

1 KINGS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*As the Jewish postscript comment on the BOOKS OF KINGS notes there are 1534 “openings of the lips” in these books—the expression is in Hebrew the equivalent to our words “spoken sentence”. So within the conversations in the two books taken as one whole there are conversations expressing 1500 plus “sets of words” or sentences. These conversations are set within dynamic scenes and the whole is related as history. Wherefore, then, are the books classified as among the “former prophets”? Clearly we term these books “former prophetic” not just because Elijah and Elisha feature substantially in the narratives but partly so of course. The basic reason is that the “words” spoken though related to us who read them as academic history are **words** by and large bearing vitally on the future of the nation of Israel or its kings or people—they are **prophetic words**. We should all say “God be in my mouth and my understanding”. One important lesson of KINGS is the value for good or ill of the tongue and of human speech. Speech can be compassionate, cruel, proud, inspired, satirical, dismissive, humble and so much more. The Hebrew postscript virtually says there is enough in these books to fill a year’s readings (53 sederim). The postscript reads “I will belong to Israel—I will be a wall of fire in her midst, and the king of Israel will gather together her divisions by the prophets.” The divine presence and glory ever acting in judgment to ensure holiness and corroborated by the testimony of prophecy is everywhere in these books. God is ever the silent listener to every conversation and the words spoken are vital to how Israel’s story moves forward in the context of dynamic history where God is in the midst. This latter factor I have captured by using such-like terms as “It was reality” to help the reader trace the link between prophetic words and actual events. Much like the red-letter NT that highlights the words of Jesus I have highlighted the conversations of the BOOKS OF KINGS in bold typeface.*

DAVID EDGES TOWARDS 120 –A VIRGIN IS FOUND FOR HIM 1-4

So the King David became elderly with the passing of years and he had no warmth in him but they covered him with bed spreads. Then his servants spoke to him that they would seek for my lord the king a young virgin maidservant for the presence of the king and she would be with him as a familiar nurse and lie with the king in your bosom and be warmth for the king. So they sought the beautiful young maid through all the borders of Israel and they found Abishag the Shunamite and bought her to the king. And the young lady was very beautiful and she would become a familiar of the king and she would constantly minister warmth but the king did not have sexual relationship with her. *This irregular but not immoral relationship would not pass scrutiny under NT standards and strictly viewed it violates the marriage vow. It presented a problem for the realm by distancing Bathsheba from the king and thereby allowing the opportunistic Adonijah to attempt to hi-jack David’s expressed will for the succession. However it also showed the discipline that David learned through the Bathsheba affair which was throughout life a firm resolved guideline. Passion never again took away his heart.*

ADONIJAH STAKES A CLAIM TO THE THRONE 5-10

Then Adonijah son of Hagidh offered himself saying **“I will act as king”** and he created for himself a chariot and fifty horse-riding soldiers who raced swiftly in front of him. His father did not trouble him [*“pain him”*] through his days saying **“Let me know why you are doing things like this”** and also he was of very good appearance and he was born just after Absalom. Then there were his promissory words with Joab son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest and they helped following after Adonijah. *It appears that Adonijah had ensured that Joab and Abiathar were on side before he attempted this coup.* But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei and the warriors of David were not with Adonijah. *It is notable that Shimei who had cursed David to his face was loyal to the core after his turn around.* Then Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and well-fed calves at the stone of Zoheleth close to Enrogel and he called all his brothers the king’s sons and all the men of Judah – the king’s servants but Nathan the prophet and Benaiah and the warriors and Solomon his brother he did not call. *The priesthood were divided and the royal house was also divided over this new rebellion.*

NATHAN DEFENDS THE RIGHT OF SOLOMON 11-27

1 NATHAN’S WORD ESTABLISHED THE RULE OF SOLOMON

Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba mother of Solomon and said **“Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Hagidh is king and David does not know? So now I would advise you that you must go and deliver your life and the life of your son Solomon. Go off and come to King David and say to him ‘My lord O king, did you not make a vow to your handmaid saying that Solomon your son “would reign after me and sit on my throne” so why is Adonijah king?’ Behold while you are speaking there with the king I will come after you and I will fill out your words.”** *Nathan who spoke to David of his sin now enters to support the woman whose husband’s death he protested by the famous parable. He is a redoubtable champion of righteousness who takes his stand for right and is a stabilising factor in the realm.*

MY WORD MY BOND

Then Bathsheba went to the king; to the inner chamber and the king was aged and Abishag the Shunamite was looking after the king. And Bathsheba bowed the crown of her head and showed reverence the king and the king said **“What is the matter with you?”** Then she said to him **“My lord, you swore by Yahweh your God for you said that Solomon your son will be king after me and sit on my throne’ but now look Adonijah is ruling and now, my lord O king, you do not know it. Besides he has sacrificed a herd of oxen and big numbers of fatlings of sheep and called all the sons of the king and Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army but he has not called Solomon your servant. And now, my lord O king, all eyes are on you that Israel may make them apprised as to who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. For the story will be as soon as my lord the king rests with his fathers I and my son Solomon will be the sin-offerings [HATTAIM]”**

And behold she continued to speak with the king then Nathan the prophet came in. And they told the king saying “Behold Nathan the prophet has come for an audience with the king and he did reverence to the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan said **“My lord O king did you say “Adonijah will reign after me and he will sit on my throne?” Because today he has gone down and sacrificed a herd and a great number of fatlings of the flock and he has called all the sons of the king and commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest and now they are**

eating and drinking in his presence and saying **‘May Adonijah the king live long’** but he has not called me your servant or Zadok the priest or Benaiah son of Jehoiada or your servant Solomon. Is this something separate that my lord the king has himself said and have you not made your servants aware who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

THE TIMELY WORD

DAVID ACTS INSTANTLY & STEMS THE REVOLT 28-35

Then King David replied and said **“Call Bathsheba”** and she came into the king’s presence and stood before the face of the king. Then the king swore and said **“As the LORD lives who delivered or redeemed [hdp] my soul from all adversity because I have sworn like this to you by the LORD God of Israel saying **“That Solomon your son will be king after me and he will sit on my throne in my place for this reason I will undertake thus this very day.”**** Then Bathsheba went down on her face to the ground and bowed to the king and said **‘May my lord king David live for ever”**

Then king David said **“Call Zadok the priest and Nathan son of Jehoiada the prophet”** and they came into the king’s audience and the king said to them **“Take with you the servants of your lord and set Solomon my son on my mule and cause him to make the descent to Gihon and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet shall anoint him there as king over Israel and they shall blow in triumph on the shophar and say **“Long live Solomon the king.”**** *David’s prompt action saved the day and spared national turmoil in Israel.*

“Then you will go up after him and he shall sit on my throne and he shall reign in my place for I have given the order for him to be leader in charge of Israel and Judah.”

A WORD OF PRAYER IS SO VITAL

SOLOMON ANOINTED – ADONIJAH DISCOMFITED 36-48

Then Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king and said **“Amen, even thus the LORD God of my lord the king will say. Just as Yahweh was with my lord the king may He be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord David the king.”** *This simple truly intentioned prayer by the future military commander in chief was heard by God. It was so simple – yet so effective and the LORD used Benaiah to begin to bring about that stability and wiser military leadership he sought in prayer.*

Then Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the Kerethites and Pelethites caused Solomon to ride on the mule of King David and travelled down with him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took the horn of anointing oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon and blew triumphantly on the shophar and all the people said **“Long live Solomon the king.”** And all the people went up after him playing pipes and radiant; the joy was great and the earth rent itself along with the echo. And Adonijah heard and all those he invited – all who were to eat and Joab heard the sound of the trumpet and said **“What do we know about this sound of a multitude in the city?”** While he was talking behold Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest also arrived and Adonijah said **“Come because you are a man of war and a carrier of good tidings.”** But Jonathan replied and said to Adonijah **“Nay rather (1) our master David the king has made Solomon king and (2) commissioned alongside the king Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the Kerethites and Pelethites and (3) he has placed him on the king’s mule. And (4) Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed**

him king at Gihon and (5) are gone up from there loudly rejoicing and (6) the shout of the city is the sound that you are hearing; and (7) Solomon has even sat down on the throne of the kingdom. (8) And the courtiers of the king came to give their blessing to King David saying “May God make Solomon’s name more prosperous than your own and his throne greater than your throne.” And (9) the king bowed upon his bed or couch and even spoke like this ‘Blessed be the LORD God of Israel that has provided for my eyes to see one sitting on my throne.’ *David rejoiced to live to see his beloved and wise son and successor enthroned.*

A WORD OF APOLOGY

THE SUBMISSION OF ADONIJAH 49-53

Then all those whom Adonijah had invited were terrified and arose and went every man on his way. And Adonijah feared the presence of Solomon and went and took firm hold of the horns of the altar. *In utter despair Adonijah sought refuge in the tabernacle. He also tried to bind the king but in his wisdom Solomon put Adonijah’s future on hold pending continued good conduct.* So the king was told “**Behold Adonijah fears king Solomon and behold, he has grasped the horns of the altar saying... Sometime today let King Solomon swear to me that his servant will not die by the sword**” Then Solomon said “**If he will be a son of valour none of his hair will fall to the ground but if evil shall be found in him he shall die.**” So King Solomon sent and had him brought down from the altar and he came and bowed reverently to King Solomon and Solomon said to him “**Go to your house**”. *In this first judgment of Solomon he showed grace and wisdom. He did not bind himself by an oath but simply removed Adonijah from the horns and dismissed him giving him opportunity to redeem himself by doing well. Genuine sorrow and a thorough-going apology cool anger and attract mercy.*

CHAPTER 2

DAVID REMINDS SOLOMON OF GOD’S COVENANT 1-4

So the days of David’s death drew near and he commanded Solomon his son saying “**I am going the way of all the earth so you must be strong because you are the man in charge. So retain the observances of the LORD your God to go in his ways; to guard his ordinances, his commands, righteous judgments and repeated testimonies as they are written in the law of Moses so that you may be wise spiritually in all that you undertake and wherever you will turn your attention so that the LORD may make good his **WORD OF PROMISE** which he declared about me saying ‘If your sons are watchful of their ways walking before my face in truth with all their heart and soul saying There will not fail you a man to sit on the throne of Israel’**” *In this instance David himself as a prophet declared what God said.*

A WORD OF ADVICE

ADVICE ON THREE MEN 5-9

From long years hard experience David at over 100 when men are mature and softer had retained his serious view that profound leadership changes were needed to allow a leap forward in the spiritual worship and military and political life of the state. “**And also you ought to know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me – what he did to the two commanders of the hosts of Israel, to Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether for he slaughtered them and imputed the blood of war in peacetime and shed the blood of war right over his girding that was on his loins and over the sandals that were on his feet. So act skilfully or wisely with him and do not**

cause his grey hairs to go down to Sheol in peace. *Solomon was charged with executing justice over Joab.*

But concerning the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite make a covenant and they shall be among those who eat at your table for thus they came close to me when I fled away from the face of Absalom your brother.

And look carefully – you have with you Shimei son of Gera the Benjamite from Bathurim and he cursed me with vehement curses on the day I went to Mahanaim but he went down to meet me at Jordan and I swore to him in the name of the LORD ‘You shall not die by the sword.’ But now do not hold him blameless for he is a shrewd man and you will be well aware what you should do with him for you will have had to send his grey hairs down to Sheol on account of blood.” *David appears to be saying that old characteristics in Shimei will resurface giving Solomon no option but to get rid of Shimei.*

THE DEATH OF DAVID 10-12

So David was laid to rest with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. The years of David’s reign over Israel were 40 years; he reigned in Hebron for seven years and reigned as monarch for 33 years in Jerusalem. Then Solomon sat on his father’s throne and his kingdom was very firmly established.

ADONIJAH’S FOOLISH REQUEST & DEATH 13-25

Then Adonijah son of Hagidh came to Bathsheba mother of Solomon and she said **“Have you come peaceably”** and he said **“Peaceably”**. And he said **“I have a matter for you”**. And she said **“Speak”**. Then he said **“You are aware that the kingdom was mine and all Israel looked on me as the future king; then things turned round and the kingdom became my brothers for it was his from the LORD. So now I have one request for you; do not turn my face away!”** so she said to him **“Speak!”** So he said **“Please request King Solomon – for he will not refuse to see you – that he gives me Abishag the Shunamite as my wife.”** And Bathsheba said **“Good, I will speak to the king on your behalf.”** And Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him on Adonijah’s behalf and the king rose to greet her and paid her respect and resumed his seat on his throne and the king had a throne placed for his mother and she sat on his right. Then she said **“I have one small petition to request from you –do not refuse me.”** And the king said to her –**“I should not cause the request of my mother to be refused.”** So she said **“You will have provided Abishag the Shunamite to be given Adonijah your brother as his wife.”** Then the King Solomon answered his mother and said **“For what reason have you asked Abishag the Shunamite as wife for my brother Adonijah?”** **“You must also be requesting the kingdom for him for he is my older brother – and indeed asking on behalf of Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruihah.”** Then Solomon the king swore by the LORD and said **“Thus may God do to me and add thus for Adonijah in speaking on this matter has spoken and acted against his life and soul.”**

And the king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah son of Jehoiada and he fell upon him and he died. But to Abiathar the priest the king said **“Go to Anathoth to your fields for you carried the ark of the LORD before the face of David my father and because you were humbled and afflicted by all that afflicted my father.”** So Solomon expelled [crg] Abiathar from acting as high priest of the Lord to fulfil the word of there LORD that was spoken about the house of Eli at Shiloh.

Then the report came to Joab for Joab had inclined after Adonijah but he did not go away after Absalom. And Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD and took hold on the horns of the altar. *This is the second use of this opportunity to plea for mercy. In the days of David (1.51) Adonijah first used this recourse to save his life. Joab would hope that it would stand good for him as well – but not so.* And Solomon the king was apprised that Joab had fled to the tabernacle of the LORD and behold he is reserved at the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada saying **“Go, slay him”**. So Benaiah son of Jehoiada came to the tabernacle of the LORD and said **“Thus says the King ‘Come out’”** but he said **“I will not for here I will die”** and Benaiah brought this statement back to the king saying **“Thus did Joab say and thus he answered me”**. Then the king to him **“Do as I said, slay him and bury him and it will remove the blood of the undeserving of death that Joab slew from over me and the house of my father.”** So the LORD shall recompense shall bring back shed his blood on his head because he struck two good and righteous men on his own and slew them by the sword but my father David did not know – namely Abner son of Ner commander of the army of Israel and Amasa son of Jether commander of the army of Judah. So their blood has returned on the head of Joab and his seed for ever and for David and his seed and his house and throne there will be peace for ever with the LORD. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and slew him and buried him at his home in the wilderness. Then the king provided for Benaiah son of Jehoiada to be in charge of the army in place of Joab and to Zadok the priest the King gave the priesthood instead of Abiathar.

Then the King sent and called Shimei and said to him **“Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem and live there and do not leave there to go hither and thither for it will be so when you leave to cross the brook Kidron you must be aware that you will definitely die. Your blood will be on your own head.”**

Then Shimei said **“The word that the king speaks is good; your servant will act in accordance with the word of my Lord the King”** and Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem for many days. Then *it was reality* that after three full years two slaves of Shimei rushed off to Achish son of Maachah King of Gath. And they told Shimei saying **“Behold your servants are in Gath.”** And Shimei arose and saddled his ass and went to Gath to Achish to look for his slaves. So Shimei went and caused his slaves to come from Gath. But the information given to Solomon was that Shimei had left Jerusalem and was living in Gath. Then the King sent and called Shimei and said **“Is it not the case that I caused you to swear by the LORD and I made it strenuous for you saying ‘The day you go out and go here or there you must be aware that you will surely die’ and you said to me ‘The word is good, I will obey it.’ So you know well that you have not kept the oath of the LORD or the command I gave you.”** Then the King said to Shimei **“Now you are aware of all the evil that you heart knows very well that you did to David my father and the LORD has caused the evil to return on your own head.”** *Shimei had clearly been cruel to his servants so that they left him or he had begun to stir something of concern through his adventure to Gath and hoped that the matter of his slaves would provide an alibi. Scripture does not give us any further facts save the impression that Solomon deemed Shimei had other reasons for leaving Jerusalem.*

“But the reign of Solomon is blest and the throne of David will be established before the LORD’S face for ever.” So the king commanded Benaiah son of Jehoiada and he went out and fell upon him [*Shimei*] and he died and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. *Solomon’s own testimony to his belief that this third act was vital to national security further suggests that Shimei was not a man to*

be trusted and a third revolt was not going to be tolerated. Shimei must have known that Solomon would be true to his word and enforce the oath he had firmly put to Shimei.

CHAPTER 3

SOLOMON MARRIES PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER – CONSOLIDATING AN ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT 1-4

Solomon had delivered a mutual alliance by marriage in respect of Pharaoh the king of Egypt and he took the daughter of Pharaoh and caused her to come to the city of David until he completed building his palace and the house of the LORD and the wall encircling Jerusalem. Certainly the people were sacrificing at the high places because he had not built a house for the name of the LORD until these days. But Solomon loved the LORD to walk in the ordinances of David his father – he certainly sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places. And the king went up to Gibeon for it was a great high place and there he sacrificed 1000 burnt offerings on that altar. *In the days of Samuel “high places” were established meeting places for God and man in worship though later the connotation changed with the building of the temple. Solomon’s worship was costly and demonstrated a deep commitment to the LORD,*

A WORD OF LOWLY HUMILITY

THE DIVINE APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM 5-9

At Gibeon the LORD showed himself to Solomon in a dream by night and God said **“Ask what I shall give you?”** *The LORD saw the immense sacrifice Solomon made and showed his greater love by his immense grace to the king. It is ever thus-no-one can outdo God in the measure of His loving-kindness.* Then Solomon answered **“You made a great covenant with your servant my father in accordance as he walked before you in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart with you. You have also watched over this great covenant in respect of him and given him a son to sit on his throne as today. And now, O LORD God, you have caused your servant to reign in place of my father David and I am a little child. I have no knowledge of going out and coming in from battle? So your servant is in the middle of your people – a people you have chosen – a great people which will not be weighed by number and will not be counted by ten thousands.”** *Solomon had learned the lesson David was taught at the end of his reign that Israel’s greatness lay not in numbers but in God.*

“Give to your servant a heart of obedient attention to righteously judge your people; to decide between good and evil for who is able to rightly judge this glorious people of yours?” *Notice how careful Solomon was to recognise the LORD’S primacy and that Israel were His (God’s) people!*

WORDS OF PROMISE

THE LORD’S RESPONSE 10-15

And the matter was good in the eyes of Adonai because Solomon asked this thing. And God said to him **“Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself length of life nor riches nor the life of your enemies but you have asked the discernment to follow justice obediently behold**

1. I have done as you said and given you a wise and discerning heart beyond that of your predecessors and none will rise afterwards like you.

2. Also because you have not asked riches or glory these also I will give you so that there will be none among the kings will arise like you during your lifetime and

3. If you walk in my ways to keep my ordinances and commands as David your father walked I will also lengthen your days.” *Two of these promises were precisely fulfilled but Solomon’s syncretistic practice prevented the third benefit (11.4-6)*

TEXTUAL GAP 3.14

Then Solomon awoke or was cut off and behold it was a dream and he went to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord and offered up burnt offerings and made peace offerings and made a banquet for all his servants.

It would have been ever so easy for Solomon to have dismissed what he dreamed but he believed God and rejoiced so in the divine provision as to share his celebrations with his staff. The short but exceedingly memorable visit of the LORD changed his life and afforded direction for the years ahead. Solomon reigned 40 years – exactly as his father David had done. David lived 120 years. From 2 Chronicles 9.29 we learn that other three accounts of the reign of Solomon were once extant in the works of Ahijah, Iddo and Nathan.

WORDS OF WISDOM

THE WORD OF WISDOM DIVIDES DISPUTING WOMEN 16-28

Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him *for judgment*. And the first woman said to him **“My Lord, this woman and I lived in the same house and I had a son while she was in the house with me. Then it happened three days later that this woman gave birth. We were all on our own as one; there was no stranger with us in the house – none besides the two of us in the house. Then this woman’s son died at night because she lay on top of him. And in the middle of the night she took my son from my side when your handmaid was sleeping and she caused him to lie to rest on her breast and her dead son she laid on my breast. Then in the morning I rose to feed my son and behold he was dead but I had a discerning look at him in the morning light and behold he was not my son to whom I had given birth.”** Then the other woman said **“No, because my son is alive and your son is dead!”** But this one said **“Your son is dead but mine is alive,”** Then the king said **“Bring me a sword”** and they brought a sword in front of the king. Then the king said **“Divide the living child between them both; half to one and half to the other.”** Then the woman who owned the living child spoke to the king because of her compassion – for his mercies on her son and she said **“For my sake my Lord give the living child to her – do not slay him.”** But this one said **“That will not be a portion each; let them divide him.”**

Then the king said, **“Give the living child to her; they shall not kill him; she is his mother!”** And all Israel heard the judgment that the king had rightly judged and they feared encounter the presence of the king for they saw that the wisdom of God was in his encounter to bring about right judgment. *The expression has two possible meanings (a) That Solomon through his encounter with God became wise and (b) That to encounter Solomon in judgment was fearful since God gave him wisdom.*

CHAPTER 4

THE MAIN OFFICIALS OF SOLOMON 1-6

1 It was reality that Solomon was king over the entirety of Israel. And these were his officers of state: Azariah son of Zadok the priest, Elihoreph and Ahijah sons of Shisha scribes, Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud chief of historical records. And Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the army and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. Azariah Ben-Nathan was over the military garrisons. Zabud son of Nathan was also priest and pastor of the king. Then there was Ahishar over the royal house and **Adoniram son of Abda who was overseer of work and labour**. *The latter was overseer of the 13 year project in Lebanon and in charge of 30,000 men*

(1)WISDOM AND THE CHOICE OF GOVERNORS

TWELVE AREA GOVERNORS SUPPLY THE KING'S TABLE 7-19

The governors Solomon appointed continued through the entire 13 years of his great building project – testimony enough of the wisdom of his selection and the workability of his plan for provisioning devised from his knowledge of the resources of the nation. Solomon had twelve appointed district officials over all Israel and they continually sustained the king and his house during a month through the year – they were (each) in charge of one month's supplies. These are their names:

- (1) Ben-Hur in Mount Ephraim;
- (2) Ben-Deker in the Makez area with Shaalbim and Elon Bethhanan;
- (3) Ben-Hesed in the Arubboth area – Socoh and all the land of Heper was his;
- (4) Ben Abinadab was in charge of all Nappath Dor – Tappath daughter of Solomon was his wife.
- (5) Baanah son of Ahilud had Taanach and Megiddo and the whole of Bethshan adjacent to Zarethan lying under Jezreel from Bethshan to Abel Meholah and to the crossing of Jokmeam.
- (6) Ben Geber in Ramoth Gilead area. To his jurisdiction belonged the villages of Jair son of Manasseh that were in Gilead united or linked with Argob that is in Bashan-sixty great cities with walls and bronze barred *gates*.
- (7) Ahinadab son of Iddo over Mahanaim;
- (8) Ahimaaz in Naphtali – he also took a daughter of Solomon, Bashemoth as his wife;
- (9) Baanah son of Hushai in charge of Asher and Baaloth;
- (10) Jehoshaphat Ben Parosh in charge of Issachar;
- (11) Shimei Ben Elah in charge of Benjamin;
- (12) Geber son of Uri in the land of Gilead – the land of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan – he was sole official in charge throughout that land area.

HEBREW CHAPTER 5 (4.20 INCORPORATED) ENGLISH 4.20-28

The Hebrew text of Chapter 5 begins at verse 21 (Chapter 4) and runs in parallel thereafter with the English text. I follow the Hebrew division which sets the greatness of Israel's joy and the greatness of Solomon's wisdom alongside each other and speaks of both as extensive as the sand on the seashore. They are as steady as the sand and as beautiful under the mighty stresses of the rolling tides of time. They are not even principally a sign of numerical power but of divine refinement and loveliness and such establishment as would not be moved.

