

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

[The Annotated Bible](#)

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Introduction

In the [introduction to the books of Samuel](#) we stated that the first and second books of the Kings are called in the Greek version of the Old Testament the third and fourth books of Kingdoms and in the Latin version the third and fourth books of the Kings. The two books, which were originally undivided and formed one book, contain the history of Israel under the government of the kings.

The same period of history is also covered in the two books of the Chronicles. However there is a great difference between the books of the Kings and the books of the Chronicles. The books of the Kings were written before the captivity; the books of the Chronicles after that event (1 Chron. 6:15). The books of the Kings trace the history of the kings from the prophetic viewpoint; the books of the Chronicles from the priestly. Kings gives the history from a human point of view, Chronicles from the divine standpoint. After Solomon's wonderful reign and the division of the kingdom the history of the kings of Israel is mostly given while much less is said of the kings of Judah. The books of the Chronicles are characterized by an almost entire absence of the history of the kings of Israel; they are mentioned only in case of absolute necessity. After the genealogical tracings the history of the kingdom of David is followed in detail down to the Babylonian captivity. The blessing and grace of God as manifested towards the house of David is beautifully given in Chronicles. The story centers around the temple. In the introduction to Chronicles and more so in the annotations we shall point out more fully these interesting and striking differences, the blessed marks of inspiration.

The Authorship of Kings

Much has been written on the possible instrument who was used in putting these records together as we have them now. Critics have much to say on the different compilers, redactors, editors, etc., who all had a hand in putting these histories together. They speak of proximate sources and primary sources and later additions and redactions. To say the least it is bewildering and unprofitable to follow, what they term, their scientific method. That the author of these two books had certain sources or documents, besides traditional accounts at his disposal, cannot be denied. But we maintain that he was chosen by the Lord to write these records of the kings and was guided by the Holy Spirit as he wrote. The books of the Kings have the mark in every way of being the work of one person and not a number of persons, followed by others who edited their writings. Unity of style can be clearly followed throughout the books; there is uniform mode of expression which would be quite impossible with a number of authors or compilers. See and compare 1 Kings 22:43 with 2 Kings 14:3-4; 1 Kings 12:31 with 2 Kings 17:32; 1 Kings 11:43 with 2 Kings 13:13. Jewish tradition declares that the prophet Jeremiah was the instrument chosen to write the two books of the Kings. While no one can say with certainty that this is true, much is in favor of this view. There is a striking similarity of style and idiom between the language of Kings and the language employed by Jeremiah. Perhaps no one was better fitted to write the wonderful history of Solomon's failure, the division of the Kingdom, the apostasy of Israel, the chastisements of the Lord, than the prophet of tears, the man of God whose loving messages were to a backslidden Israel.

Spiritual And Prophetic Truths

There is much spiritual and prophetic truth to be found in these records. Solomon's wonderful reign, and the building of the house of the Lord contains great foreshadowings of the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's reign of peace marks the climax of the history of Israel. In him the promise made unto David (2 Sam. 7) found its first fulfillment. As head over the people, as king of righteousness ruling in righteousness, as king of peace, exercising also priestly functions, furthermore, in taking Pharaoh's daughter and the Gentiles seeking after him and much else he is a type of the coming King in whom the covenant promises made to David will be fully realized. There are many spiritual lessons to be found in the decline among Israel. Elijah's and Elisha's ministries, their messages and miracles, have a deeper prophetic and spiritual meaning. To write a large volume on these two great historical books and trace in them God's way in government as well as the prophetic foreshadowings would be a far easier work than to condense

them in brief annotations. However we hope and pray that even these few hints we could give will be used by our Lord to help His people into a better knowledge of His Word. The chronological table of the kings of Judah and Israel, and of contemporary events, which follows this introduction should be freely consulted in the study of the text.

The Division of the First Book of the Kings

The first book of the Kings contains the record of the reign of Solomon and the glory of his great kingdom of peace. But that glory soon passed away through the failure of Solomon and the great united kingdom becomes a divided kingdom. In the last six chapters we read of Elijah, the Tishbite, the great prophet of God and his activity during the reign of wicked Ahab. We make the following division:

I. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND THE CROWNING OF SOLOMON

1. Adonijah's Exaltation to be King (1:1-27)
2. The Anointing of Solomon and Adonijah's Submission (1:28-53)
3. David's Charge to Solomon and David's End (2:1-11)

II. SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN, HIS FAILURE AND END

1. The Righteous judgment of Solomon (2:12-46)
2. Jehovah Appears to Solomon-His Prayer and the Answer (3:1-28)
3. Solomon's Princes and Officers: The Prosperous Kingdom and the King's Great Wisdom (4:1-34)
4. The Building of the Temple and Its Dedication (5-8)
5. Jehovah Appears unto Solomon and the Greatness of the King (9:1-28)
6. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba: His great Riches and Splendour (10:1-29)
7. Solomon's Failure: judgment Announced and the Beginning of the Disruption (11:1-43)

III. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1. Rehoboam and the Revolt of the Ten Tribes (12:1-33)
2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their Reign (13-14)
3. Abijam and Asa: Kings of Judah (15:1-24)
4. Kings of Israel (15:25-16)

IV. THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND KING AHAB

1. Elijah's Prediction and His Miracles (17:1-24)
2. Elijah on Mount Carmel: The Answered Prayer (18:1-46)
3. Elijah in the Wilderness and on Mount Horeb (19:1-21)
4. King Ahab, His Wicked Reign and Downfall (20-22)

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL, AND OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

According to Keil, Winer, Clinton, and Usher (Omitted until reformatted)

Analysis and Annotations

I. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND THE CROWNING OF SOLOMON

1. Adonijah's Exaltation to be King

CHAPTER 1:1-27

1. David's decrepitude (1:1-4)
2. Adonijah's self-exaltation (1:5-9)
3. The plot of Nathan and Bath-sheba (1:10-14)
4. Bath-sheba and Nathan before the king (1:15-27)

David was about 70 years old and extremely feeble. The strenuous life he had led, the exposures and hardships of his youth, the cares and anxieties of his reign, and the chastenings through which he passed on account of his great sin, and much else were responsible for this enfeebled condition. It is but another illustration of that rigid law, What a man soweth that shall he reap. It was a premature decay with the complete loss of natural heat. While the king was in this helpless condition Adonijah (My Lord is Jehovah) exalted himself to be king and like his unhappy brother Absalom he prepared chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. Like Absalom he also was of great physical beauty. There is a significant sentence which reveals the weakness of David towards his favorite children, a weakness which has borne its sad fruits in many families. "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou

done so?" There had been no discipline in David's family; he had spared the rod. By right of primogeniture he thought of claiming the throne. However, he must have known that his younger brother Solomon had been selected by David to fill the throne after him. But Adonijah knew not the Lord nor was he subject to His will. In his selfish ambition he was upheld by Joab and Abiathar, the priest. No doubt but both of these men sought their own interests; Joab to continue in his position he held with David; Abiathar to get supremacy over Zadok his rival in the priesthood. But Zadok the priest, who ministered at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39), Benaiah, who had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Sam. 8:18), Nathan, the faithful prophet, Shimei (not the one who cursed David), Rei and David's mighty men kept aloof from the revolt. They remained true to Jehovah and to His anointed. Then Adonijah made a sacrificial feast to give his self-exaltation a religious air. He invited all the king's sons, his brethren, and the men of Judah; but Nathan, Benaiah, David's mighty men and his brother Solomon were not called. It was meant to be his coronation. In this revolt, preceding the enthronement of God's king, Solomon, the king of peace, we have another foreshadowing of what will precede the reign of the Prince of Peace, our Lord. It seemed as if Adonijah might succeed. But Nathan, the prophet, begins to act. In agreement with the mother of Solomon the plan is made to discover what Adonijah had done to the aged King. Bath-sheba goes in first and after a while Nathan appeared to tell the King the same story he had heard from the lips of his wife. She reminded David of his oath, that Solomon her son was to be the successor to the throne, and after telling him of Adonijah's act, she appealed to him to proclaim now who was to sit upon the throne. She speaks to him repeatedly as "My lord the King." And when Nathan appeared before David he also said, "My lord O King." Some have gathered from this that aged David had become filled with the pride of life. However, the honour done to him may have been true reverence for the Lord's anointed King.

2. The Anointing of Solomon and Adonijah's Submission

CHAPTER 1:28-53

1. The renewed promise to Bath-sheba (1:28-31) 2. The anointing of Solomon commanded (1:32-37) 3. Solomon made king (1:38-40) 4. The consternation of Adonijah (1:41-49) 5. Adonijah's fear and submission (1:50-53)

Bath-sheba had withdrawn while Nathan was before the king. She is called back and David once more assures her that Solomon her son should reign after him. Then David commands that Solomon be anointed king without further delay. His instructions are at once carried out. Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. The priest anointed him king and the people rejoiced with great joy. But what joy will come to this earth when He who is greater than Solomon will be enthroned and receive His great kingdom, which is only faintly foreshadowed in Solomon's glorious reign! All David did was according to Jehovah's will and purpose. Solomon was a mere youth when he was anointed. In 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 where the most impressive scene is fully described which followed Solomon's anointing, we find David's own words concerning him, "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen is yet young and tender, and the work is great" (1 Chron. 29:1). We shall follow the remarkable utterances of King David at that occasion when we reach the Chronicles. Like Saul and David, King Solomon was likewise anointed a second time. "And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest" (1 Chronicles 29:22). And while the people were rejoicing in Gihon over God's true King, Adonijah's feast was about ended. Abiathar's son Jonathan appeared on the scene. Adonijah said, "Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings." And the tidings he brought were good tidings for God's people: "Solomon sitteth on the throne of the Kingdom." Fear and consternation took hold on Adonijah and his guests and while the people gathered around Solomon, Adonijah and his company scattered. When another One, the greater Son of David, is enthroned and the glad tidings flash forth, He has taken His throne, all His enemies will be scattered and be made the footstool of His feet. Adonijah took hold of the horns of the altar (Exodus 21:12-14). Solomon promises him that his life would be spared, "but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." Mercy shown and righteousness demanded were the first acts of King Solomon. In this he is a type of Him who will reign in peace and execute mercy and righteousness on the earth. Righteousness will reign in the millennial Kingdom and evil doers will be cut off.

