

Booklet II Chapters 9 - 22

(a) 9-16 Kings under God - their Failure

(b) 17-22 God's Prophets - witnesses in a hostile world.

Again I've given brief quotes of Scripture only as an outline on which profitable comment seems possible. Regrettably the result is rather disjointed, and I've tried to write simply without taking the time to polish the wording into fine language worthy of the Word of God. My call/ conviction is to use whatever years remain to me to put as much on your pantry shelves as possible. This leaves to you the work of preparing meals for yourself and the people of God. I haven't the time or skill to prepare tasty, easily digested meals for anyone.

Since 1943 God in Grace has often made the pages of His Word come alive to me so that the characters met there have become real people - People we may meet today in the street or the local Assembly, or as we glance in the mirror. This is what I've tried to share. Please continue to pray with me that this be done wisely, to His Glory.

E. Read

Explanation of signs: BROKEN/wrecked is KJV/Niv but text is usually NIV. LXX is Septuagint (Greek) OT. Cp= Compare with these Scriptures. BAR 93/1 = Biblical Archaeology Review 1993, No 1, (Jan-Feb.)

13-14-20 Rehoboam ignores all warnings	28
15-16-20 Nadab, Baasha, Elah & Zimri Kings of Israel	31
16-29-18-46 Ahab & Elijah - Drought b Carmel	34
19-1-21 Elijah Resigns & is Re-Commissioned	42
20-1-43 God shows Ahab that He can look after His people	47
21-1-29 Elijah finishes his work with Ahab	52
22-1-53 Ahab & Jehoshaphat	56
Appendix I Human Responsibility - Ahab, Jezebel & Elijah	60
Appendix II Elijah - as an Example to US	62
Appendix II Freedom Under God - Rights & Responsibilities .	63

INTRODUCTION

To understand the material in this booklet it's essential to read the Introduction to booklet I, although some points will be repeated briefly here. For this booklet I have the benefit of two more good commentaries, I & II Kings, D. J. Wiseman, Tyndale OT Commentaries, I. V. P., 1993, and I & II Kings, New International Biblical Commentary, I. W. Provan. HENDRICKSEN/ PATERNOSTER PRESS, 1995.

The Jews believed that God inspired the Prophet Jeremiah to write KINGS, by quoting from the royal archives, and adding explanations and comments so as to bring to us the history as it related to the purposes of God. Scripture itself makes no claim as to the author, or authors, but it's obvious it contains material written at the time of a king's reign, sometimes from his records, and comment made later, which he might well disagree with. (Provan suggests a succession of writers. Wiseman opts for Jeremiah as probable, noting similarities in tone and style, and in the closing verses of 2 Kings and Jeremiah.)

complexity of affirming and blessing him.

We're to take up God's Word as coming from His hand to accomplish His purposes in us, Isa 55:11, and see it honestly and confidently for those purposes, Jer 23:28-30. At the same time we're to bear in mind that the statements of God's Word are made against different backgrounds, at different stages of the revelation of His will, and in different literary forms. We honour God's Word by listening to Him and letting Him reveal to us what He is saying. And by remembering as we do so that it's His Word through men recording the actions of men, as rational beings responding to their God, under His influence. And that the record of this has been preserved by men faithfully copying and at times modifying it to keep the message intelligible.

As we read this book we need to remember that a loving parent/wise teacher deals with infants in ways appropriate to their stage of development. While God's purpose has always been that His people should be adult sons and daughters, Gen 1:26-28, Rom 8:19-30, Gal 3:21-4:7, in Kings He is dealing with them in ways appropriate to their spiritually infantile state.

KINGS records the development of God's redemptive purposes for His people Israel. Two factors interact in this: God's Sovereign commitment to bless Israel through the house of David was total and eternal. But in Sovereign Grace He has ordained that man pays his part by responding in obedient faith so as to make this possible. Man must reap what he sows, and what he chooses to sow determines the measure in which God can bless him, and the measure in which God's purposes of Grace triumph at any particular stage of this history - as it does in ours. Everything good man does is of Sovereign Grace alone, AND none of it without man's sovereign choice. That God will adjust His announced purposes according to the response men make is seen in 2:12-29.

Footnote **0 On the basis of 19:14 we could state dogmatically "on the authority of God's Word" that Elijah was the only Godly Israelite at the time, or at least God's only prophet - if we ignore 19:18-20:13. And there's no evidence that God ALWAYS corrects the mistaken statements of His servants as He did in this case. (Incidentally those who freely use DOGmatic, and CATegorical statements doom themselves to a "Cat & Dog" life. They may enjoy such a life, in this world, but it defiles/destroys the work of God, 1 Cor 3:17. Doctrinal statements I myself have argued for confidently have been shattered often by my coming across a balancing verse, Phil 3:15-16.

9:1-9, we ourselves are challenged to co-operate with God so that those purposes are fulfilled and expressed in our daily lives, Eph 13-210.

He did right in the eyes of the Lord- is said of 10 kings, some being compared with their fathers, others by THE standard - David. Godly Prophets and Priests strengthened them in this. Their doing right in God's sight didn't protect them from normal testing by distress and disaster. Those who failed to do right automatically did evil. There is no neutral state and action.

Ch. 1-8 God's Intervention - KING & TEMPLE UNDER GOD

These chapters gave us the transition from King David (a king who in weakness and rejection delivered God's people from their enemies) to Solomon (a king who on the basis of that deliverance ruled in power and peace - as Christ will when He comes in Glory to reign.) While the Lord speaks of the deliverance won for His people by David, this (as that of Moses and Joshua) was only temporary, Hebrews 3 and 4. And it speaks of Solomon's Glory as temporary, and in association with warnings about earthly riches, Mt 6:19-34 Lk 12:22-34. So the NEW BEGINNING WITH GOD, under Solomon, points forward to the coming of Christ, and prepares for Him to come "In the fulness of Time." But also, human failure to respond to God's Gracious intervention showed that man cannot escape from his sinful nature and fellowship with God unless God in Christ provides new life for him.

Ch. 9-16 The FAILURE OF KINGS UNDER GOD

Solomon was now 40, and we're shown what he chose to do with his next 20 years. Apart from writing Proverbs (giving good advice to others) he became a warning example that when God-given Wisdom, Riches, and Power are used in living to please oneself it empties life of all point and meaning, Ecc 1:12-2:11. (God used Ecclesiastes to bring me to my senses as a teenager. Thank-you Solomon. Thank-you Lord! It's also a warning example, 1 Cor 10:11-14, to each of us as we go through our own "Mid-life Crisis.")

In Judah Kings were kings on the basis of God's dealings with David. Although Solomon's reign is impressive in MATERIAL terms, his selfish old age set a bad example later kings found easy to copy. David is far more important and influential in SPIRITUAL terms. His love for God, and willingness to repent in order to fellowship with God sets the standard by which kings are judged. Further progress spiritually was made only when God's mercy brought about revivals of David-style love for God.

(equality of the Nations/Centuries, Isa 2:1) He lived for the present self preservation, and selfish enjoyment, as patterned by Jeroboam who re-organised their religious life to suit himself. While all their kings followed Jeroboam in this, God intervened once more to ensure that His people had the chance to fellowship with Him.

Chapters 16- 22 God's New Intervention -

PROPHETS SPEAK FOR GOD IN A HOSTILE WORLD

Saul etc failed to obey God at times, but acknowledged Him; and Samuel, Nathan, etc spoke from within the system. Ahab, Manasseh, etc rejected God and under their rule the Prophets spoke to the nation from outside the Civil and Religious Government system. Some of the prophets appear from 2035 on as a group acting for God in an apostate nation. As with God's intervention under Moses, against a background of unbelief and apostasy, MIRACLES were granted as a witness to the reality of God and His purposes, and to the fact that Moses/ Elijah- Elisha spoke for God. The factual details given support the reality of these miracles, and often the narrative wouldn't make sense without them.

Kings like Ahab employed "prophets" who, in the name of the Lord, earned their keep by assuring them they could successfully do what they liked with God's approval, as in 1 Ki 22. In contrast to this, God's true prophets spoke God's messages faithfully, even though the resentment aroused brought persecution. They weren't philosophers or mystics sharing elevating thoughts with an elite, as Khalil Gibran did in the Western world early this century. They were shepherds of God's people proclaiming His saving will regarding the practical matters of life, challenging their hearers to play their God-appointed role in God's purposes, and become what God has always intended man to be.

Against the dark background of failure to honour God by obedient fellowship with Him in His purposes of blessing, the prophets continued to keep alive the promises of God. Certainly Israel had no LEGAL right to continued life and blessing, as they wavered between partial obedience and outright defiance of God. But God's Sovereign will and Mercy never gives up. In each generation God proclaims afresh His Holiness, Righteousness and Love, 83334 9:5; 11:34, 38; 2 Ki 11:12 2527-30, and at least some respond.

(a) Chapters 9-16 Kings under God - their Failure

9-11 The Failure of Solomon to live as King for God

(From God-centred Glory and unity, to self-seeking Pride, Self-indulgence and Self-destructive division.)

9.1-28 Solomon Settles Down

(Growing EARTHLY glory and SPIRITUAL apostasy. Growing selfish, proud display of wealth and growing oppression of the people.)

Solomon had been crowned King at about 21 years of age. At 25 he commenced building the Temple, completing it when he was 32. By the time he was 45 he had completed his Palace and Administrative centre, and was widely known as being a wise and successful King. God had been acknowledged as the author of every blessing enjoyed by himself and his Kingdom, and God-honouring Temple worship established. God provided these in SOVEREIGN GRACE, but as His purpose for mankind is that we should be IN HIS IMAGE and LIKENESS, Gen 1:26 He has delegated to us sovereignty over our choices - so there's always an IF. Solomon in the GLORY OF YOUTHFUL HUMILITY and FAITH, in his Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, had defined the GOOD possibilities of his life. (As his challenge to Goliath marked the GOOD possibilities of David's life.) Now in his Prime, God again challenges Solomon to continue as he has begun.

9.1-9 Gifts & Blessings don't Cancel Responsibility

(This repeats the Lord's verdict on the Temple and Solomon's building it, 6:11-13, and warns that A GOOD BEGINNING is never the END, but a commitment to continuing commitment - As the NEW BIRTH is for us.)

9.1 When Solomon had finished building - The high point of his career. In Relation to God, the Temple built and running Politically, the Palace and a growing international reputation built.

his maturity and success what he had struggled for and achieved under God. Many keen young servants of God have failed also at this stage. **2 God honored him As he had at Gibeon by speaking directly to him in Sovereign Grace to direct his life. A singular honour for a man with singular responsibilities. A crossroads experience confirming and interpreting, after the lapse of at least 13 years, what was already obvious from the Lord's Glory filling the Temple. During those years of peace and prosperity Solomon's spiritual interest and godliness was waning. He may have begun to write off his building of the temple, and the prayer at its consecration as "excessive youthful enthusiasm" - now replaced by the "mature" wisdom of accumulating as much gold as possible, and indulging himself sexually, 11:1. God confirms the reality of the Chapter 8 experience, and gives him a personal, direct encouragement and warning - to which he failed to respond.

9.3-5 I have heard your prayer- God re-acknowledges the building of the Temple, and Solomon's prayer when it was opened. But its glories and functions were empty if God Himself had not in Grace HALL OWED/Consecrated it- Indwelt it and acted as Solomon (guided by God) had asked Him to act. God promises that His Name, and Eyes and Heart will be there PERPETUALLY forever. Nothing on HIS side will break the link.

As for you, if you walk as your Father walked- God's concern isn't with the glorious buildings, rituals, etc, but with the attitude of heart and the practical living to the glory of God in the ordinary affairs of life. Living by His commands, in His ways, in fellowship with Him. Solomon didn't so much deliberately defy God, as drift away from Him as other things gained increasing power over his life and life-style. His heart was divided as his love for God faded and love for many foreign women took its place.

Footnote **1 In Ch. 1-9 Gold is mentioned 11x, all in connection with it being used in the Temple, where its incorruptibility symbolised God and honored him. In ch. 9 10 Gold is mentioned 13x, all in connection with Solomon acquiring it and proudly displaying it to his own glory.