(2)WISDOM IN RECOGNISING POWER & GREATNESS ARE GOD-GIVEN

Solomon never numbered Israel

HEBREW 4.20-5. ENGLISH 4.20-26

And Judah and Israel were great as the sand on the sea littoral for grandeur eating and drinking and radiantly happy. *Israel's "greatness" is felicitously compared to the "sand" for the following reasons:-*

1. *The sand increases steadily like national population*
2. *The sand is cleansed by constant tidal washing*
3. *The sand is refined and becomes more beautiful as time passes.*

And Solomon was ruler and mentor [*lcm*] throughout all the kingdoms from the river Jordan to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought gifts and were servants all the days of his life.

2. It was reality that the food of Solomon for one day was thirty cor of fine flour and sixty cor of standing corn; ten fattened cattle and twenty pastured oxen and a hundred sheep apart from goats and deer and gazelles and indoor – fed birds and beasts. For he subdued and ruled [*hdr*] through the entire area over the River from Tipsah to Gaza and peace for him *3. was a reality* from all regions and all around. Then a man of Judah and Israel lived in confidence under his vine and fig tree from Dan to Beersheba all the days of Solomon.

(3) WISDOM IN USING DETERRENCE 26-28

4. It was reality Solomon had 4000 stable stalls for chariot horses and 12000 riders. *Parashim is more generally "cavalrymen" though it may also mean "horses for riding" as opposed to those which drew chariots.*

These district officers of King Solomon maintained provision for King Solomon and all who had access to the table of King Solomon. Each man in his month neglected nothing. Each man according to his administration brought both the barley and the straw for the chariot horses and the cavalry horses to the place where it should be. *The efficiency of the king's administrators was of a very high order. They appear to have been able to cope with the provision of food for his very large household and enormous animal provender besides.*

(4) SOLOMON'S FABLED COMPREHENSIVE WISDOM 29-34 (HEBREW 5.9-15)

And God gave Solomon practical and spiritual wisdom and very great understanding and a breadth of mind as the sand upon the lip of the sea. *The imagery of the ocean comes in a second time within this chapter. First it was used of the nation's power and resources and now it is used of the comprehensive mind and effective lip of Solomon beyond which nothing passes to destroy or oppress.* And the wisdom of Solomon was greater than the wisdom of all the sons of the east and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any man – than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman, Calcol and Darda sons of Mahol and his name was famous in all the surrounding nations. And he spoke 3000 wise proverbial epigrams and his songs were 1005. He would speak

- (1) On the subject of trees from the cedar which is native to Lebanon and
- (2) On the subject of the hyssop that grows on the wall.
- (3) And he would speak on the subject of wild quadrupeds
- (4) And about birds
- (5) And about reptiles
- (6) And on the subject of fish.

They came from all peoples or nations to listen to the Solomon's wisdom; from all kingdoms of the earth where they had heard of his wisdom. *The fabled wisdom even in his time had become so well known in every land that emissaries were sent to find*

out what they wanted to know about trees plants and the world of animals, birds, reptiles and fish from the king of Israel. The era was most like that of the coming Messiah when all nations shall go up to Jerusalem to learn and to worship.

CHAPTER 5

(5) WISDOM & FRIENDSHIP WITH HIS FATHER'S FRIEND 1-6 (HEBREW 5.16-20)

And Hiram king of Tyre was continuing to send his servants to Solomon for he heard that Solomon had been anointed king under David and he had a friendship with David that endured all their days. And Solomon continued to send to Hiram saying **“You are acquainted with the fact that my father David was not able to build for the name of the LORD God because of the war that encircled him on all sides until the LORD provided that they were trodden under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God has caused rest round about me and there is no opponent [*Satan*] and no urgent or attacking evil [*[r [gp]*]. And behold I am speaking of building a house for the name of the LORD my God according to that which the LORD spoke to David my father saying “Your son whom I will provide instead of you upon your throne –he will build a house for my name. So now keep orders going that they cut wood for me from Lebanon and my servants will be alongside your servants and I will hire your servants and give you as you quote for you are well aware that there is not a man among us who knows about cutting trees like the Sidonians.”**

HIRAM'S CORDIAL RESPONSE TO THE NEW KING 7-9 (HEBREW 5.21-23)

5. It was reality when Hiram heard the words of Solomon he was overjoyed and said **“Blessed be the LORD this day who has given to David a wise son over this great people.”** Then Hiram sent to Solomon saying **“I have heard what you sent *by way of request* to me and I will do everything you desire with cedar and pine timber. My servants will get them down to the sea and I will put them on floating rafts by sea to the place which you direct and divide or cut them and you will lift them there and you will do me the favour to provide food for my palace.”**

10-11 (HEBREW 24-25)

6. It was reality –Hiram provided Solomon all the cedar and pine timber he desired. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cor of wheat for his household consumption and twenty *thousand* cor of beaten oil [*cf 2Chronicles 2.10*]. Thus Solomon provided for Hiram year on year.

TEXTUAL GAP 26

The opening or space in the Hebrew text just where offerings are described allows us to note that over a period of 13 years [1Kings 7.1] The immense supplies paid for the construction material and its cutting—namely over 1.6 million bushels of wheat and 1.5 million gallons of oil.

(6) WISDOM AND CO-OPERATION

SOLOMON'S LEAGUE WITH HIRAM & WORKFORCE 12-18 (HEBREW 26-30)

And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom as he promised to David and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon and they made a covenant between them. And King Solomon caused to go up to Lebanon a number of men and the number requisitioned was 30,000 men. And he sent 20,000 to Lebanon each month exchanging so that they were a month in Lebanon and two at home. And Adoniram was in charge of them.

7. It was reality Solomon had 70,000 burden-bearers and 80,000 woodcutters [bxj may mean “stone-cutters” but the stone was cut much nearer home in quarries under the Moriah area] in the mountain. Notwithstanding there were men in charge who superintended the work for Solomon – 3,300 who gave directions throughout the work undertaken.

(7) WISDOM AND MOVEMENT OF MASSIVE ASHLARS 17-18 (HEBREW 31-32)

And the king continually gave orders and they would remove great stones – choice stones for the foundation of the temple – stones that were hewn and dressed. Then the carvers – sons of Solomon and sons of Hiram and the Gebalim [“Edging finishers”? or those who mitred stone and wood. The word in current translation is simply transliterated but I believe it describes a group of finishers who tooled the wood and stone which could be constructed on site without the use of the hammer] prepared the timber and the stones for building the temple. The greatness of Solomon’s wisdom is seen in the huge technical task of providing ashlar for the building of the temple from underneath. It may well be that the stone was quarried at a lower level and wheeled upwards by manpower and that the resultant huge subterranean space under the temple area results from the extraction. The ground beneath could be re-configured in the process and all evidence of the process virtually erased; besides a convoluted and indeed mapped underground area could thus be created.

CHAPTER 6

SOLOMON STARTED TO BUILD IN THE MONTH ZIR 1-3

It was the commencement of the dry season and the end of heavy rainfall and the Passover holiday was completed two weeks prior. It was what Solomon would call a “time to build”.

8. It was reality in the 480th year since the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt and **in the fourth year of Solomon’s monarchy** over Israel in the month Ziur, the second month he was building the house of the LORD. And the house that King Solomon built for the LORD was **sixty cubits** in length twenty broad and rose to thirty cubits. And the vestibule at the front face of the temple of the house was twenty cubits wide and it was against the front of the width of the house a **ten cubits** extension upon the house frontage. *The overall dimensions were 105 feet by 30 feet*

THE GIFT OF PAULINE TYPE SPIRITUAL WISDOM OF A “MASTER BUILDER” (1 Corinthians 3.10)

(1) WISDOM AND WINDOWS 4

He made high level windows *designed* with a slant [pqv] – windows that shut. *The first requisite of a building is light and heat and air. All of these factors were provided for in the lintel level windows Solomon had constructed. They were tilted to gain better light and produce heat for the stone building much in the way solar panels do but they could be opened or closed to suit weather conditions.*

(2) WISDOM AND LIBRARY SPACE 5

And he built a **protective storied outwork edifice** [[wxy]] against the wall around the walls of the house surrounding for the temple and for the holy of holies and made side-chambers and doors [tw[lx]] around. *These “cells” acted as protection for the main structure and supplied very considerable vestry, library, scriptorium, office and utility space. They were not exactly cloisters as in Herod’s temple but the platform around provided for access and a circular walkway. There may well have been as many as 24 such rooms on each of three stories.*

(3) WISDOM AND THE OUT-WORK 6

The low [or sunken] floor was five cubits wide and the middle floor six cubits wide and the third seven cubits wide for he provided rebatements around the house to prevent capture by means of the walls of the house (or) anything taking hold in the actual wall of the house itself *as cedar beams (A.V.). The design allowed for high level light inside but also for sturdy protection externally so that scaling the walls to gain entry or wreak havoc at the windows would be next to impossible. The Holiness of God was symbolised by stones which were not penetrated by anything external save high level light.*

(4) SOLOMON STONE 7

And in his building of the house **Solomon stone**... [hml v the stone and the king shared a name which meant “finished” and “quiet” or “peaceful” so the Hebrew writer calls the stone “Solomon stone” – this says something about the life and character of Solomon too. He was something of the complete man – what Paul calls the “fullness of Christ” in a measure was represented by the life of Solomon. *Markedly godly (his indulgence of idolatry in later life aside) he makes incredibly few mistakes]... made ready for removal [[Sm]] from the quarry was used and piercing hammers and rock axes or chisels nor any instruments of iron were heard at the house throughout its building. Our life and character like this stone for the temple will be cut and chiselled and edged and honed till the day we join the church triumphant.*

(5) WISDOM AND WINDING STAIRWAYS 8

The door of the side chamber(s) [[lx]] was fixed at the side of the house and they ascended by winding stairs [mylwl] to the middle floor and from the middle to the third. *This form of stairway was spatially economical and quite a unique feature; besides it symbolised the spiral of life which though it appears circular is truly ascending and moving towards heaven and divine judgment and greater intimacy with Glory. The glory of God resided over the temple.*

(6) WISDOM AND THE CEILING 9

So he built the house and completed *the structure* and covered the ceiling [nps] with boards of cedar set in order. *However the roof was constructed the ceiling from the inside was a beautiful construction of fitted wood.*

And he built each story against the entire house rising five cubits and it was fast to the house with cedar beams. *The three stories right around rose to 22 feet six inches. It appears the inner stone structure was hidden from the side by cedar stories chambers and internally the ceiling was also of pine or cedar wood. Essentially the attached structure did not penetrate the house wall but was a cedar framework constructed external to the stonework but linked doubtless to the roof beams and to powerful inside and outside cedar support posts to which the chamber floor beams on which the chamber floor boards were laid presumably were jointed. **The house itself***

compares in one most fascinating way to the church—it displays the great wisdom and foreknowledge of its maker who put the entire structure in place from a plan in his mind and probably drawn up for his workers.

(7) WISDOM AND OUR WALK GOD’S PROMISE & OUR OBEDIENCE - THE ABIDING GLORY 13-14

A COVENANT WORD

9. It was reality that the word of the LORD came to Solomon saying “**Concerning This house that you are building – if you walk in my ordinances and execute my right judgments and keep all my commandments to walk in them then I will cause my word that I spoke to David your father to be established and I will dwell in the centre of the children of Israel and not forsake my people Israel.**” So Solomon built the house and completed it.

The entire project would have been pointless without the accompanying glory which was dependent on the walk of the king and his people with God.

(8) WISDOM AND CEDAR AND PINE INTERIOR FINISH

And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar wood from the floor of the house to the walls and covered the inside with wood and he overlaid the floor with pine boards. And he built twenty cubits of the side of the house with planks of cedar [*half way along*]. He even built in cedar panelling in the inner holy of holies. And the house of the temple itself *adjacently facing the chambers* was 4 cubits long [*60 foot overall – yielding very considerable room for error in matching stone to wood had there not been incredible accuracy*]. *The entire house inside was a glorious experience for the senses with its fragrant red and white cedar panelling and its embroidered curtains. It was quite the loveliest building in the then known world. Its construction without tool was unique to all eras. In this again it mirrors the church which is the product of the mind of God – devised before all ages and wrought in time of the Holy Spirit of God. The superstructure (including the rafters) could be fitted together and taken apart off site for reassembly around the stone infrastructure of the temple and I believe this was the procedure. It required accuracy to the last centimetres and displayed the pin-point accuracy of Solomon’s carpentry team and indeed his stone-workers.*

(9) WISDOM AND CARVINGS 18

And the cedar upon the house interior [*hmymp*] was carved [*h[lqm]*] of sculpting of open gourds with seed and openings of flourishing flowers – the whole was cedar – no stone was visible. *The carving demonstrated fruitfulness and floral beauty in full bloom. No idolatry was found within the house but carvings of gourd with seed and of flowers open for pollination – both representing God given life and its fullness.*

CHAMBER OF THE WORD OR ORACLE

(10) WISDOM AND THE ARK 19-20

And the oracle or chamber of the word he prepared inside at the centre of the house to gift the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. And wall to wall the length of the oracle was 20 cubits and its width twenty and its height twenty. And he overlaid it with precious fine gold and he also overlaid the altar of cedar. *The writer makes an interesting and important connection between the oracle and the incense or prayer altar. Their union or allied ministry is noteworthy. The person who seeks God in prayer receives an answer from God who dwelt between the Cherubim. The word*

“overlay” [hpx] itself is a prophetic word meaning to “enlighten” or “brighten”. So wood is illuminated by overlay as man is illuminated by the prophetic word of God. At the heart of Jewish and Christian faith is prayer and the prophetic word of revelation.

(11) WISDOM AND A GOLDEN HOUSE 21-22

So Solomon overlaid the entire interior of the house with pure gold and he caused *the priest to pass across or the passage to be through chains of gold at the front of the oracle and he overlaid it with gold.*

The oracle was separated not by a veil but by olive wood doors from the holy place and this chain also barred the way. The chain was one but it was a set of two or three chains. These chains met the high-priest when he entered the Holy Place – only through the blood of the lamb had he the right to loose these chains which were more than symbolic since there were two or perhaps even three of them. The priest would carry the blood and open the door and loose chains. After the High-priest retired these chains were re-instated – providing a lasting testimony to the separation of man from God. Christ has shed his blood – opened the door to heaven and loosed the chains that prevent our access to God through His redemption.

(12) WISDOM AND THE CHERUBIM 23-30

And for the oracle he made two cherubim of olive wood ten cubits high. *The cherubim were 15 foot high – more than twice the height of a man. And five cubits was the wing of the first cherub and five cubits the wing of the second – ten cubits from one end of his wing to the other. These cherubim appear to be standing alongside the ark and their wingspan stretched three quarters of the spatial distance of the oracle from either side of the ark. The second cherub was 10 cubits. One height and form belonged to both cherubim. And he placed the cherubim in the inner house [the oracle] of the presence and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim and the wing of one cherub touched one wall and the wing of the second touched the second wall and their wings in the midst of the house touched wing to wing. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold. And all the walls of the house around [them] he carved with carved cuttings [as opposed to engravings] of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers in full bloom both inside the sacred place and outside it. And he overlaid the floor both inside the oracle and without with gold. The oracle represented heaven with the mighty Cherubim all about it and the streets of gold representing its utter holiness and glory. Something of that glory was, however, to be seen by the priests in the outer realm of the holy place as it is known in the church equally.*

(13) WISDOM AND THE DOORS 31-35

At the opening or door of the oracle he made doors of olive wood. The vestibule and doorposts were a fifth of the wall width. *The doorway was 6 feet wide and probably 6 feet high being closed off by two matching doors. Both doors were of olive wood and engravings of cherubim palms and open flowers in full bloom were on them and he overlaid the doors with gold and it ran down the engraved lines of the cherubim and palm trees. The Cherubim clearly represented heavenly beings but the palm trees represented victorious human beings and so both were especially precious. The flowers which represented beauty of character were not gilded. Whatever man attains in beauty whilst we live is still represented as earthy – plain wood not gold.*

And thus also he created for the door of the temple lintels or posts of olive wood a quarter of the width of the house. The temple door was seven and one half feet wide. And the two doors were of pine wood and both leaves of one single door wheeled round to fold. Both were carved and both folded. And he carved cherubim and palms and open flowers in bloom and overlaid them with gold spread upon that which had been carved. The carving was not just engraving – it seemed to be cut out so as to give a full impression and not just a trace of cherubim and palms. The doors were entered by angels and men and kept by angels and prophetic men.

(14) WISDOM AND THE PRIEST'S QUARTERS 36

And he built the inside court of the priests with three courses of hewed stone and a course of sawn cedar beams. The wall of the priests' court was in stone and wood by multiples to reach its height. The outer court of the priests reflected an altar with stone at its base and wood piled thereon. The whole impression is that approach to God is by sacrifice and the work of the altar – which was the main business of priests and in respect of Christianity the main joy and service of NT priests is to present Christ crucified.

A SEVEN YEAR PROJECT 37

In the fourth year of his reign the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid in the monthly Ziwa [April-May] and in the eleventh year in the month Bul [October – November – the month of ploughing] that is the eighth month the house was completed and all matters thereof according to all its rules or pronounced administrative judgments. And it was seven years in building.

CHAPTER 7

SOLOMONS LEBANON PALACE 1-5

And Solomon was building his own house over thirteen years of his reign and he finished his whole palace. Then he built the house or palace of the forest of Lebanon – the length was 100 cubits, [150 feet] the breadth 50 cubits [75 feet] and it rose to a height of 30 cubits [45 feet] upon four courses of positioned cedar pillars and hewn beams of cedar on the pillars. The 4 platforms were not raised on single cedar supports but a series of four stout cedars mounted upon one another. This was best for handling and for long term stability. The structure depended for its solidity upon the beams which were both the base of each floor and the foundation of the next course of building.

And it was covered with cedar over the ribbed beams that were mounted upon forty five pillars fifteen in a row. The spirit of God is pleased to give us detail on the building technique which relates of course to the handling of bulk materials to stability and to length and weight of the wood used. It appears that the beams which would be anything up to 30 feet long ran from the central row of pillars or spine and at an angle to the pillars and were based on the design and strength of the human frame itself. Not till the invention of the Roman Copula was the creation of expansive roofing able to be mounted without pillars. Solomon overcame the issue by the sheer strength of Cedar roof beams.

And there were three levels of viewing or picture windows – windows in parallel to one another – three “steps” or sets of them. And all the doors and wood seating mezuzah frames were foursquare – and a window opposite – window upon window – three steps or ranks. The doors of the palace were as wide as high and would admit two persons at once. It would appear that each chamber or room in the palace had

views and that they were vertically in line. The text may imply that the palace had a central corridor with doors and that the windows on either side gave light to the rooms and at the doorways. Thus if the corridor doorways were at least six feet wide the adjacent rooms on either side would have been sizeable – about 30 feet in width. This floor space would readily subdivide into four fine rooms for a family and Solomon might have on his two upper floors bedroom accommodation for as many as twenty households. At least one upper floor may have been non-residential and the views when shutters were thrown back would have been quite breathtaking so entertainment rooms may well have been located higher up as well. A minimal estimate would put the accommodation at from 30 to 120 bedrooms and it is very likely that there is considerable variety. The structural design would admit of reception rooms as large as 60 feet square. One is reminded of the word of Jesus “In my father’s house are many abiding places”. This palace has to be viewed as tailored to the housing of a harem besides affording room for grand and regal state entertainment and banquets.

THE OPEN AIR MEWS 6

And he created a vestibule or mews fifty cubits [75 feet] long and thirty cubits broad [45 feet] and the vestibule was overhead or a roofed area and the raised area [dm[]] and epistyle or portico [b[]] was overhead. This pleasant area doubtless beautified by flowers and shrubs was suited to walking or conversing and indeed might adapt as the equivalent of our open-air barbeque areas.

THE OPEN COURT OF JUDGMENT 7

And he created a covered portico [mlwa] of the throne where he gave judgment – the open court or portico of judgment and it was covered with cedar wood from floor to ceiling. There is no accuracy in the expression “from side to side” and the NIV gets it right – the Hebrew KARKA can be used of both floor and ceiling. The area would be impressive with its cedar wood backdrop and might mirror the previous dimensions although it could have been of semi-circular shape since the word “portico” here used varies from the previous word to suggest a rounded area.

SOLOMON’S OWN HOUSE OR PALACE & THAT FOR PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER 8

And his house where he lived had another enclosed court apart from the palace of the mews of like construction to this one. We are speaking of a third external area more private in character where Solomon could repose with his family and concubines. He also created a palace for the daughter of Pharaoh that Solomon had married like this mews. It appears that the word PORCH or as I translate “mews” stands for a house in its entirety – what we would call a “veranda build” or cloisters.

*All these properties were of costly stonework according to the standard size of cut stone – etched or edged with cutting tools inside and out from foundation level to ceiling and outside to the great enclosure or protective wall. Everywhere about the Lebanon suite and around it dressed stone was a special feature of the expensive building work. The foundation also was of valuable stones – stones of eight and ten cubits. Solomon’s three story building stood on ashlar of 12-15 feet long and appropriate width and depth. And above foundation level were valuable stones rated according to size and cut and costly cedar. And the great court or surrounding enclosure was **three courses** of cut stones and a row of sawn cedars **for the inner court facings of the house of the LORD** and for **the porch of the house**. To retrace*

reference to the priestly court we now can connect the architecture of the porch with the court of the house of God as both carry a spiritual imprint taken from altar building (three rows plus wood) differing of course in that the altar of God was not of dressed stone. The inescapable truth of the altar as central to Israel's life is maintained in Solomon's buildings. Because the altar represents approach to God by sacrifice realised in Christ this feature of Solomon's building kept the altar and only acceptable means of approach to God before the eyes even in the palace prepared for his Egyptian bride.

TEXTUAL GAP 12-13

The Hebrew margin reads "the slipping away and re-gathering of narratives or writings is like rounding up scattered beasts." The text moves with rather a jolt from building to the summons of Hiram. It is not all that strange in fact because it would appear that some years later Solomon commissioned two brass pillars for the temple and their completion may well now have called for a little celebration.

HIRAM IS SUMMONED FOR A CELEBRATION 13

Then Solomon the king sent and wished to receive Hiram from Tyre. *Solomon planned a deserved reception for his good friend Hiram who had contributed so very greatly to his projects.* Hiram was son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali but his father was a man native to Tyre a brass operative and he was full of practical wisdom and understanding and knowledge to create everything made of brass and Hiram came to king Solomon for he undertook his entire project undertook all his [Solomon's] work.

THE PILLARS WITH THEIR GOSPEL LESSON 14-22

Whilst Hiram's father-in-law made and moulded the pillars and capitals the design was Solomon's and it affords both in its brazen material and design detail one of the clearest OT portraits of gospel truth. So much so is this the case that we may take Solomon as Ecclesiastes shows not only for a preacher but also a prophetic preacher. It is of little value that scholars observe that Melkart was worshipped in the form of two pillars at Tyre according to Herodotus.

And he formed two columns of brass – each single pillar was 18 cubits high. And a measuring cord of 12 cubits went round the two pillars. *The line in a figure of eight would be put around them as they lay on the ground so that each pillar was 9 feet in circumference. They were less than three feet in diameter.*

And he made two crown shaped chapters to attach to the head of the columns of brass that had been poured into a mould – the height of the one chapter was 5 cubits and the height of the second chapter or capital was also 5 cubits. *The ornate crowns that were mounted on the columns were 7.5 feet high alone.* Networks of interwoven or platted work were created of chains for the chapters that were on the heads of the columns – seven for the first and seven for the second capital. Then he made the pillars and twin rows of pomegranates above the network to hide the chapters that were on the top and in that same style he made the second chapter. *From below when one would look up first the chain network would be seen – and the pomegranates symbolising fruitfulness above them – virtually obscuring the crowns at the apex from view. This is true to life for we are bound with the chains of our sinful humanity but God enables fruitfulness as we move closer to him and in his presence at length we too receive the crown of life. This process was similar for our Saviour. He suffered amongst us and bore with our sin carrying that burden to the cross – the fruit of his*

perfect life as our high priest is our imputed righteousness and as He was crowned with glory and honour so he shall make us kings and priests to God. In the first instance the two pillars symbolised two kings – maybe Hiram imagined that he as the widows son of the tribe of Naphtali was one of the kings honoured – but it was that other king from Naphtali – Jesus the Messiah-King who made His home at Capernaum along with the anointed king David and his heirs of faith among whom Solomon (and perhaps Hiram featured). It is inspiring to think that Hiram stood in the same relationship (a) in respect of his home territory – Naphtali and (b) in respect of his mother (a widow) and (c) in respect of his family as trades people as the Saviour Himself.

