the son went through his father’s belongings, he came across the Bible his father had given him years ago. He brushed off the dust and opened it. To his surprise and utter horror, he found a cashier’s check between the pages of Scripture. It was dated the day of his graduation for the exact amount of the car he and his dad had chosen together. Beloved, God’s greatest gifts are still found in the pages of Scripture, but we sometimes allow greed to destroy relationships and divert our attention elsewhere.

Greed can also trouble our home from the risks that are taken to accumulate wealth. Those risks can backfire.

* Proverbs 28:22- He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

You may also find that you may get what you want but lose what you had. Some gain wealth but lose their family, their wife or husband. Some folks lose their free time, time to relax, worship of the
Lord, or time to read their Bible and pray. Some folks lose their health in
the process of getting gain. Greed for that which is unnecessary will rob
you of that which is necessary and important.

How will Ahab respond to Benhadad’s threat?

**III. THE SURRENDER OF Ahab 20:4**

And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to
thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.

Ahab rolls over like a dog on its back! Character is
determined by what it takes to stop you. It did not take
much for Ahab. As bossy and wicked as Jezebel was, maybe Ahab wanted
to get rid of her. Notice also that he does not bother to pray to the Lord
and ask God for help. Perhaps he doesn’t believe that God would help
him. Those who do not know the Lord rely upon reasoning instead of faith
in the Lord. He knows Baal will not help. Elijah proved this false god
was a FAKE!

We find another great truth here. Without the Lord, we are
powerless.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me,
and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do
nothing.

We are powerless over sinful habits that can enslave us and
keep us in bondage. We are powerless to change. We are powerless to
save ourselves from Hell. Salvation is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Christ empowers the Christian to live for Him.

* John 1:12 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to
become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

* Romans 1:16- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the
power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first,
and also to the Greek.

God’s Word helps the Christian to change his attitudes and actions.

* Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper
than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul
and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts
and intents of the heart.

* Psalm 119:11- Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin
against thee.
The Bible....
* **Strengthens** us when we are down in the dumps.
* **Stabilizes** us and gives peace when life is confusing and unstable.
* Is our **Standard**. It tells us what is right and wrong.
* **Gives Sight.** It tells us where we came from, where we are now, what to do, and where we are going! You can’t ask much more than that.

**IV. THE SEARCH FOR THE SPOIL  20:5,6**

And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

Benhadad wants more. He wants to loot the city and sponge it all away. This was a request of unconditional surrender. Satan is the same way. He is never satisfied. He wants to entrap us and take more and more from us.

* 2 Timothy 2:26- *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

What enemy haunts you time after time? Is it a person, an addiction, or a memory from your sinful past? Realize that peace and victory are provided for us and are obtainable.

* John 8:36- *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

God’s Word is very powerful. Gaylord Kambarami, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Zimbabwe, tried to give a New Testament to a very rebellious man. This man insisted he would roll the pages and use them to make his cigarettes. Gaylord said, “I understand that, but at least promise me to read the page of the New Testament before you smoke it.” The man agreed and the two went their separate ways.

Fifteen years later, the two men met at a church convention in Zimbabwe. The Scripture smoking pagan had trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior and was a full-time evangelist. He told the audience, “I smoked Matthew and I smoked Mark and I smoked Luke. But when I got to John 3:16, I couldn’t smoke anymore. My life was changed from that moment. Aren’t you glad, beloved, that God’s book is more than just words on paper? Let the Bible change your life! Don’t let Satan sponge your life of blessing.
Chapter 46
The Calamity of Counting Unhatched Chickens
1 Kings 20:7-13

In the last section, Benhadad, the king of Syria, has laid siege against Samaria and has demanded that King Ahab deliver his silver, gold, wives, and children over to him. Ahab rolls over like a dog on his back and consents. Evidently, realizing how easy it was to get his consent, Benhadad returns with a second demand to ransack the city and take what he wants. What now takes place are events which warn us of the calamity of counting our chickens before they hatch. These events warn of the burdens, bruises, and the brokenness of boasting about tomorrow. We pick up our story with the city’s response to Benhadad’s demands.

I. THE STUBBORN RESISTANCE 20:7-9

Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. [8] And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent. [9] Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

The elders of the city advise Ahab to resist. Ahab is amazing! His attitude is, “You can ransack my home and family, but you can’t have the town. Beloved, when you get away from God and are
not following Him, your priorities tend to get all out of wack. Satan desires to shackle and enslave us. The Bible challenges us over and over again to resist Satan.

* Ephesians 4:27- Neither give place to the devil.
* Ephesians 6:11- Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
* James 4:7-10... Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. [9] Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

II. THE SWOLLEN HEAD OF BENHADAD  20:10

And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

Benhadad thinks he is Mr. Macho. He is very cocky! He uses intimidation and threats to sway Samaria to yield to him. He threatens to strip the city so bare that there won’t be a handful of dust left.

**Satan uses intimidation to shut up Christians.** He tries to get them ashamed of Christ, of their church, of the Bible, and of godly living. He feeds Christians lies like “If you talk about the Lord, people will think you are crazy!” Some may think this way, but some won’t. Don’t be ashamed of Christ.

* 1 Corinthians 4:13- Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.
* Romans 10:11- For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Satan tries to get us worried about people hurting us if we stand for Christ. Jesus responded to this worry.

* John 16:33- These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Another Satanic lie is the Bible is not true because it is written by a bunch of men. The Bible makes it very clear that the original manuscripts of Scripture were inspired of God, inerrant, and infallible.

* 2 Peter 1:21 - For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
2 Timothy 3:16 - All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Another deception and distraction of Satan is he tells Christians, “You can run your own life! You don’t need God or anyone else telling you what to do.” The Bible warns, however, that pride can lead to your ruin. God makes it clear that our lives belong to the Lord.

1 Timothy 3:6 - Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 - What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Another lie of Satan is, “Christians have no fun. They are missing out on life!” That’s right, we are missing out all right.

1. We are missing out on guilt and feelings of filthiness.

Psalm 51:2 - Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

2. We are missing out on haunting memories of past sins.

Psalm 51:3 - For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

3. We are missing out on misery and heartache.

Psalm 51:8 - Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Psalm 51:12 - Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

4. We are missing out on addictions.


When you yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives love, joy, and peace. He gives blessings with no regrets.

Proverbs 10:22 - The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.
III. THE SARCASTIC RESPONSE 20:11

And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.

For the first time Ahab says something that has some wisdom and common sense. The man who puts on his harness of armor hasn’t fought the battle yet. The man taking off his armor has fought the battles. Ahab is warning Benhadad of the calamity of counting your chickens before they are hatched. The Bible warns over and again about presuming what will happen tomorrow and being overconfident.

* Proverbs 27:1- Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Boasting about tomorrow leads to carelessness. The cocky, overconfident attitude can lead a person to drop their guard or be caught off guard. We will see that Benhadad makes this mistake. Boasting of tomorrow demonstrates pride. It denies God’s control over one’s life. The attitude that says, “I’m in control and I’m going to do what I want” can lead to some big surprises. Babylon had this attitude and James warned us about thinking this way.

* Isaiah 47:10,11- For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

* James 4:13-16... Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: [14] Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. [15] For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. [16] But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

Do people really have a boastful attitude? Do they really count their chickens before they are hatched? You better believe they do. How many times have you heard this, “I’ll get saved later or some other time.” This was the attitude of Felix.

* Acts 24:25- And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time;
when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

We have no guarantees that we will have another time.

* 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

How many times have you heard or said, “I’ll serve God later or when I get older. I want to do what I want right now.” We have no guarantees of this. Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched! Know your limitations and take one day at a time. Take advantage of the opportunities of the day.

IV. THE SUMMONS TO STRIKE 20:12

And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

Benhadad is boozing it up under his booth of brush and limbs. The fact that he feels secure in getting drunk shows his overconfidence in wartime and boastful, cocky attitude. When he receives the message of Ahab, he explodes. “Attack!” is the command he gives. Let me ask, “What triggers you? What sends you into orbit and causes you to lose your temper?”

* When you don’t get your own way?
* When you are told what to do?
* When you are confronted when you are wrong?

For Benhadad, it was when someone told him “No! You can’t have your own way!”

V. THE SOLEMN PROMISE OF GOD 20:13

And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

A prophet brings an encouraging message to Ahab. This prophet proves that Elijah is not the only prophet in the land and that Elijah’s ministry changed the climate for God’s men for the better. A promise of deliverance is given here. The promise was based upon God’s love for His people.