3. David's Charge to Solomon and David's End

CHAPTER 2:1-11

1. David's charge (2:1-9) 2. David's end (2:10-11)

We call attention again to 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 where we find the record of the great assembly of all the princes of Israel and David's great address to them. He then made known to all Israel that the LORD had

chosen Solomon to occupy the throne. He speaks there of the covenant promise, that his son should build the house of the LORD and His courts. He exhorted the people to keep the commandments and then spoke in tenderest words to young Solomon. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind... take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it" (1 Chron. 28:1-10). Then he gave to his son Solomon the patterns for the temple. These had been made under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The immense treasures are mentioned which David had dedicated for the temple worship. Of all this we find nothing in the record of the first book of the Kings. Here only the general history of God's government in Israel is given from the prophetic point of view. What Chronicles represents we shall state in our annotations on those books.

The charge of David to Solomon recorded in the opening verses of this chapter was given privately. Its main purpose was to exhort his son to punish Joab and Shimei and to show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai. Critics have attacked David's character on account of this charge. Renan in his history of the people Israel goes so far as to say that the incident is "a revelation of the black perfidy of his hypocritical soul." However, the charge to Solomon to execute vengeance upon these two men is not a stain upon King David. The punishment was well deserved. Joab had killed Abner and Amasa. Shimei had in great vileness cursed God's King. Both were wicked men. David's own guilt had no doubt compelled him to neglect the solemn duty demanded by justice. He therefore asked Solomon to vindicate divine justice and raise it up from the defeat it had sustained by punishing Joab and Shimei with death, while kindness is to be bestowed upon the righteous. From the prophetic viewpoint we get a glimpse of the coming righteous judgment of the King, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will execute the vengeance of God and punish the evil doers, and reward the righteous in His kingdom. Then David passed away and was buried after his forty-year reign in the city of David. He died in good old age, full of days, riches and honour (1 Chron. 29:28). His memory was always cherished by the nation. Peter on the day of Pentecost spoke of his burial place: "His sepulchre is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29). In the coming day of the glorious manifestation of the Son of Man, who also bears the title Son of David, when He shall receive the throne of His father David, King David in resurrection glory will have a great share in that Kingdom.

II. SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN. HIS FAILURE AND END

1. The Righteous judgment of Solomon

CHAPTER 2:12-46)

1. Solomon upon the throne (2:12) 2. Adonijah's request (2:13-18) 3. Bath-sheba before Solomon (2:19-21) 4. Solomon's answer and sentence upon Adonijah (2:22-24) 5. Adonijah executed (2:25) 6. Abiathar thrust out (2:26-27) 7. Joab and Shimei executed (2:28-46)

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

Solomon and his glorious reign foreshadows the reign of that greater Son of David, our Lord, in whom the covenant promise made to David will be fully accomplished. The section which begins with the statement of Solomon's enthronement is deeply interesting and full of the richest typical and prophetic meaning. Solomon's righteous judgments, his wisdom, his reign in peace, but especially the building of the temple foreshadow Him who will ere long receive the throne and build the temple of the LORD (Zech 6:13). Inasmuch as the critics reject the literal fulfilment of the oath-bound Davidic covenant and the prophetic foreshadowing of the recorded events, they also condemn Solomon's righteous judgment which occupies the foreground of his reign. We quote from one of these critics: "The reign of Solomon began with a threefold deed of blood. An eastern King surrounded by the many princes of a polygamous family, and liable to endless jealousies and plots, is always in a condition of unstable equilibrium; the death of a rival is regarded as his only safe imprisonment" (Canon Farrar). In such statements God's governmental ways in righteousness and retribution are entirely ignored.

Adonijah the wicked rebel on probation visits Bath-sheba. He acknowledges freely that the Lord had given the Kingdom to his brother. Then he desired that Bath-sheba should ask her son Solomon to give Abishag the Shunammite to him as wife (1:3). Bath-sheba was completely won by the pathetic plea of Adonijah and did not discover the wicked plot which was hidden beneath his request. Beautiful is the reverence which Solomon showed to his mother. He arose from his throne, he bowed himself unto her, (the Septuagint version reads "he kissed her") and he made her sit on his right hand. How he honored and loved her! It may foreshadow the love of Him for the believing remnant of Israel, His beloved people, who will have a share in His coming Kingdom. When Bath-sheba states Adonijah's request the keen discernment and wisdom of Solomon are at once apparent. "And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the

son of Zeruah." Adonijah's request was a scheme to obtain the kingdom. Most likely it was concocted by Abiathar and Joab. To many a deceased king's wife or concubine was, according to Oriental customs, paramount with claiming the rights of the king (2 Sam. 12:8; 16:21-22). Now Abishag was not the wife of David in the sense of the word, yet she must have been considered as belonging to the departed king. Had Solomon granted the request he would have hopelessly degraded himself in the eyes of the people (2 Sam. 2:7). Adonijah aimed by this cunning scheme at the throne of Solomon and attempted to obtain the kingdom. Then Solomon pronounced judgment, which Adonijah fully deserved. He was put to death that day. It has been suggested by certain critics that Solomon had a more selfish, carnal reason for putting his elder brother to death. "If, as seems almost certain," declares a higher critic, "Abishag is the fair Shulamite of the Song of Songs, there can be little doubt that Solomon himself loved her, and that she was the jewel of his seraglio." But there is absolutely no evidence that Abishag is identical with Shulamite; nor does Jewish tradition sustain such a theory. It is a mere supposition.

Abiathar is next dealt with. His life is spared but Solomon thrusts him out of the priesthood, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2:31-36). Zadok becomes exclusively priest (verse 35). Joab and Shimei are both executed. Though Joab caught hold of the horns of the altar it did not save him; he paid now by a just retribution for the wicked deeds he had done. Shimei was commanded to remain in Jerusalem; disobedience would mean certain death. When he disobeyed, the sentence of death was executed upon him. And here we have another glimpse of the government of the kingdom in the coming age. In the present age grace reigns through righteousness; in the kingdom age, when the Lord rules over all, righteousness reigns. Disobedience will be swiftly met by judgment as it was with Shimei.

2. Jehovah Appears to Solomon His Prayer and the Answer

CHAPTER 3

1. Affinity with Pharaoh and Pharaoh's daughter (3:1) 2. Solomon loved the LORD (3:2-4) 3. Jehovah appears to Solomon (3:5-15) 4. The wisdom granted and exemplified (3:16-28)

We shall now see how the Lord kept His promise He made unto David in the establishment of his kingdom. After the execution of the demanded judgment Solomon entered into affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt (probably the last King of the 21 Tanitic dynasty) and married his daughter. She was with him in David's city until he made an end of building his own house, the house of the LORD and the wall of Jerusalem round about." She was a Gentile and Jewish tradition states that she became a Jewish proselyte. This union was prophetic of the blessing Gentiles were to receive in union with Him whom Solomon typifies. It was grace which took up Pharaoh's daughter and made her share the riches and honors of Solomon. And Solomon loved the LORD. At Gibeon he offered a thousand burnt offerings. Gibeon was one of the high places where the priests performed their functions (1 Chron. 16:36-40). The tabernacle and the brazen altar were there, but not the ark of the covenant. However, he also approached the ark and stood before it to render thanks unto Jehovah. (Another application may be made to the Jewish remnant of the end of the age the same way as Ruth typified that remnant. See Annotations on Ruth. That remnant is called through grace; the Jews through unbelief are in the same place as the Gentiles. The grace which saved and called the Gentiles will draw and call them and bring them into union with the King.)

A most blessed incident followed. As stated before Solomon was a youth when he was anointed king. Eusebius states that he was only 12 years old; Josephus gives his age as 15 years. He was probably not yet 20 years old when he became King. He felt deeply two things, his own littleness and his great responsibility in governing the multitude of people. It was while still at Gibeon that Jehovah appeared unto him in a dream and said: "Ask what I shall give you." What grace this was, but it also searched his inner-most soul. And this offer was not made exclusively to Solomon. He who appeared unto Solomon and put this gracious question to him, when He was on earth clothed in the garb of a servant, yet greater than Solomon in all his glory, said: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. 7:7). And again He said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do" (John 14:13). It is faith's prerogative to hear Him speak thus to our hearts and to make use of His great offer. Solomon's answer is beautiful. He acknowledged God's great mercy and kindness. Then he confessed his own weakness and helplessness. "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in." He speaks of his responsibility and duty towards God's people and then utters his request: "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" It pleased the Lord as it always pleases Him when His people confess their littleness and expect help from Him. The request is granted. "So there was none like thee before thee, neither shall any arise like unto thee." Wisdom from above filled his soul. The book of Proverbs bears witness to this great understanding the Lord gave to him. But He added much more; He gave him riches and honour. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all things shall

be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). And the same Lord does still, to all who put their trust in Him, exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think. "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). Then there was a conditional promise. "And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes, and My commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (verse 14). Alas! Solomon did not fulfill the condition. He forsook the Lord and died when he was not quite 60 years of age. He awoke and behold it was a dream. But it was more than a dream. That the prayer had been answered and that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment is evidenced in the incident which follows and which needs no further comment. In his wisdom he is a type of our Lord Jesus who is the wisdom of God. And the justice he administered in his kingdom is typical of the righteous judgment of our Lord when He rules as king over the earth. "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor" (Is. 11:1-4).