Footnote **2 At mid-life, if God has answered our youthful prayers, we're tempted to be thankless and settle down to enjoy ourselves. Nations also go through similar stages, as Israel did, Deu 8:7-20 28:47-48.

promise is accurate and unchanging. Human responses as he should. Such promises comfort and strengthen the timid, weak Believer who desires to please His Lord. But they condemn the presumptuous man who claims "Eternal Security" with no intention or desire to be transformed into the image of the Lord.

9.6-9 But if you- Plural. Solomon and the kings that would follow. The King and the nation turn away from Me.. My commands- Gods people are INEVITABLY a witness for Him - A witness of His Grace Power and Goodness or of His Justice in frustrating their Pride and Folly - and the world will see it! If you go and serve other Gods- Jer 34 and Ezek 34 emphasise that the Kings did so. I will cut off- A solemn and serious warning Lev 17:4, 9; Num 19:20 The consequences of personal apostasy spread out to all around when Gods leaders cut themselves off from Gods grace by drifting away from Him and His Truth, Heb 22-3. Many follow them in their folly. As the King went, so did the people go, Jer 23 Ezek 34 Reject- Used of Divorce Backsliding and Apostasy isn't just the breach of a business contract. Strong emotions and grief are involved.

Israel will become a Proverb- A teaching example for others to learn from, even down to us today, 1 Cor 10:1-11. See Deu 28:37, 29:22-28 Jer 24:9. Taunt- Much of our humour is laughing at the unexpected and ridiculous. A bald-headed barber trying to sell hair-restorer, etc. When even the Heathen rarely give up their false and useless "gods" what could be more ridiculous than Israel turning from the True God who had so often blessed them, Isa 1:1-23 Jer 2:1-37, Ezek 16 People mocked and blasphemed when Gods Jewish people who rightly preached against adultery and idolatry, committed adultery and robbed idol temples, Rom 2:17-24 It's much the same when those known as "Brethren/Brothers" are involved in unbrotherly feuding

THIS HOUSE WHICH IS HIGH / Temple is now imposing- Elyon- High
**3 It looked strong and tall, and exalted by God having come into it in a cloud of Glory. But its no sooner mentioned than its ruin is foretold. Gods rejection of the Temple leads to its destruction, Lam 1:12 2:15

Footnote **3 As the rest of the verse describes the Temple destroyed/ Israel disgraced it seems likely that either the scribes in copying left out that fact, or wrote Elyon for a similar looking

verdict "They call themselves CHRISTIANS but they're not, because they're not like Christ," is the nearest equivalent. Israel honouring God before the Nations in obedient fellowship with Him, and God honouring them, go together. Solomon's prayer for the Temple was a good beginning. But the result would be the opposite of what he asked God for, unless he himself played his part. It's the same for us, and our God-honouring prayers.

9.10-14 At the end of twenty years King Solomon gave- As in Gen 23 a polite way of saying traded. Gave up for political goodwill, or in repayment of debt. twenty TOWNS/villages- Settlements. Border towns, perhaps more accessible/ more useful to Tyre. Presumably in exchange for the 120 talents of GOLD **4 as the cedar wood etc were paid for annually with grain and oil. God had given those cities to Israel, but it's so easy to trade away what God has given us in getting what we want from the world, or what they want from us. Going against God to please ourselves or others rarely gains what we hoped for.

Hiram not pleased- But such comment is a good bargaining tactic, Prov 20:14. When USA paid \$700,000,000 to Russia, for Russia to give up her claims on Alaska, many Americans protested loudly. Perhaps Solomon gave Hiram something else instead in repayment as Solomon settled the towns with Israelites, 2 Chr 8:2. Cabul- Nothing worthless is a common translation, others suggest it meant "Border" or, if based on the Hebrew root word kbl- Tethered, may mean "Mortgaged."

9.15-19 The levy Solomon raised to build- It was common for Kings to set up an obelisk listing for public display the record of what they claimed to have achieved. This could have been copied from such a list in the court records of Solomon's reign. The Lord's House- Not the conscripts sent to Lebanon, and those who worked in Israel described in 5:13-18 as they were from ALL Israel. This apparently merged into/ was replaced by a permanent levy of non-Jewish residents, 9:20-21. The burden of an ever-growing Public-Service at the Tax-Payer's expense can be lessened by forced labour. Pre-independence Angola had excellent roads, bridges etc built cheaply by conscripting annually 10% of the men, and supplying them with basic food and a few cents a week pay so they couldn't be called slave labour!

Hazor - The most important fortress town in Northern Israel, as it defended the crossing of the Jordan between Lake Galilee and the Lake Huleh swamps. Megiddo - The fortress town defending the Pass over the Carmel range between the plain of Sharon and the plain of Esdraelon. Gezer - As a fortress town would defend Israel from attack from the South. They were also valuable as defended cities on the great trade route from the Nile to the Euphrates. All show signs of having been built at the same time, as described here, **5 and to the same plan - Casemate walls, the outer wall 5 feet thick, the inner wall four feet thick, with the seven foot gap between them divided into rooms which could be used as barracks for soldiers, storage, etc. The Gates all have towers which protrude a little beyond the walls, with 3 pairs of rooms on either side of the entry passage. These rooms could be filled with soldiers who could fight any enemy who managed to break through the outer gate. Further building and remodelling was done by later kings - especially by Ahab in Hazor and Megiddo. Israelite Hazor was destroyed by the Assyrian King Tiglath Pileser III BC 734. 2 Ki 15:29

Pharaoh had taken Gezer - As we have been privileged to live in peaceful, well-ordered lands, influenced by the Gospel, such a wedding dowry shocks us. Scripture merely states the facts, without telling us what Solomon - or God - thought of what happened. We can admire the virtues of Solomon and ignore aspects that would be unacceptable today, just as we admire the virtues of Greeks and Romans, ignoring the fact that they put unwanted babies out with the rubbish, and most of their work was done by slaves.

Beth Horon - A guard against attack on Jerusalem from the West. Baalath - Possibly Badah near Beth Horon, but more likely another name for Kirjath Jearim, built to guard against attack from the South. Tadmor - An outpost defending the Nile-to-Euphrates trade-route, 2 Chr 8:4. But as this is in the land, and some MSS have Tamar, it may mean Tamar near Kadesh in the southern wilderness, Ezek 47:19, 48:28. Along with Arad this would defend the route down to Ezion Geber/Eilat.

Footnote **5 When I was shown "Solomon's Stables" at Megiddo in 1961 the Archaeologist-guide said "We now think these were built by Ahab, but he isn't popular so we'll still call them Solomon's stables. If they're Ahab's, Solomon's will be the next layer down." Since then foundations of similar buildings below the ones I saw, set at a slightly different angle, have

to the people of Judah. In the same way, God had promised that if Israel obeyed Him, he would protect them from invasion, Ex 34:24

All the people left of the Amorites, whom the Children of Israel did not destroy- Charam, from Cherem- To devote to God for destruction as Joshua was told to do. The main cities on the trade route did not come under Israelite control until late in the reign of David. The time for wiping them out to make room for the Israelites, and to prevent spiritual and social corruption was now past. They were to be brought under the control of Solomon, and used for his purposes as Messiah will use the surviving nations in the Millennium, Isa 60:10 Zech 14:16. Solomon conscripted for BONDSERVICE/slave labour force (Note the descendants of the Slaves- Ebed of Solomon who returned from Exile, Ezra 2:55-56)

9.22-24 But the Israelites were fighting men and government officials, supervising the men who did the work. After Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David he built the MILL O/ supporting terraces. Presumably this required rebuilding David's old palace

9.25 Three times a year- Solomon kept the religious routines going **6 as a generation ago many people acknowledged God by attending church at Christmas and Easter. Solomon Sacrificed- Presumably at the times of three great Feasts. Ex 23:14-17; 34:23 SO HE FINISHED THE HOUSE/fulfilled his Temple obligations- Or completed the Temple arrangements - had the routines of worship etc running smoothly to his satisfaction. Worship was now centred on the Temple, not at High Places- Gibeon, etc 3:2-5. Burning Incense before the Lord- On the incense altar before the screened-off Holy of Holies. This suggests that he continued to act as a Priest as he had on the day the temple was dedicated. Functioning as High Priest to initiate the order of Temple Worship, as Moses had acted as High Priest before the appointment of Aaron, and in general matters as long as he lived.

9.26-29 10:11, 22 King Solomon made ships- A new thing for Israel, made possible by Solomon's central position on the Trade route now that they had taken over the towns on it that had been Philistine or Canaanite - Gaza, Megiddo, Beth Shan, etc. And because of the weakness of Egypt who usually controlled the Red Sea trade. Other trade came overland

Ophir- Famous for gold, Job 22:4 Comes between Sheba and Havilah in Gen 10:28-29 list, so some say S.W. Arabia, and suggest the long time in transit was due to coastal trading. Others suggest Somalia, or Zanzibar-Zimbabwe. A good case can be made for India as all the products were well known as trade items in Ancient India. The Hebrew word Qoph seems related to the Sanskrit word for monkeys. If Peacock is the correct translation, peacocks could come only from India. An ancient trade route between Africa and India used the seasonal Trade-winds. Having to wait for these would account for the three years time taken. What they could SELL to India is uncertain.

420 Talents Gold- 120 in LXX. The pursuit of pleasure and possessions is ADDICTIVE - a TRAP. The quantity of Gold listed in these chapters may seem too great to be realistic. It's helpful to compare them with the quantities of Gold listed in secular sources. According to the available records the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III received 150 talents of Gold from conquered Tyre in 730 BC. When Sargon II conquered Babylon he gave from the spoil 154 Talents of gold to the gods of Babylon. Thutmose III included in his gifts to the Temple of Amun about 135 tons of Gold. Pharaoh Sheshonq I (Shishak, in the Bible) is said to have taken all the Gold treasures from the Temple and Palace that Solomon built. This fits well with what remains of his report on the campaign found in Egypt. His son Orsokon I records that he gave vast quantities of gifts to the Temples of Egypt. What can still be read of this list amounts to 200 tons of gold, and a similar amount of silver. The Greeks record that when Alexander the Great conquered Persia he captured almost 7000 tons of gold, 1,180 tons of that gold being the spoil from the southern capital city of Susa. Bar 198:8. That there was considerable wealth in Judah in the times of its early kings is shown by the fact that three pottery jars from that period were dug up at Eshtemoa, south of Hebron and found to contain about 30 Kg of silver. Bar 198:7.

101-13 The Visit of the Queen of Sheba

101-7 The Queen of Sheba- Sabea? The fertile S W of Arabia, including Yemen, was the home of the Sabaeans, Job 11:5; Isa 45:14; Joel 3:8.

contrasting it with the refusal of the scribes to be interested in really hearing what He had to say.

She came to prove him with hard questions- Chidah- Some chidah like Samson's Riddle, Jud 148-18, were merely a matter of matching wits for entertainment. While skill in this was valued, others, as in Proverbs, were used to draw attention to spiritual, moral, or practical Truths. (She may have also been testing his business philosophy and ethics as a trading partner.) These gave instruction and helped hearers develop the ability to think clearly. (Cp Socrates teaching by means of asking questions.) Solomon unravelled many such for her, and the Lord's quoting her as an example suggests that she sought and found answers to serious spiritual questions. (Note the Lord did not ease the mind of Moses with Chidah Num 128.)

1Q2 Came to Jerusalem with a great Caravan.. Spices- Besem- Balm. Arabia's greatest product, used among other things for EmBALMING the dead. Carbon dating of remains indicate that the states of South Arabia were wealthy in the time of Solomon. A South Arabian clay seal from the early days of the Isradite monarchy has been dug up at Bethel. Gold, Precious stones- Consultant's fees ARE high!