The Lord was trying to convince this thick-headed king that He was
God. He wanted Ahab to know Him and what He could do. God wants us to know Him, walk with Him, and talk with Him. God was giving Ahab an opportunity to change and trust the Lord. He gives us that opportunity too.

* Revelation 3:20- Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Don’t miss fellowship opportunities.

* Jeremiah 8:20- The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Don’t miss the opportunity to be saved.

* John 4:35- Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. Don’t miss serving opportunities.

Opportunities to serve the Lord are gifts from God to express our love to Him, to help others, to receive future blessings and rewards, to develop a ministry of our own, and have a purpose in our lives. Neglecting opportunities to serve God is tragic.

* Romans 14:12- So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

**Your opportunities may be here today, but gone tomorrow.**

Boast not thyself of tomorrow.

* They may be gone because the access to the opportunity may be gone. School may be out; you might move from the present location of where your opportunities exist.

* Death may change your opportunities. You or others could die.

* You could lose your health and not be strong enough to do the things you use to do.

* You could have a financial setback where you would be restricted in helping others.

* Your heart or others might be soft today but hardened tomorrow.

* The Lord Jesus Christ could return today.

In the mid 1800's, Dr. Russell Conwell dedicated his life to the formation of a college for poor, but deserving young people. Almost single-handedly he raised several million dollars with which he established Temple University. He gave more than 6000 fundraising lectures in which he included a story entitled “Acres of Diamonds.”

The plot of the story started with an African farmer who had heard tales of others making millions by discovering diamond mines. He was so excited about the possibilities which lay ahead that he sold his farm and used the money to travel across Africa in search of valuable gems. Unfortunately, he never found his fortune and died a broken man.
Meanwhile, the man who purchased the farm from the gem-seeking African discovered a beautiful rock while crossing one of the streams on his newly acquired property. He placed it on the fireplace mantle because of its curious beauty. Several weeks later a visitor noticed the rock and nearly fainted. The farmer thought it was a clump of crystal. As it turned out, it was one of the largest diamonds ever discovered and it came from a creek full of many more large and precious stones. Dr. Conwell concluded his story by stating that the farm turned out to be one of the most productive diamond mines in Africa. We need not waste our lives looking elsewhere for “better opportunities.” The greatest treasures you can find are right under your nose.

* Reaching others for Christ.
* Encouraging others by serving them.
* Serving the Lord. All of these are wonderful treasures.

Don’t put off today’s opportunities for tomorrow because you expect them to be there. They may not be there at all. Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.

**Opportunity typically favors those who have paid the price of years of preparation**
Chapter 47

The Danger of Dropping Your Guard

1 Kings 20:14-22

Benhadad, king of Syria, has threatened to take Ahab’s money, gold, silver, wives, and children. This cocky king feels confident with a crowd of 32 kings supporting his coalition. Ahab informs the leaders of Samaria of what is taking place and the fact that Benhadad wants unconditional surrender of the city and to take what he wants. The counsel of the leaders was to resist! Ahab informs the Syrian king of his answer. He tells him, “You can’t ransack the city, but you can have my gold and family.”

This reply sends Benhadad into orbit. He doesn’t like being told “No.” He orders the attack and promises to reduce Samaria to rubble. Ahab warns him in essence “Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.” Don’t boast before a battle like a soldier who has finished a battle. In this portion, we will pick up where we left off and get into the specifics of the first battle.

A group of men were carrying on a friendly conversation. One of them remarked that he had learned to be especially careful about small things. “Would you believe,” he said, “that a little thing like a pair of socks changed the entire course of my life?” The other man replied, “I can hardly believe that!” “Well it is true! Once I planned to take a trip with some of my friends on a canal boat, but two days before we intended to leave, I injured my foot while chopping wood. It was only a small cut, but the blue dye in my homemade socks poisoned the wound and I was forced to stay home. While my friends were on their journey, a powerful preacher came to our town to hold revival meetings. Since I didn’t have
anything else to do, I decided to attend. The sermon touched me deeply, and as a result, I surrendered my heart to the Lord. Afterward, I saw that I needed to change my life in many ways. New desires and purposes took hold of me. I determined also to seek an education, for I trusted that this would enable me to live more usefully for my Lord.” The man who made these comments was none other than the former President of the United States, James Garfield. Be sure you don’t treat lightly the “little things” in life. They often gravitate to great and important consequences.

The insights from this story in this chapter will remind us again that God can do anything, with anyone. He can use you if you are willing to be used. We will also be reminded of the fact that if we are not careful, we can drop our guard and open ourselves up to temptations, snares, and sinful actions.

I. THE SPECIFICS OF THE BATTLE  20:13-17

And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. [14] And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. [15] Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand. [16] And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. [17] And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

Ahab is given encouraging news from a prophet of God. This great multitude will be delivered into Ahab’s hands and Ahab would know that the Lord was God. This prophet of God got Ahab’s attention real quick. He asked, “How will this happen and who will be the commander?” It is ironic that Ahab wanted to hear about war, but not about righteousness. There are people like him today that shun preaching about righteousness. Folks love the study of Bible prophecy, financial seminars, and music concerts, but run for the hills when you start preaching on godly living. If we are going to be what God wants us to be, we must have a balance in our lives.

The prophet answers the question of Ahab. God is going to use the
young men of the princes. These young men were the pages, the footmen or errand boys. They were totally unfamiliar with war and the very last choice for a surprise attack. There were only 232 of them and they would be followed by 7000 troops. They were going to lead the attack! The weakest, most foolish-looking men were chosen for the battle. God works this way many times.

* 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.... But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; [28] And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: [29] That no flesh should glory in his presence.

During a Billy Sunday Revival, a mentally impaired boy came faithfully each night to sing in the choir. Homer Rodeheaver, the well-known song leader said, “Joey was not very bright but he never missed any of our meetings and wouldn’t leave until he shook my hand. Sometimes I was embarrassed by the way he constantly tailed me, and I secretly wished he’d go away.”

One evening a man came to Rodeheaver and said, “Thank you for being so kind to my son, Joey. He’s not right mentally, but never has he enjoyed anything so much as singing in the choir. He worked hard doing simple chores for people so he could contribute to the offering. Through his pleadings, my wife and five other children came to the revival and have been saved. Last night his 75 year old atheistic grandfather was saved and tonight his grandmother trusted Christ as her Savior. Now our entire family is saved!” Beloved, God can use anyone who is willing to be used.

The time setting for the battle was at noon, the hottest part of the day. Benhadad is having a beer party with 32 royal buddies. The king is a drunken mess! The Bible warns us that liquor looks attractive but is deadly.

* Proverbs 23:31,32- Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.
* Proverbs 31:4 - It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:
* Proverbs 23:21- For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.
II. THE SECURITY OF BENHADAD  20:18

And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

The Lord is working behind the scenes. Benhadad gives a command that gives Israel great advantage. "No matter what, take them alive," is the command. Benhadad felt perfectly secure in issuing this order. We have never so much cause to fear as when we fear nothing.

* Belshazzar’s lack of the fear of God is what destroyed him (Daniel 5).
* The lack of the fear of the Lord destroyed the world in the days of Noah. (Luke 17:27)
* The lack of fear will bring destruction to the world in the Tribulation Period.

* 1 Thessalonians 5:2,3- For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

The lack of fear for God is what is destroying America. Millions do not fear His Word, His judgment, and the consequences of their sin. The "Do Your Own Thing" mentality is ruining us. This philosophy is reflected in bumper stickers and T-shirts that say, “NO FEAR!” The Bible says we had better fear the Lord.

* Proverbs 1:7- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Don’t be a fool.

III. THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SYRIANS  20:19-21

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

The servants lead the attack and Israel slaughters the Syrians. Even Ahab is out there fighting with his army (vs.21). The Israelites were more than conquerors. In Christ, we too, are more than conquerors.

* Romans 8:37- Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
* 2 Corinthians 2:14 - Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.
* Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

In spite of this great victory, we find no record of Ahab honoring God. He still does not acknowledge God’s blessings.