And the chapiters or capitals that were on the heads of the columns were made of lily work for 4 cubits. *The lilies demonstrated the perfection of beauty and imputed righteousness alongside the purity of the king and his heaven – and above the lily work was the scarcely visible crown occupying just 18 inches at the very head of the column.*

And the chapiters above the two pillars or columns also had a union of protuberance or the womb which belonged to conception. *Here the Qere adds of “latticework” which is not necessary but probably is accurate of the order since (1) the chain work and (2) protuberance or convex rounding emblematic of virgin birth or new birth hide (3) a metal “union” that linked the lower section of the chapter to the higher section where (4) the pomegranates (5) lilies and (6) crown mouldings were. The pomegranates were 200 in tiers or rows around about both chapiters. A pomegranate at 2-2.5 inches – its real size would be able to be embossed about 45 times around a 9feet circumference so that there probably were 4 rows of these. We are not given information on the number of rows – but the depth required need not be more than 6 inches. When the viewer looked at these mighty columns what stood out was the “belly” indicative of union and of birth – spiritually an emblem of the new birth and union with the king. And he raised the columns at the porch of the temple and he established the right pillar and called its name Jachin [“He shall establish”] and established the left pillar and called its name Boaz [“Strength”]. And upon the head of the pillars was creative artificial lily work [emblematic of the fine linen or byssus of the saints].*

To make one final comment on the names of the pillars or columns the one on the right is linked with the king or crown who would in the future cause the establishment or constitution of the temple of God and the sacrifice that sanctifies the people of God. All that the pillars speak about this Jachin figure who would “prepare Himself” would bring to pass. The Boaz name signifies also “alacrity” and the “strength of defence” and this speaks of the king as the one who is formidable as a lion and fierce of countenance (and here the undertone of alacrity emerges) who also “secures” and “conquers”. This crowned head is also the LORD’S and it represents the “left hand” of judgment” and the other pillar the “right hand” of the son of God and King of Israel who established his realm by the New Covenant of grace.

THE SEA WITH ITS NUMEROUS LESSONS 23-26

I have to confess that the original Hebrew terms used in this section on the “sea” are technical and that it is singularly difficult to delineate the construction of “the sea and the bases” in such a way that would support an exact drawing. The best lessons happily derive from the graven work and not from the structure.

And he made a poured out moulded sea ten cubits from one edge to the other [15 foot in extent] It was a rolling round and 5 cubits in depth and a line of thirty cubits would

encompass it around. *This great wash-basin for the priests was 45 feet or thereabouts in circumference. And under the lip or edge of the laver were hanging gourds surrounding it; the gourds of the sea were ten to a cubit; the gourds were in two rows cast when the sea itself was cast moulded. There are several matters of interest deserving comment here. First, why in the world would one decorate the laver with what some call “cucumbers” [[qp]? Second as the circumference was 30 cubits and there were 10 per cubit in two rows there were an unbelievable number? Why so many? To answer the first question this gourd was special in two ways (a) **it burst open and its seeds shot out at a touch** (b) it may have been poisonous to eat without added flour (2 Kings 4.41). Thus it symbolises the opening up of the heart at the touch of the LORD and the gross corruption of the human heart which produces poisonous thoughts words and actions until the fine flour of Christ’s nature is implanted with righteousness imputed. As to the overwhelming nature of our uncleanness the whole number of gourds was 600. The Hebrew text [bbs “to change”] suggests they may have been portrayed “**opening to the touch**”*

It stood as established on twelve plough ready oxen, three facing north; three facing west; three facing south and three facing east and the sea was high above them and all their rear parts were underneath the sea. *We have to think of the sea as being exalted 4-5 feet above the ground at its base so that the sea itself was inaccessible and quite out of reach. We might ask why this should be so. The answer is that the divine word is pure as well as purifying and that the high level of the sea testifies to that fact. The oxen and their pose show that God in Christ by the Spirit in His glorious tri-unity gets under the burden of the sin of the world and desires that the cleansing He imparts be carried worldwide.*

And it was an open hand in density or thickness. *It was about 7 inches thick. It must have been the largest and heaviest (bronze) water vessel ever constructed in the whole wide world at **15 feet across and 45 feet circumference and 5 inches thick**. The fact is it spoke throughout its glorious substance of the generous “hand of God” providing cleansing and His holy word. And its lip was created like the lip of “a lily blossom cup.” This great laver was not just for outward cleansing but for inward satisfaction of the thirsty soul. To this both the gourds and the lip testify in different ways. The kind of cup described was a classic of the time like our Wedgwood china cups “The English country rose” pattern being one example. It was made to hold 2000 baths (44,000 litres). Only in Luke do we get a further biblical reference to such vast quantities of water in the story of the turning of water into wine [John2.6] where six jars each holding up to 115 litres would summate to almost 700 litres – about a seventieth of the quantity of water for priestly use. It is a cipher of the capability of Solomon that he could work out how large the sea ought to be to be capable as a reservoir of annual service and yet not dangerously overflow. He had such weather observations I believe as to understand the annual rainfall and that over a period of years. Whereas this laver served the priests it is in its permanent symbolism token and sign that the LORD unfailingly cleanses his own people of all their sin. That assurance tied to the confession of sin which is demonstrated at the “touch” of His Spirit in conviction is ours for the taking.*

THE BASES OR SEATINGS 27-37

The wheeled bases or stands are traditionally thought to have been used to convey water to the great altar where the use of fire and the offering of numerous sacrifices made them requisite.

And he made ten stands or prepared seatings of brass; four cubits by measure was the length of one seating and their height was **three cubits** [4 foot six inches-the height at the top of the laver]. And this was the creative design of the seatings. They had locking doors or interfacing edges [rqs] attached to them and the locks were inside the holding sockets or housings [blv]. Over or above the locking doors that were between the holding sockets and upon the sockets were lions and oxen created by wreathed inlaid work.

And there were four wheels of brass to every base and axles of brass and his four pedestals had four shoulders belonging to the axles underneath smelted and cast for the shoulders – cast from the side when it was joined. *We are looking at something not unlike the chassis of a motor car with very stout axles and pedestals and shoulders were moulded to the axles and mounted upon them to sit neatly under the brazen sea. The bases were just 6 feet long – half the length of a car.*

And a mouth **from within** that belonged to the crown or chapter above was a cubit [18 inches long]. *This mouth is described as for the outward ornamental chapter and is what we would call a pipe or opening allowing gravity feed from the sea and fitting much like a plumbed joint into the lower brass pipe*

And a round or revolving mouth was from the fashioning or creation or the pedestal base-a cubit and a half in length. *The tap or pipe as we would call it was of the same manufacture and of a piece with the base itself. It was 27 inches long]. The inner pipe from the sea housed as a male female joint to the outer pipe to the point of supply through the chapter or face of the base which was angled obtuse to the vertical away from the sea.*

And also upon or over the mouth there were square not round castings and closure edges or edges that could be closed or shut. And the four wheels belonging underneath there were confining gates or locks [trqsm] *I believe what is being said is that just as the flow of water could be shut off the wheels of the bases could be locked in position or released with a kind of drop lock. Should the wheels not be so supplied and should they move outwards a calamity could ensure.*

And the axles [literally “hands”] of the wheels were with or fixed to the base and the height of one wheel was one and a half cubits. [2feet 3 inches] And the creative of the wheels **was as the construction or manufacture of the chariot wheel**; their axles and curved rims and spokes and hubs – the entirety was cast in bronze. *Wheels of the period had typically 6-8 spokes and stood about 3 feet high.* And there were four wings or wide bearers or *sea supports* to each single base or pedestal and the bearers were part of the base. And on top of the base pedestal was a **circular (possibly revolving or mobile) table rising to half a cubit [9 inches]** and on the top of the pedestal or base the shoulders and edges were the same height. *From these dimensions we can calculate that the **laver base** that sat thereon was 3 feet above the ground.* And **he would constantly engrave** on the flat bronze tablet of the shoulders and upon the raised interfaces cherubim lions and palms according to the exposure or nakedness of man and garlands round about them. *Everywhere on the bases there would be naked cherubs with floral garlands covering them and lions with garlands about their necks and palm trees. The ten bases remind us of the commandments of God which support the word of God and the morality and spirituality of scripture. The ubiquitous engravings remind us of the innocence and fall of man and the majesty and victory of Christ – the lion of the house of Judah [Genesis 49.9] which stands beside to reverse the effects of the fall and truly cover the nakedness of man by imputed righteousness. This everywhere was the lesson impressed on the priests who served the people.*

After this style he made the ten base pedestals – of one and the same moulding, one and the same size and one and the same form for them all. *The ten bases were able to move between the sea and the approach to the temple. The purpose of the sea was to demonstrate how the word purifies the sinner and keeps him or her pure.*

THE POSITIONING OF THE SEA 38-39

Then he created ten wash-basins of bronze and each one of the ten basins would be caused to hold 40 baths and each wash basin was **4 cubits wide** and there was one wash basin to each of the base pedestal units. *Each laver was 6 foot wide and held 880 litres of water. A bath was equivalent to 6 Hebrew pots of water – akin to six cans of a quart (liquid measure) so you can imagine the capacity of the laver pool that would hold the equivalent of over 1000 such cans.*

And he placed **five base pedestals** near the right shoulder or door of the house and five near the left shoulder **and the sea** itself he placed away from the door on the right side eastward and towards the south. *To summarise the arrangements the bases were mobile and could when necessary be refilled from the sea which stood to the south east of the temple. The word shoulder [ptc] occurs frequently in the Hebrew text and indeed the water level in the lavers would have been at that height. There were of course orifices or mouths as earlier described which delivered water at a more convenient level for washing of the arms. In the original tabernacle the altar was approached from the south and offerings were made as the priest faced north. The laver of Moses stood to the south side of the court [Exodus 38.9].*

TEXTUAL GAP 40

The Hebrew margin comment hints of the difficulty of restoring what “slips away”- it is like re-gathering stray animals. Askenazi scholars have noted the loss and the Sephardic Shul makes mention of the Hanukah Sabbath prayer in connection with Hiram.

A SUMMARY – EACH BRONZE ITEM PREFIGURING THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST 40-51

So Hiram made the laver basins and shovels [*h[y]*] and basins [*qrz for blood sprinkling among other things*] and Hiram finished doing all the ministry of the house of God that he did for the king Solomon: the two pillars and the bowls or globes [*tlg*] of the capitals that were on top of the two pillars; the two networks or thickets... [*Otherwise spoken of as “chain work” but as a thicket of branches suggestive of the trees where Adam hid or the place where Abram found the ram*]... to cover the two bowls of the chapters that were at the head of the pillars... *The purpose of the networks is now given as hiding the bowls or rather “nakedness” where the convex brazen sections were earlier described as “bellies” ...of the chapters that were on or near the head of the pillars; the 400 pomegranates for the two networks – two rows of pomegranates for each network to cover or hide the two bowls or bellies of the chapters which were on **the faces** of the pillars;... There can be little doubt but that the “womb-like” moulding high up the pillars was very prominent and its concealment is devised by Solomon and yet its importance is inestimable. Whatever else may have entered his mind in using this sign of a woman presently to give birth to a child the double concealment by pomegranates and branches reaches back to Eden and forward to the virgin birth of Christ our High Priest. Like faces the “wombs”*

*confronted the vision and presented the most daring prophetic and significant device of the temple architecture...and the ten pedestals and ten lavers on the pedestals; and the single sea and twelve oxen under the sea; and the pots [rys] and shovels and sprinkling basins. And all “the tabernacle” (Kethibh) or “these” (Qere) vessels that Hiram made for king Solomon for the house of the LORD were **polished** [frm] brass. The work was not just completed to a high standard but everything was gleaming when delivered. In the country adjacent to Jordan the king cast them with thick red clay soil between Succoth and Zarethan. The location is not far from Peniel but on the West bank of Jordan and would be at least 50 miles from Jerusalem. And Solomon would cause the vessels not to be searched or examined for brass weight because of the exceeding number of them. And Solomon created all the vessels that were in the house of the LORD: the altar of gold and the golden table on which was the bread of the presence. Also he made the menorah *candlesticks* of pure (“shut” or absolute unadulterated) gold – five on the right and five on the left before the oracle – and the flowers and lamps and tongs of gold. And he made the bowls and snuffers [rmz] and spoons [ppc] and fire pans of pure gold. He then made the opening hinges of the *folding doors* of the inner house of the presence for the holy of holies and for the doors of the house –for the temple or holy place itself of gold. It appears the 51st or last verse was retained by the Ashkenazi texts. So all the ministry which King Solomon did for the house of the LORD was “Solomoned” or at peace and complete. And Solomon brought in the holy dedicated things of David his father – **the silver and gold** and the vessels he placed among the treasures of the house of the LORD. Solomon may have been very rich but he was very precise to give to God what was Gods. He placed all the wealth David has set aside in the coffers of the temple. Like Solomon as our LORD said we too should render to God what is His.*

CHAPTER 8

THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLS THE TEMPLE 1-11

Then Solomon gathered the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the office bearers of the fathers of the sons of Israel to King Solomon at Jerusalem to the end that they might for their part bring up [Niphah] the ark of the LORD out of the city of David that is Zion. *Solomon would have the decision to be a national one – not his own! He also desired the people to gain deep respect for the LORD and to lead his entire people in the right direction.*

And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to Solomon the king on or throughout the month Ethanim [“bountiful”] that is the seventh month, for the feast. *A Hebrew footnote observes that “the day of the year of **Shul Succoth**” has slipped unmentioned. It appears that Solomon may have called the celebration early on the 1st day and extended celebrations on this year through 4 weeks (but compare with vv62-3). The Day of **Atonement** occurs 5 days prior to **Tabernacles** and Trumpets 10 days before that. The first day is roughly our mid-September – on that day Solomon assembled every man of Israel. From then to a week beyond the solemn assembly of mid October celebrations in Israel continued - in one of the longest public holidays ever known in the world. The whole life of the nation was focussed on worship.*

And all the elders of Israel came and the priests carried the ark up. So they brought up the ark of the LORD and the tabernacle of the assembly and all the consecrated vessels that were in the tent; thus the priests and Levites brought these up. And Solomon the king and all the appointed assembly of Israel that was appointed and agreed came up to him in the presence of the ark sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be written or numbered for greatness. *In the days of Solomon many things are not*

numbered. The nation is not counted, the temple vessels are not counted and here the sacrifices are not numbered. Solomon does not spend time on incidentals that merely minister to pride. He just worships and praised God for his bounty and His glory in His people.

And the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place within the oracle of the house; to the holy of holies; to under the wings of the Cherubim. *This testimony is threefold. The LORD is at the heart of his people as He dwells in the spirit of the saints; the LORD dwells or inhabits holiness as the absolutely pure Creator and the LORD dwells close to the greatest creatures He ever made. Man must recognise that glorious beings that do His bidding are active in the world.* For the Cherubim actively spread out their wings over the place of the ark and the Cherubim cover [literally “Succoth”] the ark and afford cover over the staves. *The Golden Cherubim of Solomon were additional to the mercy seat and their outstretched wings formed a perfect circle above under which their heads were bowed. It is not sure that they were standing – indeed it appear that they would be in a worshipful position kneeling so that when the priests entered they carefully carried the ark under the impressive outstretched golden wings.*

Then they drew the staves out some length and the ends of **the staves were observed from the holy place at the front of the oracle but they were not seen outside and they are there till this day.** *What is being conveyed is that the staff ends were apparent by two bulges in the curtain but they did not protrude physically through the curtain. This historical note suggests the temple was standing during at least some part of the writer’s life – affirming a writing date not later than the time of Jeremiah (8.8).*

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets or door leaf stones that Moses caused to rest there in Horeb where the LORD **cut** (a covenant) with the sons of Israel at their going forth out of the land of Egypt. *The sense of “cutting” is continued in the very stones which were the actual handwriting of God. Thus the promises included in commands 2,4 and 5 were precious to Israel – namely the blessing of their posterity, the joy of their worship and the promise of long life in the land they are given.*

And *10. it was a reality* at the going out of the priests from the holy place the cloud also filled the entire house of the LORD so that the priests were not able to minister to burn incense on account of the cloud because the Glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. *The LORD was pleased to be present gloriously on earth on this rapturous occasion and the liturgical offices had to come to a halt simply because God was there in Glory so priests withdrew and all the people realised a fresh Sinai experience – an awesome epoch in their religious history – a living reality and divine intervention.*

SOLOMON RECITES THE HISTORY OF DAVID’S PURPOSE 12-21

Then Solomon said **“The LORD said he was to dwell in thick clouds”**

[Greek “obscurity” ορφνη] **“I have been building a house or residence [/bz is used of the permanent stay of the sun in its location] for you – a place established for you to rest for perpetuity or generations.”** Then the king turned his face around and blessed all the congregation of Israel and the whole congregation of Israel were standing. *When we call worshippers to stand they are not simply being invited to change position – they are being invited to act as “priests to God” to minister praise and worship to the LORD. On this occasion the entirety of the nation acted as if they were “priests”.*

And he said “Blessed is the LORD God of Israel who spoke by mouth to David my father and by His power has fulfilled it saying ‘From the day that my people

Israel went out of Egypt I have not made choice of a city from all the tribes of Israel that my name should be there but I have chosen through David to be head over my people Israel. And *11. It was a reality* with the heart of David my father to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father **‘Because it is with you heart to build a house for my name you caused or prompted good because it was with your heart except that you shall not yourself built the house but your son that comes from your loins – he will build the house for my name.’** So the LORD is bringing to pass his word that He spoke and I have been raised up; under David my father and I am sitting on Israel’s throne according to that which the LORD spoke and have built a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And I have set up a place for the ark wherein is the covenant of the LORD which He made [*Lit “cut”*] with our fathers when He brought them up out of the land of Egypt.”

Then Solomon stood [*dm*] when we compare with v.54 and 2 Chronicles 6.12 we have to resolve the matter of how Solomon came to be on his knees later in his prayer!] before the face of the [*brazen*] altar of the LORD near all the congregation of Israel and spread out his hands to heaven. And he said **“There is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below that keeps watch on the covenant and the love or covenant love for your servants who walk before you with all their hearts – who kept with Your servant David my father that which You spoke in promise to him. You spoke with your mouth and by your hand you have fulfilled it this day. And now, O LORD God of Israel, watch and keep that which you spoke in promise to David my father saying ‘There shall not be cut off in your case a man from before my face sitting upon the throne of Israel except if your sons do not watch their ways to walk before me as you have walked before me. And now, O LORD God of Israel, please let your word that you spoke to your servant David my father be shown to be faithful. But will God “faithfully” [*adverb*] live upon the earth? Behold the heavens and heavens of the heavens cannot sustain or endure or provide for you much less this house that I have built. Yet you will turn your attention...”** [*literally “your face”*] to the prayer [*hlpt literally “having rolled out or laid out even sometimes getting tinged with it and asking for others or oneself even in singing what will “pacify” on the part of the judge who completes the unravelling and does right cf Abraham and Sodom and Hezekiah and his “rolling out” and even the LORD’S prayer*]...of your servant and to his search for favour [*hnj t simple “begging” or entreaty for “grace” “favour” or “compassion” – this element is often the only aspect in modern prayers but it ought to have the stronger preliminary context of involvement and righteousness sought based on God’s word*] **“...O LORD my God to the cry...”** [*mnr the “mournful cry” or “joyful cry” or sound of an “arrow shot” or “arrow landing”-this is the third element in prayer for Solomon and for us – to direct our request like an arrow on a target and look up*]...and my prayer that your servant has been praying... for Solomon is now expressing what his heart had been musing upon and thinking of the aftermath of his prayer **“...before Your face today that *12. The reality will be* Your eyes will be open toward this house night and day because you said **“My name shall be there”** in order to listen to the prayer which your servant has prayed at or towards this place...”**

1. SOLOMON AND FORGIVENESS 29-30

“...And hear the entreaty of your servant and your people Israel that they will have prayed toward this place and you hear in the place you dwell in the heavens and both hear and pardon...” *Solomon is first putting the most basic need of man the sinner to the LORD. We need forgiveness and this is the first of seven principle heads of prayer that Solomon puts to the LORD. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE IS THE SEARCH FOR MERCY AND FORGIVENESS OUT OF BROKENNESS.*

2. SOLOMON AND ESTABLISHING GUILT BY OATH 31-32

“...When a man sins in the company of his neighbour and an oath be lifted up against him for him to swear and the oath comes before the altar in this house then you will hear in heaven and act and judge your servant to cause the wicked to be declared guilty to bring his way on his head and to cause the righteous to be justified giving him according to his righteousness...” *This case respects a sin not easily proven but Solomon seeks the help of divine guidance in establishing truth by a sworn oath involving the altar. Our LORD refers to this “altar oath” in Matthew 23.20. It was an oath accompanied by a sacrifice. THE PRINCIPLE IN THIS PETITION IS A DEEP HONEST COMMITMENT LINKED TO THE ALTAR. We might as believers own the equivalent linkage to the atonement of the cross as enforcing our entreaty.*

3. SOLOMON AND MILITARY DEFEAT OR REVERSAL 33-34

“...In the case of the defeat of your people Israel before the face of the enemy because they have sinned against you but they turn to you and confess and bring thanksgiving to your name and will have prayed and will have entreated you at this house then hear from heaven and pardon the sin of your people Israel and cause them to return to this fertile land that you gave to their fathers...” *At the poignant moment of defeat and exile this petition would come seriously to prominence and it would be inspirational for the audience of exiles for whom the writer drew out these ancient principles by the inspiration of the Spirit of God This significant prayer has been mightily answered in the return from Babylon and also in the return after almost 1900 years from the wider world after the defeat by Rome. THE UNIQUE PRINCIPLE DISPLAYED IN THIS PETITION IS THANKSGIVING.*

4. SOLOMON AND DROUGHT 35-36

“...In the case of the restraint or shutting up of heaven when there is no rain because they have sinned against you but they will have prayed toward this place and praised and confessed your name and turned from their sin because you humbled them by affliction then you will hear from heaven and pardon your servants and your people Israel because you will teach them or point them out the good way in which they should walk...” and give rain on the land that you have given your people as a heritage. *It is notable that pardon and godly teaching are linked in this case. Elijah desired to see revival but he knew that Israel needed to be taught the greatness and reality of the LORD at a time of drought. His life and teaching are also in the compass of this book.*

5. SOLOMON AND PLAGUE 37-40

“...When there is famine in the land – plague, blight or east wind, yellow mildew numerous locusts [*l y s j*] when the enemy distresses their gates in the land – whatever strike – whatever grief weariness or sickness – any prayer or any

entreaty which *is will be real* by any man or all your people Israel which man is well aware of the disease or spot or divine judgment of his own heart but spreads out his hands to this house then you will hear [future] from heaven the appointed place of your dwelling and you will forgive and act and give that man whose heart you know in accordance with his ways; for you alone know intimately the heart of all the sons of men..." *This rather long petition links forgiveness to THE PRINCIPLE OF UTMOST SINCERITY OF THE PENITENT. Thus prevailing prayer is laced to an earnest heart. James alludes to this factor in his epistle (James 5.16) "...that they may fear you all the days they live on the face of the fertile earth that you gave our fathers..."*

6. SOLOMON AND THE STRANGER 41-43

"...And also concerning who is not of your people Israel – but he comes from a distant country for the sake of your name. (For they will hear of your great name and your strong hand and your outstretched arm and will come and will have prayed at this house) You will hear in heaven your established dwelling place and act in response according to all that the stranger calls for to you in order that all the people of the earth may become aware of your name to fear you like your people Israel and that they may know that your name is proclaimed over this house that I have built..." *The PRINCIPLE HERE IS THAT COMPASSION ON THE LOST SEEKER WHO HAS BEEN FAR OFF and is brought nigh by the news of a ransom and an altar and a way back to God.*

7. SOLOMON AND BATTLE 44-49

"...If your people go out to war against an enemy in the path you sent them and they will have prayed to the LORD **as they go towards** the city where you have chosen and the house I have built for your name then hear their prayer and their entreaty from heaven and act to defend their right. When they sin against you (for there is no man that does not sin) and you are angry with them and hand them over to the presence of the enemy and they are taken as captives to the land of the enemy be it far or near but if they consider in their heart in the land where they are captive and repent and will have entreated you in the land of their captivity saying "we have sinned and acted iniquitously and been wicked – but they turn to you with all their heart and all their soul in the land of their enemies that took them captive and will have prayed to you **going to their** land which you gave their fathers and the city that you chose and the house that I built for your name then hear in heaven the established place of your dwelling their prayer and entreaty and act to defend their right..." *THE PRINCIPLE ADDED IN THIS PETITION IS THAT OF A PEOPLE "ON THE WAY" HOME. This petition was a further encouragement to exiles. When the hearts of sinners are moved to get back to God as was that of the prodigal all is changed. The Jews might wrap themselves in their tallith and feel that they were already going back to Jerusalem.*

(8) THE EIGHTH PRINCIPLE OF PRAYER – HUMBLE APPROACH 50-54

"...Then forgive your people who have sinned against you all the transgression that they have transgressed against you and give them tender affection or compassion before the face of their captors then they will have compassion on

them...” Solomon recognises that the LORD is able to induce compassion in the heart of an enemy. The exile was shown how to access the LORD at a time of need from this petition. This happened in the tough hearts of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus...