1Q3-5 Solomon answered all her questions. When she saw Solomon's Wisdom.. Palace, the catering, the servants and court officials, all dressed up HIS ASCENT BY WHICH HE WENT UP TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD/Burnt offerings he made at the Temple- How he went about his worship! If his bodyguard carried the 200 Gold Shields as Rehobam's did with the bronze ones, 14:28 that would have been impressive. She was overwhelmed- Most impressed, and said:

1Q6-9 The report was true.. Far exceeded.. How HAPPY all your servants must be to work for you. God must really love Israd to have given them a wonderful man like you as their King. She saw Solomon as a blessing granted to Israd. Visitors may notice how privileged citizens are, but the local residents may take their privileges for granted until they are lost. But also the locals see the downside behind the bright show! The sad fact was those who were with David became MIGHTY MEN who did brave things for David and for God. Those who were with Solomon, became wise, but also proud and selfish, 12:6-11. What do people learn from us? Blessed is.. Ps 1, etc.

being happy at this stage.
Footnote **7 Provan writes "1Q3 shows that Solomon knows all the answers, but is he any longer asking the right questions? Have WISE WORDS playfully exchanged with visiting dignitaries replaced wise action on behalf of his people, 37-9?"

1Q1Q 13 She Gave 120 Talents. King Solomon Gave- While exchanging gifts out of mutual respect and appreciation a commercial trade deal would also be involved, and stated this way according to polite Eastern custom. That Solomon gave according to his royal bounty is a reminder that the Lord of Glory from His infinite wealth, gives to repentant sinners, according to His infinite grace Rom 5:15, 17, 20 Eph 17; 3:16 Phil 4:19.

1Q11-12 Gold from Ophir, Almug wood- Sandalwood possibly. PILLARS/Supports- Or, Steps? Ladders? - To stand on when working at the Sea Lavers, and Altar? Harps. Solomon obtained this valuable wood in large quantities. Ras Shamra and Al Alakh texts show it as being used for fine furniture. Never been seen since that day- Suggests written a long time later as a reminder of the past glory.

1Q14-29 Solomon's Gold & Glory

(Exercise of God-given Lordship can be for mutual benefit or be selfish, 1Pet 5:1-4.)

1Q14-15 The weight of Gold in one year was 666 Talents- The INCOMING Gold is listed, but not the OUTGOING gold, so it's turnover, not annual gain. It may seem an incredibly large amount to us, but is reasonable in comparison with amounts of Gold listed in secular sources. **8

Not including revenue (taxes) for Merchants. Traders. Arabian Kings- Levied on Caravans as he controlled the inland Spice trade route through Damascus when he put a Governor there, and also the Aqaba-Gaza route, as well as the coastal North-South trade to/from Egypt. Governors- Of districts in the land of Israel.

200 Shields- Large shields used to protect the whole body. 300 small shields. of GOLD- Such shields are mentioned in connection with a

One at each end of the six steps. Twelve was a significant number - 12 tribes of Israel. Judah was a Lion in Jacob's blessing of the tribes, Gen 49.9. a Rounded top- Perhaps curved over backwards like that shown on the Sarcophagus of Ahiemnes King of Byblos, SOLOMON'S PALACES, Ussishkin, P 91. None like it- Not necessarily that it was superior to the thrones of other kings, simply that it was an original.

All King Solomon's drinking vessels, etc were Gold- Beautiful golden examples of such have been dug up in Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt etc. Tutankhamen was a very unimportant Pharaoh, but the treasures found in his tomb give some idea of the amount of Gold in use in ancient times. But while such displays of wealth were natural for god-kings it's sad to see Solomon descending to the level of a childish love of showing off his wealth. Building the Temple to the Glory of God seems now to have become a prelude to building a palace to the Glory of Solomon, and continuing to decorate it. Having begun by glorifying GOD with gold he now used it to glorify himself. Praising God for success in His service can drift into smug awareness that we are a success

1Q22 Fleet of THARSHISH/Trading Ships- Ships built like those trading with Tarshish across the Mediterranean Sea Jer 109, Ezek 27:1-12, Jonah 1:3. (Greeks traded with Tartessus in Spain 8th- 7th century BC.) Ivory, Ebony- From Ceylon, or a similar wood from East Africa Apes- Qoph and Peacocks- Tukkim. Kapi and Toge, if from Sanskrit. Apes and Baboons - GF and KY if Egyptian. Sukkim- Negroes if Tukkim is mis-spelled. OR, Ivory and Ebony carved and cut!

1Q2324 King Solomon was greater in Riches and Wisdom than all the other Kings- Of the known lands around It may be a factual statement, but possibly the writer is quoting from the Court records of the time. In which case it means that from Solomon's point of view he was richer and wiser. The inspired Word of God accurately quotes such untruthful people as the cowardly Ten Spies, Deu 1:28/9:1. Ignorant Jephthah, Judg 1:24 (Chemosh hadn't given them their land) Satan, Job 2:4; Job's lying Comforters, Job 4:27-9, and Solomon's worldly wisdom, Ecc 7:16 without meaning that their statements are true in God's sight

The Whole World sought audience with Solomon- People from the countries around came to hear Solomon's wisdom, and admire his

confirming Dea 11:14 Solomon had taken his eyes off the Lord, and his security within the eternal purposes of God, and as Gold filled his gaze he sought to protect that gold with what gold could buy, Woe unto those who go down to Egypt and rely on horses. Isa 31:1. Some trust in horses. but we trust in the Lord our God, Ps 207.

1027-29 The King made Silver and Gold common. Solomon's Horses were imported from Egypt- Mizraim- Some have suggested Musri, apparently near Kue (now Southern Turkey) as at the time they were famous for horse breeding and selling, and Egypt had to import Timber, so the trade in horses and chariots going SOUTH makes sense. But Egypt could well import timber and export chariots, and both import and export horses. The Scripture is describing trade that was going both ways, from which Solomon profited, and it was from Egypt that his idea of having a chariot army would have come, Deu 17:16

Linen yarn at a price- Egypt was famous for its linen flax, Ex 9:31, and linen cloth. It would be a profitable royal monopoly. Kings of Hittites and Arameans- Hittite Rulers over Aramean subjects were common in Northern Syria following the break-up of the Hittite Empire.

11:1-43 Solomon's Apostasy & the Consequences

11:1-8 King Solomon loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter- She's not mentioned as leading him astray. Tradition says she became a Jewish proselyte. Moabites, Ammonites. the Lord had told the Israelites "You must not intermarry.. they will turn your hearts- Prov 4:20 Keep thy heart with all diligence. after their gods. Moledh **9 The Canaanite religions had similar types of offerings, so to a spiritually careless person it might seem harmless to join in the better aspects of their worship. Solomon was far too wise to step straight into idolatry, but having become tolerant towards it, comfortable with it, he finally became involved in it. A similar process goes on today when in the false profession of Christian "love" Christians become tolerant of doctrinal or moral sin. (TRUE Christian love, stands with the God of Love, and abhors any belief or action that He condemns in His Word.)

700 Wives, **10 Princesses- As with Pharaoh's daughter acquired for political reasons or prestige. Held fast to them in love- Not the God-ordained love of Gen 22:4 but they, collectively, displaced his love for

grew old his wives turned his heart after other gods- A matter of HEART, and of visible, public apostasy that influenced the nation to follow him. Out of fondness for them, and for political/ trade reasons he built smaller Temples for his wives and their countrymen to worship in - no matter how indecent, cruel, or abominable that worship was. **11 Solomon worshipped HIS GOD as he chose, and then joined them in their worship. Solomon built a High Place for, and for- See 2 Ki 23:13 The satellite Temples around Jerusalem emphasised political/ cultural ties with surrounding nations, and may have been excused as being subservient to the Lord in the great Temple. This explanation may have satisfied Solomon. It did NOT satisfy the Lord. Cp Aaron's justifying explanation of the Golden calf worship! Ex 32:22-24

11:9-10 The Lord became angry because his heart turned away from the Lord the God of Israel- Full title, emphasising that Solomon's apostasy affected God's eternal purposes for His people. When we sin it affects our fellow-believers, and frustrates the loving purposes of our Lord. God in Grace and for His purposes had chosen Solomon, when Adonijah had the right of inheritance and strong support, 1:5-7. Solomon hadn't EARNED his position, it came to him through David, who had trained him, and urged him to honour the Lord, 2:2-4; 1 Chr 28:1-21. Hints that Solomon was heading for trouble spiritually were given in 3:1-3; 4:26 We're now told that although he loved the Lord, 3:3, it wasn't whole-heartedly, Deu 6:5; 10:12 11:1, 22 30:20 as he also LOVED/ CLEAVED TO foreign women. It was fine for him to pray that the Lord would turn the Israelites' heart to Himself, but useless when Solomon chose to turn his heart to foreign women and idols.

Who had appeared to him twice. forbidden Solomon to follow other gods- In spite of the Lord, who knew where his temptations lay, having stooped in mercy to speak directly to Solomon. And specifically warning him that to do so would make it impossible for God to use him for the fulfilling of His purpose of blessing Israel.

11:11-13 Since this is your attitude I will tear the Kingdom away from you- Solomon had torn himself away from the Lord and His fellowship/ obedience. He hadn't kept God's Covenant and Laws so he had forfeited the covenant Kingdom. Solomon's divided heart frustrated God's purposes of blessing, and resulted in a divided Kingdom. This is a warning to Us. I will give it to your SERVANT/ subordinate- Ebed-

has shown great grace/ given high positions in His work, may be the least willing to repent. Ahab did for 3 years. Solomon and Hezekiah, Isa 39 not at all. How much you and I need to seek the grace of prompt repentance

I will give him ONE tribe for the sake of David my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen- Your son will lose 10 tribes. I'll leave him 1 tribe, in addition to his own tribe Judah. (Leadership of Judah was his by right, and it was unlikely that Judah having enjoyed a privileged position would disown their tribal head.)

11:14-43 Opposition increases until Solomon Dies

11:14-17 The Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary- A Satan. When a man's ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies live at peace with him, Prov 16:7. This had been true in 54. Hadad.. from the royal line of Edom. Joab and the Israelites stayed until they had destroyed all the men in Edom- That is they stayed until they had stamped out any organised opposition. Edom remained a nation, but subordinate. While God stirred up Hadad as an adversary, He did so by the process of Israel reaping what they had sown.

11:18-19 Pharaoh gave Hadad a house.. gave him a sister of his own wife in marriage- Solomon may no longer have been popular with Pharaoh as a new dynasty began about this time. A shrewd king made all sorts of alliances with other royal families, so as to be ready to use them to advantage whichever way things developed.

11:20-22 David and Joab dead- Solomon's expensive "Professional" army was no threat to a guerilla "Independence for Edom" movement. France in Algeria, and USA in Vietnam have proved that in our lifetime. In a sense Solomon was right in having Joab killed, but he and Israel had to pay a price for enforcing justice, as we always do.

11:23-25 God raised another adversary- Satan REZON. He had fled from Hadadezer King of Zobah.. became the leader of a band of rebels- Much as David had fled from Saul. Leading a hunted band of men is excellent military training and preparation for taking over a country.

As Danas was on the trade route from Egypt through the wilderness he was in a position to build up both wealth, and an army. Rezon could demand a high price for "protecting" the trade caravans, and unofficially raid them if he wasn't paid. This made him a thorn-in-the-flesh "satan" to Solomon's greed for Gold and Glory - and ready to throw off any pretence to being under Israel's control, as soon as the chance came.

11:2628 Also Jeroboam rebelled. An Ephraimite- And therefore likely to resent the new supremacy of Judah and Jerusalem. A MIGHTY MAN - Gibbor of VALOUR /standing- Chayil- As Gideon was, Judg 6:12 INDUSTRIOUS. Solomon put him in charge of the whole labour force of the house of Joseph- The important tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Jeroboam had natural leadership ability and drive. By Solomon's action, under God, he was gaining experience in leadership, and making useful contacts. This meant he was positioned to lead a successful popular rebellion by the Northern Tribes.

11:2839 Jeroboam.. Ahijah met him- A Call to Kingship. (Not anointed King but offered Kingship.) Ahijah took off his own coat, ripped it into 12 pieces, and gave 10 to Jeroboam. Cp 1Sam 15:2629 He explained this acted parable by saying The Lord, the God of Israel says, I am going to tear the Kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes.. because they (The nation, as often, followed the King. The King must accept responsibility for what the nation does.) have forsaken me. But for David's sake.. one tribe- David's own tribe Judah belonged to his descendants by right. God added one tribe to this, the tribe of Benjamin. God intervened to inform Jeroboam of His intentions, as a challenge for him to rule to the Glory of God, and the fulfilment of His purposes of blessing for His people. But equally God raised up these three adversaries, by the normal processes of sowing and reaping on their part, and on the part of David, whose deliverance of Israel automatically made enemies of the nations he defeated, and Solomon who ruled oppressively to live in luxury.