**IV. THE SIGNAL FROM THE PROPHET 20:22**

And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

In the shadow of achievement, victory, or success is vulnerability and the tendency to drop one’s guard. In a crisis or trial, the easiest period is the trial itself. The most difficult and stressful period is the period of indecision. What do I do now? Do I fight and go through the trial or run? It is a great time of insecurity. The most dangerous period is the aftermath. With all the energy and resources spent, and the tendency to let your guard down, this period may be characterized by terrible decisions and slow reactions. This was the message of the prophet of God. He told them to take every precaution and not to think that the danger was past. The Syrians would be back in the Spring. This was the prime time for wars because the rainy season was complete. Springtime began in March and they would march to battle. March comes from the word “Mars” who was the god of war.

Over and over again God warns us not to underestimate the power of temptation and sin and to be on our guard.
* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
* Revelation 3:1-3.... And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. [2] Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. [3] Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
* Revelation 3:17- Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched,
and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: When we are less dependent upon God, we become careless.

*Matthew 26:41- Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. The words “watch and pray” indicate continuous action. Keeping up your spiritual guard is not a part-time matter but a full-time one.

Whether we like it or not, we are in a spiritual war until the day we die. When we get self-confident, spiritually comfortable, or independent of the Lord’s leadership, we tend to get spiritually drowsy. Church, prayer time, or Bible reading is not as important as it used to be. You cannot overcome Satan or the desires of the flesh in your own power. This is why New Year’s Resolutions don’t last. Daily we are to yield our life to the Lord.

*Romans 12:1,2- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Peter learned the hard way about dropping your guard and the destructive power of Satan.

*1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

The ancient sport of falconry employed trained hawks in the chase of wild game. When the “educated predator” was allowed to fly, however, it often rose too high for human eyes to see it against the blue sky. It was, therefore, not uncommon to carry a small caged bird called a shrike. The hunter could then easily tell where his hawk was located by watching the antics of the little creature in front of him, for it instinctively feared the falcon and always cocked its head to keep it in view.

The Christian desperately needs the sensitivity and perception of the shrike when it comes to the detection of his spiritual enemy. Satan dwells in high places and is a master deceiver. He camouflages himself against the beautiful background of attractive people and exciting activities. His presence is hard to detect if we are not on guard.
Chapter 48
The Load from Limiting God
1 Kings 20:23-34

God has just given Israel a great victory against overwhelming odds. But still, King Ahab will not give God the glory for what He has done. In grace and mercy, the prophet of God gives Ahab a warning to prepare for another attack in the Spring. The Lord did not have to do this because Israel did not deserve a warning. The Lord gives them a warning anyway. This is another reminder that the Lord is very patient with us for He wants us to know Him. So what is going on in Syria now? We will find that instead of repenting, Syria limits God and suffers the load and burden that comes from doing so.

And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. [24] And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: [25] And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

The pride of the Syrians has been hurt. This was a terrible defeat. Excuses are offered for the defeat as they lick their wounds. They play the Blame Game. Instead of acknowledging God as God, they make excuses for their defeat. All pagan nations believed in local deities. The Syrians believed Israel’s God was a mountain god. The Temple was on Mt. Moriah; the altars were built in high places; the Law was given on Mt. Sinai; fire descended upon Mt. Carmel; Samaria was a hilly district so they concluded this is why they were weak.

The Syrian strategy was to take the battle to the plains so they could
defeat Israel with their chariots. They believed their gods were more powerful on the plains and that the God of Israel would not be able to help them there. They believed God had limitations.

The Syrians believed that if they replaced the army and drunken kings with military commanders, they would “surely” win the battle. The Syrians make the big mistake of limiting God to the hills. Limiting God will get you into big trouble. Unfortunately, many Christians make the mistake of limiting the Lord. Here are some of their claims.
* The Lord can save me, but I don’t think He can care for my life.
* He can’t help my business or help me with my financial struggles.
* He can’t take care of my health or care for my family.
* He can’t solve my marriage problems.

**Christians are shutting God out of these areas of their lives.** They are limiting God and loaded with the burden of despair. They are weak in faith and strong in doubt and confusion. Some folks are like this especially in the mid-life years. Questions that may taunt the mind in these years include:
* Am I stuck here for the rest of my life?
* Is this how it feels to get “old?”
* Is anything worth it?
* Why can’t you understand me? Why can’t I understand myself?
* Will I ever get a promotion? Do I even really want it?
* Where has all my confidence gone?
* Am I wasting my life away doing what I am doing?
* Are my friends really friends or just fickle acquaintances?
* When I am old, will I become just like my parents?
* Are my kids ever going to get out of their troubles?
* Is this lump on my body cancer? Should I have it checked or am I just being paranoid? Beloved, God does not want us to limit Him and what He can do through us.
* Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

**II. THE SECOND ATTACK 20:26,27**

And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.
Israel’s forces were greatly outnumbered! The Syrians filled the country. Israel was like two flocks of goats. It was an impossible situation. Let me ask at this point, “Are you facing a situation where the odds are stacked heavily against you?” Don’t limit God.

* 1 John 5:4- For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

* Ephesians 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

The city fathers of New York contemplated the future growth of the city. They laid out the streets and numbered them from the center outward. When they began, there were only six or seven streets. In their planning maps, they projected how large they thought the city might grow. Reaching beyond their wildest imagination, they drew streets on the map all the way out to 19th Street. They called it “Boundary Street” because they were sure that’s all the larger New York City would become. History has proven them to be shortsighted. At last count, the city had reached 284th Street, far exceeding their expectations. As they limited the growth of the city, we sometimes limit what God can do in our lives. He can do far beyond what we ever dreamed if we will let Him.

III. THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SYRIANS 20:28-30

And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. [29] And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. [30] But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

God’s reputation has been challenged by the Syrians. The Syrians claim that the Lord may be the God of the mountains, but not the God of the plains. The man of God informs Ahab again, “God will give you a great victory and Ahab will again know that the Lord is God.” For seven days the armies are afraid or reluctant to attack. Finally the armies engage and God’s promise is fulfilled. In one day, 100,000 foot soldiers are killed in battle. The rest flee to the fortress
of Aphek. They thought they were safe and secure. Their security ended up being insecure as the wall fell and 27,000 more die.

**People today are putting their security for salvation in that which is insecure.**

1. **Some put their salvation in good works.** God says this is a mistake.  
   * Ephesians 2:8-9- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.  
   * Matthew 7:21-23 ... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

2. **Some put their security in riches.**  
   * 1 Timothy 6:17- Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

3. **Some trust in their own abilities.**  
   * Proverbs 28:26- He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.  
   * Romans 3:10,11- As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

4. **Some trust in a priest for salvation.** Christ is the only priest we can trust.  
   * Hebrews 3:1 - Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;  
   * 1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

5. **Some trust in the Virgin Mary for salvation.**  
   * John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

6. **Some folks trust in baptism to save them.** Paul makes it clear that baptism does not save a person or he would have never written what he did to the Corinthians.  
   * 1 Corinthians 1:14-17.... I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; [15] Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. [16] And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides,
I know not whether I baptized any other. [17] For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

* 1 Peter 3:21- The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

IV. THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE SERVANTS  20:31,32

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

The Syrians knew of the mercy of the kings of Israel. They knew they needed mercy. They put on sackcloth which symbolized mourning and penitence. The ropes around the heads were symbols of surrender. The Persian custom for a person desiring mercy was to approach with a sword suspended from a rope around the neck. This was the custom in Egypt too.

Israel’s kings were merciful because our king, the God of Heaven, is merciful. He has taught us to be merciful because He is merciful.

* Psalm 103:17- But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

The Old Testament speaks four times more about God’s mercy than the New Testament. Mercy is compassion in action. It is His love and lovingkindness. God’s mercy is like a cluster of diamonds to those impoverished by sin. It is like a garden of flowers to those whose lives have been tainted by the torments of sinful living. God’s mercy is an oasis in the desert, a balm and bandage for the wounded. The mercy of God makes the Lord compassionate though we are corrupt. It makes Him forgiving of our faults and foulness. Because of God’s mercy, I don’t get what I do deserve...Hell. Because of God’s grace, I do get what I don’t deserve... a home in Heaven.

God’s mercy says, “I pity you.” God’s grace says, “I pardon you.” God is merciful and He is just. Justice gives exactly what is deserved. Mercy gives less punishment and more help than what is deserved. How
can God be both merciful and just? In every true act of mercy, someone pays the price. To be truly merciful is to bare the load for someone else. God’s justice says, “The penalty for sin is death.” God’s mercy says, “My Son will pay the price, bear the load of sin and remove the guilt.” Jesus Christ was *Mercy Incarnate*.