“...for they are your people and your heritage that you caused to come out of Egypt from the midst of the smelting furnace of iron...” The hard heart of Pharaoh was like ore which hardened with the heat of divine judgment. The experience of the slaves was that of making bricks in furnaces.

“...In reality may your eyes be open to the entreaty of your servant and the entreaty of your people Israel to hear them in all their calling on you. For you have caused them to be separated to you for a heritage from all the peoples of the earth in accordance with that which you spoke by the hand of Moses your servant when you caused our fathers to come out of Egypt, O LORD God.” *And it was reality* as Solomon ended his having prayed to the LORD this entire prayer and entreaty he arose from before the altar of the LORD from sinking down upon his knees and from having spread his hands to heaven. *When Solomon knelt we cannot know but it appears that the entire prayer was prayed kneeling and with spread hands. Consider it just possible that as Solomon envisaged the ignominy of defeat and exile he dropped to his knees in yet more fervent prayer. Solomon knew how to express empathy and reverence and awe. He took the pose of the original Cherubim on the mercy seat as his model. Such willingness to become nothing before their creator on the part of these great creatures he respected and as a king he did the same – yet did he lift his face toward heaven because there dwelt his redeemer – and so might we do. This is one of the great prayers of scripture. It deserves to be taught in the context of exploring the meaning of prayer by every preacher. Solomon showed himself a “path-finder” as to the principles of prayer.*

SOLOMON’S BLESSING 55-61

And he stood and blessed the entire gathering of Israel with a great voice saying **“Blessed is the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel according to all that he has promised – not one word has fallen or failed of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. 14. And let it be the reality that the LORD our God is with us as He was with our fathers. May He not forsake us or abandon [vfn] us to cause our hearts to extend or bow to Him to walk in all His ways and to keep His commands ordinances and righteous judgments that He commanded our fathers. 15. And may the reality be that these words with which I have made entreaty before the LORD be close to the LORD our God day and night to the righteous cause of His servant and the just cause of His people Israel – a daily word of promise with His day.”** *Just as we would seek a word for the day Solomon believes that the LORD would keep his petitions close to him and watch over them. “...In order that all the peoples of the earth may know that He is Yahweh – there is none besides. 16. And let it be the reality that your heart is at peace with the LORD our God to walk in His ordinances and to keep His commandments as this day...”*

THE GREATEST EVER OFFERINGS AND POSSIBLY THE GREATEST JOY AND HAPPINESS OF ISRAEL 62-63

And the king and all Israel offered offerings to the LORD. And Solomon offered sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD; 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep and the king and the sons of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. On the same day the king consecrated the middle court that was before the house of the LORD because he

made burnt offerings and meat offerings and the fat of peace offerings there because the bronze altar before the LORD was smaller than would sustain or provide for the burnt offerings, meat offerings and fat of peace offerings. And at that time Solomon created **the feast** and all Israel with him – a great gathering from the entrance to Hamath to the River of Egypt before Yahweh our God – seven days and seven days [two weeks] fourteen days. *It may be that the whole festival event lasted but 2 weeks and that this statement details its term precisely in face of the general statement in 8.1.* On the eighth [namely the 15th day] he sent the people off and they blessed the king and went radiant to their tents and happy of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David His servant and for Israel His people.

The Spirit of God testifies to the great joy at the opening of the temple. This is a sample and foretaste of the joy that the whole world shall share when Messiah enters his city after the end times at the beginning of a new day when millennial joy shall accompany his glorious rule. Then in a larger sense His people shall bless Him. As king of peace His once-for-all sacrifice makes this historic day we have just read about pale into insignificance.

CHAPTER 9

THE LORD'S SECOND APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON – PRAYER ANSWERED 1-9

Just as our LORD Jesus assured us of answered prayer and said “Whatsoever things you ask in prayer believe that you will receive them” and again “Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things” and “He that asks receives” so in this instance the LORD assures Solomon that he has been heard.

*14. And it was reality as Solomon had completed the construction of the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the his heart's desire [qvj – “desire that attached or cleaved to him”] that he delighted to do – just then **the LORD appeared** to Solomon a second time as he appeared to him at Gibeon. And the LORD said to him **“I have heard your prayer and your entreaty that you have pleaded before my face. I have caused this house you built to be holy to place my name there for an era or until the age [of Messiah] and my eyes and heart shall be there all the days...”** This latter promise is a vast assurance – it is like that given by Jesus at his ascension when he said “I am with you all the days”. The LORD would keep that vigil while days of this OT dispensation ran and into the age of Messiah.*

“...and if you will walk before me as your father David walked with his whole heart and in uprightness or strait to do with your whole heart and to keep my commands ordinances and righteous judgments then I will make the throne of your kingdom rise over Israel to the age even as I promised to David your father saying “There shall not be separated or cut off from you a man upon the throne of Israel. But if you (plural) **gradually turn [turning you turn] and your sons turn from following me from my commands and statutes which I gave in their presence and walk with and serve different gods and worship them then I will cut off Israel from the face of the fertile land I gave them and this house that I have made holy for my name I will cast off [j|v as a divorced wife] and Israel shall be a proverbial similitude and an insulting taunt [hymv] throughout all peoples. And at this house which stands high all passers by will be amazed and whistle derisively and say ‘On what account did the LORD act in this way to this land and this house?’ And they will say ‘Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers from the land of Egypt and have grasped different gods and have worshipped and served them – on that account the**

LORD has brought all these calamities upon them.” *This promise of the LORD – so acutely comforting to exiles– came to pass after the destruction of Solomon’s temple at the exile and at the destruction of Herod’s temple too. The judgment of God demonstrates His being and power as much as his provision of this wide world of wonders. Notice whilst God divorces the house he holds faithful to the covenant with His people.*

SOLOMON HIRAM AND THE DISPOSSESSED NATIONS 10-23

17. It was abiding reality – as the harvest of twenty years Solomon built two houses – the house of God and the house of the king. Hiram king of Tyre raised for [the Hebrew *b avn* is “against” – an expression implying the levy or supply was in some sense a rival supply – as if to show the superiority of his state] Solomon trees of cedar and pine wood and gold as he (Solomon) pleased. Then King Solomon gave Hiram ten cities in the land of Galilee. *Hiram’s mother was from Naphtali which is Galilee so this was a very appropriate and kind gift.* Then Hiram left Tyre to view the cities that Solomon gave him and they were not right to his view of things. And he said “What sort of cities are these that you have given me, my brother? And he called them “The land of Cabul” to this day. *Tregelles observes that Arab geographers mention Cabul as located in the Safed or Mount Canaan area. In Josephus’ Antiquities 8:5:3 it is said in the Phoenician tongue to signify “Not pleasing”. [Today we are familiar with Kabul in Afghanistan which phonetically is the same.]* So Hiram sent 120 talents of gold to Solomon. So this is the reason for the tax that King Solomon raised to build the house of the LORD and his house and the citadel Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer. *We are being informed that because Hiram paid but a token sum for the ten cities Solomon had to raise funds for his building and fortification scheme.*

Pharaoh, king of Egypt came up and took Gezer and burned it with fire and slaughtered the Canaanites that lived in the city and gave it as a bounty or fortune to his daughter the wife of Solomon.

And Solomon built Gezer and Bethhoron lying below it and Baalath and Tadmor... *[The Hebrew text has Ta-mor but the Qere or oral marginal reading is Tadmor “city of palms” which appears to be the desert city Palmyra in Syria as we know it today.]* ...in the wilderness in the land. *Solomon’s sphere of influence reached well into present day Syria.*

And *he built* all the prosperous cities of treasured store and cities of chariots and cities for equestrians that Solomon had and that heart’s desire of Solomon’s that he desired to build at Jerusalem and in Lebanon and in all the land that he ruled.

All the people that remained from the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and Jebusites that the sons of Israel who were not of the sons of Israel – their sons who remained in the land whom the sons of Israel did not prevail to put to the ban-upon them Solomon raised a levy of servitude till this day. *This feature probably remained good till the days of Hezekiah if not afterward and during the intermediate time.* But from the sons of Israel Solomon provided no servitude or slaves but these (the sons of Israel) were men of war and his servants and his commanders both members of his three army divisions and captains of his cavalry and horsemen. *It appears that Solomon had a well organised army – which the world around him respected. It seems to have had three divisions and was a fast reaction force of cavalry.* These five hundred and fifty were the garrison commanders that were overseeing the administration and security for Solomon and gave assistance [hdr]

along with and throughout the people undertaking and administering in the work of messaging. *The army was used extensively in carrying the commands of the king everywhere – to Lebanon and to the cities and throughout the realm under these significant commanders. Cavalry from these garrisons secured Israel’s borders and effectively policed the nation’s security throughout Solomon’s reign.*

PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER 24

The daughter of Pharaoh was definite – she went up from the city of David to her house that Solomon built her. Then David built Millo.

THE TRI-ANNUAL FEASTS 25

And **three times each year** Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that he built to the LORD and he offered incense on it (the altar) that was before the LORD [*the incense altar*] and he made his house safe and sound and entire [*mlv*]. *In this Solomon steadfastly obeyed the imperative of the LORD in Exodus 23.17.*

THE NAVY AND HIRAM’S ENDURING ALLIANCE 26-28

And Solomon the king created a fleet at Ezion Geber [*“The backbone of a warrior”*] which is Eloth [*“oaks” or “ancient terebinths” – the Eilat of today*] on the coast of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent his servants in the navy – seafaring men who were well acquaint with the sea along with the servants of Solomon. And they went to Ophir and brought gold from there four hundred and twenty talents – and they brought it to King Solomon. *Solomon’s navy was capable of ranging along the East coast of Africa and further a-field towards the coast of India. The weight of opinion favours India because sandalwood and ivory and the type of ape found on the Malabar coastal plain as mentioned in 1 Chronicles 29.4 and 2 Chronicles 8 and 9 were and still are distinctive products of India. Oman and Mozambique as we now know these locations are two other locations scholars have proposed.*

CHAPTER 10 WORDS OF ENQUIRY

SOLOMON ASTOUNDS THE QUEEN OF SHEBA 10.1-13

Then the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon in relation to the name of the LORD and she came to test or prove him over and over again with spiritual discourse or proverbs and problems [*dlj*]. So she came to Jerusalem with exceeding glory of might or force, camels laden with spices and a very large amount of gold and precious stones so she came to Solomon and continued to tell him all that was in her (secret) heart. *We like she have many questions close to our chests – many thoughts which few can answer or cast light upon and these she brought to the discussion with Solomon. Not a few had respect to the spiritual issues relating to what she first heard of Solomon and his meeting with Yahweh.* And Solomon explained to her all her matters or words. *It seems she first cast some riddles [*dlj*] which Solomon was able to untie and explain.* There was not a matter or word so locked [*l [n]*] from the king that he did not explain to her. And the queen of Sheba saw all the spiritual and practical wisdom of Solomon and the house that he built and the cuisine of his table and sitting or dwellings of his servants and the ministry of his nobles or even priests (ministers of the sanctuary) [*trc*] and their clothing and his cup-bearers and his going up [*with offering*] when he went up to the house of the LORD there was no further convinced disposition of anger within her. *I take it the scriptures are testifying that all countering the mind and*

religion of Solomon was at a stand and her ideas were stood on their head. Solomon's meanliest servant lived like a king and could sit down – no slaves here. His nobles and priests acted like servants – things seemed upside down. His priests were glorious as monarchs. His cup-bearers were joyful officials and totally confident men. His worship was radiant prayerful and accompanied by deep recognition of his own sinfulness. What a testimony! And she said to the king **“The word that I heard reported in my land about your words or affairs and your wisdom *18.is in all reality* truth. But I did not make myself believe the words till I came and would see with my own eyes and behold not the half was explained to me. You have caused wisdom and prosperity to be added to the report that I heard. Your leading men are happy; your servants are happy. These that stand to minister day after day before you are listening to your wisdom...”** Encapsulated here is the glory of being with Solomon. He exuded wisdom. He spoke with consummate grace and deep discernment and clearly radiated joy as well. His court was such a scene as no-one would ever want to leave. Such was the presence of Christ only to the degree of infinitude beyond in grace and judgment and proverbial teaching. **“...The one who has been blessing *19 Will in reality be* Yahweh your God who has delighted and is delighting in you to give you the throne of Israel because the LORD loved Israel for ever or an age and has caused you to be established as king to do or maintain right judgment and righteousness...”** And she gave the king 120 talents of gold and very great treasure of fragrant spices or balsam and precious stones. There came not again spices like this that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. But the fleet of Hiram that also carried gold from Ophir also brought from Ophir a very great number of Almug trees and precious stones. *The Almug was possibly a “red sandalwood variety of tree still grown in India and Ceylon. The gold and stones and trees could be replicated but Sheba and Yemen were elite centres for spices and this was the largest consignment ever. Solomon's court and life was rendered more fragrant physically by the visit of the queen and her life rendered more fragrant spiritually by her visit from beyond the 5th Cataract of the Nile.*

And the king made supporting pillars for the house of the LORD from the Almug trees and also for the king's palace and harps and psalteries for the musicians. And there never came such Almug trees nor were such seen even to this day. And Solomon the king gave to the Queen of Sheba all her delight that she asked... *This word xpj can be understood as loaded in which case the personal favour she sought in marital connection may be understood and tradition tends to confirm this through written records and the Ethiopian genetic connection. It may also be understood of that which she pursued in other directions – especially of information she sought and religious understandings that she lacked... apart from that which he gave her according to the authority of king Solomon himself. Then she would turn her face and she would go to her land – she and her servants. Three questions stand out. Did she convert to faith in Yahweh? Did she carry something of Solomon in her person and though she might never see the king again did she bear him a son? Did her servants share with her a change of mind and find faith in Yahweh and was their manner of serving deeply affected by the grace and kindness they experienced at Solomon's court?*

SOLOMON'S ANNUAL GOLD AND SPICE GDP 14-15 ARABIA

20. And it was a reality that the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold. This apart from income earned by men who searched out (explorers) and by travelling merchants and commercial the trade profits of the

merchants or marketers and all the income from the kings of Arabia and from the governors of the land.

SOLOMON'S GOLD TARGETS & SHIELDS 16-17-INDIA, AFRICA

And King Solomon made 200 shields [*hmx*] of pressed gold and 600 *shekels* of gold was brought to each single shield and he made 300 smaller shields [*ngm*] of pressed gold – three pounds of gold was brought to *the making* of each shield and the king placed them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

SOLOMON'S IVORY THRONE 18-20 – TRADE WITH INDIA /AFRICA

The king also made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure refined gold [*zpp*]. There were six steps to the throne and the head was rounded on the back and there were arms on this side and that adjacent to the place of the seat and two lions stood close by the arms. Twelve lions stood there on the six steps on this side and that. There was not made the like for any kingdom. *The special features of the throne were its enduring strength based on ivory and its value linked with ivory and its total gold overlay. Its rounded back afforded both protection behind and obviously comfort for the crowned head. The 12 lions represented the tribes of Israel who supported the throne and the two arms were representative of the arms of the LORD and the two lions by the arms. The two lions on the left and right may represent the legend of Genesis 49 9-10 – the old crouching lion of Judah and the ultimate leonine judge Shiloh between the feet of both Israel's kings and rulers are to sit till Shiloh comes. This throne told the story of history as first spelt out by the patriarch. No kingdom has such legend or ever had such throne. Many lions have been made but they do not link with the Messiah Shiloh.*

SOLOMON'S GOLD CUPS AND ZOOLOGICAL IMPORTS 21-23 –TRADE WITH INDIA /AFRICA

And all the drinking vessels of King Solomon were gold and all the vessels of the forest palace of Lebanon were pure gold. None was silver. It was not thought about in the days of Solomon – for it was not this or that – *i.e. gold was so common.* For a navy of Tarshish belonging to the king was at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the navy of Tarshish came *to port* carrying gold and silver and ivory and apes that dance round in circles and peacocks. So King Solomon would be greater than all the kings of the earth for wealth and wisdom. *In the wake of Assyria on the wane before Sardanapulus and the Egypt of Siamun (whose daughter married Solomon) and Troy as it declined and Carthage just scarcely built and Alba Longa just 100 years on the way long before migrations from it produced the race of Romans and with the Peloponnesus divided and the first Olympiad a century and more away Solomon was the world's leading statesman, thinker and ruler.*

SOLOMON'S CHARIOTS AND SILVER 24-27 – TRADE WITH EGYPT, EDOM

And the whole earth was seeking audience with Solomon to listen to the wisdom God gave him in his heart. And these brought each of them his present. *They brought* vessels of silver and garments and battle armour [*qvll*] spices, horses and mules – something year by year.

And Solomon would add chariots and horsemen and there were 1400 chariots belonging to him and 12,000 horsemen whom he directed in chariot cities and to

accompany the king in Jerusalem. *Solomon took personal charge of the placing and disposition of the chariot army. He was the supreme commander and no doubt used his forces well on the borders and for defensive and preventative manoeuvres. And the king provided silver in Jerusalem like stones and cedar trees like sycamore in the Shephelah for size and abundance.*

SOLOMON'S HORSES LINEN AND CHARIOTS 28-29 EGYPTIAN TRADE

And horses that belonged to Solomon were brought from Egypt... [*It appears Solomon had a stud in Egypt itself and owned many of Egypt's best horses*]... also linen cord or rope. The merchants of the king would take the spun cord at the selling price. *They did not need to bargain. They could buy out the Egyptian market on linen cord.* And a chariot was offered and went up from Egypt at 600 shekels and a horse for 150 shekels. *The buying price and transportation in all of a chariot was 600 shekels.* And thus it was appointed for all the kings of the Hittites and kings of Syria – they brought them out by their own *purchasing power.* *Again the relationship with Siamun was prejudicial to war for by purchasing power Solomon could easily afford chariots and clearly the numbers he obtained showed by comparison with today's car market that he cornered the lion share of Egypt's production. The text suggests that the other kings had not such capability in the market and that they may even have had to drive their own chariots north and so Solomon could gain intelligence of the power both of the Hittites to the North West in today's Turkey and the Syrians directly north. His business acumen tied the hands of his enemies and hampered their military capability markedly. His triple alliance with Tyre and Egypt made him master of sea and land. Not till Messiah will such power again be concentrated in Israel with such guaranteed peace. Shiloh will so marvellously engage the hearts of men that peace shall prevail the world over and swords will be beaten to ploughshares.*

CHAPTER 11

THE DOWN-SIDE–SOLOMON'S SYNCRETISTIC PRACTICE 1-8

And King Solomon expressed longing for intimacy with great numbers of strange women and that alongside the daughter of Pharaoh–Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women. *Solomon had six nationalities and languages spoken within his harem and perhaps more. It may be that he had received delegations or been received as a visiting monarch by those from each of these nations. We learn nothing of his travels and that may well be because he did not travel extensively though his fleets ranged from Spain to India.* Women from the nations concerning which the LORD said to the sons of Israel **“You shall not go in to them and they shall not come in unto you for certainly [׀ka “it is established” or “fundamental”] they shall lead or turn away or expand [hfn] your hearts after their gods.”** *The problem with other modern religions is that they do not give place to Jesus as we are taught and they do not worship Yahweh. They have “other” gods. It is no use defending syncretism with the palaver or alibi that “we all worship the same God” or that “all religions lead to God” – they do not – and so it is verity that those who would worship Christ cease to be Muslims and those who worship Christ cease to be Jehovah Witnesses. The converse is to deny the old adage “You cannot mix oil and water”. To these (women) Solomon was welded or set alongside like marquetry. The union of man and woman is very solid and it either subscribes to the will of God or flouts it.*

21. And it was reality – he had 700 princess wives and 300 concubines and his wives lead his heart away. *22. And it was reality* at the time Solomon was elderly or aged the

wives had turned his heart after different gods and his heart was not enjoying peace, restored to or sincerely at peace with Yahweh his God as the heart of David his father. And Solomon followed Ashtoreth goddess of the Sidonians and Milcom the abhorrent abomination [xqv] of the Ammonites. And Solomon enacted evil or calamity in the eyes of the LORD and was not fully consecrated [alm – “complete” “following fully” “filled” with following] to follow the LORD as was David his father. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh – an abhorrent abomination of Moab on the hill which overlooked Jerusalem and a high place for Molech – loathsome contamination of the sons of Ammon. And thus *was established practice [nk]* that he did for all his foreign wives that burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. *The liberty to serve their gods was not a natural right within the theocratic kingdom any more than it will be in the millennial. Moslem shariah law denies freedoms guaranteed under the UN charter and what we call “freedom of religion” by constitutional right or natural right is proscribed as I understand it by the nation of Islam concept – again enforced theocratically.*

SOLOMON REBUKED – HIS KINGDOM TO BE TORN APART 9-13

But the LORD had been angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from being together with the LORD God of Israel that let Himself be seen by him twice and commanded him on this matter that he was not to go after other gods but he did not watch what Yahweh commanded him. So the LORD said to Solomon **“Because these have been “living” or *23 “reality”* with you and you have not kept my covenant and my ordinance which I commanded you gradually I will rend [“rending I will rend”] the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. I will definitely not do it in your days on account of David your father – I will rend it from the hand of your son. Only [qr] I will not tear away the entire kingdom but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of David my servant and on account of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”** *After such a mighty empire as Solomon bestrode this chastisement must have dumb-founded Solomon. His Ecclesiastes is very easily contexted in days when he saw against the divine judgment the importance of just one thing – “fearing God”. All other attainments are empty and damning when idolatry prejudices a man’s walk with God.*

No.1 ADVERSARY STIRRED UP 14-22

And the LORD raised up a “satan” or adversary for Solomon Hadad [ddh “idol-Rimmon”] the Edomite – he was from the seed of the king in Edom. And *24 it was reality* when David was in Edom for the going up of Joab commander of the host to bury the slain for he slew all the Edomite males for Joab and all Israel lived there six months until he had cut off every male in Edom. But Adad [dda – “the unfortunate”] – he and leading Edomite men and servants of his father bolted away to go to Egypt and Hadad was a small child. *The two spellings of Hadad’s name suggest this little boy with the name telling of a sad youth was really named after an idol. His son was eventually to become ruler of Syria.* Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran and took important men from Paran with them and went to Egypt to Pharaoh King of Egypt. *Shishak – the successor to Siamun whose daughter Solomon married. Shishak later in 925BC sacked Jerusalem. [Jeroboam took over in 933BC or as some think in 930BC] Shishak’s reign began in 945BC when Solomon’s friend Siamun died. The completion of the temple in 957BC (in the king’s 20th year after 16 years of construction) was perhaps before Israel and Egypt were hand and glove allies.* And he (Shishak) gave him a house and food and also promised [rma] to give him land.