If you do whatever I command.. walk in my ways.. do right.. as David did.. I will build you a SURE HOUSE /enduring Dynasty as I built for David- God's Gift, the equivalent of God's offer to Solomon. Ask what you wish.. 3:5, and with it the IF of sovereign responsibility. Solomon's response is seen to be good when we see how Jeroboam

The REST OF THE ACTS/other events. are written in the book- The court records no doubt boasted of his great deeds and wisdom. These boasts rang hollow to the writer of Kings who placed alongside them the record of how they stood in the light of eternity. Today the Media endlessly glorify the supposedly GREAT and POPULAR people of our world. A great contrast will be seen when the "Books are opened," Rev 2012

Solomon reigned 40 yrs., died.. buried- Death ends the opportunity to respond to the grace of God, and serve Him on earth. But our life continues to witness in time and eternity. May the encouragement of what the Grace of God has done for us and through us be the message our life leaves, rather than the warning of our folly.

Chapters 12- 14 REHOBAM & JEROBOAM

(Rehobam inherited a place of blessing. Jeroboam was offered one. Both despised it and failed to respond. In my youth old men were quick to warn against Jeroboam-style rebellion. But to be fair we must also warn against Jeroboam-style arrogant indifference to protests against the burden of an ever-growing tradition that is no longer meeting people's needs. But, like Solomon's entrenched power, has moved that tradition from being God-centred to Self-centred.)

121-33 Rehobam & Jeroboam Divide Israel

Rehobam went to Shechem- See Gen 126; 3318-20 Josh 24 In the time of Judges no Israelite unity had been possible. The central tribes of Ephraim and Manasse were largely cut off from the northern ones by the Canaanites occupying Megiddo, Beth Shan, and the plains between them. And cut off from Judah in the south by Jebusite Jerusalem, the Gibeonites, and the Philistines in Gezer. Ephraim's pride and jealousy were obvious in Jud 81-4; 121-7. The Northern tribes had been slow to accept David as King, and did so on the basis of a covenant, 2 Sam 5:3. Rehobam had to come to their town of Shechem and discuss the terms under which they would accept him. Jeroboam, who would have known their resentment against Solomon's heavy-handedness, 11:28 had returned/been recalled to be their spokesman.

requires the ruler to use the servant of those who serve him; 10:4-24:5 The old court officials who'd learned from Solomon's political wisdom may have had something of this in mind. Or simply said in effect "Promise what they ask and they'll eat out of your hand. You risk losing them if you don't." Their words may have implied that it was only a POLITICAL promise that he wouldn't have to keep once he was firmly in charge.

12:8-15 Rehoboam consulted the young men- The 40 year old friends who'd grown up with him and had learned from Solomon's increasingly selfish life-style, said what would please him, "You're King, you can do what you like, show them who's boss. Tell them that you'll be tougher than your father was." He did, and 10 tribes made Jeroboam King. Rehoboam's folly is obvious to us. Our own never is. All David's life he had stood in the presence of God/acknowledged the reality of God and of His righteous, wise, merciful will and purposes. This gave him a sense of proportion, and meant that even sin and folly weren't final - repentance and restoration were possible. He had urged Solomon to do so, 2:2-4. At first Solomon had been like that in 3:4-15. But Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite, and he had seen Solomon worshipping her "god" or his own "god" as if he, Solomon, could do what he liked - as if he himself as king was more important than either!

The King would not listen.. Whips.. Scorpions- Possibly whips with bone or metal inserts, to bite into the flesh, as with the Roman scourges. This was from the Lord- In the midst of human self-pleasing decisions, God's will was being carried out. Cp Ex 7:13 God didn't approve of either Rehoboam's boastful folly, or Jeroboam's rebellion. Both were defying the Lord in what they did, and yet they were fulfilling His promise of what the end of Solomon's apostasy would be, 11:9-13. Those who ignore and defy God, prove God's predictions to be right. Just as, with a happy result, those who respond badly to His offers of Mercy under God's sovereignty - all reap what they sow.

12:16-20 When Israel saw the King refused to listen to them.. "What share have we in David.. To your Tents O Israel"- Most of them lived in houses, but they used the old slogan which meant "Everyone look after himself, and his own interests." See 2:23-6 2 Sam 20:1. The Israelites living in the towns of Judah Rehoboam still ruled over-

When all Israel heard Jeroboam had returned they made him King- Those assembled at Shechem had chosen him as spokesman. His actions had pleased them, so on their return to their homes everyone decided that he was the natural choice for their new king. cp 112638

1221-24 Rehoboam mustered.. from Judah and Benjamin- The northern part of Benjamin, including Bethel, apparently joined the Northern tribes. 180 000 fighting men- LXX 120 000 Able-bodied men who could be recruited as a temporary army. to regain the kingdom- Jerusalem was the centre for both tribes. Both had had their share in ruling, and so had many armed men, and would be reluctant to give up their favoured status. (Near the close of David's reign Judah alone could number 500 000 Against the 800 000 in Israel, 2 Sam 249.)

But his word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God- ONE man to stand against a King and such an army! But one man speaking for God, in fellowship with God, is sufficient to enable God's will to be done. What he says, God is also saying in the hearts and minds of the hearers. The Lord says do not fight against your brothers. for this is my doing. So they obeyed- If LOVE for our brothers doesn't stop us, common sense should stop us carrying on a fight with our brothers. God would have to change their hearts for re-uniting to work.

122527 Jeroboam fortified Shechem- It was now the capital of the area inhabited by 10 tribes, so must be made a strong centre for the King and his government. Built Peniel- As a strong city for governing the land on the other side of the Jordan.

Jeroboam thought.. if these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem they will kill me and TURN AGAIN UNTO Rehoboam- They were probably already objecting to the cost of building Shechem, and Peniel, establishing an army and royal household, etc - perhaps getting no more for their money than they had from Solomon. His thinking was worldly wisdom. But it was blatant rejection of the Lord. Totally ignoring the fact that it was the Lord who had promised him the Kingdom, and given it to him with the provision that he would be secure only IF he obeyed the Lord and walked in His ways.

Solomon's Temple proclaimed to all willing to know the truth that making ANY image to represent the Lord was a defiance of His command, Ex 20:4-5, as the Mercy Seat was in a sense the throne of the invisible Lord. Some have suggested that the golden calves were to take the place of the Mercy Seat as thrones of the Invisible Lord. If so, Jeroboam's religion would speed up the drift into Baal worship as the Canaanite god Baal-Hadad was shown standing on the back of a bull. Cp Hosea 8:1-8. **13

One at Bethel - Regarded as sacred to the Lord in Gen 12:8; 13:3-4, and even more so after God had revealed Himself to Jacob there, Gen 28:19; 31:1-3; Judg 2:26-27; 1 Sam 7:16; 10:3. the other at Dan - Made a sacred place for the tribe of Dan, by the young Levite priest, Judg 18:6-31. Excavations have shown that before and after the Israelite occupation Dan had been a pagan holy place and Pan was worshipped there in NT times. **14 And this thing became - Hayah - Was a Sin..

Jeroboam built shrines on High Places - Bamah. Making traditional places of worship more important and appointed Priests of the LOWEST - Qatsah - Literally EDGE / FRINGE / BORDER-line people. Whatever they were didn't disqualify them from being priests under his order. Not Levites - Many of these migrated to Jerusalem, 2 Chr 11:13-14.

He ORDAINED/initiated A FEAST/Festival on the 15th day of the 8th month - It was HIS religion, HIS ideas, and the convenience of HIS Kingdom was its basis. This would replace the end-of-year Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, in the 7th month. Offered sacrifices - As its founding Priest, as Moses, under God, had been in his time. But unlike Moses, totally lacking any authorisation from the Lord. He was an Anti-Moses!

13:1-32 Partial Obedience won't Work

God's Verdict on Jeroboam's system of Worshipping the Lord

13:1-9 By the Word of the Lord a man of God came to Bethel as Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense - Cp with Solomon's

He cried against the Altar in the Word of the Lord.. A son of David will sacrifice the priests.. on you- See 2 Ki 23:15-20 men's bones will be burned on you- While human remains were treated with respect, death, and the decay of the body were the result of Adam's sin, and a witness to human sinfulness, and so contact with them was defiling, Lev 21:1-4, 11; Num 6:9-11, etc.

Jeroboam stretched out his hand and said "Seize him," but the hand he stretched out shrivelled up and the altar split apart according to the sign- This expressed visibly the fact that the sacrifice and sacrificial system Jeroboam had set up weren't acceptable to God. Jeroboam in his power and pride was shown he was powerless to act against God's servant. He had to plead with the man of God to ask God to restore strength to his arm. God had honoured Solomon's Temple with His visible presence, and acceptance of the dedication offering, and moved Solomon to pray wisely regarding its future use, because it was His OWN IDEA/HIS Temple, 8:11. Equally visibly He DISOWNS/rejects the sacrifice and altar at Bethel, and paralyzes Jeroboam. MEN might see the worship at both places as similar -as today they see all professed worship of God as similar. The Lord will give His verdict in due course, Mt 7:21-27. (We can trust God even when under threat)

The King said "Come home.. I will give you a gift"- God in His Mercy had made it clear to Jeroboam that he was sinning against God, and to continue to defy Him was dangerous. And, as rebel sinners usually do, Jeroboam tries to gain the goodwill of God's messenger by a bribe. He may have hoped that as the Prophet's intercession had restored his paralysed hand, the prophet might be able to persuade God to lift the curse from the altar. He also wanted to give the public impression that he was still in fellowship with God Cp 1 Sam 15:24-31.

The man of God said "I was commanded not to eat- So he refused the King's invitation. God can't be bought by bribes. God's servants should make that obvious by their actions. Cp Elisha and Naaman, 2 Ki 5:15-16 Beware the world's offers of reward, Gen 14:22-23 (In various ways Scripture emphasises that a True Prophet of God must speak and act without fear of or favour from men, Micah, in Ch 22 Amos 7:10-14 or return by the way you came- If he did he might be recognised, asked what had happened, gain credit or blame. His mission was from

1311-17 An old prophet at Bethel - A messenger of God in the "Old Days" of Solomon, and not involved in Golden Calf worship. His sons told him.. he found the man.. said " Come home with me and eat-" To be fair to him we must assume that he still had a genuine love for God, and for Gods servants, and was glad of the rebuke given to Jeroboam, and wished to be identified with it and them. The man of God said "I cannot.. I have been told by the Word of the Lord you must not eat bread" - The Lord had given him direct orders.

1318-19 The Old prophet.. I am a prophet. An Angel said by the word of the Lord " Bring him back to your house," but he was lying- How DARE he tell such a lie! Old age has its temptations and tragedies. Solomon's involved women and god. For this man it was different, but the root tragedy is that BOTH were out of touch with the Lord. For years he had said "Thus saith the Lord!" and it had been true. Saying such things can become a habit that continues after we have lost touch with God, Jer 23:25-38 Even seemingly Godly habits will destroy us and others when God ceases to be their source and goal. When we see once Godly men destroying the work of their lifetime by proud rash, divisive statements, we rightly tremble. That God in His Mercy has counted us faithful, and trusted us to minister His Word, 1 Tim 1:12-17, and used us for many years, is no excuse for smugness or self-righteousness 1 Cor 9:24-27. The longer we have lived in His Grace and served Him among His people, the greater is our need to consciously cast ourselves upon His Mercy, in confident faith and obedience, AWARE OF OUR SINFUL FRAILTY, Ps 19:7-14. If we don't, the day may come when our desire to enjoy being in the company of an active man of God, becomes more important to us, than our encouraging him to obey his Lord. And our attitude and actions in that may destroy him or his usefulness for God

1320-22 While sitting at the table the Word of the Lord came to the old prophet and he cried out "This is what the Lord says You have defied the Word of the Lord.." - A fellowship meal, harmless in itself, shared in defiance of Gods will, brings death. Cp 1 Cor 11:17-32 It may be much the same with other things, harmless enough in themselves, that are done in disobedience to what God has commanded in His Word.

old prophet did, that we have caused someone to disobey God. The LXX for Marah here has Pikraino, make bitter, angry, but sometimes translates it as Atheteo- To not recognise, to reject.