V. THE SUMMONS FOR BENHADAD  20:33

Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

Ahab calls Benhadad his brother! The servants picked up on the word “brother.” This was a good sign. Benhadad is brought to Ahab and Ahab invites him into his chariot. This was an act of friendship and honor. What in the world is Ahab up to now?

VI. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TWO KINGS  20:34

And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

Benhadad restores the captured cities to Ahab. Ahab is allowed to set up a bazaar in Damascus to sell merchandise. This would be very lucrative. Ahab’s ulterior motive is he wants a treaty of defense against Assyria in which he and Benhadad join as brothers. Three years later they will face Shalmaneser, king of Assyria and repel him according to Shalmanser’s historical records in the British Museum.
Chapter 49
The Pouting Potentate
1 Kings 21:1-14

Have you ever gone to a store and watched the reaction of a child who did not get his own way? The child wants a toy or candy and the parents say, “No!” The responses vary, but do capture one’s attention. Have you seen this?

1. Screaming at the top of their lungs.
2. Kicking or hitting the parent.
3. Temper tantrums on the floor. You would think they had ants in their pants.
4. Hold their breath.
5. Running away.
6. Hanging on their parent’s leg and begging.

All of this pouting takes place because the child did not get his own way. By the way, do you pout? Do you act like this when you don’t get your own way? Maybe your pouting is more civilized such as the silent treatment, where you don’t talk to the person who denied your request or maybe you hide yourself in your room?

In this chapter, we are going to observe the same kind of pouting behavior. It will not be a child that we will observe, but a childish man; a man who doesn’t get his own way and goes home and pouts. He is not pouting over a toy, gold or silver, or a beautiful woman. He is pouting over a garden. The result of the pouting potentate is treachery, forgery, conspiracy, and murder. This story offers lessons that we should take to heart lest our lives be ruined by our discontent.

1. THE CROP OF NABOTH 21:1

And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.
Several years have passed since Elijah’s wilderness journey. Israel has had several wars with Syria. The vineyards are growing in Jezreel again. The effects of the 3 ½ year famine have been overcome. A man named Naboth owns a vineyard adjacent to the royal palace in Jezreel.

Jezreel was a very historic place in the Bible.
* Barak defeated Sisera in Jezreel.
* Gideon defeated the Midianites.
* Saul was destroyed by the Philistines.
* It is also the future site of the Battle of Armageddon.

King Ahab wants Naboth’s vineyard.

II. THE COVETOUSNESS OF THE KING  21:2,3

And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

Ahab offers Naboth a better parcel of land or money for his vineyard. He seems to try to treat Naboth right in this matter. What would you do if the President came to you and wanted to buy your land or house? Even though Ahab is the king, Naboth declines the offer. Why? Better land was offered to him. The answer is Naboth was governed by the Word of God. It was the guiding principle in his life. God’s Word stated he should not sell his land.

* Numbers 36:7- So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.
* Leviticus 25:23-28... The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. [24] And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. [25] If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. [26] And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; [27] Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. [28] But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought
it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

III. THE CONTRITION OF AHAB 21:4

And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

Ahab pouts because he can’t get his own way. The problem with Ahab was he had not learned to be content with what he had. Matthew Henry said, “Paul had contentment in prison, but Ahab did not have contentment in a palace.” The Lord was not a part of Ahab’s life.

* Proverbs 15:16- Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

A person with contentment realizes that true happiness is not hindered by material conditions or possessions. The word content has two slightly different pronunciations and meanings.

* content= That which is inside of something.
* content= Satisfaction with present circumstances.

Contentment is being happy with present contents. It is being happy with what I’ve got rather than focusing on what I don’t have. Ahab was a pouting potentate because he focused on what he did not have. The process of acquiring things results in emptiness. Ahab was the king, yet, he felt empty now because he did not have Naboth’s vineyard. He had not learned to be happy with what he already had.

The process of acquiring character is what brings fulfillment in a person. Character development increases who I am on the inside, not just what I own on the outside. Fulfillment has far more to do with my internal condition than my outward circumstances. A person with character has learned to be content in any circumstance.

* Philippians 4:11- Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
* 1 Timothy 6:6,8- But godliness with contentment is great gain. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Men who learned to be content had a great impact on American history. The first man we will discuss is George Washington. George’s brother had arranged for him to have a Naval opportunity when he was 14. George was so excited about getting to see the world. On the day he was
to depart, George placed his trunk upon the ship but when he was saying his final farewell to his mother, she changed her mind and asked him to stay at home. George was disappointed, but went ahead and retrieved his trunk off the ship.

George put his whole heart into a career of home-surveying. He was good at it. He was licensed at a young age and entrusted with important jobs. Through surveying, George learned the topography of the land; he learned about Indians and their customs; he learned about living outdoors. George became the natural choice later on for a critical assignment in the French and Indian War. He was launched into the military career that made America. All of this happened because he learned to be content.

The other leader we will speak of is Oliver Perry. At the age of 13, Oliver enlisted in the Navy as a midshipman on his father’s ship. He sailed for the Navy for the rest of his life. He took command of a schooner called the Revenge when he was 24. Peace was restored at sea at this time and Naval officers became discontented with trivial, boring assignments. Many of them resigned from the Navy.

When Oliver was 27, he was promoted to the rank of Commander and given responsibility for Newport Harbor, Rhode Island. It was monotonous duty that caused others to resign from the Navy. Oliver served faithfully while others sailed the high seas, policing the rising conflicts with the British Navy. War eventually broke out in 1812, with Britain. Perry felt ocean duty was unlikely for him so he informed his authorities he was willing to serve on the Great Lakes. A year later, he received orders to go to the less glamorous post on Lake Erie. He constructed a small fleet of ships that boldly engaged a British fleet invading from Canada. Perry was outgunned. His flagship was destroyed but after three hours of battle, the entire British fleet surrendered on the Lakes. Perry wrote General Harrison, “We have met the enemy and they are ours.”

Perry’s contentment at Newport Harbor led to his experience in building ships. He used this knowledge to build the fleet on the Great Lakes. His contentment in putting his whole heart in unglamorous tasks set the stage for his victory and made him the best remembered Naval hero of the War of 1812.

A person with contentment has learned self-control and restraint from wishing for that which is not available. Alexander the Great did not learn this. He sat down and wept because there were no more lands to conquer. If we are to learn to be content, then we must learn to focus our affections in the right places.
* Colossians 3:1,2- If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Naboth learned to be content with what he had and was not willing to compromise to get more. Ahab was not content and was miserable, restless, and pouting. Have you learned to be content with what you have? If not, your discontent may lead to destructive decisions. This is what happened to Ahab.

IV. THE CONVERSATION OF THE COUPLE  21:5-7

But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? [6] And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. [7] And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Jezebel asked her husband, “What’s wrong with you? Aren’t you the king? Get up you big baby! I’ll get you your vineyard.” Jezebel has contempt for Naboth’s adherence to the Word of God.

* Proverbs 29:27- An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

V. THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST NABOTH  21:8-14

So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. [9] And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: [10] And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. [11] And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. [12] They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. [13] And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. [14] Then
they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

Naboth is to be set up and framed for a fall. Forgery, perjury, and murder is the plan of the day. Naboth is falsely accused by scoundrels, men of Belial. He is accused of blasphemy, which is a stoning offense. Naboth’s sons would be stoned too as the heirs are removed.

* 2 Kings 9:26- Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord.

Where is God in all of this? Why didn’t the Lord intervene? Naboth has suffered for doing right. We need to realize that nothing happens unless God permits it. In God’s wisdom, Naboth is allowed to die, just like the Christians in Rome. Whenever His children suffer for righteousness, God will reward them. God has preserved the truth of Naboth’s character for over 3000 years.

Naboth is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Each was tempted to disobey God and part with an inheritance.
   * Matthew 4:9 - And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
2. Both refused the voice of the tempter.
3. Both were falsely accused by those who sought their deaths.
4. Both were charged with blasphemy of God and the king.
   * Matthew 26:65- Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.
   * Luke 23:1,2- And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.
5. Both were put to death by violent hands.

   God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

   Ahab’s discontentment robbed him and others of joy. Are you discontented and pouting too?
Chapter 50

Footsteps in a Forbidden Vineyard

1 Kings 21:15-29

Have you ever been caught in a situation or a place where you were not supposed to be? What did you do? How did you feel? What did you say? In this section, Ahab gets caught in a place where he is not supposed to be. His footsteps are in a forbidden vineyard. From this story we will be reminded again that....