This promise was possibly dependent on northern conquests and bringing Edom back under Egyptian sway. Even in the early days of Shishak after a 14 year inter-regnum since Siamun there was fear of the strength of Israel..

And Hadad found much favour in the eyes of Pharaoh and he gave him the sister of his wife in marriage – the sister of Tahpenes the queen. And the sister of Tahpenes produced for him Genubah his son whom Tahpenes nurtured in the midst of the palace of Pharaoh: and Genubah was in the house of Pharaoh among the sons of Pharaoh. And **Hadad** heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers and that Joab the captain of the host was dead and Hadad said to Pharaoh “**Send me off and I will go to my land.**” And Pharaoh said to him “**Why – what have you come short of with me? And look at you seeking to go to your land?**” And he “**No, but you will still continue to send me.**” *This Edomite would by going back re-gain the land and realm of which he was a rightful ruler and so claim the Promised Land that Pharaoh said he would receive.*

No.2 ADVERSARY STIRRED UP 23-25

And God caused to rise up for him a “satan” or adversary **Rezon son of Eliadah** who bolted from Hadadezer king of Zobab his master and he gathered to him stout or leading men and he became commander of the troops when David slaughtered them and they (the remnant) went to Damascus and lived in it and reigned in Damascus.

25 And he was in reality an adversary [literally a “satan”] of Israel all the days of Solomon and there was also the evil that Hadad did and he feared and loathed [xwq] Israel and reigned over Syria. We are informed that Rezin of Syria was an upstart who is mentioned on a stele by his grandson Benhadad who flourished in Elisha’s time a century later.

No.3 ADVERSARY – AN APPOINTED SERVANT TO REVOLT 26-40

2. GOD SENDS AHIJAH WITH THE PROPHETIC WORD FOR THE NEXT ERA OF THE THEOCRACY SOLOMON’S DEATH 41-43

And Jereboam son of Nebat an Ephrathite from Zaredah and servant of Solomon whose mother’s name was Zeruah a widow-he lifted up his hand against the king. So this was the reason he lifted up his hand against the king – Solomon built Millo. He closed up the broken down parts of the city of David his father. And Jereboam the soldier was a warrior of valour and Solomon would look at the young servant because he was doing messaging [*communication duties*] and he gave him charge of all the duties or burdens of the house of Joseph. *Solomon in other words put Jereboam in charge of Ephraim and Manasseh. 26. And in a really significant event* at that time Jereboam went out of Jerusalem and **Ahijah the prophet** found him on the road and he was a man concealed by a new garment and the two of them were on their own in the country. And Ahijah rather irreverently caught hold of the new garment he had on and tore it in twelve remnants. Then he said to Jereboam “**Take the ten torn bits for thus says the LORD God of Israel ‘Look whilst I tear the kingdom from the power of Solomon and give you the ten tribes but one tribe will be his on account of my servant David and on account of Jerusalem the city that I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel. Because they have departed from me and have been worshipping Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and Chemosh the god of Moab and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon and they have not walked in my ways to do the right in my eyes and my statutes and my righteous judgments as did David his father. But I will not take the entire kingdom from his hand but I will set him in array or regard [tyb] him as prince all the days of his life**

because of David my servant whom I chose because he kept my commands and ordinances. But I will take the kingdom from the hand of his son and I will give you ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe for the reason that there shall be a candle [רמ]—not a lamp but a little light – to presage also the “light of the world”] belonging to David my servant all the days before me in Jerusalem the city that I have chosen for myself to place my name there...” This repeated statement of the Spirit of God is not just a comment on the past but a special promise for the future. Jerusalem is the city of Jesus. He is to dwell and reign there. The sacred writer will not allow us to forget that. “...but I will take you and you shall reign with all that your soul breathes after in desire and you will be king over Israel. 27. *And it is reality* if you obey all that I command you and walk in my ways and do the right in my eyes to keep my ordinances and commands as in the case of David my servant I will give you Israel. But definitely not all the days I will humble and afflict the seed of David on this account.” But Solomon sought to cause the death of Jereboam but Jereboam rose up and bolted to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt and was in Egypt until Solomon’s death.

THE REMAINDER OF SOLOMON’S LIFE STORY IS LOST 41-43

And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did and his wisdom are they not written upon the scroll of “The acts of Solomon”. And the days Solomon ruled over all Israel in Jerusalem were 40 years. And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father and in his place Rehoboam his son became king.

CHAPTER 12

THE HARD-HEARTED REHOBOAM IS ILL ADVISED BY HIS PEERS 1-11

Then Rehoboam went to Shechem because all Israel came to Shechem to make him king. 28. *And the reality was* as Jereboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he still remained in Egypt because he had rushed off from the presence of King Solomon) Jereboam was living in Egypt. But they sent and called him and the entire gathering of Israel came and talked with Rehoboam saying “**Your father was hard on us** [literally “put a hard yoke on us”] **but now you must lighten the service or taxation of your father and lessen from us his heavy yoke that he laid upon us and we will serve you.**” But he said to them “**Leave until three days pass then return to me**” and the people went away. And King Rehoboam took advice of the elders that stood to minister before Solomon his father during his lifetime saying “**How do you advise that I answer the people?**” And they spoke to him saying “**If today you will be a servant to this people and will serve and answer them then talk to them in better prosperous words and they will be servants to you all the days.**” But he left aside the counsel of the elders that they had counselled and consulted with those who had grown up and were educated and grown in dignity with him who stood before him. And he said to them “**What do you advise that I should answer this people that have spoken to me saying ‘Lighten the weight your Father levied upon us.’**” Then those who were trained and had grown up with him spoke to him “**Thus you shall speak to this people that talk to you saying ‘Your father was heavy on us and you must cause it to be lessened upon us’ – thus you shall say to them ‘My small finger shall be heavier than my father’s thighs’ and now my father has burdened you with a heavy yoke [/ /] I will add to the yoke of my father upon you – he consistently chastised you with whips or verbal whiplash [fiv] but I will chastise you with scorpion scourges [brq].”**

JEREBOAM ARRIVES 12-15

And on the third day Jereboam and all the people came to Rehoboam in line with the statement of the king saying **“Come to me in three days time”**. And the king answered the people harshly and forsook the counsel of the old men that they gave him and he spoke to them in accordance with the advice of young peers saying **“My father chastised you with whips but I will add to your burden under my father who chastised you with whips – I will chastise you with scourges”** *We do have to give due weight to the words of both sets of advisers for the truth lies between. The elderly knew the Solomon had waxed harsh and the youth who were brought up in a disciplined culture where tough speaking and punishment by whipping was indeed used widely might easily feel that upon relaxing it society would relax and become ungovernable. Solomon is famous for an aphorism from which our proverb “Spare the rod and spoil the child” emerges. Rehoboam his son was aware of his tough talk which is the other side of the coin to his amorous silken words. Solomon was an iron ruler.*

EXCURSUS ON HISTORY AND PROPHECY 15

So the king did not listen to the people **because the turn of events [hbs] 29. was a reality running with [mym] the LORD...** *This is a tell-tale phrase and encapsulates the whole historical and prophetic development of history. The “turn of events” is often impossible humanly to foresee but God reveals it to his prophets at special junctures and sets forth in scripture the principles and often the time phases or eras during which His will shall prosper or be realised in one particular or another. I have throughout the books to Samuel Kings and Chronicles retained numerous testimonies to this fact which I call “reality” because scripture is the reality check of history and history is the reality of God acting in concert with His word. Thus “it came to pass” is dynamic and means “It is real because God is real.” He is the “I am” and history is His story with its antiphony “even so LORD Jesus” ...in order that He might cause his word to rise or be active **like one awaking** which the LORD spoke by the hand of Ahijah [Yahweh is my friend] the Shilonite [“the pacifier” or “man of ease”] to Jereboam [“the people are numerous”] the son of Nebat [“aspect – even “expectation”]*

ISRAEL DEFECTS FROM DAVID’S HOUSE 16-20

Then all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them and they replied to the king saying **“What lot have we in David and we have no future heritage in the son of Jesse-to your tents O Israel. David, see to your own house.”** And Israel went to their tents. But *as for* the sons of Israel that lived in the cities of Judah – Rehoboam was their monarch. Then King Rehoboam quickly sent out Adoram who was over the taxation and all Israel stoned and heaped stones on him and he died and King Rehoboam continued to be vigorous and toughen mounting his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. *Rehoboam lost no time setting about levying a burden but his move was countered by rebellion and the summary execution of his tax-man. He continued strong and set off for Jerusalem. It appears that there were yet many families of the Jews that dwelt in tents though Judah and its cities were well walled and modernised.* So Israel rebelled [literally “sinned”] against the house of David **UNTIL THIS DAY**. *The account in its written scriptural form is an autograph from the period of the divided monarchy and owes something to the prophetic school though until Jehoshaphat and the close liaison between king and prophet is restored it was not*

completed.(see 2 Chronicles 18. 7-9). *30. And it was reality* as all Israel heard that Jereboam had returned they sent post haste and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel; there was no-one following the house of David except the tribe of Judah alone.

3. THE PROPHETIC WORD OF SHEMAIAH PREVENTS INTERNECINE WAR 21-24

So Rehoboam came to Jerusalem and gathered the whole house of Judah and the tribe off Benjamin 180,000 chosen men that executed or made war to fight with the house of Israel to return the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon *31. it was reality* the word of God came to **Shemaiah a man of God** saying “Speak to Rehoboam son of Solomon the king of Judah and to the entire house of Judah and Benjamin and the rest of the people saying “Thus says the LORD ‘**Do not go up to battle against your brethren the sons of Israel: return every man to his own house for this word or matter is with me and is working itself out.**” *The further exposition of how historical events develop under the hand of God shows that Israel or God’s people are at the heart of history and the out-working [hyhm the Niphal of the “going on” or outworking” of the “divine word” accentuates the fact that God speaks and events follow in their course-often immediately and very often centuries or millennia later]* So they listened to the word of the LORD and returned going back according to the word of the LORD.

JEROBOAM’S IDOLATRY – A BAIT TO DRAW ISRAEL BACK 25-33

And Jereboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and lived there and went out from there and built Penuel. *The first city abides today. It lies beneath Samaria and hard by the mount of cursing. The second city was in east of Jordan – in the territory of the tribe of Gad across Jordan and 50 miles distant but more especially the scene of Israel’s patriarch Jacob met with God and where he was first called Israel. Jereboam was solidifying the link with Israel’s patriarch.* But Jereboam said in his heart “**Now the kingdom may return to the house of David**”. When this people go up to offer sacrifices at the house of the LORD then the heart of this people is returning to their Lord – to Rehoboam king of Judah. So the king took advice and made two calves of gold and said to them “**It is too great a journey to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel that brought you up from the land of Egypt.**” *This repetition of the folly of Aaron spelt future trouble for the rule of Jereboam. His advice was even worse than that of Rehoboam.* Then he set one at Bethel and he gave one for Dan. *To brazenly establish idolatry where Samuel had led Israel to God was rank apostasy. To send a “calf” to Dan to encourage idolatry there was added infamy. I have seen the remnants of the shrine there. It became a grove and once had attendant priests as Bethel would have had as well. Jereboam was courting disaster.* And he created a house of high places and created priests from the last dregs of the people that were not from the sons of Levi. The Jereboam created a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month like the feast that existed in Judah and he offered upon the altar. Thus he did at Bethel offering to the calves that he made and he caused priests of the high places he made to minister at Bethel. So he made his offering on the altar that he made at Bethel on the 15th day in the eighth month – on the month that he feigned from his heart and created a feast for the sons of Israel and brought his offering on the altar to raise a sweet smell or incense. *The logic to the choice of month was two-fold: first the month had no feast, and second on that month calves were everywhere ploughing the land in this month and he might sell the theory that the oxen brought prosperity and hope to the people. The busy work of farmers might mean that there might not have been a popular take-up of his new religion. He*

appears also to have made religion cheap in two senses – first less able and good elements of the people acted as priests – and second incense not animals seemed to be required.

CHAPTER 13

(4) A PROPHETIC MAN OF GOD FORSEES JOSIAH'S REFORMATION 1-10

And **behold a man of God** came from Judah with or **“in”** the word of the LORD for Bethel and Jereboam was ministering at the altar offering incense and he called against the altar **“in”** or with the word of the LORD and said **“O altar, altar, thus says the LORD “Behold a son will be born for the house of David and his name will be Josiah and O altar, he will offer upon you the priests of the high places that burn incense on you and the bones of men will burn fiercely on you!”** And he gave that day a sign saying “This is the sign that God has spoken – behold the altar shall tear itself in pieces and as the king heard the word of the man of God which he proclaimed to the altar at Bethel suddenly Jereboam put forth his hand from upon the altar saying **“Capture him”** and the hand that he sent out against him was dried up or stiff and he was not able to cause it to come back down. And the altar split and the dust spilled from the altar according to the sign that the man of God had given **“in”** the word of the LORD. *The special lesson of this passage is that godly men were found in Judah at this time and three times over we are told that this godly prophet was “in” or “into” God’s mind and will. He is described as being deeply associated with and imbued with the living word of God. The word of God is like a “house” and we are to dwell within it. But **men of God** are characterised by authority, evidence and the prophetic word itself. These three elements mark out God’s holy men in every generation. Elijah is described thus and was characterised by word, sign and authority from God.*

Then the king humbled himself and said to the man of God **“Please supplicate [I] the face of the LORD God and cause prayer to continue for me that my hand may also come back as it was at the first.”** So the king said to the man of God **“Come to my house and get refreshment or help and I will give you a reward.”** But the man of God said to the king **“If you gave me half your house I would not come with you nor would I eat bread or drink water in that place for thus was my command **“in”** the word of the LORD saying “Do not eat bread or drink water and do not come back the way you go””** so he travelled on another road and did not return the way he went to Bethel.

THE CONTRARY WINDS OF PROPHETS – THE MATTER OF THE MAN AND THE MESSAGE 11-19

And a single old prophet lived at Bethel and his son [*mb –tending to suggest “family” or a number of sons*] came and narrated or wrote for him all that had happened that the man of God did that day at Bethel – the words that he spoke to the king these also he wrote or narrated to their father. Then their father said to them **“What was this way that he went for his sons saw the way the man of God who came from Judah went.”** And he said to his sons **“Saddle the ass for me”** and they saddled the ass for him and he rode off on it. And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under the oak and said to him “Are you the man of God that came from Judah?” and he said **“It is I”**.

Then he said to him **“Come with me to the house and eat bread”** But he said **“I am not able to return with you and come with you to eat bread and I cannot drink water in this place for a word was upon or about me **“in”** the word of the LORD**

not to eat bread and not to drink water there; not to return walking in the way I went there.” But he said to him “I also am a prophet like you and an angel spoke to me “in” the word of the LORD saying “Cause him to come back to your house and he shall eat bread and drink water”; he was failing or deceiving him. [vjk] So he returned with him and ate bread and drank water at his house. *The lesson we learn here is that so-called prophets may look plausible even to other men of God but be thoroughly knavish. The only safe course of life is direct obedience to the word of God. Paul the apostle warns us not to heed angels where they conflict with the word of the gospel – Galatians 1.8*

TEXTUAL GAP 13 19-22

32. And it was a reality as they sat at table...

33. And it was reality the word of the LORD came to the prophet that made him return and he proclaimed to the man of God that had come from Judah saying “**Thus says the LORD because you disobeyed from embitterment or resisted the mouth of the LORD and did not keep the command the LORD your God commanded you but have returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place where He told you not to eat bread and drink water your carcass shall not arrive at the burial tomb of your fathers.**”

The text seems to make God speak with two voices. But in reality the man under the oak tree had become embittered and proved disobedient not in the discharge of his message indeed but rather in his personal obedience to God and so the LORD had to chasten him and warn of his divine punishment through an older prophet that may no longer have been able to hear – because his family appear to have written the relevant details of the story of the man of God for his attention.

34. And it was real after he had eaten bread and drunk he saddled the ass for the prophet he caused to return to him. So he left but a lion found him on the way and killed him and his carcass *35. Was really there* having been cast down on the way and the ass standing beside or **joined to it** and the lion also standing near the carcass. And behold great men passing by saw the carcass that had been destroyed on the roadway and the lion standing beside the carcass and they went and told it in the city where the old prophet lived. So the prophet who made him come back from his journey heard the report and said “**It is the man of God who was embittered at the mouth of the LORD so the LORD has given him to the lion and he has torn and killed him according to the word of the LORD that he spoke to him. Then he spoke to his sons saying “Saddle me the ass and they saddled it”.** *This was a different ass for neither the lion nor the ass formerly referred to moved away from the carcass.* So he went off and found the carcass torn on the road and the ass and the lion standing near the carcass. The lion was not eating the carcass and had not torn the ass. Then the prophet lifted the corpse of the man of God and conveyed it back onto the ass and caused him to return and the old prophet came to the city to lament him and to bury him. And he laid his corpse to rest in his own grave and his lamentation over him was “**Alas my brother!**” *These two were brothers in Yahweh but one was somewhat bitter and simply disobedient whilst the other was not perfectly truthful and yet God used them both. Had the old prophet courageously spoken to the errant Jeroboam he (that prophet) might have died by consequence and gone first to his grave. But the older prophet had no commission and accompanying sign or authority save the understanding that Jeroboam was acting as an idolater. The man of God for his part was very clear on his testimony before the king and the world but less clear or more translucent about his personal bitterness when it came to the brother with whom he*

had fellowship. *36. And it was real* after he had buried him he also spoke to his sons saying “**When I die bury me also in the burial tomb where the man of God is buried and cause my bones to rest next to his bones for the word that he proclaimed “in” the word of the LORD** against the altar that is at Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria *37 is a reality* and *38 will be a reality.*”

SIN AND THE NEMESIS OF JEROBOAM 33-34

After this event Jeroboam did not turn back from his evil way but went back again and made the off-scourings of the people priests of the high places whoever desired the office he consecrated [*literally “filled his hands”*] and he would be of the priests of the high places. And in this matter... *39... lies the reality* of the sin of the house of Jeroboam and it would bring it to nothing [*dj k*] and destroy it [*dmv*] from the face of the fertile earth.

CHAPTER 14

(5) AHIJAH THE PROPHET MARKS THE END OF THE WORST THEOCRATIC MONARCH 1-4

At that time Abijah son of Jereboam became sick or afflicted by disease. And Jereboam said to his wife “**Please get up and disguise your face so that they will not recognise you as the wife of Jereboam and go to Shiloh.**” Behold Ahijah the prophet is there. He it was that spoke with promise about me becoming king over this people. And take in your hand ten loaves of bread and crumb-cakes and a bottle of honey and go to him and he will explain to you what will happen to the child. So the wife of Jeroboam did thus as appointed and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Abijah but Abijah could not see because his eyes stood unmoving from his old age [*byv – grey hairs*] *It may seem ironic that men seek healing from others afflicted by natural age related conditions but that has happened and it demonstrates no surd in God’s purpose for all suffer ageing and its concomitants.*

(4) AHIJAH PROPHECIES THE DEMISE OF JEROBOAM 5-16

But the LORD said to Ahijah “**Behold the wife of Jeroboam is coming to enquire a matter by being with you about her son for he is sick. You shall speak thus and thus to her for the reality is when she comes she will present herself in full disguise.**”

40. And the reality was as Ahijah heard the sound of her feet coming to the door he said “**Come in wife of Jereboam. Why this full disguise?**” “**But I am sent to you with a heavy yoke or severity**” [*hvq – the play is on the earlier idea of Rehoboam going to ruin under the heavy yoke he proposed – the idea recurs to haunt Jeroboam himself*] Go tell Jeroboam “**Thus says the LORD God of Israel because I raised you up from among the people and made you leader of my people Israel and tore the kingdom from David and gave it to you. But you have not been like my servant David who kept my commandment and who walked after me with all his heart doing only the right thing in my eyes. But you have caused the creation of evil more than all that were before you and you have gone and created for yourself different gods and molten poured out images to irritate and provoke me and you have cast me behind your back. Therefore behold me bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam and I will cut off from Jeroboam he that makes water [*ntv*] against the wall and him that is ruling or retains strength and is left in Israel. I will also continue to remove what is left afterward of the house of**

Jeroboam as one removes and sets on fire dung [//g] till it is gone. The one belonging to Jeroboam that dies in the city the dogs will eat and those in the field the birds of heaven will eat for the LORD has spoken. So you rise and get going to your palace and when your feet make it to the city the child will be dead. And all Israel shall lament for him and bury him for this alone of those belonging to Jeroboam shall come to the burial because in or through him there was a good word about or to the LORD God of Israel [or preferably qxmm “we will discover a better word concerning Go”] in the house of Jeroboam.

And the LORD will cause a king to rise for Him over Israel who will cut off [“as tree-felling”] Jeroboam’s house this day; but what, even now? For the LORD shall strike Israel like a reed is agitated and made fugitive or flees [dm] in the water and pluck up [a metaphor used by Jeremiah of expelling a people Jer.24.6 and of failing water Jer.18.14-this supplies yet further evidence of Jeremiah as the writer of KINGS] from this good land that he gave their fathers. And scatter them as seed across the river because they have created their Asherah groves causing the LORD to be provoked. And he will give Israel over because of [//gb “by or for rolling] the sins of Jeroboam that he sinned and because of [rva] the sins of Israel.

JEROBOAM’S DEATH AND SUCCESSOR 17-20

And the wife of Jeroboam rose up and left and came to Tirzah and when she came to the door threshold of the house the child was dead. So they buried him and all Israel mourned him according to the word of the LORD spoken by the hand or power of his servant Ahijah the prophet. And the remaining acts of Jeroboam – how and where he warred and ruled – these are written in the book of “**THE DAYS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.**” And the days **Jeroboam was king were twenty two years** and he lay down with his fathers and Nadab his son reigned after [literally “under”] him. *There may have been an overlap of joint rule – thus ended the long evil reign of Israel’s worst monarch.*

Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned then in Judah and he was 41 at the outset of his reign and **he was king 17 years in Jerusalem** – the city the LORD chose out of all the tribes of Israel to set His name there; and the name of his mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman. And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD and provoked Him to anger from all that they did and along with the sins of their fathers – which they sinned for they also built high places and statue style pillars [bxm] and Asherah groves upon every high or **bald** [jbg like the “forehead”] hill and under every green tree. Also there were also male prostitutes [Sodomites] in the land that did according to all the abominations of the nations that the LORD dispossessed [vry] before the face of the sons of Israel. *The bible is clear in all contexts as to the abominable nature of the various sins belonging to homosexuality [b[t means “occasion of horror” and entails that which people in general deeply distaste. So this sin was considered in earlier times shameful and detestable Deut.7.26, 1Kings 21.26, Ezek.16.22. Before mankind it is abhorrent and to God it was and it is abominable and proscribed in laws developed alongside the 10 commands in Leviticus 18.22 (holiness code)].*

SHISHAK INVADES JERUSALEM 25-28

41. And it was historical reality – Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem in the fifth year of king Rehoboam. And he took treasures of the house of the LORD and treasures of the palace of the king – he captured the whole lot and took all the shields

of gold that Solomon made. But king Rehoboam made brass shields instead and caused them to be deposited under the hand of the commander of the runners that kept watch at the door of the king. *Immense wealth had been lost. Rehoboam was taking measures after the horse had bolted. His carelessness led to serious loss and Judah along with Israel went into a steep dive economically as well as spiritually. The shields ironically demonstrated a spiritual malaise for Israel's faith in God had stolen away too.* 42. *And it was reality* from the time that the king went to the house of the LORD the runners carried them and caused them to go back to the station of the guards.

REHOBAM'S DEATH AND SUCCESSOR 29-31

And the remainder of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did – are these not written on the scroll of the “**ACTS OF THE DAYS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH**”. And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his father in the city of David and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite woman and Abijam his son ruled in his place.