3. Solomon's Princes and Officers The Prosperous Kingdom and the King's Great Wisdom

CHAPTER 4

1. The Princes (4:1-6) 2. The Officers (4:7-19) 3. The prosperous kingdom (4:20-28) 4. Solomon's great wisdom (4:29-34)

"So King Solomon was king over all Israel." A list of the princes and the twelve officers is given first. Their names fit in perfectly with the character of the kingdom, foreshadowing the coming and better kingdom of our Lord. We give the names of the princes with their meaning. Azariah, "Jehovah is help"; Elihoreph, "my God is reward"; Ahiah, "Brother of Jehovah"; Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges"; Benaiah, "Built up by Jehovah"; Zabud, "Gift bestowed"; Ahishar, "Brother of ability"; Adoniram, "Lord of Heights."

Then we have here the record of a remarkable increase of Judah and Israel "as the sand which is by the sea in multitude." It reminds us of the promise made to Abraham, "in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. 22:17). Such an increase will come during the reign of God's appointed King, the Prince of Peace. His kingdom reached from the river (Euphrates) to the border of Egypt. Even so had Jehovah spoken to Abraham that his seed should possess the territory from Egypt unto Euphrates. This was realized in Solomon's kingdom. Now the Jews hold not even the little land called Palestine. When the true King comes the promised territory will be given once more to the seed of Abraham. It was a time of great prosperity. Another prophetic hint we find in the fact that the great multitude were in peace, "eating and drinking and making merry." Such will be the universal state of the people in the coming Kingdom when "every man shall call his neighbor under the vine and the fig tree" (Zech 3:10), as under Solomon's reign Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and fig tree (verse 25). Solomon had also great stables full of horses and many chariots. He had 4000 horses; the number 40,000 in verse 26 is evidently the error of a copyist. (See 2 Chron. 9:25.) There was much to be supplied for the provision of the court of the King. See the daily need; but they lacked nothing. How great the need there is in the world during the absence of the true King! But when He comes to reign "He will satisfy the poor with bread" (Ps. 132:15).

And how marvellously the Lord answered the King's petition! The greatness of Solomon's wisdom, the many-sidedness of its character as well as the world-wide impression this wisdom made is recorded in verses 29-34. "Happy is the man who findeth wisdom, and the man who causeth understanding to go forth; for merchandise with it is better than merchandise of silver, and the gain from it than the most fine gold" (Prov. 3:13-14). The King expressed in these words his own experience. His wisdom was greater than the wisdom of the wise men of the East and greater than Egypt. (Compare 1 Chron. 2:6. Ethan, 1 Chron. 6:44; 15:17, 19. Ps. 89 [Inscription]; Heman see 1 Chron. 6:33; 25:5. Psalm 88 [Inscription].) He spake 3000 proverbs and made 1005 songs. The book of Proverbs contains hundreds of his sayings. But not all these proverbs were preserved and only a few of his songs (Song of Solomon and a few Psalms). Creation itself was known by the great King. (See verse 33.) According to an apocryphal book (Wisdom of Solomon) he had knowledge of cosmogony, astronomy, the alteration of solstices, the cycles of years, the natures of wild beasts, the forces of spirits, the thoughts of men, the qualities of plants and roots. Jewish tradition even declares that he could converse with the wild beasts. This knowledge of creation was not a perfect knowledge. However, it also reminds us of the glorious time when the secrets of nature, lost through the fall of man, will be restored through Him, who will deliver groaning creation (Rom. 8:21).

4. The Building of the Temple and its Dedication

CHAPTER 5

Hiram King of Tyre

1. Hiram sends servants to Solomon (5:1) 2. The message of Solomon (5:2-6) 3. Hiram's answer and league with Solomon (5:7-12) 4. Solomon's workmen (5:13-18)

In connection with 1 Kings 5-8 the chapters in 2 Chronicles should be read which give a more extensive account (2 Chronicles 2-5:11). Solomon now begins the great work, which may be called his life work, the building of the house of the LORD. Hiram heard of Solomon's enthronement, and sent messengers to Solomon. This Gentile king was a lover of David. David had made before his death abundant material for the building of the house and Hiram had supplied much of it (1 Chron. 22:4). Solomon requested that Hiram furnish cedar trees from Lebanon for the building of the house and Hiram agrees to float them down the coast. According to the request of Hiram, Solomon supplied Hiram's household with 20,000 measures of wheat and twenty measures of oil. Hiram also sent a master-workman by name of Hiram whose mother was a Jewess (2 Chron. 2:13-14; 1 Kings 7:14). This cooperation of the Gentiles in building the temple is also prophetic, for the riches of the Gentiles are promised to Israel (Isa. 40:6; 54:3). Jews and Gentiles will unite to manifest His glory. A large number of workmen were needed. Two classes were employed. First there were 30,000 men out of Israel raised by a levy; 10,000 worked by relays of 10,000 a month. The second class was composed of strangers (1 Kings 5:15; 2 Chron. 2:17-18), 150,000 in number; 70,000 were burden bearers and 80,000 hewers in stone. Over all were 3300 officers (verse 16) with 550 chiefs (1 Kings 9:23), of whom 250 were native Israelites (2 Chron. 8:10). The great stones and the costly (splendid) stones and hewed stones are especially mentioned. They were for the foundation of the house. These stones may illustrate all those who as "living stones" are built up a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). Through Grace all those are taken out of nature's place and prepared to fit into that marvellous temple of the Lord "fitly framed together--an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

CHAPTER 6

The Description of the Temple

1. The date of the beginning of the building (6:1) 2. The house, the porches and side chambers (6:2-10) 3. The divine charge (6:11-14) 4. The internal arrangements (6:15-22) 5. The cherubim (6:23-30) 6. The doors (6:31-35) 7. The inner court and the temple finished (6:36-38)

Three chapters are taken up with the description of the temple, its contents, Solomon's house of the forest of Lebanon and with the dedication of the house of the LORD. Rich foreshadowings are here which we must pass over in greater part. Books could be written on these three chapters. However, we hope to point out the way for a closer study of the temple. The building of the temple commenced in the month of Zif (splendour), the second month when nature bursts forth in all her splendour. There comes a morning without clouds (2 Sam. 23:4) with glorious splendour, when He, for whose coming all is waiting, will build the temple (Zech. 6:12). It took seven years to finish the house. The temple was erected on Mount Moriah. There was an immense foundation of great hewn and splendid stones, a platform upon which the temple was built. This great foundation remains to the present day, known by the name "Haram-esh-Sheraf," and upon it there stands now the Mosque of Omar. One stone alone is thirty-eight feet and nine inches long. "This great stone is one of the most interesting stones of the world, for it is the chief corner stone of the temple's massive wall. Among the ancient Jews, the foundation corner stone of their great sanctuary on Moriah was regarded as the emblem of moral and spiritual truths. It had two functions to perform; first, like the other foundation stones, it was a support for the masonry above, but it had also to face both ways, and was thus a bond of union between the two walls.... The engineers, in order to ascertain the dimensions of this foundation stone, worked round it, and report that it is three feet eight inches high, and fourteen feet in length. At the angle it is let down into the rock to a depth of fourteen inches, but, as the rock rises towards the north, the depth at four feet north of the angle is increased to thirty-two inches, while the northern end seems entirely embedded in the rock. The block is further described as squared and polished, with a finely dressed face.... Fixed in its abiding position three thousand years ago, it still stands sure and steadfast" (from report, "Recent Discoveries in the Temple Hill").

Still more interesting is the fact that the men who made an exploration of this temple wall, some 3000 years old, discovered certain marks. We quote from the Palestine Exploration report: "I must now speak somewhat fully on a subject which has engaged public attention for some time, and has already given rise to many conjectures, namely, the 'writings,' either painted on or cut into the stones, discovered lately on the bottom rows of the wall, at the south-east corner of the Haram, at a depth of about eighty feet there, where the foundations lie on the live rock itself. I have examined them carefully in their places--by no means an easy task. The ventilation at that depth is unfavourable to free breathing; nor is the pale glimmer of the taper, or the sudden glare of the magnesium wire, calculated materially to assist epigraphical studies.... I have come to the following conclusions:--First: The signs cut, or painted, were on the stones when they

were first laid in their present places. Secondly: They do not represent any inscription. Thirdly: They are Phoenician. I consider them to be partly letters, partly numerals, and partly special mason's, or quarry, signs. Some of them were recognisable at once as well-known Phoenician characters; others, hitherto unknown in Phoenician epigraphy, I had the rare satisfaction of being able to identify on absolutely undoubted antique Phoenician structures in Syria, such as the primitive substructures of the harbour at Sidon. No less did I observe them on the bevelled stones taken from ancient edifices and built into later work throughout Phoenicia. For a striking and obvious instance of this, the stones of which (old Phoenician stones to wit) immured in their present place at subsequent periods, teem with peculiar marks identical with those at Jerusalem." Thus the stones testify to the fact that strangers, Phoenicians and others were employed. This rock foundation, which has remained unshaken, is an illustration of Him, the rock of ages, upon whom everything rests.

The dimensions of the house were twice the size of those adopted in the tabernacle; the whole length was 60 cubits, the breadth 20 cubits, and the height also 20 cubits. The interior was lined with boards of cedar, the house was overlaid with gold, and a wall surrounded the whole. The upper chambers were 10 cubits high, on which account the height of the whole building is stated to have been 30 cubits. The porch before the entrance of the temple was 10 cubits in length and as many in breadth, and here were placed two massive pillars of brass, named Jachin (he shall establish, or, steadfastness) and Boaz (in Him is strength). On the other three sides a building was erected three stories in height, which rose to two-thirds of the height of the house of the temple. The sanctuary, 40 cubits in length, contained the golden altar of incense, ten candlesticks of gold, and ten tables of gold. The holiest of all was a cube of 20 cubits; it contained two cherubim made of the wood of the olive-tree, overlaid with gold, and 10 cubits in height, whose expanded wings touched in the middle, and, on the opposite sides, touched the walls.