Brought back the body to mourn.. laid the body in his own tomb.. lay my bones beside his bones. For the SAYING /message.. against the altar at Bethel and High places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true. (The name Samaria came later, 1624 but was used by the later writer/copier in order to be understood)

13331420 Jeroboam Ignores all Warnings

133334 Even after this- The shock of his own personal encounter with the Lord through the man of God Supported by the warning example of what happened even to such a man of God when he failed to obey God. Jeroboam did not change his evil ways .. appointed.. anyone who wanted to become a priest- It was a "please yourself religion," with no word from God to support it and no desire for God's approval. This BECAME /was the sin of the house of Jeroboam- That Jeroboam became King over the 10 tribes was God-given, and God-approved, if, like David, he walked faithfully with God in His Law 11:31-39 Jeroboam's SIN was that his actions divided Israel SPIRITUALLY, by creating idols as national "gods," setting up and emphasizing worship centres, priests, and feasts to rival those God had ordained, honoured, and used in blessing Israel. The Lord God of Israel disowned Jeroboam's religion, and its natural drift was back to that of the Canaanites. TO CUT IT OFF /led to its destruction from the face of the earth.

14:1-3 ABIJAH- Means "My Father is the LORD." While the Lord rejected Jeroboam's religion, his son's name reminds us that Jeroboam claimed to be worshipping the Lord. son of Jeroboam became sick- In Scripture, as in life, the good and the bad, the wise and the foolish, are human. People in distress may be more open to God. Jeroboam cared enough for his son to risk making a fool of himself. God cared enough for Jeroboam to use this softening of heart to get a last warning through- give him a last chance to repent before it was too late.

Jeroboam said to his wife- Not the only man to hide behind his wife! Disguise yourself, go to Shiloh to Ahijah who told me I would be King- Jeroboam is so out of touch with Ahijah he doesn't know he is

because those in fellowship with God by His grace will see what they need to know.

When Ahijah heard her footsteps he said "Come in, wife of Jeroboam" - We can gain good from God only by being honest with Him, and with ourselves. Even after experiencing His goodness for years we may still try to hide the reality of our thoughts, desires, and position. God in His mercy strips this hypocrisy from us, and the godliest are brought to say "God be merciful to me the sinner." I have been sent to you - In LXX Apostolos - I am an Apostle/ God's messenger to you. Jeroboam saw himself as cunningly sending his wife in disguise. The greater fact was that God was over-ruling the situation to get a message to Jeroboam with bad news.

14:7-11, 14:16 Tell Jeroboam the Lord God of Israel - The full title reminded him of the solemn reality of God's involvement with His people. I EXALTED & raised you up - You owe your position entirely to Me. So Jeroboam should have fulfilled God's purposes/ taken up His kind offer. God had made the alternatives plain to him, 11:37-38

I gave it (the Kingdom) to you, but you have not been like my servant David.. doing what was right in my eyes - David sinned and his son died. But David repented, and by God's sovereign purpose and grace His promise to David remained in effect. You have done more evil than all who lived before you to provoke me to anger and thrust me behind your back - Cp Ezek 23:35 Jeroboam had grabbed what God gave him, and肘bowed God out of his way and ignored Him. To drift along in sinful ways is bad enough. Jeroboam had actively introduced evil ways, and his example would curse the nation of Israel all its days, 15:30 16:31; 2Ki 3:3; 10:29-31; 13:2, 11; 14:24 15:9, 18; 24:28 17:22

THEREFORE/ Because of this I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam - Our wrong choices may do more harm to our children than they do to us. I will cut off every male.. burn up as dung.. The dogs will eat.. belonging to Jeroboam (Dogs in Scripture are packs of jackal-like scavengers, 16:4; 21:24 Ps 22:16 59:14-15 Jer 15:3.) The Lord has spoken - A final blunt verdict on the life Jeroboam had chosen to live. The spiritual ugliness of the religion he had created was like dung in God's sight. The consequences for his descendants was that they

14:12-13, 17-18 The boy will die.. will be buried because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the Lord has found something good- God is eternally Holy, Righteous, Wise, All Powerful LOVE. But so that men and women could be created in His likeness He has granted to mankind the right to choose or refuse that glorious provision which God has made at the ultimate cost of His own dear Son. There are sweet winsome statements in God's Word, as when God weeps over those who are about to mock and brutally crucify Him, Mt 23:37, Lu 13:34-35 19:41-44 To such men as that, as to Jeroboam, God in His Word makes brutally clear the consequences of their refusing the Gospel of His Grace Lk 16:23-31; Heb 10:26-31. But still God, as with Jeroboam's family, does for every man the kindest thing which that man will let Him do.

14:19-20 How he ruled.. written in the book- No doubt he had it written up positively, but while it's nice to be important and popular, in the end it's God's verdict that matters. He reigned 22 years, and Nadab his son succeeded him.

14:21-15:1-2 Rehoboam, Abijah & Asa kings of Judah

14:21 Rehoboam.. was 41 years old when he became King and reigned 17 years in Jerusalem the city the Lord had chosen.. His mother was an Ammonite- What a mixed inheritance! What would he choose to be? In Judah the King's mother is mentioned so that we do not forget that she had a role in defining his nature, character, etc.

14:22-24 Judah did evil- Not merely the King did evil. His sin may have been a failure to stand for God and the Temple against the nation's drift back into traditional worship. In the eyes of the Lord- Whatever we do, is done in His presence they stirred up His jealous anger more than their fathers had done- By worshipping in the rotten ways of the Canaanites who God had driven out to make room for Israelites. God loved them possessively, and wanted them to enjoy the fulness of fellowship with Him that was possible only if they were loyal to Him. God had given them possession of the whole promised land, a royal house that had started well under David, and a Temple. This meant that they had less excuse than ever for idolatry,

Footnote **15 Asherah- the Canaanite fertility goddess, partner of fertility god Baal who represented thunder, lightning and rain. Asherah often refers to an object representing her. It seems to have been made of wood, as it could be burned, Deu 12:3; Judg 6:26.

14:25-26 In the Fifth year of Rehoboam Shishak King of Egypt- Founder of the new dynasty, who set out to make Egypt strong again. He carried off the treasures of the Temple of the Lord, and the Royal Palace including the Gold Shields- The Gold that Solomon heaped up so greedily and which made him so famous went back where it belonged.
**16 If we live like the WORLD, God can't protect us from the consequences of their ways. Rehoboam, as Solomon had become in his old age, was just a greedy King among greedy kings - His God and His Temple just one of the many Gods and Temples, to be treated as such.

14:27-29 King Rehoboam made bronze shields- When you've lost the Golden glory of fellowship with God in Christ, you can replace it with the polished bronze of Human religious effort. It can be made to look nearly as good but to do that is hard work, and it hasn't the value of GOLD. And the land had become so insecure (when people cease to love and fear God, they become like the "gods" they worship) that even bronze shields couldn't be left unguarded so were kept under lock and key. In my youth many people left their doors unlocked, confident that they and their property were safe. Today so many people have thrown off any respect for God and His Word, that lawlessness and misery are obvious and increasing.

14:29-31 The rest.. written in a book- Which perished long ago, as what human pride has written isn't worth keeping. There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam- Pointless border skirmishes. Abijah his son succeeded him as king.

15:1-8 Abijah became King.. Mother's name Maacah daughter of Abishalom- Or Absalom. Possibly Grand-daughter of David's rebel son Absalom, if his daughter Tamar, 2 Sam 14:27, (named after Absalom's sister Tamar) married Uriel of Gibeon, 2 Chr 13:2.

WALKED IN/committed the sins of his Father. His heart was not fully devoted to the Lord. Nevertheless for David's sake the Lord his God

Footnote **16 In the Temple of Amon, at Karnak in Egypt Shishak/ Sheshonq lists 150 towns in Judah and Israel which he conquered and plundered, or which he besieged until they paid tribute to him. As no battle is mentioned, this verse may mean that Rehoboam handed over this tribute in order to avoid battle.

There was war- Rehoboam was dead but the hostility didn't die with him. We need to bury hostility promptly, Mt 5:21-26 or it may not be buried when we are. Written in the books- We don't get a second time round so as to leave a better record. Abijah buried.. Asa his son succeeded him- David, in sparing Saul because the Lord had anointed him King 1 Sam 24:1-15 26:6-24 2 Sam 1:14-27, established a pattern that was followed in Judah. Another case of Sowing and Reaping according to the order God as Creator built into the Universe.

15:9-15 Asa became King of Judah. He reigned in Jerusalem 41 years. His MOTHER'S/Grandmother's name was Maacah- Father and Mother are used rather loosely in Hebrew for Male and Female ancestors. The Rich man calls Abraham "Father," Lk 16:24 and the Lord says those who are planning to murder Him have the Devil as their "Father," Jn 8:44

Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord- Read 2Chr 14 and 15 for details. As his father David had- King David had been dead for about sixty years. How could he influence his Great Great Grandson Asa? David had lived such an adventurous life of obedient Faith in God that the story of his life is well known to this day. It still opens a vision of what the young and poor willing to trust God, can achieve for God in the face of the Goliaths they may meet. Let's not be content to live timid, dull, safe lives that will challenge nobody.

He expelled the male shrine prostitutes and got rid of the idols- Gillul- A disdainful name that probably originally meant dung pile that his fathers had made. He even deposed his MOTHER/Grandmother Maacah because she had made an IDOL IN A GROVE/repulsive Asherah pole- Miphletseth- a horrible thing an idd. Cut it down and burned it.

BUT/Although he did not remove the High Places- Bamah. Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his DAY S/life- In view of 15:18-

treaty between me and you.. as between your father and my father- Probably a diplomatic fiction as there's nothing in the Bible about any such treaty. A sa bribed Syria's King to attack Baasha instead of asking God to help in the way God chose, as Hezekiah did, Isa 37:14

Ben Hadad.. conquered.. Dan **17 - What a disgrace it had been when Baasha attacked his fellow Israelites. It provoked a worse disgrace when A sa who had given money to God, took it back to pay godless people to attack fellow Israelites. (He also responded violently when God had this unbelief/disloyalty pointed out to him, 2 Chr 16:7-10) As Mk 9:39 Jn 15:1-10 1 Cor 13:1-3; Phil 1:15-18 etc have now been written for us it's even worse when God's people use His money to finance books etc to attack Christians with whom they disagree

Baasha left off building Ramah- He had to concentrate on defending his own territory. A sa issued an order- A war-time emergency levy so that two towns on Judah's side of the border were strengthened against any future attack. Mizpah- Excavations show a rebuilding at this time.

All the other events.. written in the book- Scripture gives us a brief selection only, covering matters which were important in God's purposes, and giving us encouraging/warning examples. In old age.. his feet became diseased- I've heard this spoken of as symbolising his falling from a godly life of walking with God. Perhaps it does, but there's no indication that he ever walked with God again after the events of 15:18-19. All too few of us would be in better physical health if the prayer of 3 Jn 1:2 was answered in our lives.

A sa.. buried.. Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as King- And in spite of A sa's partial obedience, he gave to his son an example, and a national godliness much more helpful than A sa's father had.

15:25-16:20 Nadab - Baasha - Elah - Zimri Kings of Israel

15:25-31 Nadab son of Jeroboam became King of Israel.. did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father- May God in His

to celebrate Assyrian King defeating Israel and capturing the town. But it couldn't be the battle referred to here, as the Syrian King also claims to have defeated "the house of David," referring to Judah. BAR 942, etc. The Bible record doesn't mention Israel and Judah combining to fight Syria until Ch. 22. If Syria conquered Dan again after that battle the inscription on the stone may be referring to that victory. The summaries at the end of the life of each king (14:19, etc) make clear that many events, wars etc, aren't listed by the writer of Kings, so it's not surprising that those selected for the Bible record don't always fit the random finds made by archaeologists.