CHAPTER 15

ABIJAM'S 3 YEAR REIGN IN JUDAH 1-9

And in the 18th year of Jeroboam son of Nebat Abijam was king over Judah. He ruled three years in Jerusalem and the name of his mother was Maachah daughter of Abishalom [*Gore, Goudge and Guillame state that “daughter” means “grand-daughter” and Abishalom is simply Absalom which is all very well until we read 2 Samuel 14.27 where we learn that Absalom had one daughter and her name was Tamar*]. But he walked in all the sins of his father – which he did before him and his heart was not fully committed or steady with the LORD his God as the heart of David his grand-father. But because of David the LORD God gave him a **candle** in Jerusalem to cause his son to rise after him and to cause Jerusalem to stand secure or as minister of God [*dm*]. Because David did the right in the eyes of the LORD and did not depart or turn from all that he commanded all the days of his life excepting in the affair of Uriah the Hittite. And the rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did are they not written on the scroll of “**THE ACTS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH**” but there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. And Abijam slept with his fathers and they buried him in the city of David and Asa his son reigned in his place. *The LXX gives Abijam 3 further years. His life was fraught with war but he kept the light of David alive like a flickering candle and Jerusalem was militarily strong and spiritually a city of divine ministry in his time.*

ASA'S 41 YEAR REIGN IN JUDAH 9-16

And in the 20th year of Jeroboam king of Israel Asa King of Judah began to reign. And he ruled 41 years in Jerusalem and the name of his mother was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom [*cf comment on verse 2*]. And Asa did the right in the eyes of the LORD like David his grand-father. And he overcame the Sodomites... [*rb*] “*to bolt up*” or *imprison* or “*transfer away*” – even “*shave the head*” – *the verb has the force of “remove” so that by whatever means he removed them from the land. Under the theocracy they were an abomination besides being abhorrent by practice*... and removed all the idol stone statues that his fathers [*Solomon and Rehoboam*] had made. And he also removed Maachah his mother as queen dowager because she created terror images for the Asherah grove and Asa cut down her fearful image and burned it by the stream of Kidron. *Asa made an exhibition of the destruction of this*

*frightful image that cost his mother her prestigious position. But the high places were not taken away or **put out of bounds** [rns] – still the heart of Asa was fully committed – wholly disposed in friendship to and alongside [m/v] the LORD all his days. And he brought the things his father had consecrated and his own to the house of the LORD – vessels both of silver and gold. *Asa's life was excellent and that over a long period. He brooked no rival to the worship of the LORD. He dealt a body blow to immorality and idolatry.**

ASA'S OVERTURNING OF BAASHA'S ENCROACHMENT 16-24

And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah so that he might not give leave for any to come and go to Asa king of Judah. *Baasha was virtually besieging Asa and cutting of traffic from the north.* So Asa took all the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the house of the king and put them in the hands of his servants and king Asa sent them to Benhadad son of Tabrimon son of Hezron king of Aram that lived in Damascus saying **“There is a covenant between me and you as between my father and yours. Look, I am sending a present of silver and gold – go and cause the covenant with Baasha king of Israel to be broken and he will go up from being against me.”** And Benhadad listened to King Asa and sent the commander of his forces that he had against the cities of Israel and struck Ijon and Dan and Abel Beth Maachah and the whole of Cineroth (Galilee) through all the land of Naphtali.

43. And it was live reality as Baasha heard he ceased building Ramah and returned to Tirzah. Then King Asa proclaimed through the entirety of Judah that nobody was free from obligation and they carried away the building stones of Ramah and the timber that Baasha had built or constructed and king Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpeh with it. And all the remaining deeds of Asa and all his power as a warrior and all that he did and the cities he built are these not written on the scroll of **WORDS OF THE DAYS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH?** [Chronicles] Yet at the time of his late age he was feeble or diseased in his feet. And Asa slept with his fathers and they buried him with his father in the city of David his grandfather and his son Jehoshaphat ruled in his place.

Asa was successful in cutting off Baasha's daring scheme to create a great southern city that might well have acted as an alternative capital besides being a stronghold to suppress Judah. He is eminent as a spiritual man despite his commitment to parry the warring north. He wisely used wealth to buy better security and strengthen an old alliance. He disestablished homosexual aspirations and established the worship of God firmly in the face of earlier idolatry. His was truly a reign when the light of truth burned brightly.

NADAB'S 2 YEAR REIGN IN ISRAEL 25-26

And Nadab son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah and reigned over Israel two years. But he did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father and in his sin that he occasioned Israel to sin. *Nadab's reign was cut short. He learned nothing from the evil ways of his father.*

BAASHA'S 24 YEAR REIGN IN JUDAH 27-30

And Baasha son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against him (Nadab) and Baasha struck him at Gibbethon which belongs to the Philistines and Nadab and all Israel were besieging Gibbethon. And Baasha slew him in the third year of Asa king

of Judah and took the rule in his place. *44. And the reality was* during his reign he struck all the house of Jeroboam – there was not a remnant of all that lived belonging to Jeroboam until he had destroyed him utterly according to the word of the LORD that was spoken by the hand of his servant Ahijah the Shilonite because of the sin of Jeroboam that he sinned and because he occasioned Israel to sin by his provocation by which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. *Baasha despite his belligerence towards Judah was instrumental in taking apart piece by piece the evil family of Jeroboam and so fulfilling the prophetic word of Ahijah. **Though there is much water under the bridge from the death of Jeroboam to the end of Benhadad the next mighty dynamic point scripture draws attention to the end of the cruel Benhadad.***

BAASHA’S 24 YEAR REIGN IN ISRAEL 31-34

So the remainder of the acts of Nadab and all that he did are these things not written on the scroll of “**THE ACTS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL**”? But there was between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. In the third year of Asa king of Judah Baasha son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah for 24 years. But he did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in the sin **that he occasioned Israel to sin**. *Like Asa Baasha reigned nearly a quarter century. His reign commenced with regicide and was marked by warring besides this extermination of the line of Jeroboam. His capital was close to Thebez and about 5 miles NE of Samaria – so his push south to build Ramah would bring him 70 miles closer to Jerusalem and put him in contention to besiege and capture it – but Asa was too swift and wily to allow his plan to get off the ground. Baasha like Jeroboam and others pulled their people with them in their idolatry and so occasioned many to fall. This most serious type of sin by example and evil leadership was a radical problem then as it is today. Few national leaders can sway populations closer to God unless like George 6th they have a prayerful and biblical approach to rule.*

CHAPTER 16

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

We enter a kaleidoscope of change in the 16th chapter. The chapter begins with God’s word to Jehu the Seer who has a significant part in the writing of 1 Kings that includes also material on Israel’s monarchy (910 or later to 854B.C.) from Baasha to Ahab’s time – and historical material on Judah over the 25 years of Jehoshaphat (873-848B.C.) (cf 2 Chronicles 20.34) concerning Baasha of Israel (909-886B.C.). His son occupied his throne for 2 years (886-885B.C.) (8-14). He lived a debauched life and was assassinated in a drunken state by Zimri a military commander whose rule over Israel lasted a mere 7 days in 885B.C. (15-20). He was burned to death and succeeded by Omri (885-874) whose claim to fame was the building of Samaria (16. 21-28 nota bene 24.) The chapter concludes in the despicable rule of Ahab who for 27 years reigned over Israel with his infamous wife Jezebel at his side (874-853B.C.)

(6) THE PROPHET JEHU BEN HANANI HERALDS RELIEF FROM WICKED RULE 1

And it was so that the word of the LORD came to **Jehu** son of Hanani over Baasha (“wickedness” from “ill savour” or “displeasure”) saying. *The prophetic word of this little-known prophet was here presented to Baasha as in 2Chronicles 19.2-3 it came to Jehoshaphat king of Judah. This obscure figure was important not alone in these contexts but as we read in 2Chronicles 20.34 he makes some – perhaps even a substantial contribution to the writing of the book of “First Kings” and his ministry may have spanned as long as 60 years. His name was not forgotten to the days of that*

other Jehu, grand-son of Nimshi and king of Israel whose father Jehoshaphat may well have named him after this then “well-known” prophet of Israel Jehu. Additionally it should be noted that Jehu’s father Hanani (God has been gracious to me) was a Seer as well (2 Chronicles 16.7) – all of which tells us that this specific family was deeply aware of “divine grace” in the 9th and 10th centuries B.C.

BAASHA’S DEMISE FIRMLY FORECAST BY THE PROPHET 2-6

“Because... [נ[י – the concept of “because” in Hebrew can be expressed by a set of prepositions-of which this is one. It includes the ideas of “”being under” or “humble under” and also of “providing an answer” or “responding to a situation” and certainly of “exercising oneself” – so the LORD is making clear through the prophet that He is desired to use a humble tool]...when it was or better “I who” caused you to be raised from the dust and gave you as prince or leader or one “proclaimed” and “in front of” my people Israel but you walked in the way of Jeroboam and you caused my people Israel to sin – which directly related to the cause of my provocation through their sin... As W.F.Albright’s archaeological work has confirmed (and the author himself has witnessed some of these relics Jeroboam built shrines to Baal at Bethel and Dan) and erected “calf” images as idolatrous rivals to the LORD’S temple at Jerusalem. “Behold me as I make bare and naked those who come after Baasha and I will make the aftermath of his house as the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat.” Jeroboam was assured of his rule over ten tribes by the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh (1Kings 11.30-31 when he invited Jeroboam to symbolically tear 10 pieces out of his new cloak. Jeroboam failed in that he feared Israel would revert to submit to Solomon’s family so he built the “calf” shrines at Bethel and Dan to prevent re-assimilation of religion(1Kings 12 25-32). He also established a new festival on the 15th day of October – the month of ploughing and used non-Levites at his shrines. In a word he created a new form of Baalism.

“He who dies in the city belonging to Baasha will the dogs eat and he who dies in the field belonging to Baasha will the birds of heaven devour.” And what remains of the feats of the days of Baasha and that which he performed – are these not written on the book of **“the feats of the days of the Kings of Israel?”** (cf 1Kings 15.27) So Baasha lay down to rest with his fathers and was buried at Tirzah and Elah (“*terebinth*” or “*ancient strong oak*”) his son ruled in his chamber instead. And truly the word of the LORD by the hand and power of Jehu son of Hanani the prophet also came to Baasha and his house overall the evil that he had done in the eyes of the LORD to cause Him to be provoked by the works of his hands to model him on the house of Jeroboam and over that He (God) struck him dead.

THE BRIEF REIGN AND ASSASSINATION OF ELAH 8-10

Elah is the king with the ironic name. Though called “terebinth” his reign merely entered on a second year and it is contrasted unfavourably with that of Asa of Judah who was already 26 years on the throne.

And on the twenty sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha reigned over Israel in Tirzah two years. *Pere de Vaux excavated what is believed to be the site of Tirzah 7 miles to the north east of present day Nablus.* And his servant Zimri, [“*my song*”] commander of half of his chariots, plotted against him. And he (the king) was in Tirzah drinking to giddy intoxication in the house of Arza, who was financial controller over his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck and killed him in the twenty seventh year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his chamber.

ZIMRI'S SUMMARY JUDGMENT FALLS ON THE HOUSE OF BAASHA ACCORDING TO PROPHECY 11-14

And it was so (under providence) in the house of his Sabbath reign upon his throne *the expression is one of irony and is a play on words – for his Sabbath or seventh day saw him strike all the house of Baasha and not a remnant remained – not one who makes water against the wall a phrase used for a little boy and not even a Goel kinsman or friend. And Zimri destroyed all the house of Baasha in line with the word of the LORD which He spoke on Baasha by the hand of Jehu the prophet. This was on account of all the sins of Baasha and the sin of Elah his son – which they had sinned – and because they had sinned to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger by their foolishness. But what remains of the acts of Elah and all that he did are they not written upon the book of the feats of the days of the kings of Israel? There is something of irony in this and the previous statement on accomplishments – neither king had much to boast about and the notices in the book mentioned are minuscule.*

WHILE ZIMRI'S HOST BESIEGED GIBBETHON ZIMRI BURNED HIMSELF TO DEATH IN HIS PALACE 15-20

In the twenty seventh year of the reign of Asa king of Judah Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah and the people were encamped at Gibbethon which belongs to the Philistines. *This former Levite inheritance in Dan – a little to the west of Gezer (see Joshua 21.23) had been overrun by the Philistines.* And the people who were in the camp heard it told that Zimri had plotted against the king and struck the king so all Israel made Omri commander of the host king in that day in the camp. And Omri rose up and all Israel with him from Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. And it was so when Zimri saw that the city was captured that he went to the high stronghold of the palace of the king and set the palace ablaze over his own head and died in the fire. He died because he sinned to work evil in the sight of the LORD to walk in the way of Jeroboam and by the sin which he did to provoke Israel to sin. And what remains of the acts of Zimri and the conspiracy he plotted are they not written on the book of “the acts of the days of the kings of Israel.”

ISRAEL DIVIDES – BUT TIBNI DIES 21-22

Then the people of Israel were dividing them in half. Half of the people were following Tibni son of Ginath to make him king and half followed Omri. But the people that followed Omri grew stronger than the people who followed Tibni son of Ginath but Tibni died and Omri reigned.

THE CALAMITOUS 12 YEAR REIGN OF OMRI 23-28

In the thirty first year of Asa King of Judah Omni took rule over Israel for **twelve years**. He ruled for six years at Tirzah. And he acquired the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver and built on the hill and named the city he built for Shemer –owner of the hill of Shomron. (Samaria). But Omri did evil in the LORD'S eyes – he did more evil that all that were before him. And he walked in all the way of Jeroboam (“numerous people” – symbolic of the broad way) son of Nebat (“look” – symbolic of following the eyes not the heart.) and in his sin by which he caused Israel to sin and provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger by their vanities or follies. And the rest of the acts of Omri that he did and his deeds as a warrior are they not written on the book of the acts of the days of the king of Israel? So Omri lay down to rest with his fathers and they buried him in Samaria; and Ahab his son ruled in his throne chamber.

OMRI'S CRASS EVIL REIGN 29-33

And Ahab son of Omri did evil in the LORD'S sight more than all who were before him. And it was *just* a light matter to him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians and went and served and worshipped Baal. And he raised up an altar to Baal in the house of Baal that he built in Samaria. And Ahab made **the Asherah** and Ahab added to his works to provoke the LORD God of Israel than any of the kings of Israel before him. *His liaison with Jezebel was bad news in the extreme. He adopted Baalism with his marriage. The male phallic symbol he raised up in Samaria was the last word in sensuality and idolatry*

THE ADOPTION OF AMORITE CHILD SLAUGHTER 34

In his days Hiel of Beth Hael (the House of "strength" or "idol god") built Jericho. *Now Bethel and Beth Hael may be taken to differ radically in this period since the erection of the Bethel shrine – this became a centre of idolatry to which the variant on the name bears testimony. Hiel(or Jehiel – "may God preserve him alive") With Abiram his firstborn he laid the foundation stone and with Segub he cause the gates to be put in position according to the prophetic word of the LORD **which he continued to speak(Piel) by the hand of Joshua the son of Nun.** This stone laying ceremony and gate erection ceremony involved the death of two of Hiel's children and one of the most horrific practices of the former Amorite culture. This curse was upon him in the form of the death or sacrifice of two children – in accordance with the solemn oath in Joshua 6.26 "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this Jericho – by his firstborn he will lay its founs and raise its gates with his youngest. Like Lionel Patrick in the earlier SPCK commentary on Joshua I suppose that this Hiel stooped to pagan practice rather than suffering unwanted death. As a result his action is idolatry and his accomplishment simply a cause of grief and curse. It may be as some believe that he lost his entire family not just those he sacrificed – for the conclusion of the building project did not just take the second son but the last and youngest. The point of greater interest to me is that Joshua rehearsed this warning continually over his life-time as a prophetic signal of the future downgrade in the life of the children of Israel – which conviction is borne out by his last speech.*

CHAPTER 17

THE WORD OF ORACLE OF THE PROPHET-AN EXCURSUS

(7) ELIJAH'S PROPHETIC MINISTRY WHICH TURNS THE NATIONS ROUND¹

Elijah is called "A settler" and in the sight of the LORD he did settle uneasily on the earth but has unlike any other with the exception of Enoch lived immensely longer in heaven though he never died nor has he been raised from death. He is a testimony to the fact that man may live on and on by the WORD OF GOD as Jesus said. It becomes vital to observe that during this period of failure to seek the LORD at the oracle in the temple the oracle of word of God comes out to men through the prophets.

But Elijah the Tishbite from Tishbe in Gilead said to Ahab "**Yahweh God of Israel is life itself before whose face I stand to minister – dew or rain will be with these years because my oracle is with my mouth.**" *This statement has been taken to be a type of oath and not without reason but the vital link between "the Living God" and "the live oracle" of the prophet is the matter Ahab needs to understand. Elijah is*

saying **“Yahweh is God and must be put in His rightful national place as sovereign which will be done over these years by this means – when he gives me a word on the end of rain and dew you will hear nothing more till He gives me word on the beginning of rain and dew.”** In other words God and rain relate to worship and seeking and ministering blessing. What then is wanted is to look to him and to pray and minister to the nation and to the LORD. This prophetic ministry in the theocracy was being used to bring Israel humbly back under the rule of God – for she had opted out into widespread idolatrous Baalite practice. There is a double “If” or “when” in the verse – and the **“If of rain and dew”** relates precisely to the **“if of oracle”**. James makes this point well in James 5.17-18. He adds that the years of testing were three and a half. When Elijah returns the number three and a half takes on renewed significance – because it speaks of the second half of the tribulation – Apocalypse 11.2 & Malachi 4.5 – this return has to do with the important matter of controlling precipitation in times of serious nuclear incidents and by that means alone the world can be bound over to keep the peace till the gathering in of those who believe in tribulation “months”.

EXCURSUS ON “THE DAYS OF ELIJAH”

*“The days of Elijah” are strictly three and a half years in the Apocalypse. The ministry of Elijah from his sudden appearance in 17.1 from across Jordan to the end of the life of Ahab and two battles – the Northern foes first approach and the final approach in which Ahab dies. The events recorded of Elijah in this reign span exactly 7 years which are divided into the ministry during the famine of 3 and a half years and his ministry during the siege of Samaria and its abortive follow up and then the third and fatal encounter with Aram in 1 Kings 22 three and a half years later. Then after 2 further years (including the Moabite rebellion) Ahaziah son of Ahab dies and immediately following this the final mission of Elijah is to anoint successors to kings and his own prophetic ministry – significantly Elisha (God saves) and then he is translated to heaven. In a very real sense there is strict parallel between the ministry of Elijah which was related to “the turning of the hearts of Israel back” (18.37) with the appearance of the latter day Elijah whose ministry is described by Malachi as one of “turning the hearts of fathers to their children and children to their fathers” especially in Israel in that latter day. The **very same means or modus operandi** as in 1 Kings 18 and 2 Kings 1 (during the last 7 years of Ahab) and in the 2 years when his son Ahaziah reigned) are given to the prophet of the 9th century BC-861-858 (3.5 years) and 858-852 immediately after which time Elijah was translated; the means of climate control and fire. Elijah’s first ministry was one of prayer and provision and hiddenness under Ahab but in the latter days it will be one of mighty international consequence and the prophets appear not to be covert.*

CHERITH 2-7

EXCURSUS ON GOD’S COMMAND TO “GO” (CF ABRAM’S CALL AND THE CHURCH’S MISSION)

In this call a very significant move of the LORD is going to thrust Elijah into a ministry that reaches a Gentile woman.

And it was so that the word or oracle of the LORD came to him saying **“Go [J/] from this and Go [JL/] facing eastward and get yourself hidden by Nahal Cherith. The “stream of separation” that is before the Jordan.”** The location is along a ravine close to the Wadi Kelt on the old Jerusalem Jericho road. Elijah would have been very much aware that the nature of his call was being postulated on the

Genesis 12.1 call of Abraham which used exactly the same co-ordinates “Go from here...go to” and it had the same explosive “daghesh lene” ל which in Hebrew means that the LORD said “Go” (made emphatic with the use of a long breath) followed by “Go” (made urgent with a curt loud and explosive command). The departure of Abraham and that of Elijah incorporate the same biblical calling from this world to the city of God and to be hidden in the rock of Ages till the seed come and dark vision God gave Abraham where he chases the birds away comes to be and till the days come when Elijah equally enters into the dark days of latter time and sees the judgments of God in the earth.

“...So you shall drink [htv] from the stream and I have commanded the ravens and they will stay or remain with you there and continually nourish you [Jlklk] there.” *This was a considerable act of faith. He knew where he was going generally and the predatory ravens would be his best friends.*

So **he went** and did according to the oracle of the LORD and **he went** and settled by the stream Nahal Cherith which is above the faces of Jordan. *Notice the two “went” statements that make emphatic his obedience and link with the oracle of God. His location is given as very high but within view of two vistas of Jordan to the North and south. The rock heights above Cherith command glorious views of the Jordan valley. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening and he was drinking from the stream. This was not just one pet raven – this was a group of ravens and they provided him very adequate and continual supply of varied diet daily. Man can train pigeons and parrots but God “commanded” ravens to act with grace and selflessness and in a systematic manner.*

And it happened at the end of the days that the brook dried up because there had been no heavy rain on the land.

ZAREPHATH 8-16

But it was so that the oracle of the LORD came to Elijah saying **“Arise and go to Zarephath [smelting] which belongs to Zidon and reside there. Behold I have commanded a desolate widow woman [hml a] to sustain you.”** So he arose and went to Zarephath and came to the open gate of the city. *His journey exceeded 100 miles but it could largely be taken along a route where Wadis and streams entered the Jordan basin and flowed in the Anti-Lebanon Range. And behold there was a desolate widow who had been gathering wood [tvvqm]. Clearly the woman had wood on her head and was going into the city. And Elijah called to her and said “Please get a little water with the vessel so that I may drink.” And she was going to draw or get it and Elijah called to her and said “Please get me just a small piece of bread in your hand.” And she said “The LORD your God is alive truly I say if only I had a cake but truly I have but the full of my hand of flour in an earthen jar [ddk] and a little oil in a wide cruise. And look what I am doing gathering two pieces of wood and I am going to make it (i.e. a cake) for me and for my son and we will eat and die.” At this point the woman clearly broke down and showed terrible fear. But Elijah said to her “Do not fear – go do as you have said – only make a cake from there in the first place for me and cause it to be brought to me and with the following afterward make for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel ‘The barrel of flour will not finish nor the cruise of oil diminish until the LORD gives heavy rain over the face off the fertile land.’”* And she went and acted in line with the oracle of Elijah and she and he and her household had food to eat for many days. The barrel of flour did not come to an end and the cruise of oil did not diminish according to the oracle of the LORD by the hand of Elijah.

THE MIRACLE OF RESTORATION 17-24

And it was so after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became pained sick or took ill. And his sickness was so strong or took such hold that there was no remaining life or breathing in him.