In verse 7 we find a remarkable statement: "And the house when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." Thus orderly and quietly proceeds the erection of that spiritual house, the Church, destined to be the holy temple in eternity. However, the temple itself does not exactly prefigure the Church. It is a type of the Father's house above where God dwells. The chambers or dwellings round about remind us of the words of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (literally: abodes, dwellings). It is a blessed hint that God will have His people dwelling with Him. But the temple is also prophetic of another temple which will yet stand on the earth when our Lord reigns. His glory will cover and fill that house, which will be a house of prayer and worship for all nations.

After the description of the dimensions of the house, and after he had built it and built the chambers, the word of the Lord came to Solomon telling him that His dwelling among the children of Israel depended upon Solomon's faithfulness. Soon the failure came in and Ezekiel saw later the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple and from Jerusalem.

And in the house gold was the prominent feature. The word "gold" occurs eleven times in this chapter. All was overlaid with gold. Besides this there were "glistening stones, and of divers colours" (1 Chron. 29:2). Everything was of pure gold; the sanctuary might have been called the golden house. The floor was overlaid with gold, the walls, the doors and ceiling were covered with pure gold, and the walls had inlaid precious stones (2 Chron. 3:6). Gold is the emblem of divine righteousness and divine glory. Therefore the whole sanctuary witnessed to the glory of righteousness which is in keeping with the prophetic foreshadowing of this house. How much greater will be the glory and the manifestation of divine righteousness when the true King builds the house and manifests His glory!

Another interesting feature present was the cherubim. While the cherubim which belonged to the ark of the covenant remained unchanged, for it was the same ark which was in the tabernacle, Solomon put on either side of it the big figure of a cherub carved of olive wood and overlaid with gold. Each was ten cubits high. The two with their wings met over the mercy seat, while the wing of the one touched the wall on the south and the wing of the other touched the wall on the north. Then instead of these cherubim, like those on the ark, looking downwards towards the mercy seat, they looked outwards (2 Chron. 3:13). "Inwards" really means "towards the house" or "outwards." And this is in harmony with the reign of righteousness which is foreshadowed in Solomon and the temple. "At that time, righteousness reigning and being established, these symbols of God's power can look outwards in blessing, instead of having their eyes fixed on the covenant alone. During the time there was nothing but the covenant, they gazed upon it; but when God has established His throne in righteousness, He can turn towards the world to bless it according to that righteousness."

CHAPTER 7

The House of Solomon and Pharaoh's Daughter The Furnishings of the Temple

1. The house of the forest of Lebanon (7:1-7) 2. The royal palace and the house of Pharaoh's daughter (7:8-12) 3. The master workman (7:13-14) 4. The great pillars and chapters (7:15-22) 5. The brazen sea (7:23-26) 6. The ten lavers with their carriages (7:27-40) 7. Hiram's work (7:41-47) 8. The golden utensils for the interior (7:48-51)

The description of the palace buildings come next. These buildings are called "Solomon's own house" (verse 1). The buildings consisted of the following: The house of the forest of Lebanon (verses 2-5). The porch of pillars (verse 6). The porch of judgment, where the king judged (verse 7). The house where the king dwelt (verse 8). The house where Pharaoh's daughter dwelt "like unto his house" (verse 8). The wall which surrounded the great court. Seven things are mentioned in connection with the palace buildings. While the temple was God's dwelling place the palace buildings were the dwelling place of the king and his wife, Pharaoh's daughter. From there the king executed judgment. Here we have prefigured the glorious administration of the kingdom, when our Lord judges in righteousness. The house of the forest of Lebanon is the type of His glory among the Gentiles. And inasmuch as the house of Pharaoh's daughter was closely connected with Solomon's house it is written "we are his house" (Hebrews 3:6), we have here foreshadowed the association of the Church with Christ in His coming reign of glory. Everything in the temple and in the palace buildings was glorious and revealed the immense riches of the great king. What a day it will be when the riches and glory of Christ will be manifested and when the saints of God will share it all!

Then Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. This was not the king, but a master workman. His father was a Tyrian and his mother by birth of the tribe of Dan was a widow and had married a man of Naphtali. This reconciles an alleged discrepancy. (See 1 Kings 7:14 and 2 Chron. 2:13.) In Chronicles he is called Hiram. (Probably Hiram-abi (Abi--meaning "my father") was his correct name.) His mother belonged to the same tribe to which Aholiab the coworker of Bezaleel belonged. (See Exodus 31:1-6.) The two pillars of solid brass Jachin (he will establish) and Boaz (in him is Strength) are first described. They were a new thing for the house of the Lord. The outward support these pillars afforded speak of Him who is the support of everything and whose power upholdeth all things. Read Jeremiah's words concerning these pillars (Jer. 27:19, etc.) and the fulfilment (2 Kings 25:13-17; Jer. 52:17). All the vessels mentioned were made on a much larger scale, and greater in number, than those of the tabernacle. The great molten sea supported by twelve oxen which looked towards the North, South, East and West, the river wrought like a cup, like lilies, contained two thousand baths (about 16,250 gallons of water). (2 Chron. 4:5 has 3000 baths: this must mean the actual capacity of this colossal vessel, while the 2000 measures in 1 Kings gives the usual contents of the laver.) Here the priests and Levites performed their ablutions. The water was drawn from the big reservoir. There was a large supply. Living waters in abundance will flow forth from Jerusalem in the coming kingdom ages. The oxen (the burden bearing beast) are typical of service. Of all this we shall find more in Chronicles. Then all the things which David had dedicated, the silver, the gold and the vessels were put by Solomon among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

CHAPTER 8

The Dedication of the Temple

1. The great assembly (8:1-2) 2. The transportation of the ark (8:3-9) 3. The glory of the LORD filling the house (8:10-11) 4. Solomon's opening words (8:12-21) 5. Solomon's great prayer (8:22-53) 6. Solomon's benediction (8:54-61) 7. The sacrifices and the feast (8:62-66)

The ark of the covenant is now to be transported out of David's city to be put into the most holy place, under the wings of the great cherubim. The ark was carried, according to the instructions in the law, by the priests. A great sacrificial ceremony also took place; so many sheep and oxen were sacrificed that "they could not be numbered for multitude." The ark now had found a resting place (Ps. 132:8). The staves by which the ark had been carried were now drawn out. They were not to be removed (Ex. 25:15); but now they were pulled out, but remained there as a memorial of their journeys and the Lord's faithfulness in bringing them into the promised rest. But in the ark nothing was found but the two tables of stone; Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were missing. (Hebrews 9:4 has reference to the ark in the Tabernacle). The rod of Aaron was the emblem of the priestly grace which had accompanied them on their journey and the manna was their food in the wilderness. Both Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were provisions for the wilderness; they would not have been in keeping with the reign of glory and peace, as well as the rest they now enjoyed. Thus when we are brought into glory we have no more need of priestly intercession and help, nor do we need the manna any longer. But the law was not missing, for as regards that earthly kingdom over which our Lord will yet reign, its foundation and administration will be the law of righteousness.

When the ark had been placed the glory-cloud filled the house. Jehovah had appeared in His glory to dwell in the house. And when that future temple will be on the earth as seen by Ezekiel in his great temple-vision, the glory will return and fill the house, and more than that, the whole earth will be filled with His glory (Ezek. 43:1-5; Num. 14:21).

Then Solomon spoke. A great and marvellous dedicatory and intercessory prayer follows. It must be noticed that in all, especially in the bringing of the sacrifices, Solomon assumes the full character of priest. He acts as the king-priest, another Melchizedek, King of Salem. And this he was, king of righteousness in his judgments and king of peace. In all this he foreshadows Him, who is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. "He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6:13) is the still unfulfilled prediction. Now He is upon the Father's throne as the priest and advocate of His people. When He comes again He will have His own throne and be also a priest. We have therefore in Solomon's functions in dedicating the temple and in the bringing of the sacrifices a prophetic type of our Lord in His future royal priesthood. First, Solomon turned towards the Most Holy filled with the glory of the Lord and said: "I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in forever." Then he blessed the congregation. He mentions once more David, his illustrious father, and the covenant-promise. "And the LORD hath performed His word that He spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit upon the throne of Israel as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel" (verse 20). And yet the covenant-promise had not seen its accomplishment; the failure of Solomon and the passing of the glory witnesses to that. Yet Solomon, his reign of peace and prosperity and especially his great work in the building of the temple foreshadows the great coming fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in the enthroned Christ upon the throne of his father David. A closer study of the great prayer we must leave with the reader. The different petitions are of deep interest and the kingdom characteristics are prominent. "The prayer sets the people under the form of a righteous government, abounding indeed in kindness and forgiveness, yet one which will not hold the guilty innocent; and it presents God as the people's resource, when the consequences of their sin fall upon them according to the principles laid down by Moses in Deuteronomy and elsewhere" (Synopsis of the Bible). And in the prayer mention is made "that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy name" (verse 43). This looks forward to the ingathering of the nations into the kingdom, when nations will be joined to a God-fearing Israel. (See Zech. 2:11; 8:23.) The feast mentioned which followed the dedication feast is the feast of tabernacles. And this is again highly typical, for the feast of tabernacles is as a type unfulfilled. While it pointed back to the time when they were in the wilderness, living in tents and journeying towards the land of promise, it also pointed to the future, when the name of Jehovah was to be known among all the nations of the earth, when the nations would come to worship the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 14). The conjunction of the dedication of the temple with the feast of tabernacles was more than significant, it was prophetic. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ occupies the throne and He builds the Temple of glory, that the nations will seek after Him and be converted. (See our annotations on Leviticus 23.) And while the king prayed and blessed the people, the people full of happiness and joy blessed the king. Heaven and earth rejoiced. It is the climax of Israel's history in the land.