15:32-34 War between Asa and Baasha- As in 15:16-22 Baasha reigned 24 yrs.. did evil.. walking in ways of Jeroboam- Baasha had carried out the Judgment on Jeroboam proclaimed and decreed by God. But while he must have known something of God's verdict on Jeroboam he chose not to benefit from what he knew. He lived as Jeroboam had lived, and automatically qualified for the same judgment as Jeroboam had,

16:1-7 Then the Word of the Lord came to Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha. I lifted you up from the dust and made you leader- God in Grace gave Baasha the privilege of leadership - as He gives to us all gifts, 1 Cor 12:7-11. Whether in the end this brings blessing or judgment depends on how we use what we have been given. Baasha operated within the will of God and fulfilled His purposes of Judgment without God approving his reasons for his actions, or the attitude in which he carried them out. And Baasha was in no way exempt from the moral Law that all men reap what they sow. A drastic, ruthless exercise of judgment, WITHOUT THE PUNISHING JUDGE LEADING A BETTER LIFE THAN THE CRIMINAL calls for the same judgment on the Judge. Cp Assyria in Isa 10:5-17. God who knew what Baasha would do had foretold what he would do. He now calls him to account with a final warning.

of my people- In spite of the apostasy of Jeroboam, and perhaps the bulk of the nation, Israel was still God's people, and He continued to discipline and bless them. If Baasha acknowledged that God was God, and had for His purposes placed him in the position of ruler, he could respond and be blessed. But Baasha, like Jeroboam, failed to do so.

But you walked in the ways of Jeroboam.. So I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam- You're leading Israel in sinning as he did, so

harvest or having his own family wiped out (in Israel there were more people willing to carry out God's judgment on sinners than were willing to take positive action for God. Today it's still the same. It's easy for us to criticise and cut down those we see as wrong in doctrine or life, because our Flesh/ Adam-nature/ old self enjoys doing that. Only the Grace of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives enables any of us to BUILD UP GOD'S PEOPLE IN LOVE, 1 Cor 13:1-2; Gal 5:22-26; Eph 3:14-21; 4:14-16

Elah became King.. reigned two years. He was getting himself drunk- Exercising his kingly right to destroy himself, like any modern man! Zimri.. killed him and succeeded him as king.. killed the whole family of Baasha- All those who had responsibility to avenge the murder of their relative Elah, Josh 20:3; 2 Sam 14:11. Zimri was exercising his "right" to be violent, as many do today. Yet in doing so also fulfilled the warning God had given Baasha, through Jehu the prophet

because of all the sins Baasha and Elah had committed and caused Israel to commit.. provoked the Lord by their VANITIES/worthless idols. The rest.. is written- In the records from which Jeremiah, or whoever wrote the book of Kings selected the information needed to write God's view of them. Zimri reigned 7 days. The army encamped at Gibbethon proclaimed Omri King.. laid siege to Tirzah.. Zimri set the palace on fire round him, and died because of the sins he had committed- Seven days were enough to show what kind of man he was.

16:21-28 Then the people of Israel were split into two factions.. Omri became King- The proud refusal of God's people to repent of their sins automatically brings on them the judgment of divisiveness. Our faction may win, as Omri's did, and a new beginning results, but unless our attitudes/our spirit changes it can do no real good

He reigned 12 years.. bought the hill of Samaria and built a city- A new capital city. **18 Like Jerusalem it could be fortified well, 2 Ki 18:9-10 and being new it wasn't subject to old tribal jealousies. A NEW beginning, but not with God - same old ways. In fact Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord.. more than all before him.. provoked the Lord to anger- It isn't that anger is characteristic of God. But that anything which ignores and defies His Holiness, Righteousness, Truth, Wisdom,

Footnote **19 The Moabite stone records that he conquered the fertile plain of Moab along the Arnon River. The Assyrians record him as playing an important part in the battle of Karkar/Qarqar when the local kings fought off an Assyrian attack. (The Assyrians from then on always listed Israelite kings as of the house of Omri.) Marrying his son to a princess from Tyre would have been good for trade, and strengthened Israel against the Syrian kings in Damascus. But like all actions made in the wisdom of this world it was a spiritual disaster.

Section II 1 KINGS 16-22 & 2 KINGS

A NEW START with God - Prophets to witness to Him in a hostile world

(Jezebel-Ahab introduced a new phase in the life of Israel. From then on even the NOMINAL worship of the Lord is treated as optional. Baal was the God of Jezebel, and Ahab was at times prepared to support her in this. Elisha states that the Lord was no longer the God of Ahab's dynasty, 2 Ki 3:13. In Judah, Ahaz and Manasseh took a similar stand in favour of open idolatry, 2 Ki 16:1-4; 21:1-9. God responded by raising up Elijah so the Israelites would continue to have the option of worshipping Him, and being His people. The GOOD Kings in Judah continued to take up the responsibilities God placed on King David and King Solomon. But in Israel, and Judah, Kings hostile to God are faced with His messengers, and this confrontation dominates the scene.)

16:29-19:21 Ahab & Elijah - Drought on Carmel

16:29-33 Ahab became King.. reigned 22 yrs.. did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any before.. considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam, he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians- Josephus records that Ethbaal, High Priest of Ashtarte/Asherah, had murdered the King of Tyre and usurped the throne. He set up an altar for Baal- Solomon built a temple for the Lord in his capital city. Ahab built a temple for Baal in his. Yet he obviously expected the Lord to put up with this defiance of the first command as he included part of the Lord's Name in the names of his sons Ahaziah, and

would be as for Ahab in his fighting with Moab. His actions show what happens when nations turn from worshipping God and begin to worship and live as they choose. Some Canaanite houses excavated have beneath the foundation of the house the skeleton of a child buried in a jar - apparently to provide a guardian spirit for the house, to bring it goodluck. A similar jar with the remains of a child in it is found under the gate/door foundations, to provide a guardian spirit for the entrance to the house. A Hebrew targum says that Hiel did this with his oldest and youngest sons, in accordance with the Word of the Lord spoken by Joshua, Josh 6:26 It's mentioned here to show the effect of Bad worship.

17:1 Elijah the Tishbite- Tishbi OF THE INHABITANTS OF/ from Tishbe- Toshab While he may have been a SETTLER outside his tribal lands, I think the translations miss the point **20 Toshab is from Yashab- To dwell. Generally it means a FOREIGNER/ Non-Jew living among Jews, Ex 12:45 etc. But it was first used by Abraham when he said "I am a stranger and a SOJOURNER with you" Gen 23:4. That is he lived among them, but he didn't belong to them. All Israelites were said to be Toshab with the Lord, Lev 25:23 1 Chr 29:15 They were given the land so that they could live in it in fellowship with the Lord, on His terms. They were forbidden to live godlessly in it as if they had won the land for themselves, Deu 8:10-20 But the life of Israel was no longer God-oriented. Elijah's life was, so his loyalty to the Lord made him a foreigner to his own relatives and neighbours.

Said to Ahab "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, BEFORE WHOM I STAND /whom I serve- KJV follows the Hebrew, but it means to stand in God's presence ready to serve Him as God chooses to order. Elijah's name proclaimed that the Lord was His God. God is the LIVING God. He was living prayerfully in His presence/ in fellowship with Him, Jas 5:17, and as God had promised that Apostasy would be punished by DROUGHT, Deu 11:16-17; 28:23-24 etc that would happen until further notice There will be neither dew- The slopes of Lebanon were kept green and fertile by dew that resulted from the height of Mt Lebanon chilling the air. nor rain in the next few years except at my word

17:2-7 The Word of the Lord came to Elijah.. hide BY THE BROOK /in the ravine- Nachal- A valley down which a torrent rushes after winter

of the desert country, by searching as the birds do. (It was people like that smuggling goats from Trans-Jordan to Beer Sheva who found the "Dead Sea Scrolls." Whatever the words mean, it's clear that God kept His promise as The Ravens brought him bread and FLESH/meat, in the morning and evening, and he drank of the brook. Cp God's provision for Israel in the wilderness, Ex 16

Footnote **20LXX treats Tishab as the name of a place a NIV Tishbe, but no such place is mentioned elsewhere. In Gen 234 translates it as Parepidemos, used in Heb 11:13, 1Pet 1:1; 2:11- Strangers/Pilgrims, etc, living in fellowship with God, so in a large measure out of fellowship with those around. This is uncomfortable, but an effective witness for God IF we take care to live a life that is visibly GOOD in the sight of everyone.

Until the brook dried up God's faithful servants share the suffering when God punishes rebels - Our nation is suffering the punishment of reaping what it has sown in selfishness, greed, and godlessness. It affects us, but God looks after his obedient servants.

17:8-12 The word of the Lord came "Go to Zarephath of Sidon. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food- Not a luxury Hotel. The Lord's faithful servants aren't guaranteed better accommodation than Jesus the Servant-Son of God enjoyed, Mt 8:20 And He may choose that either rich or poor minister food and shelter to them, Lk 8:3. Only God would know that in the land where Baal was worshipped someone would welcome one of the Lord's prophets.

So he went to Zarephath.. a widow was gathering sticks. He asked "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink"- A reasonable request from a new arrival who knew no-one in the town.

"And bring me please a piece of bread." "As surely as the Lord your God lives," he replied, "I don't have any bread - only a handful of flour in a jar, and a little oil. I am gathering a few sticks to make a meal.. that we may eat it and die"- DESPAIR. The drought on God-forsaking Israel impoverished the Godless lands around - It still does spiritually and socially. If the church in NZ hadn't turned its back on God, the world around it wouldn't have sunk so low, so fast. We may find it easy to be generous - but not when it's our last dollar, piece of bread, etc. But if Elijah was to stand tall on Carmel he needed to eat till then, depending each day afresh on the promise of God. We all have some money, some ability, a 24 hour day, and the chance to befriend

For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel (Note full title.) says The BARR EL jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land- She did what God said through Elijah, and God did what He promised. By this miracle God provided for His servant Elijah, and the widow who sheltered him. Like

Footnote **21 In 1958 planned to spend the Easter break in special preparation for a School inspection the following week as it seemed to be my last chance to get on the promotion ladder. A friend phoned that the Speaker at a Boys' Camp had cancelled at the last minute. I went to the Camp. Not having spent the time frantically preparing to make a good impression I was relaxed/ resigned when the inspection came - and to my surprise was promoted to Assistant Principal a year later!

the Manna, enough for each day was provided, but ONLY AS NEEDED. Each day they needed to trust God, and discover His faithfulness again each day, and so prove Him TRUSTWORTHY /faithful to His promises. Their provision was certain with God. Their peace of mind was a matter of their willingness to rely on Him and His Word. See Deu 8:2-3; Mt 6:11.

17:17-24 Some time later the son of the woman became ill.. finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE What do you have against me- Literally What do you and to me- an odd Hebrew expression, NIV gives the sense of it. As she knew Elijah to be a man of God, and that God was miraculously keeping the three of them from starvation, that the boy should die made no sense to her, except as a punishment for some sin of hers. Cp Jn 9:3. Many bewildering things happen in life. It's always wise to come to the Lord in our worry, and sometimes helpful to turn to some Godly person. Man of God- Used in 12:22; 13:4; Deu 3:31; Josh 1:46; Judg 1:36, etc. We're challenged to be that too, 2 Tim 3:17.

He took.. him to the upper room- A shelter built on the roof, to be done with God, about the situation laid him on his bed. Then cried out "O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy upon this widow.. by causing him to die?"- We have the responsibility to bring to God matters that concern those around us, and those to whom we're bound by natural ties. And we're also responsible to do for them the physical things which are within our power, Jas 2:15-16 But as Elijah showed in his prayer, it's God alone in whom we trust, not our actions.

identification, empathy, and willingness to share the concerns and needs of those spiritually dead is commonly needed to bring them to life in Christ. And it may need to be a matter between them, us, and God alone. The boy's life returned to him- That the Lord restored him to life after Elijah had prayed that this would happen is clear. That in the will of the Lord the boy became ill and was restored may have been to strengthen their faith, or to remind them that He alone was God, is probable.