* God sees everything we do.
* Your sin catches up with you and you can’t cover it up.
* You can’t fool God.

As we begin this chapter, we recall that Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth that was next to the king’s palace. Naboth would not sell this land to the king. Jezebel concocts a plan to frame Naboth for blasphemy against God and have the people stone him and his sons to death. The plan works and Naboth is dead.

I. THE POSSESSION OF NABOTH’S VINEYARD 21:15,16

And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

Jezebel tells Ahab to go get his vineyard, for Naboth is dead. Since Naboth was accused of being a traitor, the land would become the property of the crown. Naboth gained the land, but he did it by treachery. It was unjust gain that the Bible warns us about. Money or gain that is acquired by corruption, cheating, deception, or treachery has a stigma attached to it and contains a burden, not a blessing.

* Proverbs 21:6- The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity
tossed to and fro of them that seek death. It's a vanity, a fleeting fantasy. Dreams will not be satisfied.

* Proverbs 22:16 - He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. This gain leads to loss, emptiness, and want. It will not satisfy.

* Jeremiah 17:11- As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. You will not get to enjoy unjust gain and will be a fool in the end. Such will be the case with Ahab. Ahab got his vineyard, but he is not going to enjoy it as we will see.

II. THE PROPHET IS SUMMONED  21:17,18

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

The Lord watches the unfolding of these events and is about to intervene. He is very aware of what has happened to Naboth..

* 2 Chronicles 16:9- For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

* Psalm 34:15- The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

God is aware of the scheme of Ahab and Jezebel too.

* Proverbs 15:3- The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He is aware of what we do too.

Entering the picture here is someone we haven't seen for a while...Elijah. God tells Elijah, "Ahab is in Naboth's vineyard. Go get him tiger!"

III. THE PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT  21:19-24

And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. [20] And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. [21] Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from
Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in
Israel, [22] And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of
Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation
wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. [23] And
of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall
of Jezreel. [24] Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him
that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

Ahab’s party is about to be rained upon. He thought, “I got
away with it! The vineyard is mine!” Ahab got it, but he
won’t be able to enjoy it because a party pooper is about to show up and
ruin his good time. Why? Ahab’s footsteps are in a forbidden vineyard.
Elijah exposes Ahab’s sin and Ahab is caught. His sin has been
found out. The secret is out in the open. That which has been covered is
exposed! You cannot keep a lid upon sin. Don’t deceive yourself into
thinking you can.

* Numbers 32:23- But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against
the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.
* Ecclesiastes 12:14- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with
every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Don’t cover your sin, confess it to the Lord and forsake it. Ahab
was totally surprised when Elijah showed up. He was taken off guard for
he has not seen Elijah for several years. There goes the fun or peace Ahab
might have had from his prize! Ahab calls Elijah his enemy (vs.20). Ahab
is so blind that he mistakes his friends for foes and foes for friends. He
thought Elijah was his enemy and Jezebel was his friend. Sin distorts and
blinds us to the truth. The person who leads you to sin is not your friend!
Elijah tells Ahab, “You sold yourself to work evil.” Ahab was a slave to
his own sinfulness. He sold himself into bondage.

Ahab traded the valuable for the cheap. This is what sin leads
us to do. We have abundant examples of people who made this mistake.
* Ahab traded Naboth’s life for dirt, for a garden.
* Judah traded his peace of mind for 30 pieces of silver.
* Achan traded his life for silver and clothes.

Anytime you choose to live wickedly, you lose out on the deal and
make foolish decisions. Elijah pronounces judgment upon Ahab.
* Proverbs 11:21- Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be
unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

Elijah says, “Where Naboth died, the dogs would lick the blood of
Ahab.” His death would be a violent one. Ahab would reap what he had
sown. Ahab was cruel and his death would be cruel. This was a terrible judgment. Ahab’s descendants would also be cut off and Jezebel will be dog food in Jezreel. She was not going to have a funeral like Princess Diane. The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings.

* 2 Kings 9:30-37... And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tied her head, and looked out at a window. [31] And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? [32] And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. [33] And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. [34] And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king’s daughter. [35] And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. [36] Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: [37] And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

In a nutshell, Elijah told Ahab, “You are not getting away with your sin.” Further explanation for judgment is given in the next two verses.

IV. THE PERVERSENESS OF AHAB  21:25,26

But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

Jezebel was an evil influence upon Ahab. What kind of influence are you upon your husband or wife?

V. THE PENITENT KING  21:27

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

Elijah’s message shakes up Ahab. For the first time, he shows signs of repentance. He puts on sackcloth, tore his clothes, and fasted. He walks softly which means he walked slowly, barefoot, or
meekly. He repents but it is not very deep. He feared judgment more than having a hatred for his sin.

VI. THE PENALTY IS DELAYED 21:28,29

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Psalm 86:5- For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Ahab shows the first rays of hope or the first sign of going in the right direction. God shows Ahab grace and mercy and delays His judgment. He would not see the death of his sons. The judgment was only partially fulfilled at this point in time.

* 1 Kings 22:37,38- So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.

The main judgment came during the reign of Joram when he was destroyed by Jehu.

* 2 Kings 9:25,26- Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him; Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord.

God delayed his judgment upon Ahab because Ahab humbled himself before the Lord. God blesses a humble spirit.

* James 4:10- Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

* 1 Peter 5:5- Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

* Micah 6:8- He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Are your footsteps in a forbidden vineyard?
Chapter 51
Don’t Rock the Boat!
1 Kings 22:1-14

Have you ever been pressured to do something you did not want to do? Perhaps someone wanted you to give money to a cause, a charity, or a campaign of a politician. Maybe you were pressured to buy something you didn’t want or to take responsibility you were not prepared to take. Some folks are pressured by the opinions of others to drink, take drugs, play a prank, or indulge in sexual sin. Common reasons for feeling pressured are intimidation, guilt trips, the fear of being different, or getting caught up in the “Everyone is doing it but me” syndrome. So what do you do when you find yourself in this situation? Is there a way to avoid situations like this? If you get caught in a pressure situation, is there a way to take a stand even when you are alone? We hope to provide some answers to these questions as we find a prophet of God named Micaiah who is pressured to be politically correct and not rock the boat. The pressure is exerted by the majority of the ministerial association and the government of Israel. This prophet demonstrates how to stand alone for God and how to obey the Lord when you are in a minority.

I. THE PEACE IN ISRAEL   22:1
And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

For three years there has been peace between Syria and Israel. Tension has been building between the two nations. Promises by Benhadad are still unfulfilled.

* 1 Kings 20:34 - And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for
thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

II. THE PARLEY OF TWO KINGS 22:2-4

And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. [3] And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? [4] And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, visits Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab is upset that the city of Ramoth is still not returned to his kingdom. Ramoth was one of the chief cities of Gad. It was 28 miles east of the Jordan River. Ahab asks Jehoshaphat to help him reclaim Ramoth and Jehoshaphat agrees. This was a tragic alliance that had serious repercussions. It almost destroyed the family tree of Jesus Christ.

Jehoshaphat was a godly king. The Lord was with him.

*2 Chronicles 17:3,12- And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.

Ahab was a wicked man who showed some signs of repentance three years earlier. He was more concerned over the consequences of sin than his hatred for sin. This alliance would create big problems for Jehoshaphat. He will be rebuked for doing this.

*2 Chronicles 19:1,2- And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.

The Bible warns repeatedly that the godly are not to yoke up or be in partnerships with unbelievers or the ungodly.

ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [17] Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. [18] And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We are not to be in business partnerships, date, court, or marry unsaved people. When unequally yoked, believers suffer and are hurt. I have met many business men who lost money through unequal yokes and many husbands or wives who are miserable because they married an unsaved person. When a believer co-operates with a business or individual where evil is tolerated or promoted, then the believer becomes jointly liable for what happens. Sin, wickedness, or evil always leads to negative consequences. When it does, you reap the consequences if you are a party to that which is wrong.

Jehoshaphat’s alliance affects his future, his family, and almost us.