5. Jehovah Appears unto Solomon and the Greatness of the King

CHAPTER 9

1. The second appearance of the LORD to Solomon (9:1-9) 2. Transactions with Hiram (9:10-14) 3. The levy of the king (9:15-23) 4. Pharaoh's daughter occupies the house (9:24) 5. The king's offerings (9:25) 6. Solomon's navy (9:26-28)

Jehovah's righteous government in the midst of His people Israel had now been established. This government was given and entrusted to Solomon the son of David, so that, in a sense, Solomon occupied the throne of the Lord. All depended upon the faithfulness of Solomon. Therefore the LORD appeared unto him the second time, not to say once more: "Ask what I shall give thee," but to assure him that He would keep His promise made to David and if he would be faithful his throne would be established. Then He warns against disobedience. If he serves other gods, Israel was to be cut off from the land and the house would be forsaken. How all this came to pass, Solomon's idolatry, disobedience, the subsequent shameful history of Israel's apostasy, we shall soon have to follow. Then God used Nebuchadnezzar to carry out the judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple. Another son of David will receive some day the throne and the government will rest in His hands. In Him all will be accomplished which the prophets have spoken and which was foreshadowed in Solomon.

The transaction with Hiram is interesting. Besides furnishing Solomon with timber he also gave him gold; this amounted to 120 talents of gold. Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee. When he came to look at them, he was displeased with them and called them Cabul, which probably means "as nothing." These cities may have been given to King Hiram for the gold Solomon had received from him. The cities were later restored to Solomon by Hiram, most likely after Solomon had paid back the gold Hiram had furnished.

The activity of the great King in building fortresses and cities is described in this chapter. Hazor became under him a stronghold in defence of Syria. The plain of Jezreel had for a protection Megiddo. Gezer and Baalath were other strongholds. Tadmor is Palmyra, called so by the Greeks and Romans, while it is called still today Tadmor. In this chapter (verse 18) the name is given in Hebrew as "Tamar"; in 2 Chron. 8:4 it is "Tadmor." Tamar means "palm tree," the same as Palmyra. Chronicles uses Tadmor because it was known by that name after the exile.

And Solomon had a fleet of ships, manned mostly by the experienced shipmen of King Hiram. Another fleet is mentioned in 10:22, a navy of Tharshish, which, with Hiram's navy, sailed every three years to fetch gold, silver, ivory and apes and peacocks. Ophir has been variously located. Peru, the Molucca Islands, Armenia, Arabia and parts of Africa have been suggested. All these statements show the great prosperity of the kingdom.

6. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba: His great Riches and Splendour

CHAPTER 10

1. The visit of the Queen (10:1-13) 2. Solomon's enormous wealth (10:14-15) 3. the targets and shields (10:16-17) 4. The ivory throne (10:18-20) 5. The abundance of gold and the depreciation of silver (10:21-22) 6. The greatest living monarch (10:23-26) 7. His chariots and horsemen (10:27-29)

The visit of the Queen of Sheba, who had heard of Solomon's wisdom, is the next recorded event of much interest and significance. It illustrates what was previously stated in chapter 4:34. Sheba was known to such ancient writers as Strabo and Pliny. It was the center of a vast commercial empire in the southwestern part of the Arabian peninsula. The mines which are still to be seen testify of a great civilization. (See Isaiah 60:6; Psalm 72:15; Jeremiah 6:20; Ezekiel 27:22; 38:13.) She heard and came; she communed with Solomon and brought presents; she was filled with wonder at all she heard and saw and declared: "Behold the half was not told me." Then she uttered her praise: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God, who delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee King, to do judgment and justice." Then she gave gold, spices and precious stones of an enormous value. In all this glory which came to Solomon we have a prophetic type of the glory which will come to Him, who is greater than Solomon. When He occupies the throne, the Gentiles will seek Him and praise the King as the Queen of Sheba praised Solomon. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all the kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him.... And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised" (Ps. 72:10-15). This great Kingdom Psalm will be fulfilled when our Lord comes again. "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto Thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto Thee. The multitude of camels shall cover Thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD" (Is. 60:5-6). All these and many other prophecies will be fulfilled in the future kingdom of our Lord. The visit of the Queen of Sheba foreshadows all this. See also the warning of our Lord in Matt. 12:42.

And what riches and glory the king possessed! Everything was of gold. His throne was of solid ivory overlaid with gold. Twelve wonderful lions stood on the one side and on the other. All the drinking vessels were of gold. Silver depreciated in his days; it was worth next to nothing. "The King made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as sycamore trees" (verse 27). Compare this with what will take place in the coming kingdom of our Lord. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree" (Is. 55:13). "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stone, iron" (Is. 60:17).

7. Solomon's Failure: judgment Announced and the beginning of Disruption

CHAPTER 11

1. Solomon's polygamy and departure from God (11:1-13) 2. Hadad the Edomite (11:14-22) 3. Rezon the second adversary (11:23-25) 4. Jeroboam (11:26-40) 5. Solomon's reign and death (11:41-43)

"But--." An ominous word with which this chapter begins. It introduces us to the sad picture of Solomon's great apostasy. "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses, for as much as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (Deut. 17:16-17). The Lord anticipated a royal form of government for Israel and gave these instructions concerning the King. The first failure is seen in the previous chapter. He multiplied horses and brought them out of Egypt. Egypt is the type of the world. God had answered his prayer and then added riches and everything else. But his heart was captivated by riches and luxuries. No doubt he loved these things and multiplied silver and gold. The Devil's crime, pride, was found in him. His heart was lifted up (Deut. 17:20). But worse than all he multiplied wives. The sad record is found in the opening verses of this chapter. Then his heart was turned away by his wives and concubines after other gods. David, though his trouble also originated in polygamy, had always, in all his sin and failure, clung to Jehovah. In this sense David's heart was perfect with the Lord his God. He did not turn away from the Lord, nor did David go after strange gods. Solomon's guilt was great. The Lord had appeared twice to him; He never appeared to David. And with all the Lord had done for Solomon, the evidences of His grace towards him, the house he could build, the superior wisdom he had, the great king departed from the Lord. Such is the heart of man, desperately wicked. It becomes now evident that the oathbound covenant concerning a man to sit upon the throne of David with a glorious kingdom established, must be fulfilled in another son of David. Solomon fails. The kingdom is rent from him. The glory departs. Never again were the scenes of glory repeated in the kingdom of Israel. But when David's Lord and David's Son appears, the King of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace, the kingdom and the glory will be restored to Israel.

It has been stated that Solomon himself was not actually guilty of idolatry. If he built the places of idolatrous worship for his many wives only, he was guilty of the sin of idolatry. The abominations were then introduced. Luxuries, wealth, self-indulgence, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life led into idolatry. It is the same in the closing days of the present age. Ashtoreth, a Phoenician goddess, was worshipped with impure rites. Milcom (Molech) was the idol-god of the Ammonites. Chemosh was the sun-god and war-god of the Moabites.

And the Lord who had appeared twice unto Solomon, the Lord who had commanded him not to go after other gods, was now angry with Solomon. Judgment is announced. Two adversaries were stirred up at once against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite and Rezon of Syria, who abhorred Israel.

Jeroboam, a servant of King Solomon (verse 11) lifted up his hand against the king. Ahijah the prophet, attired in a new garment, meets the future king of the ten tribe division and tore his garment into twelve pieces. "And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces, for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." But the message of the Lord through Ahijah also declared His faithfulness to David. Jehovah still speaks of "David my servant"; he is "to have a light always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to put My name there." The house of David in the midst of all the evil is not forgotten. There will be affliction, "but not forever" (verse 39). And Jeroboam also has the opportunity of having a house "as I built for David" on the condition of obedience. But ambitious Jeroboam did not keep the statutes and commandments of the Lord.

And Solomon? Not a word of repentance! No tears like those his father wept. No confession as it came from David's lips. Only one thing is stated. Only one act is mentioned of apostatized Solomon. He sought to kill Jeroboam. After a reign of 40 years, Solomon passed away not quite 60 years old.

III. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1. Rehoboam and the Revolt of the Ten Tribes

CHAPTER 12

1. The revolt of the northern tribes (12:1-20) 2. The threatening war averted (12:21-24) 3. Jeroboam's wicked schemes (12:25-33)

Rehoboam (enlarger of the people) is the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible (1 Chron. 3:10). Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 and 4:13-16 seem to give a hint that his father was fearful about his reign in his stead. In 2 Chronicles 10:13 we find the history of Rehoboam more fully, which we follow in the annotations of that book. He was the son of the Ammonitess Naamah. During the first three years he was outwardly faithful, but after that he drifted like his father into idolatry and its moral evils (1 Kings 14:23-24; 2 Chron. 11:13-17). He forsook the law of the Lord and the people followed him (2 Chron. 12:1). The polygamous tendency of his father and grandfather were also indulged by him (2 Chron. 11:21). Jeroboam who had fled

into Egypt (11:40) was recalled and the history of the revolt follows. Jeroboam was made king over the ten tribes, while Rehoboam reigned over Judah. What took place was from the Lord "that He might perform His saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (12:15). The disruption of the kingdom had taken place. Up to the deportation of the ten tribes under Shalmaneser (722 B.C.) covers 253 years. During that time thirteen kings reigned over Judah and twenty over the ten tribes; there were also two periods of lawlessness. The apostasy of the ten-tribe kingdom was complete; none of their kings served the Lord. Under Ahab and his two sons Ahaziah and Joram the Baal worship became universal. It was different with the kings of Judah. A number of them were God-fearing (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah). Others were wicked blasphemers as we shall see from their history. It is also noteworthy that the reign of the wicked kings was shorter than the reign of those who feared the Lord.

After the stoning of Adoram, Rehoboam's collector, Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and gathered an army from Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel to bring back the kingdom to the son of Solomon. Shemaiah (heard of Jehovah), a man of God, brought the message from the Lord not to fight against Israel. They were obedient and the war was averted. Many Israelites, who were true to Jehovah, as well as all the priests and Levites remained in the Kingdom of Judah. (As failure had come in, prophecy at once reappears. Shemaiah must have been a very courageous man to stand in face of a gathered army of 180,000 men, an angry king and an angry people and declare a message which must have been decidedly unwelcome. And one cannot but admire the gracious submission of king and people.)