Now I know you are a man of God and the word of the Lord from your mouth is truth- As with the blind man, Jn 9:3, the lad's sickness was for the glory of God. Her faith in God/ love for God was strengthened through the distress of a time of testing. Rom 5:3-5; Jas 1:2-8; 1 Pet 1:3-9. The woman's closing words are a reminder that it's rather easy for a man to be recognised as a professed/ professional servant of God. Testing times can prove he is in touch with God, and used of God effectively, as a matter of heart and life confession.

The Discipline of Drought ends in the Crisis of Confrontation.

18:1-2 After a long time- It would certainly SEEM long. In a nation where Baal was publicly worshipped, 16:31-33 Elijah challenges the Nation to acknowledge only the LORD as God. The word of the Lord came to Elijah.. present yourself to Ahab- Ahab couldn't find him. I will send rain. So Elijah went- We may be tempted to think what a wonderful man of Faith Elijah was to confront the King, and to call down fire and rain from Heaven, and hope we might build up a Faith like that and do wonderful things. NONSENSE! What a wonderful GOD who promises what HE WILL DO, and lets us share His work by telling us the part we're to play in it. That part may be exciting for us, or may be merely to do the dishes or mow the lawn without complaining. Phil 2:3-16 and speak stumbling words of witness to a neighbour. Famine in Samaria- The stored grain was running out.

18:3-6 Obadiah- His name means Servant of the Lord. GOVERNOR/ in charge of HIS HOUSE/ palace. GREATLY FEARED/ was a devout believer in the Lord. While Jezebel was killing the Lord's prophets he had taken a hundred and hidden them.. fed them- Some of us might criticise him for working for Ahab. I'm sure those prophets didn't. Presumably like Joseph and Daniel he was such a worthy man and

18 7-9 Elijah.. met Obadiah said " Go tell your Master Elijah is here"
" What have I done wrong.. you are handing me over to death?" - No doubt Obadiah had been praying that God would bring an end to the drought, and Elijah was the key, yet he was reluctant to be involved in this. If you've ever prayed earnestly for God to revive and bless your assembly, or your family, and God has said "Well for a start, go and apologise to X.. Go and offer to help Y.. Go and witness to Z.." you'll sympathise with Obadiah, as he says in effect "Why pick on ME! Why expect ME to do THAT! I've been pretty GOOD really, I'm not the problem! Haven't you HEARD.. He'll KILL me." We're all called to be witnesses. Even Elijahs have only one experience of calling down fire from Heaven.

18 10-15 There is not a kingdom where my master has not sent to look for you.. swear they could not find you- This is the inspired record of a godly man, under pressure, saying truthfully that the King has made every possible effort to find Elijah. We must not force the words into the folly of claiming that God is saying that Ahab got the rulers of Egypt, Persia, India, China, etc to swear they weren't hiding Elijah. More to the point is the comfort of knowing that God can keep His servants safely hidden under any circumstances. Elijah was only 100 Kilometres from Samaria, and close to Jezebel's father the King of Sidon who couldn't find him.

As soon as I'm gone the Spirit of the Lord may carry you away- Trying to trust and obey the Lord while living and working in Ahab's palace meant that he was very aware of the risk he was taking. The King was in a desperate mood Obadiah was sure God would continue to keep Elijah safe. By being involved in God's answer to the drought was risking his own life. Having been faithful in doing ONE thing for the Lord - as Obadiah had been - qualifies us for further responsibility in the Lord's work, but it's natural for us to panic rather than praise the Lord for the privilege. In such a situation we need reassurance, and God gives it.

Elijah said "As the Lord OF HOSTS/Almighty lives- A strengthening reminder of the greatness of God, as Lord over all the hosts of Heaven, and all of Creation, who was asking His servant Obadiah to do something for Him. I will show myself to him today."

realities of their desperate situation. A public test to show the real God, and feature His removing the disciplinary drought.

182021 So Ahab sent word throughout Israel and summoned the prophets. Elijah went before all the people and said "How long will you HALT /waver- Pasach- To walk unevenly, limp, as Mephibosheth did, 2 Sam 4:4. Or, as we would with a high heeled shoe on one foot and a sandal on the other. How ridiculous, uncomfortable and crippling that would be. And in the same way there's no glory to God, or good to people, in giving God only PART of our life, Mt 6:24 Jas 1:5-12. They may feel that acknowledging BOTH "Gods" is playing safe. In fact any worship of Baal automatically cuts them off from the Lord, the only God. If the Lord is God, follow Him- Israel made no response to Elijah's challenge. Cp the response to Joshua's challenge, Josh 24:18 and ours to the Lord's challenge given in Mt 6:24.

182225 Elijah said I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left- The 100 6184 may have abandoned the role. Or Elijah may have been wrong as in 1918, but Scripture records his honest view of the situation. Baal has 450 prophets- (No mention of the Asherah prophets. Did Jezebel refuse to send them?) Get two bulls. Let them choose one.. The God who answers by fire - He is God- The priesthood and sacrifices of Aaron and his descendants were authenticated by God sending fire to ignite the sacrifice in Lev 9. It was tested and authenticated against the challenge by Korah, Num 16:35. As Baal was supposed to be the God of Thunder, Storms, Lightning and rain, the DROUGHT had been the appropriate test, and now if there WAS such a God, surely he could ignite the sacrifice by a flash of lightning. Cp Judg 6:31. Elijah gave Baal and his 450 prophets first chance. A sacrifice without fire was folly, ineffective. Fire descending to ignite the sacrifice would be a sure proof that the god to whom the sacrifice had been offered existed, and approved of the offerers and their offering. (For the prophets of Baal to have asked for rain on a specific day, and Elijah to have asked for rain on another day, would have been subject to "chance". This would be a certain test.)

Then all the people said "What you say is good"- Obedient Faith is man's proper response to God. But in mercy God sometimes sets up a test that demonstrates the reality of His existence, His character, and His power, as in the Plagues of Egypt, Ex 6:12.

until sunset. Baal had been given about 6 hours to prove that he existed.

183035Elijah said "Come here. " He repaired the altar of the Lord- So this happened at a High Place where the Lord had previously been worshipped. Elijah took 12 stones one for each of the tribes- Ignoring/disapproving the division into rival kingdoms. Cp Josh 42-10 With the stones he built an altar- Elijah obeyed God's instructions - simple stones, Ex 20:25 and the correct time for the sacrifice BEFORE asking God to work. Obedience is part of any work for God

He arranged the wood, cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood- The normal preparation for a sacrifice

Footnote **22 An Egyptian, Wen Amon, about 1100BC describes similar "worship" in a Temple at Byblos. Ancient Near East Texts, J B Pritchard, P 2529.

Then he said fill four BARR EL S/Jars of water- Earthen-ware jars were used at the time. KJV gives barrel as a dynamic equivalent, as by the time the translation was made barrels had replaced jars for water storage. They did it the third time. the water ran down and filled the ditch- Elijah had made the preparations in full view of the people. There was no NEED for the water to be put on, but he was making it clear that there was no trickery - Only GOD could set that sacrifice alight! **23

183637 At the (proper) time of the sacrifice Elijah stepped forward and prayed "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob- Honouring God with His full title in relation to His people. Cp God's revealing Himself to Moses, Ex 36. Let it be known today that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and have done all these things at your command- The record hasn't said that God had detailed the actions of Elijah, but it's obvious from this that whether God had given the instructions beforehand, or had guided Elijah step by step, He had given Elijah the assurance that what he had done was God's will. God gives His servants such an assurance when it's needed. But we are to step forward in faith to do God's will, in responsible sonship, as best we know it, confident that God will give us further guidance, Gen 22:7, Isa 30:21; Phil 3:15

Answer me Lord so these people will know that you O Lord are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again- The last expression is worth spending thought and prayer on I (and perhaps you) need to

stones. Water. Making it perfectly clear that it was a miraculous intervention. That so many prophets had cried so frantically to Baal for so long with no response, and the Lord had responded at once to the simple, rational request of one man, Elijah, emphasised the reality that He, and He alone, was GOD. When all the people saw this they fell prostrate and cried "The Lord he is God" - An emphatic response to an emphatic action by God.

Footnote **23 Those who are quick to "believe" too much point out a Spring on Carmel as the one from which the water was obtained. Those who refuse to "believe," almost anything ridicule the possibility of in the drought finding so much water close enough to carry to the top of Carmel. But what the Scripture says is that they were gathered TO Mt Carmel, and so presumably the altar was merely somewhere ~~at~~ on Mt Carmel, 1819-20. Carmel is a RANGE of hills/mountains, and later in 1842 Elijah climbed to the top- Rosh- Head of the spur near the place of sacrifice which gave a look-out over the Mediterranean Sea.

1840-41 Then Elijah commanded them "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away"- They had misrepresented God, and their lies had deceived men, corrupting their lives in this world, and damning them eternally. These actions called for their judgment, Deu 7:2-6; 13:13-15; 17:2-5. Elijah brought them down to the Kishon valley and slaughtered them- Not just paying them back for the slaughter of the Lord's Prophets, 184. The Israelites had confessed that the Lord was GOD, but it was necessary for them to act on their decision to make it real. Christians are to leave all Judgment to our Lord, Rom 12:19-21; Rev 20:11-15; 22:19. With us it's a SPIRITUAL slaughter that is required - but that too may be messy.

1841-45 Elijah said to Ahab "Go eat and drink for there is the sound of a heavy rain- Celebrate the end of the drought. Now that Israel has confessed that the Lord is GOD/ their hearts have been turned back to the Lord, the time has come for the drought to be lifted. Elijah was confident God would complete the fulfilment of His promise to him. BUT, he prayed until the rain was seen to be coming.

So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel- So the Altar and sacrifice was lower down the slopes. He bent down to the ground and put his face between His knees- An attitude of humility, concentrating on earnest prayer, Jas 5:17. Go and look towards the sea- The Carmel range juts out into the sea just south of the

6:6-7; 7:5; Deu 5:15 26:5-9; Isa 5:25 26:9 12:17; 104; Jer 21:5; 32:16-22 Ezek 14:13 16:27 of the Lord came upon Elijah, and tucking up his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel- Probably about 40 Kilometres

19:1-21 Elijah Resigns & is Re-Commissioned

19:1-4 Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done- It seems Ahab ignored the LORD's involvement in the events at Carmel, and had made no commitment to Him as he's recorded as telling to Jezebel what had happened, as if Elijah alone was responsible. Human nature prefers to ignore God and talk about the preacher, his words and actions, whether approving and responding or not. We must ever be looking off from man, to God Himself, or all that God does for us may be wasted. killed (Bad's) prophets, So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah "May the gods. if I do not make your life like that of one of them"- Jezebel was a strong character. Fire from heaven didn't change her thinking. She was beyond repentance. Exhausted after his tremendous day, and faced with the fact that Jezebel remained unchanged, and Ahab couldn't or wouldn't restrain her, Elijah felt that all he had done (and could do) left the situation of apostasy unchanged.

Elijah SAW/was afraid- The KJV correctly translates the Massoretic Text. It suggests that Elijah SAW/ understood the situation, but from a natural, human point of view in which Jezebel loomed very large and near, while the Lord seemed uncaring and distant. In his exhausted state it would be easy for him to feel sorry for himself, with THIS threat, the only obvious consequence of his triumphant service for the Lord. LXX has WAS AFRAID. The Hebrew word, if different vowel points are added to those added by the Massoretes, means AFRAID.

and ran for his life- There's no suggestion that the Lord sent him, but the Lord never abandons His servants, Isa 49:13-16 6:39, Mt 28:20 Heb 13:5-6. When he came to Beersheba in Judah- About 160 Kilometres away. he left his servant there- Abraham also left his servants, Gen 22:5, to face God alone, as in a sense every man must while he went a day's journey into the desert- He left the Land God gave Israel. He is

ONERONS who snap and the strong. THE WEAK coming to the Lord, conscious of their weakness and He is able to make them stand, Rom 14:4. Cp 2Cor 12:9-10 See Appendix II ELIJAH as an Example to us.