Jehoshaphat (king of Judah) Ahab-Jezebel (Israel)
(His son) Jehoram marries (their daughter) Athaliah
(their son) Azariah
{He was a wicked king of Judah- reigned 1 year}
(2 Chronicles 22:2-4)

Athaliah, his mother, takes the throne after his death and almost wipes out the line of Jesus Christ (2 Chronicles 22:10,11)

You never know where your sin will lead you! You don’t know where an unequal yoke will take you and how it will bind or strangle you.

III. THE PRAYER REQUEST 22:5

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

Jehoshaphat says, “I’ll go.” Let’s find out what the Word of the Lord says. He wanted God’s counsel.

* Psalm 1:1- Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
What is good about this? He is seeking direction from God. We can avoid many problems, mistakes, and catastrophes if we would seek God’s guidance. This is stressed repeatedly in the Bible.

* Psalm 5:8- Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

* Psalm 25:5- Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

* Psalm 27:11 - Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

* Psalm 143:10 - Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

If you seek God’s direction, then follow His directions. Is that too hard to understand? When God shows you truth, then follow it. When He shows you a plain path, then follow the path. When He shows you His will, then do it. The reason I mention this is Jehoshaphat seeks God’s direction and God will show it to him, but he does not follow it. This negligence will almost cost him his life.

The phrase, “Let me pray about it” is not to be a cliche or trite expression to make us sound spiritual or make someone feel good. We are to really pray. I suspect that many who make this statement don’t pray because of the terrible, unscriptural decisions they make. God will not lead you to make a decision contrary to His Word. He does not lead us to disobey Him.

* James 1:13,14- Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

If you do pray about a matter, do what the Holy Spirit tells you to do. His leading will not contradict Scripture. Notice verse 5 again.

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

It was good that he sought God’s guidance. His mistake, however, was he should have prayed first to the Lord before he committed himself to Ahab.

IV. THE POSITIVE PROPHETS 22:6

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.
Ahab summons 400 prophets and asks, “Shall I go?” Unanimously they all say, “Go for it, Ahab! Go get them tiger! The Lord will give you victory!” This is great! What an encouragement. There is only one problem though, it is not the truth as we will see later.

V. THE PERCEPTION OF JEHOSHAPHTH 22:7

And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?

Whatever Jehoshaphat saw in the 400 prophets did not give him peace. Alarm signals were going off in his conscience and his spirit. He sensed that something was wrong. Everybody acted the same way, talked the same and gave the same message, but their life message of claiming to be prophets of God did not match their lives.

* Matthew 7:15,16-Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Jehoshaphat asks, “Is there not a prophet of the Lord?” Wow! This is a powerful statement with powerful truths. Jehoshaphat was on target. Who were these 400 guys? These were the Asherah prophets that Jezebel cared for. They were absent at Mt. Carmel. Elijah asked that they be at Carmel, but they were absent.

Our nation is filled with preachers who talk “God talk” but don’t know the Lord. The New Testament describes folks like this.

* 2 Timothy 3:5- Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
* Matthew 7:21-23... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
* Romans 10:3- For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

What about you? As you look at your life, are you like the 400 prophets? Do you act like everyone else? Are you talking spiritually, but
walking wickedly. Churches are filled with people claiming to be Christians, yet, they act like heathens. They sip the liquor, shoot the drugs, pop the pills, dress sensually, and shack up with women or men in adulterous affairs. Some have such a filthy mouth that a sewer is more sanitary than their tongue. Beloved, dirty, suggestive stories and jokes, and cursing are not to characterize our vocabulary.

I believe there are people who are asking today, “Is there a genuine Christian around here? One who can tell me about God and pray for me? Is the real McCoy around anywhere?” Beloved, people are reading our lives just like Jehoshaphat was reading the lives of the 400 prophets. God help us to be consistent in our walk with Him.

* 2 Corinthians 3:2- Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

             The Gospel According to You

*If none but you in the world today had tried to live the Christlike way,
Could the rest of the world look close at you and find the path that is straight and true?

* If none but you in the world so wide had found the Christ for his daily guide,
Would the things you do and the things you say lead others to live in His blessed way?

*You are writing each day a letter to men, take care that the writing is true;
'Tis the only gospel that some men will read, of the gospel according to you.

       -Author Unknown-

VI. THE PROPHET OF GOD  22:8,9

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.

There is one man, but I hate him. I can’t stand him. I hate his preaching. He doesn’t tell me what I want to hear. He rocks the boat. These were Ahab’s complaints. Ahab’s repentant attitude did not last long. When you hate God’s people or God’s men, you have a
spiritual problem.

* 1 John 2:11- But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

* 1 John 3:15- Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Ahab reverts back to his old ways and attitudes. Peter described people like Ahab.

* 2 Peter 2:22- But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Ahab’s problem is he was more concerned about feeling good than knowing the truth. He hated Micaiah for preaching the truth.

* Galatians 4:16- Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

It is ironic that people don’t like to be lied to or deceived, yet, when you tell them the truth about salvation and Hell, they are offended. We are hated by some because we proclaim the truth of Christ. We rock the boat. The Bible warns us that not all would love us.

* John 17:14- I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

* 1 John 3:13 - Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

People want the Bible preached in shades of gray with no absolutes. God wants His message clear, concise, and definite. He doesn’t want confusion or compromise. Christians are accused of being too narrow and the Bible is narrow. Narrowness gives me security! I’m glad the Bible narrowly declares the truth! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life, NO MAN comes to the Father but by me.” I am glad He didn’t say I am A WAY, or A TRUTH. I am glad the Bible says, "Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord SHALL BE saved.” I am glad it doesn’t say MIGHT BE or COULD POSSIBLY be saved. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It does not say He had a part in creation or He might have created. There is comfort and security in narrowness, in black and white instead of gray. Those individuals who want us to broaden our thinking want room for their lifestyles to be acceptable. They want room to live their own way without being condemned. They don’t want the boat rocked.
VII. THE POLITICALLY CORRECT PERSUASION  22:10-13

And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. [11] And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. [12] And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand. [13] And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.

The majority of the prophets said what Ahab wanted to hear, “You will prosper Ahab!” They were so nice and sweet. They probably had the 897 B.C. version of How to Win Friends and Influence People or The Power of Positive Thinking. They made the king feel good even though they didn’t tell him the truth. Beloved, truth is what matters. It is what changes the lives of people even though it may rock their boats. Here we see again that the majority was wrong. They were wrong at the Promised Land border when they said they could not defeat the giants in the land. The majority was wrong at Noah’s Ark when they said it would not rain. They were wrong at Mt. Carmel when Elijah challenged Baal and his prophets.

Micaiah the prophet is summoned and he is informed that the majority told the king that all would be well. He is then told what to preach. That’s a “No No” with a preacher! He is told to preach what everyone else is preaching. They told Micaiah, “Boy, don’t go rockin’ the boat! Do the politically correct thing. You preach nice to the king!” Micaiah is pressured to do something he may not want to do.

Great pressure is put upon preachers and Christians today to be politically correct and not to rock any boats or take any stands against sin. Our pulpits have been compromised and gagged and our nation is suffocating. American churches have lost their saltiness and power. We have become so spiritually numb and cold as a nation that being politically correct is to be scripturally incorrect. When tyranny becomes accepted in those who govern us, then anarchy lurks in the shadows. When apathy for wickedness replaces morality, then iniquity festers and grows stronger. That is what is happening in America and will continue to happen unless revival takes place in our
churches.

To tolerate corruption is to give it liberty to affect areas that are still good. Corruption spreads. That is the nature of corruption. Potatoes rot and affect other potatoes; bread gets moldy; flesh gets infected and can turn to gangrene. Paul put it this way in the book of Galatians. *Galatians 5:9 - A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

In the 1990's, the United States yawned at the corruption in its leaders because our allegiance was to the god of economy. As God removed the head and hands of Dagon when the Ark was captured by the Philistines, the Lord has smacked the economy of the United States upside down.

The messenger that came to Micaiah told him to fall in line and not rock the boat. The message of political correctness is killing our nation and our churches. Political correctness says, “A woman has a right to murder her unborn baby.” God never gave any mother the right to turn the most secure, sacred place of a baby’s life into a slaughter house of convenience. Liberals have cried, “We can’t vote for pro-life candidates because we can’t go back to the butchery we had before the law was changed.” Hello! Butchery is going on now. It has been made legal as babies are chopped up at a rate of 1 ½ to 2 million per year in the United States alone. Liberals cry, “We must protect women.” These folks don’t get it. Abortion endangers the women they claim they are trying to protect. It endangers that woman who is still very tiny. Baby girls grow up to be women.