Jeroboam made Shechem his capital. He also built the ancient Peniel (the face of God, Gen. 32:30; judges 8:8), but he did not meet the Lord there like Jacob. Then the step was done which precipitated idolatry. To protect his kingdom and keep the people back from the true worship of Jehovah, he placed, with the consent of the people, in Dan and Beth-el on the northern and southern boundaries of his kingdom, two calves of gold. Thus with an unspeakable blasphemy he said: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The lowest class of the people were chosen as priests. Then he also offered sacrifices unto the calves that he had made. All was devised of his own heart and God's Word was completely set aside. It corresponds to the great apostasy of Romanism with its wicked, blasphemous rites.

2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their Reign

CHAPTER 13

The Man of God from Judah

1. The man of God and Jeroboam (13:1-10) 2. The temptation and lying message (13:11-19) 3. Judgment announced (13:20-22) 4. The fate of the man of Judah (13:23-32) 5. Jeroboam's impenitence (13:33-34)

A dramatic scene opens this chapter. The idolatrous King is engaged in his religious ceremony when an unnamed man of God interrupted him. He did not rebuke Jeroboam, but addressed himself to the altar, uttering a remarkable prophecy: "Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee." More than 300 years later, and nearly a century after the ten tribes had been carried away captive, this prophecy was fulfilled (2 Kings 23:15-18). The man of God announced the unborn king by name and also what he would do, just as Isaiah announced the unborn King Cyrus and his work. Higher criticism has labored in vain to destroy this great evidence of prophecy. Then the man of God added a sign which happened literally in the presence of the king. The angry king commanded the seizure of the prophet, but the outstretched arm withered. The withered arm was restored in answer to the prophet's prayer. Jehovah was seeking in mercy even Jeroboam in all his wickedness. It was unsuccessful, for it is written: "After this King Jeroboam returned not from his evil way." The man of God and what happened to him occupies the greater part of the chapter. The King invited him to a feast, probably an idol feast, and wanted to give him a reward. He refused both because the Lord had charged him not to eat bread nor drink water, nor return the same way he came. The man of God was to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. The same principle is laid down for God's people in the New Testament (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). Then comes his great failure, showing that while he was a messenger of God, his heart was not altogether right with God. It was through the old prophet that a lying spirit induced him to disobey the Word of the Lord. And when the old prophet announced his coming judgment we read not a word that he turned to the Lord with confession and prayer. Then the predicted fate overtook him. It is a solemn lesson which teaches us obedience to the Word of God. "It teaches us that, whenever God has made His will known to us, we are not to allow any after thought whatever to call it in question, even although the latter may take the form of the Word of God, If we were nearer to the Lord, we would feel that the only true

and right position is to follow that which He told us at first. In every case our part is to obey what He has said." The lion who had killed the disobedient prophet remained for a time with the body without touching it. It was to show the divine character of the judgment. If we look upon Jeroboam's departure from God and idolatrous worship as typical of the corruption of Romanism, we may see in the Man of God from Judah, who rebuked the false altar, a type of Protestantism. Like the prophet who delivered the message faithfully but became disobedient, Protestantism is disobedient to the Word of God and the judgment of God will overtake it in the end.

CHAPTER 14

The Passing of Jeroboam and Rehoboam

1. Sickness and death of Jeroboam's son (14:1-18) 2. Jeroboam's reign and death (14:19-20) 3. Rehoboam's apostasy, punishment and death (14:21-31)

We come now to the passing of both kings, Jeroboam of Israel and Rehoboam of Judah. Abijah (Jehovah is my father), the son of wicked Jeroboam, was sick. "That child was the one green spot in Jeroboam's life and home; the one germ of hope. And as his father loved him truly, so all Israel had set their hopes on him. Upon the inner life of this child, its struggles and its victories, lies the veil of Scripture silence; and best that it should be so. But now his pulses were beating quick and weak, and that life of love and hope seemed fast ebbing. None with the father in those hours of darkness, neither counsellor, courtier, prophet nor priest, save the child's mother." (A. Edersheim, Bible History) Then the unhappy king remembered Ahijah, who had first announced his exaltation to be king (11:31). Disguised the wife of Jeroboam proceeds to Shiloh not to ask prayer for the sick son but to find out (as if consulting a fortune teller) what should become of the child. Ahijah was blind. What need was there for Jeroboam's wife to feign to be another? And the Lord saw her coming and announced her approach to blind Ahijah. She hears from his lips not good tidings, but a message of judgment. Judgment upon the house of Jeroboam is announced and when the feet of the mother entered Tirzah once more the child would die. Concerning the child, Ahijah, the prophet, said: "In him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." Thus the little one was saved and removed from the evil to come upon the house of Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam died. In 2 Chronicles 13:20 we read "the LORD struck him and he died." Nadab reigned after him for only two years.

Then follows the passing of Rehoboam. (in 2 Chronicles 11 we find the fuller record. He had 18 wives and 60 concubines. His family consisted of 28 sons and 60 daughters.) His reign was begun well, but he also turned against the Lord, and Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Idolatry and immorality flourished. A corrupted worship led to a corrupted life. Departure from God and His Word leads always to moral decline. Our times bear witness to this. Then the punishment came in the fifth year of his reign. Shishak, King of Egypt, took Jerusalem and carried away the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the King. He took away the golden shields of Solomon so that Rehoboam had to substitute shields of brass. Shishak was the founder of the twenty-second dynasty. Jeroboam had been with him (11:40), and it is not improbable that at his instigation Shishak made his expedition to Jerusalem. In the temple ruins of Amon at Karnak, near Thebes, are recorded more than sixty Ephraimitic cities that paid tribute to Shishak, also the names of many more Judean cities; there also is a picture of Rehoboam. The detailed description of Shishak and his invasion, the work of Shemaiah the prophet in averting a greater disaster, we find in 2 Chronicles 12.

3. Abijam and Asa, Kings of Judah

CHAPTER 15

1. Abijam of Judah (15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13) 2. Asa of Judah (15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16) Abijam is called in Chronicles Abijah; in 2 Chron. 13:21 he is called Abijahu. Abijam was undoubtedly the older form. It is possible that on account of his great address of rebuke to Jeroboam (2 Chron. 13:4-12) they may have called him Abijah (Jehovah is my father). He ascended the throne in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign and was king for three years. Here we find the statement that he walked in all the sins of his father and that his heart was not perfect with the Lord as the heart of David his father. The statement in chapter 11:36 is repeated, that for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem. It was a custom (and is still so among the Fellaheen in Palestine) to keep a lamp constantly burning in the tent. The extinction of the lamp signified the removal of the family. The Lord remembered the house of David and his covenant and on account of that covenant the deserved judgment was held back. The war he fought with Jeroboam is not given in Kings but in Chronicles. We shall follow his history with the text in Chronicles. Then his son Asa (who will heal), a mere boy, began to reign. During the first ten years of his reign the land had rest (2 Chron. 14:1). He is the first King of Judah of whom it is said, he did right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. A great reformation took place. The Sodomites with their abominations, the

result of idolatry, he ended; the idols were removed. His grandmother, Maachah, was removed by him from being a queen because she had made an idol, which Asa destroyed and burnt. (Most likely on account of his youth Maachah was regent during Asa's minority.) And in Chronicles we read more of his good work. He was faithful to Jehovah, though he also failed in the end. The war with Zerah the Ethiopian is recorded in 2 Chronicles 14, as well as other deeply interesting events during his reign. We do not touch those at this time. Our book here only records the war with Baasha, King of Israel, and Asa's strange alliance with Benhadad, King of Syria, to whom he presented the silver and gold which Shishak had left in the house of the LORD, and also the treasures of the King's house. Baasha had fortified Ramah, which meant the complete isolation and domination of Jerusalem. Asa, forgetful of his experience with Zerah and the manner of getting the victory (see his beautiful prayer, 2 Chron. 14:11), and that the Lord who had smitten Zerah could also smite Baasha, feared the rival king and renewed the God-dishonoring league with Syria which his father Abijah had made. What followed after this league, the divine exhortation and judgment delivered through Hanani the prophet and Asa's end, we shall follow in Chronicles. Asa's sin and failure consisted in not trusting the Lord wholly, but using other means for deliverance. Hanani told him "thou hast relied on the King of Syria, and not on the LORD thy God,... For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (2 Chron. 16:7-9). Then Asa imprisoned the faithful messenger. Alas! how often the failure of Asa has been repeated among God's people! Many begin well but lose the freshness of their faith. In our own days we behold on all sides Asa-movements, no perfect confidence in the Lord, but reliance upon all kinds of world schemes and alliances which make it impossible for the Lord to manifest the fullness of His power.

4. Kings of Israel

CHAPTERS 15:25-16

1. Nadab, King of Israel (15:25-32) 2. Baasha, King of Israel (15:34-16:7) 3. Elah, King of Israel (16:8-14)
4. Zimri, King of Israel (16:15-20) 5. Divisions (16:21-22) 6. Omri, King of Israel (16:23-28) 7. Ahab (16:29-34)

Six kings of Israel are now mentioned. Asa saw them all ascending the throne of Israel. The first mentioned is Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, who followed in his father's footsteps. His reign was cut short by an uprising of one of the house of Issachar, Baasha. He smote Nadab at Gibbethon (Josh. 19:44; 21:23). Baasha then smote all the house of Jeroboam. Thus was the prediction of Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, fulfilled. "Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger." God's predicted judgments never fail in the end. The judgments written over against our own age, this evil age, will some day be executed by the Lord as all other judgments which were threatened against Israel.