And she said to Elijah **“What is there in common between me and you? Have you come to me to recall my iniquity and to cause the death of my son?”** And he said to her **“Give me your son”** and he took him from her bosom or embrace and brought him up to the upper room where he was living and rested over his length. And he called on Yahweh and said **“Lord my God have you caused calamity to come upon the woman with whom I have been living as a stranger or guest to cause the death of her son?”** And he measured himself pressing upon the youth three hammer blows [*mym[p]*] and called upon the LORD and said **“LORD God please return the life and soul of the youth within him!”** And the LORD heard or obeyed the voice of Elijah and returned the soul of the lad to his inner being [*brq – presumably heart and lungs*] and he came to life. *The glory of this passage is not just the obedience of Elijah but the obedience of the woman of Zarephath and then the obedience of the LORD who hearkened to the voice of a man He loved. It was love that promoted Elijah’s obedience – it was kindness that promoted the lady’s obedience and it was deep love for his servant Elijah and this believing Gentile that lay behind the sovereign action of the LORD in whose book of life no doubt this lady’s name was to be inscribed.* And Elijah took the child and caused him to go down from the upper chamber of the house and gave him to his mother and Elijah said **“See prophetically – look by faith – your son is alive.”** And the woman said to Elijah **“Now I know that you are a man of God and the oracle of the LORD through your mouth is true or faithful.”**

CHAPTER 18

GOD CALLS ELIJAH TO COSTLY OBEDIENCE

And it was so after many days that the oracle of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, **“Go [*J/*] be seen near Ahab and I will give rain upon the fertile ground.”** *This time the angry king must get the prophet in his sights and the commission was fraught with danger but Elijah did not shrink from it.*

And Elijah went to be seen by Ahab and the famine was severe in Samaria. *Elijah was en route while God was altering the way the matter would issue – for Ahab had an idea which he put into action at the same time to search for high springs. Had Elijah fallen into the wrong hands at this time he might well have died.* And Ahab called Obadiah who was over his household and Obadiah was a man fearing the LORD exceedingly. And it was so that through Jezebel’s cutting to death of the prophets of the LORD Obadiah took one hundred prophets and hid them fifty by fifty in an empty neglected place and supplied them with bread and water. *He did exactly what the ravens did for Elijah at Cherith.*

OBADIAH READILY OBEYS AHAB-CHEAP OBEDIENCE

And Ahab said to Obadiah **“Go [*J/*] through the land to all the springs of waters and to all the Wadi streams; peradventure we shall find grass and the horse and mule will live and we will not kill our animals.”** *The scheme was not comprehensive – just a way of saving their own pedigree and favourite beasts.* And they apportioned the land among them to pass through it. Ahab went one direction and Obadiah went in another direction on his own. And it happened as Obadiah was

on the way that he saw Elijah and he called him and he had to make himself recognise him as strange [rkn] and he fell before his face and he said **“Are you my Lord Elijah?”** And he said to him **“I am, go [J] go say to your Lord ‘Behold Elijah’”** *The message was two words – it ended the idea that Elijah had perished – it brought back to Ahab’s mind 3 years on the thought that maybe rain would come. It was on one hand unwelcome and on the other the best news for some time – and might spell an end to drought.*

OBEDIENCE – THE COST EXAMINED

But he said **“What have I done wrong that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab to kill me? As the LORD your God lives there is not a nation and kingdom where my Lord has not sent to look for you and they say ‘Nothing’ and he causes that kingdom and nation to swear that you are not found.”**

(a) And now you say **“Go [J] say to your Lord ‘Behold Elijah’ and it shall be when I have left you then the Spirit of Yahweh will bear you up where I have no idea and I will go to explain to Ahab and he will not find you and he will slay me but I am your servant reverencing the LORD from my boyhood. Has it not been explained to my Lord what I did at Jezebel’s slaying of the prophets of the LORD? I caused one hundred prophets of the LORD to be hidden fifty by fifty in a cavern and sustained them with bread and water...”** *It would appear that this secret action was ongoing.*

(b) And now you say to me **“Go [J] tell your master ‘Behold Elijah’-but he will slay me. Ahab might readily suspect Obadiah of having protected Elijah all the while. But Elijah said **“As the LORD God of hosts lives before whom I stand to minister I – for that cause I will see his face today!”** And Obadiah went to call Ahab and inform him and Ahab went to call out or shout [arq] to Elijah. *The nature of meeting may have been arms’ length and it was predictably to be a “shouting match.”***

AHAB MISCALLS ELIJAH 17

And it was so as Ahab got to see Elijah that Ahab said to him **“Are you this Achan – this troubler of Israel?”** *This strictly is a question but it is in effect an allegation.* But he said **“I have not troubled Israel but you and your father’s house by you’re forsaking of the commandments of the LORD and walking after the Baals. But now send and gather all Israel to me to Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal 450 and the prophets of the Asherah 400 who eat at Jezebel’s table.”** So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets to Mount Carmel. *It is notable that Elijah knew to the last man the weight of numbers of the false prophets of Baal. Clearly Jezebel put it about how strong her evil religion was.*

(1) ELIJAH COUNTERS SCEPTICISM & FANATICISM 21

And Elijah drew near to the entire people and said **“For how long are you “limping people” over two parties or opinions [hp[s literally “two branches” – hopping like a little bird changing perch oftentimes – the word is the nearest Hebrew gets to our word “sceptic”]. Chrysostom rendered this into Greek with the phrase $\chi\omega\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \delta\omicron\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ “limping like a maimed person between strongly held beliefs. Elijah was saying – “There is no place for doubt much less scepticism] If Yahweh is God walk after Him! If Baal is god go after him! The people did not answer him a word or anything. There was utter silence. Israel’s instability stemmed from the double minded attitude unmasked by Elijah.**

(2) ELIJAH COUNTERS IDOLATRY WHICH IS ATHEISM 22-24

But Elijah answered **“I present myself the only remaining prophet belonging to the LORD and the prophets of Baal are 450 men. They will provide us with two bulls and they will choose for themselves the bull that they cut into pieces [j tñ] and place it on wood but set no fire on it and I will “offer up” one bull and place it on the fire and put no fire on it. And you shall call on your god and I will call on the name of Yahweh... We should observe the faithfulness of the Jew who would not take the name of a heathen god on his lips. This practice we would do well to adopt – for we too readily render to pagan so-called deities both credibility and equal status with the living God – we speak as pluralist idolaters though we believe as Christians. The contrast between “offering” to the true God and “cutting up meat” has to be observed. Elijah was saying that the act of the Baalite priests was merely “butchery” and had nothing to do with approaching God...and the God who answers by fire – He is “the God”. Elijah uses *the Hebrew definite article* of which one of its two regulative roots is “This” – so “Yahweh is this (one) God”. The other root of the definite article is “The (one) of several.”**

And all the people replied and said **“This oracle or thing is good”**. A formerly apathetic people were firing up – under the wise leadership of Elijah. Already the heart of Israel was won by the man with the “oracle” of God. He was in touch with God – he had something radical and positive and dynamic to bring to the need of the hour.

THE WORD OF FAITH

(3) ELIJAH COUNTERS FANATICISM WITH GODS WORD AND ASSURANCE BORN OF 3 YEARS OF PRAYER AND STURDY CYNICISM TOWARD AN EVIL PRINCIPLE 25-28

*It could be said that Elijah went on “retreat”. His quiet waiting on God over these years was not pure cynicism but it had three cynical elements. (a) He did not accept the world view of the Baal dogmatic (b) He did not accept that “plenty” was the way forward but indeed lived in continued “austerity” as the LORD required – yet having all sufficiency in necessities. (c) He sought **the turning of men’s hearts to God** and saw but faintly how anointed future leaders as Hazael, Jehu and Elisha – might contribute to this. Elisha one of these leaders wept over another – Hazael – for he used prophecy as an occasion to sin. (2Kings 8.10&15)*

And Elijah said to the prophets of Baal **“choose the first young bull and prepare it first. [hv[This term is not strictly used as a word related to approaching God but as a word for preparing a meal or feast] for there are many of you. Elijah was bowing to the majority. If the majority opinion or dogma could first be proved wrong a mass retreat from this reliance was in view. To the priests it seemed to mean Elijah was bowing to majority opinion. So call on the name of your god but do not put fire upon it. So they took the young bull [rp] that was given to them and prepared it and called on the name of Baal... [l [bh] The definite article is never given to a name and we can only infer that Baal was not a name for God in the eyes of Elijah or the writer...from daybreak until midday saying **“O Baal listen to us”** – but there was **no voice of reply** indeed the priests’ voice volume itself was obviously weakening after 5-6 hours and there was no answer and they limped at the altar or leaped on the altar which was built or prepared. It would seem that they had built an altar as well as preparing a sacrifice and now they were totally craven and frustrated with the negative response. They may even have cut themselves and in their frenzy become**

prepared to make a living sacrifice of themselves. Clearly for Elijah it was time to call a halt to such a parade of passion.

FIVE HOURS MORE OF FANATICAL DISPLAY WITH A PRELUDE OF BITING SARCASM FROM ELIJAH 29

And so it was at midday that Elijah waved at them [*It the meaning is various – it may mean “mock” or “delude” and “deceive” but the radical meaning “to wave” suggests Elijah gestured as he mocked*] and said **“Call out with a great voice for he is in deep pious meditation [jyv] or because he is withdrawn to the toilet [qv] for his own need or because he has a journey of his own unless peradventure he has fallen asleep and will waken up or should be wakened.”** So they called with a great voice and had been cutting themselves as their manner of punishment [*fpcM – “fashion of equity” or “severe pronouncement of judgment”*] was with swords and spears until blood poured all over them. And it was so that when midday passed they had continued to prophecy until the offering up of the evening sacrifice [*In Exodus 29.41 this sacrifice was offered “between the evenings” i.e. when the sun had sunk over the horizon and the light was still glowing often in a glorious but less radiant manner*] but there was no voice, no answer, no sharpening of attention.

ELIJAH WINS THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE 30-39

Darkness was imminent. The altar scene was almost grotesque. The playful remarks of Elijah had hours to make their impact. The people were restive. A whole day’s stand to see a miracle had gone by. Now Elijah does a number of most interesting things to bring the people back to the LORD.

- (1) And Elijah said to all the people – **“Draw near together with me”**. *Elijah wanted the people to be involved alongside him – not acting alone – but bringing them with him. So all the people drew along side him [vqn] The first thing Elijah did was bring people with him and teach them to come to God.*
- (2) And he restored like a physician [*apr*] the altar of the LORD which had been broken down. *This altar was “healed” – in other words it came back into use and would be used thereafter to the glory of God. Such plain stone altars built to honour the God of Israel would now become a healthy feature on the landscape where prayer would be made. The second thing he did was to teach the healing power of the altar in the nation’s life.*
- (3) And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob because the word or oracle of the LORD was given him (Jacob) saying **“Israel shall be your name”**. *Elijah lived at Tishbe – within 5-7 miles of Peniel where Jacob met God (Genesis 32.30) And he built an altar of stones in the Name of the LORD and made a channel as would house two seah’s [According to rabbinic calculation one seah was equivalent to a third of an Ephah of corn=7 litres so two would be 14 litres] of seed around about the altar. The third thing he did was to testify to a Personal salvation & blessing.*
- (4) And he laid the wood in lengths and cut up the young bull and placed it on the wood. And he said **“Fill four barrels of water and empty it out over the sacrifice and the wood.”** And he said **“Do it a second time”** and they did it twice and he said **“Do it a third time”** and they did it three times. And the water went all round the altar and also the trench filled again and again with water. *The Piel of the verb to “fill” tells us that on each pouring of the barrels the trench which was so dry that the water seeped away in part-re-filled. The fourth thing he did seemed superfluous. But he used a means of showing that*

the rain God's power to extinguish flame was nothing at all. God was sovereign.

- (5) And it was so at the offering up of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said **“LORD God of the Abraham Isaac and Israel – today may it be known that I am Your servant and have done all these things at Your word. Answer me O LORD answer me and may this people know that You are the LORD God and that You have turned their hearts around again.”** [tymrja] *This is like the turning back of the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz in 2Kings 20.10 a miracle of God's doing. The fifth thing that God did was “to pray”.*

Then the fire of God fell and consumed the sacrifice and the wood and the stones and dust the fire continued to lick up the water that was in the trench. And all the people saw it and fell on their faces and said **“Yahweh He is God, Yahweh He is God.”** And Elijah said to them **“You must seize all the prophets of Baal; no man from them shall escape.”** And they had laid hold of them and Elijah brought them down to the river Kishon and slaughtered them there. *Under the theocracy we often see the prophet of God acting over the head of the king as the agent of the LORD whose authority comes from a greater intimacy with and understanding of Yahweh.*

THE LESSON ON PERSISTENT “PRAYER” – Elijah's secret weapon 40-46

The lesson we are about to revise was emphasised by James the prayer warrior of the New Testament. James said “And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit.” (James 5.18) This praying was in parallel with the praying of over three years to prevent rain; it models “effectual fervent prayer” – prayer that prevails – prayer that does not readily take “No” for an answer – prayer that is out to move hearts and nations.

And Elijah said to Ahab – Get up (to a place where food was available nearby) and eat and drink for there is a voice of a raging rainstorm.

And Ahab rose up to eat and drink and Elijah went up to the summit of Carmel and he bowed his face down to the earth between his knees. And he said to his young helper **“Go up now please; look in the direction of the sea”** and he went up and looked and said **“There is nothing whatever”**. And he said **“Return seven times”**. *Years ago I first came across the interesting word mym[p which means “strokes of the hammer on the anvil”. Elijah told the lad to come back and return all these times whilst he prayed. One might ask where Elijah got that lad. Was this the lad who came back from his death-bed who had attached himself to the prophet? And it was so for seven times and in the seventh time he said “Behold a small cloud is rising up as a man's hand from the sea.” And he said “Go up say to Ahab ‘harness your chariot; get down so that you will not be stuck or shut in by heavy rain.’”* And it was so between then and now or meantime the heavens had become black with cloud and there was a storm and a great downpour of rain and Ahab had to ride his chariot like an equestrian and he went to Jezreel. But the hand of the LORD was with Elijah and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab until the entrance to the Jezreel (valley) *Elijah was enjoying the run – his time in the open had made him very fit. He was just over five years from his translation but he was immensely fit. The boy seems to have disappeared – but he cannot have so done. He too was either with the king still till he was reunited with Elijah as they came to the open plain. It would even seem that Elijah guided Ahab out of the mountains and in the plain he and the boy continued. We learn from chapter 19.3 that the young man carried on with him in a later journey far to the south and was left in good care in Beersheba. During this*

mighty mission that servant learned invaluable lessons about his relationship with God and about the divine sovereignty and prayer. Preachers could do no better than look at this mighty historic incident through that boy's eyes!

CHAPTER 19

CARMEL TO BEERSHEBA 1-6

And Ahab apprised Jezebel of that Elijah had done and how he had slaughtered all the prophets like sheep with the sword. And Jezebel sent a messenger post-haste to Elijah saying **“May the gods do the same to me and additional for as about this time tomorrow I shall make your life as one of them.”** But he saw that prophetically and arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba which belongs to Judah and caused his servant to settle or remain there. But he went on into the desert a day's journey and came and settled down under a broom [*mtr* – Jerome has “a juniper” – it is George Henslow of “Botany for Beginners” renown states “*Retama raetem* – a true desert shrub with white or purplish pink pea-like flowers and minute foliage-growing to 10-12 feet in height and the largest desert plant.” After it the 15th station of the Israelites in the desert is named in Numbers 23.18] and he prayed one thing... [*tja* – feminine gender-not agreeing with “broom” so clearly with a missing assumed word for prayer]... – that his life might die saying **“It is now the main thing [*br*]; take away my life for I am not better than my fathers.”** So he lay down and slept under a certain lonely broom and behold this man-like [*hz* – masculine] messenger or angel struck him and said to him **“Arise and eat”**. And he looked, and behold “first” a cake baked on hot coals [*mypxr*] and an ample cruise of water so he ate and drank and turned over and lay down.

BEERSHEBA TO HOREB 7-10

But the angel of the LORD returned a second time and explained to him and said **“Rise, eat, for the journey is great beyond your resources.”** So he arose and ate and drank and went in the strength of that repast forty days and forty nights to Horeb the Mount of God. And he came there to the cave and took up lodging there. [*fwl*] And behold the angel of the LORD came to him and he said **“What is your business here Elijah?”** *This does not mean he is in the wrong place – it is to prompt him to re-discover purpose in his ministry.* And he said **“I have burned with zealous indignation for Yahweh the God of hosts for the sons of Israel have forsaken the covenant, destroyed Your altars and slain Your prophets with the sword and I am the only one who remains and they are seeking my life to take it.”**

11-12a

And he said **“Go and stand on the mountain before the face of the LORD.”**

- (a) And behold the LORD was passing by and a great and strong RUACH or wind tore pieces of the mountains and shattered the rocks before the LORD – the LORD was not in the wind.
- (b) But after the wind a trembling of the earth [*v[r]*] but the LORD was not in the earthquake.
- (c) But after the earth had shaken a fire but the LORD was not in the fire.

DEATH 12b

- (d) But after the fire an astonishing quiet voice [*hmd*] crushed [*hqd*] voice. *The words are very tell-tale. It is not the scary nature of the voice that shook*

Elijah. He was rather shaken by the quietness and the brokenness of the voice-broken “as if when wheat is crushed” – it is as if the LORD is describing his concern in terms that only Calvary could really equal. The LORD was greatly moved.

RESURRECTION 13

And it was so that as he was listening Elijah covered [*f#l* – veiled] his face in his wide cloak and went and stood at the opening of the cave. *This action suggests Elijah was immediately thrust into sorrow and felt like mourning. It seemed that God Himself was undergoing the pains of death. Everything seemed wrong – the mountains breaking up – the fire of judgment falling – the earth in a terrible commotion – and then God Himself in distress. Elijah was being shown something of which the sequel is his visit to another Mountain-the Mount of Transfiguration. And behold there came to him a voice and He (the LORD) said “What business have you here Elijah?” Now these two stances of Elijah are highly significant. First he was in a cave where he lodged as one staying a few nights – the traditional place of burial. There he heard a voice and then he stood again at the entrance to the cave or tomb. Just then the voice came again. It is plain as day that Elijah was being taught that the LORD would not remain in the tomb. Amid hopelessness and the broken covenant a greater hope was being demonstrated at Sinai – the hope of the Resurrection. For that reason it would seem to me Paul also went away to the Mount of God like Elijah when his life was endangered.*

THE LORD GIVES ELIJAH HIS LAST COMMISSIONS 14-21

And he said **“I have been zealous and indignant for the LORD God of hosts for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant and thrown down your altars and slain your prophets with the sword and I alone remain and they seek my life to take it.”**

1. But the LORD said to him **“Go – return by the desert route to Damascus and when you go there anoint Hazael king over Aram.**
2. **And you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel and Elisha the son of Shaphet from Abel Meholah [“Meadow of dancing”] to be prophet in your place.”** *The first two roles were prestigious but to hear of the end of his ministry was perhaps something of a shock. How would he take it?*

“...For it shall be so that he who is able to escape from the sword of Hazael Jehu will kill and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu Elisha will kill. But I have caused a remnant of seven thousand to remain for me in Israel – all who have not bowed the knee to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.” [*qv#* *Kissing the hand of the God – Job 31.27 was the traditional sign of worship*]

So he went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat and he was ploughing with twelve yoke before him and Elijah passed by him and sent his wide mantle over him. And he left the oxen behind and sped after Elijah. And he said **“I should please kiss my father and my mother then come after you.”** And he said **“Go turn back – because of what I have done to you!”** *This is not the response of disappointment – this is the simple thrill of a man willing to go and leave father and mother for God’s will. Elijah was still on the desert like trail to Damascus. The word “Go” was a command not a query. And turning back he took a yoke of oxen killed them as a banquet and he continued to boil them with the wooden harness of the oxen and gave to the people to eat and arose and followed Elijah and waited upon him [*trv* – the word means “frying pan” so in the first instance he became his catering manager –*

but it has the much more prestigious meaning of “ministering in the sanctuary” – so that Elisha joined the ministry of prayer and prophecy. Perhaps he was also instrumental in helping establish and teach in the prophetic schools or academies at Gilgal Jericho and Bethel. Certainly after this mighty experience Elijah was ready to teach the truth of God with ardour.]

CHAPTER 20

BENHADAD LAYS CLAIM TO ISRAEL & SIEGES SAMARIA 1-12

And Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army and **thirty two kings** with him and horse and chariot and went up and laid distressful siege to Samaria and fought against it. He then sent messengers to Ahab the king of Israel to the city and said to him **“Thus says Benhadad ‘your silver and gold belongs to me and your wives and sons and best things are mine.’”** The king of Israel answered and said **“According to your word, my lord. O king I am yours and all that I have.”** But the messengers returned and said **“Thus Benhadad spoke saying ‘Because I sent to you to say that your silver and gold and your wives and sons will be mine nevertheless I will surely send my servants to you at a similar time tomorrow and they will explore your house and the houses of your servants and let it be that every object of delight to your eyes they shall place in their power and take it.’”**

The roll over and surrender tactic of Ahab proved an abject failure. The force of 32 kings scared him deeply – but he was not about to cave in quite so readily.

Then the king of Israel called the elders of the land and said **“Please be aware and watch for this man seeks harm or injury for he has sent to me for my wives and sons and silver and gold and I have not refused him or held anything back from him.”** Then all the elders and the entire people said to him **“Do not listen to him or show willing.”** So he said to the messengers of Benhadad **“Say to my lord the king ‘The whole message you sent to your servant at first I would do but this thing I am not willing to do’”** so the messengers left and brought back this word. Then Benhadad sent to him saying **“Thus may God do to me and thus add to do if the dust of Samaria shall not be sufficient handfuls for all the people that I lead.”** But the king of Israel answered and said **“Let him that girds on armour not glory of their deeds like him that puts his sword back in his sheath.”** *This is a true proverb from the mouth of Ahab that the sacred writer commends.*

45. And the reality was as Benhadad heard this word he was drinking and the kings with him in the tents and he said to his servants **“Set things in place and we will set ourselves against the city.”**

A SINGLE PROPHET PROCLAIMS THE DOOM OF BENHADAD

ISRAEL ROUTS BENHADAD AS PROPHESED 13-20

The LORD in his grace granted Ahab victory despite his idolatry and deprived the loud-mouthed Benhadad of the conquest he thought so inevitable. As everywhere in KINGS God is the diligent listener and words matter to Him. He casts down the proud for their pretentious words.

And behold a single prophet approached Ahab king of Israel and said **“Thus says the LORD ‘You see all this great noisy or humming host – behold I am giving it into your hand today so that you will be aware that I am the LORD.’”** Then Ahab said **“By whom?”** And he said **“Thus says the LORD – by the young commanders of the provincial regions”** Then he said **“Who will give orders to the army?”** and he (the prophet) said **“You!”** So he (Ahab) mustered the young commanders of the regions and there were 232 and he mustered after them all the people – all the sons of

Israel – seven thousand. And they went forth at the double light of noon when Benhadad was drinking having been drunk in his tents – he and the king – the thirty two kings that helped him. So the young commanders of the provinces went out to battle first and Benhadad sent and Benhadad sent out and it was reported to **him** **“Men are come out from Samaria.”** He then said “If they are come for peace they must be seized alive and if they are marching out for battle take them alive as captives. But these young men who were commanding princes of the provinces marched out of the city and the military followed them. And each man slew his man and the Syrians fled and Israel pursued them and Benhadad king of Syria escaped on a horse and his horsemen also. Then the king of Israel went out and struck the horses and chariots and smote the Syrians with a massive strike.

THE SYRIANS PLAN TO FIGHT IN THE PLAIN 22-27

Then the prophet drew near to the king of Israel and said to him **“Go and keep strengthening yourself and be aware and watch what you do for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against you.”** But the servants of the king of Syria said to him **“Their gods are gods of the hills therefore they are stronger than we are but perhaps we should fight them in the level country where we will be stronger than them. Then undertake this action – take out the kings and put a military deputy governor in place of each man. And now build up a military force for you as the number of that of yours that fell both horse for horse and chariot for chariot and we will engage to fight them on level ground – truly we shall be stronger than him.”** [*Hebrew al for #1*] and he listened to their call and did so. *46. And the reality was* at the return of the year Benhadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight with Israel. *The battle-ground was a good 60 miles north west of Samaria in the territory of Asher and approached along the coastal plain. Ahab was drawn far from his capitol.* But the sons of Israel were numbered and had food supplies and they went out to meet them and the sons of Israel pitched their camp before them like two sets of goat kids but the Syrians filled the land.

(8)AN ANONYMOUS PROPHET FORETELLS OF ISRAEL'S VICTORY 28-30

Victory in war was pinioned on the proud declaration of Syrian advisers that God was limited. The LORD is not to be esteemed to be limited by circumstance and in this instance He granted victory to the few to declare His power in all the earth.

Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said **“Thus says the LORD ‘Because the Syrians said “Yahweh is a god of the hills and He is not God of the valleys I will give all this great noise some host into your hand and you will be personally aware that I am the LORD.””** And they stood in array these opposite these for seven days and *At the reality was* on the seventh day there was an encounter in battle and the sons of Israel struck 100,000 Syrian foot soldiers in one day and the remainder fled to the city of Aphek but the wall fell on 27,000men that remained and Benhadad fled and went to a remote part of the city into a secluded room.