Another crazy philosophy offered by political candidates is, “I’m against late-term abortions when the baby is bigger or in the third trimester, but it’s OK when it is smaller in its first weeks or months.” Hello! The baby is a real human being in both stages of development! Some folks say it’s OK to abort the baby in cases of rape, incest, or deformity. It is not the baby’s fault that these things happen. The baby is still a real person. Killing it for these reasons does not make it acceptable with God.

Political correctness says, “Homosexuals should be free to practice their perversion and be considered normal.” God says that sodomy is an abomination and the practice of this filthy lifestyle is unnatural. AIDS is a by-product of this kind of sexual perversion.

Political correctness says “Women should be allowed to do whatever men do. If women want to pastor a church, they should be able to do so.” The Bible says there are limitations on what a lady can do. A woman is
not to lead her home. Her husband is to lead and she is to follow his leadership.

* Ephesians 5:22- Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

**A woman is not to pastor a church or be a preacher.** The same Bible women preachers claim to believe says that what they are doing is unbiblical. They are hurting their credibility when they ignore what God says.

* 1 Timothy 2:11-14 ...Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. [12] But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. [13] For Adam was first formed, then Eve. [14] And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

* 1 Timothy 3:1,2- This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

* 1 Timothy 3:4-7 ... One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; [5] (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) [6] Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The purpose of boundaries is to give security and order at a ball game. When a player is out of bounds, he is penalized. There is disorder in homes and churches today when the woman steps out of bounds in the area of leadership. The home and the church suffer when women step out of bounds and disobey the Word of God. This teaching is not politically correct. It is God’s truth. It is narrow. It is black and white and not gray. If your boat is rocked, then let it be rocked! God has made it clear that he wants men leading the home and the church.

**VIII. THE POSITION & PRINCIPLES OF MICAIHAH 22:14**

And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.

**M**icaiah is determined to preach what God tells him to preach. He was prepared to stand alone if need be. That leads us to a good question here, “How do you stand alone for God?”
How to Stand Alone For God

The Bible gives us a formula in Ephesians 6.

* Ephesians 6:11 - Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Several things are needed to stand for the Lord.

1. Comprehension of the Real Enemy 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Satan is the real enemy who is trying to destroy our soul. We must be willing to stand for God because of a concern and compassion for the lost. We should be willing to risk their anger and intimidation because their souls are at stake for eternity.


Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

A clear conscience gives boldness in proclaiming the truth. This is why it is important to live a godly life. Being right with God and men gives confidence in ministry because your life is consistent with your message. There is no hypocrisy, hindrances, or stumbling blocks. Conviction of the truth gives security, strength, and confidence. I know I am saved and because of this I can tell others how to be saved. The Bible is truth.

* John 17:17 - Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

* John 8:32 - And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. We are free to stand for God and be a witness for Christ. We are to know what we believe and be sure what you believe is right.

3. A Commitment to the Cause of Christ 6:15

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

We are to be prepared to stand up for Christ.

* 1 Peter 3:15 - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The time to make up your mind about standing for the Lord is now. Doing the will of God should be a priority in our lives no matter what the cost. Daniel stood for God in Babylon because he made up his mind to do this before he got there.

* Daniel 1:8- But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile
himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

4. **Concrete Faith & Confidence in God’s Care 6:16**

> Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

We are to stand because our lives are yielded to the Lord. We know that God knows our circumstances. Whatever happens to us has been cleared by the Lord. We know that all things work together for good. The three Hebrews had this attitude when they stood for God in Babylon and Job had it when he went through his trials.

* Daniel 3:16-18... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. [17] If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

* Job 13:15- Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

5. **A Comprehension of the Scriptures & Salvation 6:17**

> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

We don’t stand because mentally we have fears which hinder us. The helmet deals with the head. We are to saturate our lives with Scripture. We are to know The Book....the Word of God.

* Psalm 119:50- This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. Quicken means “revived.”

* Romans 10:17- So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Fear is conquered by faith.

6. **Communion with God 6:18**

> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Prayer gives courage and boldness.

* Acts 4:31 - And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Daniel prayed even though he was threatened with death in the lions’ den. His communion with God gave him courage and strength. All of these things will help us stand for God.
Chapter 52

Truthful Tongues or Tickled Ears

1 Kings 22:15-28

Have you ever had someone come to you with a problem and seek your counsel, advice, or opinion? They ask you to be truthful, up front, or honest with them about what they are to do. You now have a decision to make. You can tickle their ears and tell them what they want to hear or tell them the truth, the hard, cold, realistic truth that they need to hear. If you care about the person, you will tell them the truth.

* Proverbs 27:17- Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Truth is what brings change and effective solutions.

* John 8:32 - And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

So you tell them the truth, give them Biblical solutions, and then the person you care about does an exact 180, an exact about face, and does the opposite of what you counseled them to do. They end up ruining and wrecking their lives. Has this happened to you? If you are a parent, you may understand the feeling of frustration as you try to help your kids but they won’t listen and end up crashing their lives. Take those same feelings, mom and dad, and you will know what a pastor feels too, when his people won’t listen to God’s Word.

Many times I have preached messages or given counsel and people have done the exact opposite of what was preached. Sure enough, they ended up wrecking their lives. Then they want me to fix their busted-up lives, but many times, it’s too late. The damage is beyond repair. God issues a warning to us about obeying authority in our lives.

* Hebrews 13:17- Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account,
that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.
* Ephesians 6:1-3 ...Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. [2] Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

In this portion of Scripture, we find the prophet Micaiah giving counsel with a truthful tongue and the people he counsels do the exact opposite of what he says. They end up destroying their lives. What they wanted was someone who would tickle their ears. It all begins in verse 15.

I. THE PEEVISH RESPONSE 22:15

So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

The messenger was sent to summon Micaiah. He told him that everyone had spoken positively to the king and that he would be victorious in battle. Micaiah is told to fall in line and not rock the boat. He was to speak good to the king too. Micaiah says he will speak what the Lord tells him to speak. When he is confronted by King Ahab, he says what everyone else says, “Go and prosper. The Lord will give you victory.” He tickles the king’s ear. I believe he was being sarcastic when he said this because the king immediately detected something was wrong by either the way he said it or what he said. He rebukes Micaiah.

II. THE POINTED PREACHING 22:16,17

And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord? And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

Ahab says, “Don’t tickle my ears! Don’t tell me what I want to hear. You tell me the truth!” This was not the first time they had met. Micaiah says, “OK, here is the truth! I see Israel scattered. They have no master or king. Tell everyone to go home now in peace.” The prophecy foretold the defeat and death of Ahab. So what’s going to happen now?
III. THE POUTING POTENTATE 22:18

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

Micaiah tells Ahab the truth and Ahab explodes like a big baby, “See I told you he didn’t like me! I told you he would preach mean to me! He never says anything nice to me!” All I can say is “Ahab you asked for it and you got it!” Ahab, like many folks today, want the pastor to preach the truth. They tell me, “Pastor, let me have it. Keep stepping on my toes! If I get out of line, tell me!” If you tell this to your pastor, don’t get mad at him if he does this. Thank God for him and pray that God will continue to give him boldness and courage in a day of compromise, cowardice, and spongy backbones. The responsibility of proclaiming the truth and watching over people’s lives is a heavy one. Pray for your pastor that he will speak with a truthful tongue and not tickle your ears. Paul gave a warning in 2 Timothy.

* 2 Timothy 4:2-4…. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. [3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; [4] And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Ahab said he wanted to know the truth, but he really didn’t. His mind was already made up of what he was going to do. The world is filled with people who do not want to know God’s truth. They reject and despise the Bible.

* Job 21:14- Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
* Zechariah 7:11- But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.
* Matthew 13:15- For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Do these verses describe you? What you do with the Bible will determine what God does with you. As believers we are:

1. To **discover** the truth (seek it).

* 1 Timothy 2:4 - Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the
knowledge of the truth.
2. To **demonstrate** the truth in our life.
   * 3 John 1:3, 4- For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and
testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have
no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
3. To **distinguish** it from error when we examine it. If we love the truth,
we will protest error.
   * Jude 1:3, 4- Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the
common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you
that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered
unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were
before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the
grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and
our Lord Jesus Christ.