The new dynasty headed by Baasha began in the third year of Asa's reign. Baasha reigned twenty-four years. He sinned as Jeroboam did, though he had been the executer of God's judgment upon the descendants of the wicked king. He had not heard Jehovah's voice speaking in the events of the past. Then came the message of the Lord to Baasha through Jehu, the son of Hanani (2 Chronicles 19:2; 20:34). He reminds him that the Lord had raised him out of the dust (his family was unknown) and He had made him prince over Israel. He followed Jeroboam and Rehoboam's fate, and the fate of his house would now also be the fate of Baasha, who had executed the divine sentence. "I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." Such is divine justice.

Elah his son followed. His rule lasted not quite two years. He was in Tirzah. While the army was away fighting the Philistines, Elah in the house of his steward Arza ("earthliness") became drunk and was killed by his captain, Zimri, who at once began to reign in his place. He only reigned seven days and the only deed mentioned, besides his awful death, is the slaying of all the house of Baasha "according to the Word of the LORD, which He spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet." Omri was made king by all Israel and with him began another dynasty. His first act was to besiege Tirzah where Zimri was, who set the king's palace on fire and perished in the flames. A division followed, but Omri prevailed. In all these sad records the fruits of the departure from God and from His Word are seen. They can easily be traced in the history of other nations down to our own times, the days which have brought the most awful bloodshed in the world's blood drenched history. It is all the result of sin. And Omri was worse than all that were before him, and his son Ahab was the climax of all wickedness in the Kingdom of Israel. There was no improvement, but a steady decline till God's hand smote them in judgment. Ahab introduced Baal-worship in Israel. This was the result of his marriage to Jezebel (dung-hill), the daughter of Ethbaal (with Baal), King of Zidonians. "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before

him." The last verse of this chapter records a presumptuous action. Hiel (God liveth) built Jericho. He found out that the word of God spoken 500 years before (Josh. 6:26) was true.

IV. THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND KING AHAB

1. Elijah's Prediction and Miracles

CHAPTER 17

1. Elijah's message to Ahab (17:1) 2. At the brook Cherith (17:2-7) 3. With the widow of Zarephath (17:8-16) 4. The widow's son restored to life (17:17-24)

Upon this scene of complete departure of God, when Ahab and his heathen wife worshipped Baal and all the vileness connected with that cult flourished in Israel, there appeared suddenly one of the greatest of God's prophets, Elijah (my God is Jehovah) the Tishbite. "A grander figure never stood out even against the Old Testament sky than that of Elijah. As Israel's apostasy had reached its highest point in the time of Ahab, so the Old Testament antagonism to it in the person and mission of Elijah."--"He was the impersonation of the Old Testament in one of its aspects: that of grandeur and judgment" (A. Edersheim). His miracles, like those of Moses, have a judicial character. Heaven is shut in answer to his prayer and fire falls from heaven at his word. The last promise in the Old Testament is concerning Elijah the prophet who is to appear before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers (Mal. 4:5-6). See also the Lord's words concerning the coming of Elijah (Matt. 17:10-13). He appeared with Moses on the transfiguration mountain. In the book of Revelation two witnesses are mentioned who witness among Israel before the great day of the Lord comes. Though their names are not given, the miracles they perform clearly show that these witnesses will be like Moses and Elijah. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Elijah), and have power over waters to turn them to blood and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will (Moses)." "And if any man will hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies (Elijah)" Rev. 11:5-6. James speaks of Elijah also and tells us he was a great man of prayer. He appeared suddenly upon the scene and said to wicked Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." He had, no doubt, like other great servants of God, his training in secret.

The passage in James gives us the key: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain" (James 5:17). It was in secret that he sought God's presence and wrestled in prayer till the Lord sent him forth with the message of judgment. Prayer, persevering prayer, is the one great need in the days of declension and departure from God, and it is the one resource of God's faithful ones. And how little true and continued waiting upon God there is in the days of apostasy! When Elijah delivered the message to Ahab and said "according to my word" he did not speak presumptuously, but as standing in the Lord's own presence as his mouthpiece he had a perfect right to speak thus with divine authority.

As soon as he had delivered the message the Lord told him to hide himself by the brook Cherith. There he was miraculously fed by the ravens. He was in the appointed place and the Lord took care of him in His own way. Rationalistic critics have made the absurd statement that the word "orebim"--ravens--should be arabim, which means Arabs. (Thus Canon Farrar in the Expositor's Bible: "The word (orebim) may equally well mean people of the city Oreb, or of the rock Oreb; or merchants as in Ezek. 27:27; or Arabians.) But the Lord had commanded the birds, so shy in their nature, to supply His servant with the needed food. Twice every day they ministered to his wants. How this shows the omnipotence of the Lord. There is nothing too hard for Him. If we are in the right place, the place He assigns to us, we shall find that He still provides for those who trust and obey. The brook dried up. Surely his faith was being tested. Then he was sent to a destitute Gentile widow, who faced starvation. And concerning her the Lord said: "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." The Lord who commanded the ravens, commanded the widow. The Lord delights to take the weak things and use them for His glory. And how did Elijah find her? Preparing the last meal for herself and her child. Her faith was tested. She was to make first a little cake for Elijah and bring it unto him and afterwards to do the same for herself and her son. She obeyed and "the barrel of meal wasted not neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the LORD." Here was greater faith than in Israel. See also Luke 4:26. The story foreshadows the bringing in of the Gentiles to know the Lord. And when the widow's son fell ill and died and was restored by Elijah and he delivered him to the mother saying: See, thy son liveth--she made the blessed confession: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the Word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." The truth of resurrection both physical and spiritual is here foreshadowed.

2. Elijah on Carmel : The Answered Prayer

CHAPTER 18

1. The command to see Ahab (18:1) 2. Elijah's response (18:2) 3. Ahab and Obadiah (18:3-6) 4. Elijah and Obadiah (18:7-15) 5. Elijah meets Ahab (18:16-18) 6. Elijah's demand (18:19-20) 7. The events on Carmel (18:20-40) 8. The answered prayer (18:41-46)

The judgment of God as announced by Elijah continued its allotted time. A Greek historian, Menander of Ephesus, in his account of the acts of Ethbaal (the father of Jezebel, Ahab's wife), says: "Under him there was a want of rain from a certain month till the same month the following year." And Josephus, the Jewish historian who quotes this, adds, "by these words he designed the want of rain that was in the days of Ahab." It was in the third year of the drought that Elijah is commanded to show himself to Ahab. Elijah obeys.

Great distress and famine were everywhere. Then we see Ahab and Obadiah, the governor or steward of his house, looking for a little pasture so that they might save the horses and mules alive. Obadiah (servant of Jehovah), holding a high position with Ahab, feared the Lord greatly. He belonged to the faithful remnant who did not bow the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). He must have had severe tests of faith and much courage. It showed faith and devotion in hiding the Lord's prophets. Jezebel, the wicked idolatrous woman, used the civil power to kill off the true prophets. Her aim was to exterminate completely the men of God who stood for the truth. We find her mentioned in Revelation 2:20. There she is used to represent Rome, the harlot, and her spiritual fornication and idolatry. Rome, like Jezebel, has persecuted the Lord's servants and killed them (Rev. 18:24). Jezebel had evidently left the palace of Samaria and was at Jezreel, but Ahab and Obadiah were still in Samaria making a survey of the land. Then Obadiah met Elijah. The prophet requests Obadiah to announce his presence to Ahab. But Obadiah feared that such a message might cost him his life. Had not the whole country been searched for Elijah? And what if the Spirit should carry Elijah away? Then he pleads his kindness to the hundred prophets whom he saved when murderous Jezebel slew the prophets. From all this we learn that Obadiah, pious and faithful, was full of fear and trembling. He and the other faithful ones in Israel during the dark days of Ahab and Jezebel typify that faithful remnant of Israel during the end of the present age, suffering and persecuted during the great tribulation.

Ahab and Elijah met, and the prophet, clothed with power, rebuked the apostate King: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." What would have happened if the daughter of Ethbaal, demon-possessed Jezebel, had been present? The great gathering suggested by Elijah would hardly have taken place. But she was in Jezreel and was ignorant of what was taking place. Ahab gathers all Israel and the 450 prophets of Baal upon Mount Carmel as demanded by Elijah. It is said that upon that mountain there stood two altars, one dedicated to Jehovah and another altar of Baal. This place Elijah chose for the vindication of Jehovah. To describe the scene, one of the grandest in the history of Israel, would take many pages. To his solid statement demanding decision--"How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him"--the people had no answer. Then follows his great declaration as the only prophet of Jehovah, while 450 prophets of Baal stood over against him. Then the sacrifices are suggested "and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And all the people answered, it is well spoken. Then follows the wild crying of the prophets of Baal from early morning till noon; Elijah's sarcasm and the greater frenzy of the Baal worshippers. A wild scene followed. Crying louder and louder, they cut themselves with knives and lances till the blood flowed. But there was no answer and no voice. Then Elijah repaired the altar of Jehovah, that was broken down. What a reminder the twelve stones were with which he built the altar! The sacrifice had been put upon the altar with the wood. Three times the altar had been drenched with water, so that the trench was filled with water. And now the time for the evening sacrifice, that significant time had come. A simple prayer follows. Jehovah's vindication is demanded and that he is Jehovah's servant. "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again." Then Jehovah answered by fire and everything was consumed. The people who witnessed the indescribable scene fell on their faces and cried: "The LORD He is God--the LORD He is God." Thus Jehovah manifested His power in the vindication of His name and in answer to His servant's prayer, and the people were brought back to the confession of the name of the LORD. His great mission to which the Lord had called him had been accomplished and the prophets of Baal, wicked and guilty as they were, received their deserved judgment. And here we have a foreshadowing of events to come.

Apostasy from the Lord and from His Word is increasing. Before the age closes it will be universal, though the Lord will have a faithful remnant even in the dark days of the age. His name is dishonored and rejected. But that blessed name will be vindicated by a manifestation of His power in judgment. "For behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His

rebuke with flames of fires. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Is. 66:15-16).