BENHADAD'S ARTIFICE 31-34

Then his (Benhadad's) servants said to him **“Please look – we have heard about the kings of the house of Israel that these are kings of covenant mercy. Please let us put sackcloth on our loins and ropes on our heads and go to the king of Israel – perhaps he will keep us alive.”** So they girded sacking on their loins and put ropes on their heads and went to the king of Israel and said **“Your servant Benhadad says**

‘Please let me live.’” Then he (Ahab) said **“Is he still alive? He is my brother!”** But the men were observing like serpents and they were quick and skilful and they were seeking confirmation of that which came from him and they said **“Your brother Benhadad!”** and he said **“Go and get him”** and Benhadad came to him and he brought him up into the chariot. Then he (Benhadad) said to him **“The cities that my father took from your father I will return and you shall put streets or squares for yourself in Damascus such as my father appointed in Samaria.”** **“Then I will send you off with this covenant agreement.”**(Said Ahab) So he established a covenant with him and dismissed him.

A PROPHETIC ORACLE AGAINST AHAB FOR HIS FOLLY 35-43

Then one man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbour by the word of the LORD **“Please strike me”** but the man was not willing to strike him. Then he said to him **“Because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD watch yourself as you go from me a lion will also slaughter you”** and he departed from his side and the lion struck him dead. Then he (the prophet) found another man and he said **“Strike me”** and he struck him and by striking injured him. Then the prophet went and stood waiting for the king on the way but he disguised him with mud over his eyes. *48 And reality was* the king was passing and he cried out to the king and said **“Your servant went out in the encounter of the battle and behold a man turned away (from battle) and brought a man to me and said ‘Watch this man. If he should go missing it will be my life instead of his or you will weigh out payment of a talent of silver.’”** But *50 the reality was* as your servant was doing this and that he was nowhere to be seen. Then the king of Israel said to him **“Thus is your just judgment – you yourself decided.”** And he hurried and got rid of the mud over his eyes and the king of Israel was able to recognise him because he was from among the prophets. Then he said to him **“Thus says the LORD ‘Because you sent away out of your hand a man meant for destruction your life shall be in place of his life and your people in place of his people.’”** The king of Israel went to his house perverse and angry [*rs*] and he was gloomy and sad [*p[z – like our “zapped”*] when he came to Samaria. *Instead of being overjoyed at winning a battle and exhilarated at concluding a gentleman’s agreement he saw himself as he truly was “a fool” and must have remembered the term “troubler of Israel” with which Elijah ridiculed him after he dismissed God and his prophet. Thus once again in KINGS the link between words and actions and the need to listen to the LORD and seek Him at every juncture is demonstrated superbly.*

CHAPTER 21

The story of Naboth is like a drama in five acts. In the first Naboth baulks the king’s notion to acquire land for a kitchen garden. In the second Jezebel contrives a stategem to silence Naboth. In the third Jezebel delivers the answer Ahab wants though not perhaps in the manner he would have wished. In the fourth Elijah brings the powerful conviction WORD OF GOD to Ahab. In the fifth Ahab surprisingly humbles himself.

(1) NABOTH DEFENDS HIS PATRIMONY 1-4

51. And the reality was after these events there was a vineyard belonging to Naboth [*“fruit”, “increase”*] the Jezreelite which was in Jezreel at the side of the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth saying **“Give me your vineyard and it will become my herb or vegetable garden for it is adjacent and close to my**

house and I will give you a better vineyard instead of that one or if it is better in your view I will give you the sale value of this one.” But Naboth said to Ahab “Far be it from me under the LORD that I should give the heritage of my fathers to you.” Then Ahab went to his house angry [rS] and gloomy [p[Z] over the word which Naboth the Jezreelite spoke to him... *Ahab displays exactly the same reaction to Naboth as he did to the prophet that criticised him for his relaxed attitude to Benhadad...for he said “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers” so he (Ahab) lay upon his bed and turned his face away and would not eat bread.*

(2) JEZEBEL CONTRIVES A WICKED STRATEGEM 5-14

Then Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him “What is this? Your spirit is gloomy and you will eat no food?” Then he said to her “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him ‘Give me the vineyard for silver or if it pleases you I will give you a vineyard in place of it’” but he said “I will not give you the vineyard”. Then Jezebel his wife said to him “You are now made monarch over Israel. Rise, eat food and it will cheer you up [“make your heart better”] and I will provide you with the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” *Immediately the king might imagine Jezebel would use persuasion or seek it as a special present for him but it is more in keeping with his understanding of his wife that he imagined the worst and remained quiet.* Then she wrote letters in the name of Ahab and sealed them with his seal ring and sent the letters to the elders and to the free-born nobles [myrj] that lived in the city of Naboth. And she wrote in the letters saying “Call a fast and set Naboth up as chief of the people. Then cause two men of the sons of Belial to turn upon him in his presence and testify against him saying ‘You blasphemed God and the king!’ Then cause him to be taken away and stone him and he will die.” And the men of the city – elders and nobles that lived in his city did in keeping with what Jezebel had written to them in the letters she sent them. They called a fast and set Naboth as chief of the people and two men came – sons of Belial and the men of Belial turned round in his presence and testified against Naboth before the people saying “Naboth blasphemed God and the king” and they carried him outside the city and they stoned him with stones and he died. Then they sent to Jezebel and said “Naboth has been stoned and he is dead”. *In a few particulars this incident foreshadows the death of our gracious redeemer. Both Christ and Naboth were falsely charged. Witnesses were hired in both cases. Both were charged with blasphemy and both died in innocence.*

(3) JEZEBEL ROUSES AHAB WITH THE GRUESOME NEWS 15-16

50. And reality was as Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and was dead Jezebel said to Ahab “Rise, possess you of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to give you for silver for Naboth is no longer alive – he has died.” *51. And the reality was* when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead Ahab rose to run down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take it as his possession. *In a remarkable particular the situation of Ahab trammels our own as gross sinners. Through the death of Christ we come into possession of joy and provisions and in a sense we too have arisen. The difference is that the atoning death of Christ has gained these possessions for us and they are fully legitimised by his love and the Father’s provision.*

(4) ELIJAH CONFRONTS AHAB 17-24

Then *52 in reality* **the word of the LORD** came to Elijah the Tishbite or settler saying “Arise, run down to encounter Ahab king of Israel who is in Samaria. Behold he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has run down to make his possession. But you speak to him saying ‘Thus says the LORD – Have you slain a man and also taken possession?’ And you shall speak to him saying ‘In that place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will also lick up your blood – yes yours!’”

Then Ahab said to Elijah “Have you found me out, O my enemy?” And he said “I have found you because you have been selling yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD.” As the book of James confirms Elijah made Herculean efforts to save Ahab and God sought not once or twice to demonstrate his power and support to the king but he continued to sell himself to evil.

“Behold me *bringing* [*Kethibh ybm Qere aybm*] calamity upon you and I will destroy or consume those after you and cut off from Ahab him that lets out water against the wall and he that still rules [*rx*] or “retains strength”] and remains in Israel. And I will deliver over your house as the house of Jereboam the son of Nebat and as the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah for the grief or provocation by which you grieved me and made Israel sin. And also the LORD speaks of Jezebel saying ‘the dogs shall eat Jezebel at the fortified out-work of Jezebel. The one that dies connected to Ahab in the city the dogs shall consume and the ones that die in the field the birds of the heavens shall eat.’”

(5) THE HUMBLING OF AHAB 25-29

But there was none so ill favoured [*literally* “*thin* *qr* cf Genesis 41.19ff] as Ahab that sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD that Jezebel his wife induced and persuaded [*tws*]. And he acted extremely abominably to follow after idols in all that the Amorites did whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. We see the recompense of the LORD in embryo as it answers to Ahab’s dispossessing Naboth. In the same manner his entire estate will presently be possessed by others.

53. But it was reality as Ahab heard these words he tore his robes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in dust and walked gently or “murmuring”. Was Ahab less strident and impetuous in his manner or was he beginning to meditate and speak to his soul or even pray? Whatever the precise nature of his character change it tilted the balance away from Baal and towards Adonai but as the immediate future would show not wholeheartedly after Yahweh. *54. And it was reality* the **word of the LORD** came to Elijah the Tishbite saying “Cause yourself to look how Ahab is humbling and submitting himself before my face. Because he is humbling him before my face I will not bring the calamity in his day. In the day of his son I will bring the calamity upon his house.” The LORD was pleased to advise Elijah that Ahab had come at length to a sort of deathbed peace with God and finished his course in gentle living and speaking to himself of his failure and perhaps even engaging with God Himself – so that the LORD encouraged Elijah with this word.

CHAPTER 22

AHAB & JEHOSEPHAT-THE GREAT PROPHETIC CONFERENCE ABOUT RAMOTH GILEAD 1-14

And they lived three years without war between Syria and Israel. *55. Then the reality was* that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah ran down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel was saying to his servants “Are you aware that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us

and we are still and inert as to recovering it from the hand of the king of Syria.” He then said to Jehoshaphat **“Will you go to war along with me to Ramoth Gilead?”** Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel **“I am like you; my people are as your people, my horses as yours.”** Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel **“Please seek today [mryk] the word of the LORD”** *There is an asterisk in the Hebrew text with a note that part of the verbal context is not included. We do not know for instance the quality of the 400 prophets – as to whether they were of a reconstituted Baalite type or a group of soothsayers that Ahab who was earlier described as “murmuring” like a soothsayer now confided in. Certainly there is something indeterminate and unconvincing to Jehoshaphat about the group of men about to be introduced. And the king of Israel gathered prophets – about 400 men and said to them “Should I go up to Ramoth Gilead to battle or should I decline?” And they said “Go up and Adonai will give the king into your hand!” Then Jehoshaphat said “Is there here no prophet of Yahweh still? Let us search from him!” Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat “There is still one man from whom to seek Yahweh but I hate him because he has consistently failed to prophecy well or good about me but rather evil – Micaiah son of Imlah.” Then Jehoshaphat said “The King should not speak thus!” Then the king of Israel called one of his eunuchs and said “You will need to keep hurrying Micaiah son of Imlah here.” And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat each upon his throne clad in their robes in a level forum [nrq “a forum” like a “threshing floor” where matters were sifted and justice done] at the gate of Samaria and all the prophets “gave” or “contested” or “died” prophesying before them. [the Hebrew MITHNABAIM is difficult to translate and like MUTHLABBEN (“death of the son”) it may mean “killed prophecy” or “provided different prophecies like a prophetic menu” or even “argued about what would emerge”. Coming, as it does towards the end of this book of which a highly significant postscript says “The King of Israel gathered the prophets” the interpretation appears to be that this second 400 who defied Yahweh prophesying in the name of Adonai so lamentably failed that they looked ridiculous and combative and killed off false prophecy as completely as when Elijah slew the former 850 at Carmel. This was the greatest prophecy conference in the history of Israel and Judah and yet it was a nonesuch event because Ahab had clearly cultured a new regime of prophets that prophesied glib platitudes. The nature of the genuine Spirit of prophecy thus comes out starkly at the end of this first book of KINGS.*

Then Zedekiah son of Chenaaniah made horns of iron for him and said **“Thus says Yahweh ‘With these you will butt the Syrians until you have finished them off.’”** *This visual aid made his prediction striking in several ways but it was simple ingenuity not divine inspiration and owed nothing to intimacy with Yahweh. Then all the prophets were fundamentally [nk] prophesying the same saying go up to Ramoth Gilead and deliver it and Yahweh will give it into the king’s hand. The prophetic language was right and the positivity was music to Ahab’s ears – but it was simple spin.*

Then the messenger that went to call Micaiah spoke to him saying **“Please look – the words of the prophets are of one voice prosperity to the king; please may your word be as the word of one of them and speak better.”** But Micaiah said **“But no – as the LORD lives I will keep speaking [Piel] just what the LORD reveals to me in word.”**

(9) MICAHIAH THE PROPHET HERALDS THE END OF AHAB 15-36

So he came to the king and the king said to him **“Micaiah, shall we march to war against Ramoth Gilead or decline?”** And he said **“You must go up and deliver it and the LORD must cause it to be delivered into the hand of the king!”** But the king said to him **“For ever so many times have I caused you to swear that you will not make a declaration to me except the truth in the name of the LORD.”** Then he said **“I saw the whole of Israel dispersed upon the hills as a flock that had no shepherd”** and Yahweh said **“These have no masters – let them return every man to his house in peace!”** Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat **“Did I not tell you that he would not have prophesied success for me but rather calamity?”** Then he, (Micaiah) said **“On this matter hear the word of the LORD ‘I saw the LORD sitting on his throne and the whole host of heaven standing around about Him on the right and left to minister. And the LORD said ‘Who shall make Ahab come unstuck or unsheathe his sword [j tp – to render him defenceless” or “open”] so that he will go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?’”** Then this one spoke on this side and this one on that side. But the spirit came and stood before the face of the LORD and said **“I will open him up!”** and the LORD said **“With what?”** Then the spirit that violated covenant said **“I will go and I will be or become a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets”** and He said **“You will render him open and defenceless and also prevail – “Go and do thus!”** So now see that the LORD has provided a deceitful spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets and the LORD has spoken evil above you. *This rare passage of the OT shows that in the courts of heaven where as in Job so here in Kings “the” deceiver appears and in this instance gains access to the heart of the king through religious men acting in concert. Above the human scene the heavenly has allowed to come into play forces that will prevail whilst at the same time warning those that are open to deception of their plight in time. The advice of Jehoshaphat was given. The verity of Micaiah stood in the way. Yet wilful Ahab ploughed on rejecting God’s way and adopting Satan’s advice. At this critical juncture when Ahab had the entire theology of evil’s ramifications set out for his learning another part of the ploy of Satan came into effect. Satan who violates his brief now turns violent and uses one of the prophets to smite Micaiah and disengage the king’s mind and heart.*

But Zedekiah son of Chenaanah approached and struck Micaiah upon the jaw and said **“Where did this spirit of the LORD cross from me to speak in agreement [Jt#[] with you?”** *The leader of the false prophets now contests which of the two –whether he or Micaiah – have the Spirit. He has “the spirit of evil” alright but Micaiah has the Holy Spirit. This theological argument brings the great conference to a new and controversial debate.*

Then Micaiah said *to the king* **“You will behold seeing prophetically in that day when you go into the room within a room to hide yourself.”** *This prophecy may have been realised in the preparation Ahab made to disguise him for war.* Then the king of Israel said **“Take Micaiah and cause him to return to Amon the lieutenant in charge of the city and to Joash son of the king then say ‘Thus says the king ‘Put this man in the house of confinement and cause him to eat the bread of oppression and water of oppression until I come in peace.’”** Then Micaiah said **“If you ever return in peace the LORD has not spoken by me!”** And he said **“Listen you people –every one of you!”**

Then the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat **“I must disguise myself and go into battle but you should put on your robes so the king of Israel had him disguised and**

went into battle.” Then the king of Syria ordered the thirty two commanders of his chariots saying **“Do not engage with small or great but with the king of Israel and him alone.”** *56. And the reality was* as the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat these also said **“That is definitely the king of Israel!”** and they turned against him to fight but Jehoshaphat cried out. *57. Then the reality was* as the commanders of the chariots saw that he was not the king of Israel they turned away from going after him. But a man stretched out his bow for a last shot and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour and the coat of mail and he said to his charioteer **“Alter your hand and direction and get me out of the battle for I have been wounded.”** But the battle went on throughout that day and the king was ministered or attended to in his chariot in sight of the Syrians but he died in the evening and the blood from the calamitous wound poured on to the hollow base or bosom of the chariot. And the shout for help went throughout the battle as the sun went down saying **“Every man to his city and every man to his own land.”** *It appears the battle was inconclusive but the forces disengaged and so ended the assault on Ramoth Gilead. The aim of the king of Syria had been achieved – his arch enemy Ahab was dead.*

AHAB DIES AS PROPHESED –AND IS SUCCEEDED BY AHAZIAH 37-40

So the king died and came to Samaria and they buried the king in Samaria and the dogs licked up his blood but they washed his armour **according to the word of the LORD** that He spoke. And the remainder of the acts of Ahab and all that undertook and the palace of ivory that he built and all the cities that he built are these not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. So Ahab rested with his fathers and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

THE CONTINUING REIGN AND FAITHFULNESS OF JEHOSEPHAT 41-49

So Jehoshaphat son of Asa reigned over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty five years of age when he took rule and he reigned fifteen years at Jerusalem and the name of his mother was Azubah daughter of Shilhi *These names speak of “one forsaken” whose father was known as “one armed”. The lady may have come from a military family.*

And he (Jehoshaphat) walked in all the pathway of Asa his father. He did not turn from it doing the straight thing in the sight of the LORD. Truly the high places were still not removed and the people were continuing to offer incense at the high places. But Jehoshaphat was at peace with the king of Israel. And the remaining acts of Jehoshaphat and his might that he created and when or whom he fought are not these written upon the book of the Chronicles of the King of Judah? And the remaining male prostitutes that were a remnant through the days of Asa his father he destroyed or burnt out *[r[b] of the land. The treatment is hardly simple expulsion but appears to be of one sort with the conflagration of Sodom. They were either burned or burned out. Under the rule of Jehoshaphat there was zero tolerance of this sin.*

And there was no king in Edom – a garrison officer ruled. Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold but they did not go because they were broken to pieces at Ezion Geber. *Thus the attempt of Jehoshaphat to emulate the trade and restore the wealth of Solomon was aborted possibly by an unusual storm or espionage.* Then Ahaziah son of Ahab was saying to Jehoshaphat “My servants will go with your servants in the ships” but Jehoshaphat was not willing.

THE SHORT REIGN OF AHAB’S SON AZARIAH 50-53

So Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David and Jehoram his son reigned in his place. Azariah son of Ahab ruled over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the pathway of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jereboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. And he served Baal and worshipped him and grieved the LORD God of Israel in accordance with all that his father did.

THE END

POSTSCRIPT TO THE BOOKS –FOUND AFTER THE SECOND BOOK

“The portions of the openings of the lips of the Book of Kings are 1534. We are appointed the happy of the nation that has the LORD as its God. And there are 53 Sederim. We are so constituted and I will be to her a wall of fire around her says the LORD and I will be for Glory in her midst and her (Messiah) king will gather the divisions of Israel by the prophets.” In this book 8 prophets appear at key times. In 1Kings I have counted over 200 speeches (224 at least) and but conveying these into English sentences the number of “openings of the lips is doubled to just under 500. Because it was by prophecy that the LORD guided his monarchs and disciplined his theocracy their words and the answering words of kings became radically important. It is no less so under Christ. Our words become the stuff of eternal judgment and are the expression of the will and the spur to virtually every action good and bad in which the human race engages. Just as Israel was gathered by the prophets so the church is gathered by preachers who ought to speak of eternal and kingdom matters at every opportunity.

GENERAL BACKGROUND & COMMENDATION

The Books of First and Second Kings are viewed together in the Hebrew original scripts just as the Books of Chronicles are jointly known as “The book of the days of the kings of Israel” A short postscript to the Hebrew text provides us with a note that helps with the “Legend” or structure of the book and a reference to Deuteronomy 33.26-29 which reminds us that Israel is a “special” people. The First book of Kings is ostensibly a portrayal of the developments in the nation’s life during a sector of her history from Samuel to Ahab and Jehoshaphat-but as set within the Former Prophets the book is an exposition of the LORD’S rule within His theocracy and eight distinct developments in the period are heralded by eight distinct prophets. You should not miss this cardinal fact. Jewish tradition acclaims Jeremiah as the compiler of the Books of Kings and it is generally supposed that the compilation was sent to the exiled community in Babylon.

I will now set the book within the framework of the prophets whom the LORD used to instruct or direct the good kings Solomon and Jehoshaphat and issue the divine discipline and judgment to the remaining monarchs that were adjudged evil in their ways.

PERIOD 1 1.11-10.25

The prophet Nathan introduces the first golden era when Solomon ruled. There are numerous lessons to be learned from studying the wisdom and praying and building of Solomon

PERIOD 2 10.26ff

The prophet Abijah proclaims the divine recompense of the divided monarchy which for hundreds of years until the Babylonian Captivity was to bi-furcate the nation's life and bring more prophetic heralds of God to the fore

PERIOD 3 13.1

A man of God seeks to establish prophetic accountability and predicts the end of the era of idolatrous priests and the Reformation naming Josiah as the monarch under which it would come some 300 years ahead

PERIOD 4 14.1

Ahijah heralds the end of the era of Jeroboam-a long blot on the theocracy

PERIOD 5 17.1

Elijah appears to turn the nation back to Yahweh. This prophet who foreshadows the great latter day prophet that will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice-versa has courage and faith to withstand the machinations of Ahab and Jezebel and establishes a prophetic school that sends a ray of light along future prophetic history.

PERIOD 6 20 28-30

An unknown Man of God forecasts the fall of the Syrian dynasty

PERIOD 7 21.17 & 28 -29

Elijah is told of his success to bring Ahab to a place of repentance by God Himself whose pleasure is that a sinner should turn from his unrighteousness and live.

PERIOD 8 22 14-15

Micaiah previews the decease of Ahab at the classic prophetic conference in his day. Thus as the book comes to an end Judah continued after David and Israel after Jeroboam and the difference is not unrelated to the time-serving prophets of the north among whom some are evidently open to a satanic spirit

THEOCRACY

It becomes clear from the evidence adduced that the theocracy is not so much directed through kings who certainly fight the wars and organise the defence of the land but the overall direction of the LORD is given by the prophets. In this matter the Israelite Theocracy is little different from the church in which prophetic preachers spell out the will of God through all generations whilst the kaleidoscope of successive human governments looks after society and its defence.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Yahweh her king whispers "I will be a wall of fire around her and for glory in her midst." No-one could read 1Kings and believe that Ichabod applied to this nation. The golden era of Solomon occupies half the book and during that time the message of what the LORD was doing with this first nation on earth

had reached India and Spain and the depths of Africa. Even as the book finishes the nation of Syria supported by 32 kings trembles before the LORD as He gathers His believing people to humble their pride. The book testifies to God in Israel's midst and advises that human life is blessed and garrisoned by the indwelling LORD as in no other way.

WISDOM AND PRAYER

Don't miss the lessons to be derived from the outstanding prayers of Solomon and Elijah. God through His covenant mercies calls his people down through the ages to seek His face and the same principles apply today as always. As to wisdom as James the apostle consents it is no otherwise to be found than by "asking God" and the evidence that it is found thus is portrayed through the early life of Solomon.

COMMENDATION WITH THE TRANSLATION & COMMENTARY

This translation and commentary was completed in Mid August 2011 and it follows similar work on the Books of Samuel. It is offered public in the form of another Westgate commentary and CD label No.11. It is the 35th OT digital commentary to be completed –and as in each case I heartily wish I could have done more to be of help to the reader.

The commentary is promiscuously set out alongside the translation. I have highlighted the 200 or so conversations contained in the book because the Jewish interpreters considered these conversations of high spiritual value as showing how importantly the LORD rates speech. Words cause wars and words bring judgment but words also heal and bring the blessing of God when they reach out for the heart of God.

There are Hebrew words strewn here and there in the book. In such instances it can be useful for our understanding to think of the Hebrew root meaning that emerges in the original language.

I have great pleasure commending this commentary in the prophetic vein to the reader. May you become part of the long-standing divine purpose not only to gather Israel by the prophets but also to gather the people of God that we call the church from all nations by the heralding of the message of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in such a way that He is glorified as Redeemer and coming King.

Bob Coffey,
Westgate August 13, 2011.

<u>ISRAEL</u>		Ahaziah	853-852
		Joram	952-841
		Jehu	841-814
Solomon	971-931		
Jeroboam	931-910		
Nadab	910-909		
Baasha	909-886		
Elah	886-885		
Zimri	885		
Omri	885-874		
Ahab	874-853		

The asterisk* indicates the only two kings that can be considered good following the division of the kingdom

JUDAH

Rehoboam	931-913
Abijah	913-911
Asa*	911-870
Jehoshaphat *	873-848
Jehoram	853-841