   Bob Jones Sr. said, “The man who sincerely and unselfishly desires
to know what is right doesn’t have any trouble finding out what is right.”
Do you desire to know the truth or do you want someone to tickle your
ears? God’s truth will change your life.
   * John 17:17 - Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

IV. THE PERCEPTION FROM HEAVEN  22:19-23

   And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord
sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right
hand and on his left. [20] And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that
he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and
another said on that manner. [21] And there came forth a spirit, and stood
before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. [22] And the Lord said unto
him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in
the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and
prevail also: go forth, and do so. [23] Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath
put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath
spoken evil concerning thee.

Micaiah is basically saying that all 400 prophets are liars.
A lying spirit was permitted to lead the king astray. This
will happen again after the Rapture of the Church. This world will follow
the lie of the Anti-Christ.

   * 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 ... Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, [2] That ye be not
soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter
as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. [3] Let no man deceive you by
any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; [4] Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. [5] Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? [6] And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. [8] And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: [9] Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, [10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: [12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

V. THE PERSECUTION OF MICAIAH 22:24-28

But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? [25] And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. [26] And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; [27] And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. [28] And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

Micaiah told the king and the prophets the truth about the loss in battle and the lies of the prophets. Zedekiah smacks Micaiah on the cheek and says, “Which way did the Spirit of the Lord go when he went from me to you?” Zedekiah was sassy, sarcastic, and a smart-aleck. This slap was a great insult. Don’t be surprised if you are despised or insulted for telling the truth. You go ahead and tell the truth, especially about salvation. If you are asked, “Will my church, good works, church membership, baptism, or the Virgin Mary save me?” You tell them “No.” Don’t tickle their ears. Tell them the truth.

Micaiah calmly rebukes Zedekiah. You are going to be hiding in fear because Ahab’s death will expose Zedekiah as a false prophet. Micaiah is put into prison for telling the truth even though it’s what the king asked him to do. Micaiah warns the king again, “If you return in
peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. Mark my words people!"

Micaiah was persecuted for telling the truth instead of tickling ears. Paul gave us a warning in 2 Timothy.

* 2 Timothy 3:12- Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

   Are you willing to endure harassment, intimidation, persecution, or suffering to proclaim the truth or will you go through your life tickling ears, trying to please the world, but never reaching the world for Christ? Are you going to let the lost go to Hell so you can be popular? You must choose, so make the right choice.

* Joshua 24:15- And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

   You must determine who is going to be more important in your life. Is it going to be the crowd or the Lord?

* Matthew 6:24 - No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

   This world does not have time for you to be popular or comfortable. People are dying without Christ and the Lord is returning soon. Will you tell them the truth about the Lord or tickle their ears?
Chapter 53
The Fallacy of Trying to Foil God’s Word
1 Kings 22:29-35

Have you ever found yourself in your lifetime, trying to beat the wrap of God’s Word; trying to prove that His truth does not apply to your life or His judgment or chastening will not happen to you? Perhaps you were involved in drinking, stealing, lying, cheating or immorality at one time in your life. Many people have refused to heed the warnings of God’s Word only to destroy their lives. Their reasons for disobedience include such beliefs as:
* That’s not true! The Bible is a bunch of bunk.
* It won’t happen to me!
* I won’t get caught or punished!
* Preachers say that to scare people.
* There is nothing wrong with the way that I am living.
* Who knows if the Bible is really true?

Whether you agree with it or not, what God says in His Word will happen. Unheeded warnings lead to the fulfillment of those warnings. You cannot stop His will, word, way, or work. God is more powerful than you and I ever dreamed. He is more powerful than your opinions, your schemes, your rejection, resistance, or your plots to prove Him wrong. To try to prove the Lord wrong is foolish.

* Psalm 14:1- To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

In this section King Ahab tries to outdo and foil God’s plan. He
tries to disguise himself to foil God’s judgment against him. He is out to prove that God’s Word is wrong. From this passage, we will again see that God is in control of men’s affairs. He is God. He is sovereign and cannot be fooled! What the Lord says, He will do and fulfill.

* Psalm 111:7 - The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

* Matthew 5:18 - For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.


So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. [30] And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. [31] But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. [32] And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. [33] And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. [34] And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. [35] And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

King Jehoshaphat asked Ahab to pray for God’s direction before going into the battle. Micaiah, the prophet of God, said they would be defeated and to not go into battle. Ahab and Jehoshaphat now go against the Word of the Lord and enter the battle.

Ahab is leading this campaign. His response to the Word of the Lord is typical of the blindness and folly that characterizes those who disregard the Word of God today. God’s Word is rejected today because people do not see it as truth. They are spiritually blind.

* 2 Corinthians 4:3,4- But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

* Ephesians 4:18 - Having the understanding darkened, being alienated
from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Ahab has become hardened to the point of numbness. He doesn’t care what God says. He is going to do what he wants to do. The Bible warns us about getting ahead of God and being stubborn.
* Proverbs 28:14- Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.
* Proverbs 29:1 - He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The reason we get hard and cold spiritually is because of our sinfulness.
* Hebrews 3:13- But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Jehoshaphat should not be hanging around with King Ahab. He knows better than to go against God’s Word. He proves the truth of Scripture that wicked companions corrupt good character.
* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

As Ahab goes into battle, he disguises himself as just another soldier and wants Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes. Ahab’s reason on the surface is this would give Jehoshaphat the post of honor in commanding the army. What it really does is it makes Jehoshaphat a target. The focus of the enemy would be upon Jehoshaphat, not Ahab. Ahab will not outwardly admit that he believes God’s warning. Secretly in his heart he does believe it. This is the reason why he disguises himself so he can foil God’s Word and will.

There are people today who are just like Ahab. No matter what they do to cover up or disguise their sin, God sees through the disguise. When they stand before the Lord, He will reveal everything.
* 2 Corinthians 5:10- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
* 1 Corinthians 4:5- Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.
* Ecclesiastes 12:14- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
* Luke 12:2- For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.
The king of Syria focuses his attack of 32 captains against the king of Israel. They see Jehoshaphat, who sticks out like a sore thumb, and head toward him. They think he is Ahab. Jehoshaphat cries out in a panic. Whatever he said convinced them he was not Ahab and they retreated from attacking him. God in His mercy spares Jehoshaphat. His cry revealed his true identity. What you do or say in a crisis reveals what you really are and believe. You find out the strength of your faith in the Lord or your weakness. Jehoshaphat almost lost his life. He invited trouble, terror, and stress into his life because he was out of the will of God and went against God’s Word. The same thing will happen to us too.

Ahab was disguised and hidden among the troops, but God still found him. Ahab was out to foil God’s Word, but to no avail. A man shot an arrow at random and severely wounded Ahab, hitting him in the crack of his armor. He bled to death in his chariot and died that evening. Ahab could not foil God’s plan. Ahab was warned three times of his death but could not foil God’s plan.

1. 20:42-The unnamed prophet
2. 21:19- Elijah in Naboth’s vineyard

If God says something is going to happen, it will happen. The arrow that hit Ahab was a missile guided by the Lord as David’s stone was guided to the head of Goliath. God’s arrow had Ahab’s name upon it.

*Psalm 64:7- But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.*

That arrow overcame every obstacle to accomplish God’s will. It overcame Ahab’s camouflage, armor, unbelief, and his defiance. The timing was right and the place was right. Like an orchestra playing in unison, God brought all the factors together to fulfill His Word and will. You cannot foil God’s Word or will. He is God.

*Job 12:19- He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.*

*Proverbs 21:1- The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

*Job 42:2- I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

*Isaiah 43:13- Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*  

*Psalm 135:6 - Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

*Job 9:12 - Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say
unto him, What doest thou?

God is sovereign and all powerful. Nothing happens without His clearance. He can overcome the impossible or whatever obstacle men put in His path to thwart His plans.
* Three Hebrews stood for the Lord in Babylon and were thrown into a fiery furnace. The Lord protected them in the furnace.
* Daniel was thrown into a lions’ den for praying and the Lord shut the mouths of the lions.
* Israel was cornered and threatened by the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. God opened the Red Sea and drowned the Egyptian army.
* Jonah ran from God. God sent a storm and a whale to get him back on track.
* Jesus was crucified and left for dead. He was buried for three days, but arose from the grave because He was God. You cannot foil God’s plan or His Word.

The fact that the Lord is in control gives great comfort. Nothing happens to us without His clearance.
* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

God help us to be yielded and surrendered to the Lord’s will in our lives all the time. May we never get to a point where we try to foil God’s will or plans in our lives.
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