Higher criticism has not left these records unattacked. They speak of "the legendary narratives in which Elijah's history is enshrined." All is done to discredit these records and to make them appear doubtful. But the verdict given by these men who sit in judgment upon the Word of God, that the scene on Carmel is unhistorical, is a false verdict which shows lack of real research. Nothing whatever can be brought forward to question the historicity of this great scene, while much confirms it.

Then follows Elijah's word to Ahab: "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain." It was spoken in faith. The Lord had said to him: "I will send rain upon the earth" (18:1). And then came his prayer. He knew the Lord's will and the Lord's promise, and then persevered in prayer, and when the answer was in sight then he exercised faith once more by sending a message to Ahab. Then the heaven was black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain. The hand of the Lord was also upon Elijah and he ran before Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel. It was supernatural power which sustained him (Is. 60:31).

3. Elijah in the Wilderness and upon Mount Horeb

CHAPTER 19

1. Elijah's flight and despondency (19:1-8) 2. Upon Mount Horeb (19:9-18) 3. Elisha called (19:10-21) Elijah perhaps stopped at the very door of the palace where wicked Jezebel dwelt. He would remain with Ahab to the very last before he went in to face the queen. Should not Elijah have remained and gone even before Jezebel to bear his testimony? Instead he becomes terrified of wicked Jezebel. Had he hoped that what had taken place on Carmel would result in bringing not alone Ahab back to Jehovah, but also influence Jezebel? If such was his expectation he must have been bitterly disappointed. Jezebel seeks to kill him and he flees for his life. All what follows is the result of unbelief. This verifies James' statement in his Epistle: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." Then in despair and unbelief he requested to die. He is altogether occupied with himself and did not look to God. Instead of seeking the wilderness, his training school, to pour out his heart before God, to get new strength in communion with the Lord, "he requested for himself that he might die."

"The heart of Elijah and the hand of God led the prophet into the wilderness, where, overwhelmed perhaps, yet precious in Jehovah's sight, he will be alone with God. Elijah's forty days journey in the wilderness has only a partial resemblance to the forty days which Moses spent with God, in the same Horeb to which the prophet was going, or to those which Jesus spent in the wilderness for conflict with the enemy of God and man. In the two latter cases nature was set aside. Neither Moses nor the Lord ate or drank. As for Elijah, the goodness of God sustains the weakness of tried nature, makes manifest that He considers it with all tenderness and thoughtfulness, and gives the strength needed for such a journey. This should have touched him, and made him feel what he ought to be in the midst of the people, since he had to do with such a God. His heart was far from such a state. Impossible, when we think of ourselves, to be witnesses to others of what God is! Our poor hearts are too far from such a position" (Synopsis of the Bible).

In Mount Horeb the Lord spoke to him: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It was the gentle rebuke of a loving God. He was not in the place where the Lord wanted him as His servant. It is a great contrast--Elijah on Mount Carmel and Elijah on Mount Horeb in a cave. On Carmel he stands the man of faith, filled with a holy zeal for Jehovah. On Horeb hidden in the cave because he fled from Jezebel. And how many children of God may learn something from this question: "What doest thou here?" They are drifting into the world while others have left the sphere of service into which the Lord called them. And Elijah's answer shows his self-occupation. It is what he had done; what he was and the threatening danger to lose his life. But that danger was far greater when they searched countrywide for him and when the Lord preserved his life by the ministry of the ravens and by the widow-woman.

His answer has in it the spirit of bitterness and accusation. Then the Lord passed by. The storm, the earthquake and the fire preceded His coming; these are always connected with Jehovah's presence and manifestation. Then came "a still small voice" Elijah knew so well. He wrapped his face in his mantle and then he answered the question once more, but in an humbled spirit. He receives the commission to anoint Hazael, King of Syria; Jehu (Jehovah is he), the son of Nimshi (Jehovah reveals), he is to anoint King of Israel and Elisha is to be his successor. All three are called as instruments of judgment upon Israel's idolatry and the house of Ahab. Then the Lord announced that He had a faithful remnant of 7000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee unto Baal. (See its prophetic meaning in Romans 11:3-6.)

4. King Ahab: His Wicked Reign and End

CHAPTER 20

Ahab's War with the Syrians and His Victory

1. The siege and relief of Samaria (20:1-21) 2. The victory at Aphek (20:22-34) 3. A prophet's symbolical action and his message (20:35-43)

Two expeditions of Ben-hadad (son of the Sun) against Israel are recorded in this chapter. When Ben-hadad forced the war and insulted the King of Israel, Ahab prepared for the battle. Then a prophet came to Ahab, most likely one of those who had been hidden by Obadiah. He brought a message from the Lord. "Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." From this we may gather that a spiritual revival must have taken place in Israel after the manifestation of Jehovah on Carmel. Jezebel, after her rage on account of Elijah's deed, is not mentioned again till after Ahab's failure. The Lord in graciousness gave to Ahab another evidence that He is the Lord and can smite the enemies of Israel. The Syrians were defeated. Another message came to Ahab through the prophet. A year later Ben-hadad made another expedition against Israel. "And there came a man of God, and spake unto the King of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, because the Syrians have said, The LORD is the God of the hills but not the God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into their hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD." A great victory followed at Aphek. But Ahab let Ben-hadad, who had defied Jehovah, live. More than that, he treated him like a friend and brother, had him come into his chariot, and made a covenant with him. In showing such clemency to the enemy of God, Ahab revealed the state of his soul. He had no heart for the Lord and was bound to follow his wicked ways.

Then one of the sons of the prophets (Josephus saith it was Micaiah; 22:8) was commanded by the Lord to ask another prophet to smite him. The prophet refused the unquestioning obedience demanded from a prophet and therefore the judgment of God overtook him. The purpose of God in bringing the judgment message home to Ahab is carried out nevertheless. Then Ahab pronounced his own doom for showing leniency to Ben-hadad.

CHAPTER 21

Naboth's Vineyard

1. Naboth's refusal (21:1-4) 2. Jezebel's wicked deed (21:5-16) 3. Elijah pronounces divine judgment (21:17-24) 4. Ahab's wickedness and confession (21:25-27) 5. The LORD's mercy (21:28-29)

No comment is needed on the story of Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel, the wicked, and Ahab's submission to her was his ruination. On her Satanic suggestion one of the most wicked deeds recorded in Bible history is done. Naboth is murdered to obtain his vineyard. The measure of Ahab's apostasy and wickedness is now filled to overflowing. For the wicked king the tidings of Naboth's death were welcome tidings. No inquiry follows, but in self-satisfaction he goes to take possession of the beautified vineyard of Naboth. But his enjoyment, as it is always with the enjoyment of sin, did not last very long. No sooner had the innocent blood been spilt, than Jehovah, who saw and knew the foul deed, sent Elijah with the final message of doom and judgment for the guilty pair. Ahab was still in the vineyard. His eyes still feasted on the beautiful scene before him. His thoughts were occupied with the pleasures of sin when suddenly Elijah appeared. "I have found thee," were the prophet's first utterances. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Then follows the sentence already indicated in the words of the disguised prophet in the previous chapter. "I will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Abijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked Me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." How literally this sentence was carried out we shall find in the subsequent history. But Ahab having humbled himself hears a merciful message from Elijah's lips. "Because he humbled himself before Me, I will not bring evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring evil upon his house." How merciful the Lord is to all who humble themselves!

CHAPTER 22

The Death of Ahab

1. Jehoshaphat and Ahab (22:1-12) 2. The prophet Micaiah (22:13-28) 3. The battle and Ahab's death (22:29-40) 4. Jehoshaphat of Judah (22:41-50; 2 Chron. 19-20) 5. Ahaziah, King of Israel (22:51-53)

Three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. In the third year Jehoshaphat of Judah came down to Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son and heir-apparent had married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. An unholy alliance had therefore been formed between the royal families. Jehoshaphat, who knew better, was in this very unfaithful, and though the Lord did not forsake him chastisements came upon him and his house. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, met him after he came back from the battle of Ramoth-Gilead and said to him: "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? Therefore is wrath upon thee from

before the LORD" (2 Chron. 19:2). Ahab, under the predicted judgment of God, asked Jehoshaphat: "Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-Gilead?" And gladly the good King of Judah answers: "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." And Ahab in all his wicked apostasy had prophets, four hundred of them. Jehoshaphat was, no doubt, troubled in his conscience, and demanded that Ahab inquire of the LORD. The prophets he had, used no longer the name of Baal, but the name of Jehovah. And they all prophesied success. Jehoshaphat, however, was suspicious and asked for a prophet of the LORD. From this we may gather that there was something about them by which the King of Judah knew that they were not Jehovah's prophets. Ahab then sent for Micaiah the son of Imlah. Both kings occupied thrones and were clad in their robes in the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All the false prophets prophesied and one Zedekiah made horns of iron to produce a vivid impression of the coming victory. Then Micaiah appeared. The faithful prophet tells the kings what he had seen. It is a revelation he had. Jehovah permitted a lying spirit to possess Ahab's false prophets and they were prophesying lies. And Micaiah predicted the defeat of Israel. The words of Micaiah are of much importance. What happened in Ahab's day, when the Lord permitted a lying spirit to deceive and lead the wicked into ruin, will happen again at the close of this present age. God will send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. 2). Unclean spirits will then be on the earth, even as they begin already and by lying words, lying miracles and signs, lead the Christ-rejecting masses into judgment.

Then the battle. Ahab disguised himself and Jehoshaphat wore his robes. It was more than cowardice in Ahab; he feared the judgment which was hovering over him and tried to avert the coming fatal stroke. Jehoshaphat was almost miraculously saved, but Ahab was miraculously killed. A soldier drew a bow at venture. That arrow was guided by a higher hand. It found the disguised King of Israel. It found the small opening in the King's harness. A little while later the dogs were licking his blood as they washed his blood stained chariot. Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Jehoshaphat's full record we shall consider in Chronicles and Azariah's in the beginning of the second book of the Kings.