19:5-8 He lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep- In sheer exhaustion. A great servant of God reduced to seeking refuge in a desert, as if God had deserted him. An angel touched him and said "Get up and eat." and thereby his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals- Bread dough would have fed him, but God comforted him with a well baked loaf to assure him of His continuing care for him. It's also a reminder that as at Kerith, Zarephath, and Carmel, God is LIVING/LIFE-GIVING/LIFE SUSTAINING.

The Angel of the Lord- Sometimes this title seems to refer to pre-incarnation appearances of the Son of God, as to Abraham, Gen 22:1-18 and Moses, Ex 32, came a second time, touched him and said "Get up and eat."

So he got up, ate and drank. Strengthened by that food he travelled 40 days- Unbelieving Israel spent 40 years in the desert. Discouraged Elijah spent 40 days crossing it, although a man on foot should have taken about half that time. Moses spent 40 days with the Lord without eating and drinking in preparation for a new phase of his service, Ex 24:18-25:1-; 34:28 and the Lord was tempted 40 days in the wilderness before taking up His public ministry, Mt 4:1-2 until he reached Horeb- Ex 31:2. Another name for Sinai, Ex 17:6; Deu 12, etc. the mountain of God- It doesn't say that God had told him to do this, but it was a natural and right desire to get back to God/ where God began the covenant relationship.

19:9-12 He went into a cave and spent the night. The word of the Lord came to him "What are you doing here Elijah?" Cp Where are you? to Adam, Gen 3:8-9. God is deeply concerned about where His people are, and what they are doing - concerned for their eternal good. He knows the answers to His questions, but asks such questions so that His people are forced to ask themselves the question. This helps us to see what He sees, and be willing to put ourselves into His hands.

He replied "I have been very zealous for the Lord OF HOSTS/Almighty" - I have been eagerly obeying the Lord as Commander of His armies. The Israelites have rejected your commands, broken down your

The Lord said Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord. BEHOLD THE LORD PASSED/is about to pass by- Cp Moses, Ex 33:15-34:7. God was revealing Himself, and His power to Elijah to initiate a new stage of the unfolding of His purposes for His people.

Then a great powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind- The Lord showed that He had tremendous invisible power at His disposal, but that wasn't His usual way of working. After the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake- The Lord could easily terrify people, shaking and shattering all their security, but that isn't His usual way of working. This could have reminded Elijah that although he might think God should intervene in violent ways to bring Israel to repentance, unless unavoidable, that isn't the way God chooses to act.

After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord wasn't in the fire- God had revealed Himself in awesome fire at Mt Carmel, accepting the sacrifice of His servant Elijah. The fire of His holiness could just as easily have consumed unbelieving Israel, and they knew it. But that isn't God's usual way of working.

And after the fire came a STILL SMALL VOICE/gentle whisper- Almighty God does speak in the dramatic events of life, Ex 19:9, 16-20; Deu 5:23-26; Ps 18:7-12; Isa 6:1-4; 13:13, 29:6, but He chooses to speak most often, and most clearly, in the quietness of men's inner beings, their thoughts and consciences. This rebukes all religionists who rely on shouting and spectacular claims and actions, and ignore the quiet patient witness of loving actions, and loyal-to-God persuasive kindness. It's not only those who make a great show of their faith, who are doing God's work in our world.

19:13-14 When Elijah heard it he pulled his cloak over his face- With His hand God protected Moses from seeing His intolerable Glory. Elijah humbly hid his own face. A voice said "What are you doing here?" Elijah replied "I have been"- He still sounds as if he was disappointed in God/ about the way things had worked out. As he uses the same words to answer God's question it seems he has failed to get the idea that God works/ is working in gentle ways that men can be aware of.

in Gods work, and read others to complement John Baptist saw clearly that this was his position, and rejoiced in it, Mt 3:1-17; Jn 11:9-28 3:25-31. So must we all. The Glory and Triumph are the Lord's alone - we can't enlist HIM in our work for Him, Josh 5:13-15 Mt 16:18

19.15-18 The Lord said "Go back the way you came" - Often for us too, as Gods servants, our first step forward with God is to retrace our footsteps. Cp Abraham, Gen 13:3-4. Anoint Hazael King over SYRIA/Aram- a ruthless ambitious Ididater, 2 Ki 8:8-15 etc. As with Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, etc such men do Gods STRANGE/Alien (to His preference Ezek 18:32 Mt 23:37) work of puritive Justice Isa 28:14-21. Anoint Jehu king of Israel- A competent but reckless man, good at killing people for God, without himself really worshipping God

And anoint Elisha- His name means "God saves/ God is Salvation" The violent aggressive work of Elijah was needed to get a hearing for Gods message. Elisha followed, working more closely with kings, etc in the next stage. John the Baptist was the Elijah figure. Jesus/ Jehoshua- "The Lord Saves/ The Salvation of the Lord," followed him and lived closely with people, Mt 11:16-19. But once more the mass of the nation refused both. son of Shaphat- The name means "One who judges" to succeed you as prophet- Elisha was Godly, but seemingly too rich and busy to work for God

Jehu will put to death any who escape from Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu- This had particular reference to Gods judgment on the house of Ahab. Yet I have LEFT ME /reserve- Shaar- A remainder, remnant, a group reserved. 7000 in Israel whose knees have not bowed to Baal- Joined in public worship. whose mouths have not kissed him- In heart's affection

19.19-21 So Elijah went from there- We're not to try to spend as much of our time as possible isolated from the world, trying to enjoy fellowship with the Lord. We need to come apart and rest in His presence to be refreshed and re-directed, but then go out with Him to share with Him His work in the world. Found Elisha- The nearest to hand of his new task, and the most congenial. It's good for us to do the same, be strengthened by doing so, and then reach out further with/ for God He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen- Energetically engaged in

But if you are working in a most natural way, do his own thing, show off, and ignore those he expects to follow him. He can do more good caring for the work, and the team as a whole, keeping them before him, and paying for them, following up what is done.

Elijah threw his MANTLE /Cloak around him- An acted Parable, saying "You're to wear my cloak, take up my work, but also, probably you're to carry it for me - be my servant in the work of God, until you take over my work." Often the most effective way to learn to do God's work is to help others by sharing the work God has given them to do Lk 16:12, Acts 16:1-3; 1 Cor 4:16. The Lord Himself set this pattern of making disciples, and ordered us to carry it on, Mt 28:19.

19.2021 Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye- God has commanded us to honour them. It doesn't honour God to dash here and there to do what we see to be His will for us, and leave behind us a trail of unfinished work and unfulfilled promises/obligations, Mt 15:3-9. But there is also the danger that we may use our obligations to parents or others as an excuse to not do what God has asked us to do when we don't want to do it, Mt 8:21.

"Go back," Elijah said "What have I done to you" - Elijah refuses to accept responsibility for taking over Elisha's life. He has passed on the Lord's call, but Elisha must deal with the Lord for himself, and accept His direction. The Lord checked volunteers, with a reminder that they should count the cost before making a commitment, rather than to take up the work hastily, and then turn back, Lk 9:57-62, 14:25-35 (Not that there is any virtue in hating anyone, but if falsely, for selfish reasons, the parent says "If you choose to put pleasing the Lord above pleasing me, you hate me," we must accept that slander against us, and still obey the Lord. On the other hand to set out thoughtlessly to serve the Lord, and find we haven't the ability or stickability to cope with that service, and have to quit, shames the Lord in the eyes of the world, and may mean that the once eager volunteer is too ashamed to attempt again to work for the Lord.)

Elisha went back, took his oxen and slaughtered them, burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people and they ate- An acted parable. This would have given time for his parents to join them in a farewell feast in fellowship together with Elijah. A

freshly proud or ambitious. HE would be serving a prophet who was under a death sentence, and WE are called, to take up a position, not of power and glory among God's people, but to serve a crucified Lord, by sharing that Cross, Gal 2:20

set out to follow Elijah, MINISTERS UNTIL became his attendant- As Joshua did with Moses, Ex 24:13 Num 27:18-23 Deu 34:21-22 27:28 34:9. Elisha cuts himself off from the this-world security of the old life, and places himself in God's hands for the service of God and His servant, 2 Cor 8:1-5.

201-43 God shows Ahab that He can look after His people.

201-4. Now Ben-Hadad- "Son of the god Hadad," is the name of a number of Syrian kings - perhaps more of a title than a personal name. mustered his entire army accompanied by 32 kings- From the small countries under his domination with their horses and chariots and besieged Samaria- It was obviously a good time to attack as Israel had been weakened by three years of drought.

He sent messengers to Ahab saying "Your silver and Gold are mine and the best of your wives and children"- Demanding that Ahab accept him as Overlord and place himself, his property, and family at Ben-Hadad's disposal. The King of Israel answered "Just as you say my lord, I and all I have are yours"- Israel had been crippled by drought, and Ben-Hadad had cut them off from any chance to recruit a bigger army. Ahab and Israel had now confessed that the Lord WAS GOD, so in a sense Ahab was being challenged to take his stand with the Lord and claim His protection. He failed to, but God didn't let this challenge pass.

205-8 I am going to send my officials to search your Palace. they will seize everything of value and carry it away- Insulting Ahab by emphasizing the fact that he and Israel were helpless. All he had would be looted just as if he had been conquered in battle. The King of Israel summoned the elders and said "See how he is looking for trouble"- By not accepting an honorable surrender from Ahab that left him to choose what to hand over as a reasonable tribute. The elders and people said "Don't agree to his demands"- Sometimes the Devil,

The king of Israel answered "One who puts on his armour - before the battle, should not boast like one who takes it off" - Having won the battle, Ahab speaks bravely, but knows he's cornered. Yet in sovereign Grace God steps in to tell Ahab that now he has been goaded into being willing to fight. He can give him the victory, if he will obey Him. Ben-Hadad ordered "Prepare to attack" - Over-confident and so busy celebrating his victory he couldn't interrupt the party to lead them.

2013-15 Meanwhile a prophet - One of the 7000 Elijah in his despair ignored, came to Ahab and announced "The Lord says. This vast army I will give into your hand today, and you will know that I am the Lord" - We too are called to step out in Faith in our hopeless situations, and say our feeble word for God and the Gospel. "But who will do this?" asked Ahab - In effect putting himself at the Lord's disposal, and asking for orders. The prophet replied "This is what the Lord says. The young MEN OF THE PRINCES OF THE PROVINCES/officers of the provincial commanders will - Probably professional young soldiers who acted as bodyguards for the Governors, and were used to enforce their orders. Being used to action these would be suitable for first contact with the enemy, and an encouragement to the ordinary recruits that followed them.

"Who will start the battle?" "You will" - This was in a sense almost as daring a step of Faith as David took in facing Goliath, and as great a triumph. The difference was that David didn't have to be manoeuvred into a position where he had no alternative except absolute disgrace. I must confess with shame, and with delight in my Lord, that I too can look back on occasions when He used me to His glory, even though too acted only because I couldn't back out of the situation without the embarrassment of conscious disgrace. HE NUMBERED/summoned the young MEN/officers, 232 men. Then he assembled the rest of the Israelites 7000 in all - Against a large army.

2016-21 They went out at noon while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings were in their tents getting drunk - Common sense suggests that when the leaders of an army use their position for self-indulgence, while they send their men into battle, as in this case, it's unlikely that the men will feel like being heroic. History has often demonstrated that

running away from a smaller enemy army is an abstract idea that carries little weight with people who realise that they are likely to get killed if they don't run for home fast. Ben-Hadad had not been an inspiring leader, and the war had been quite unnecessary.

Ben-Hadad escaped on horseback - And seeing that there was no reason for his soldiers to keep on fighting bravely. The King of Israel advanced.. overpowered.. inflicted heavy losses on the SYRIANS/ Arameans- Just as God had promised through His prophet/messenger.

202225 The prophet came to the king of Israel and said strengthen your position.. FOR AT THE RETURN OF THE YEAR /next spring-Summer and Autumn for harvesting Winter for plowing and sowing wheat and barley while the rains lasted. Then while the crops were growing and grazing for animals was plentiful, men could be spared from their farms to form an army. the king of SYRIA/Aram will attack again.

The servants of the king advised him " Their gods are gods of the hills. That is why they were too strong for us, but if we fight on the plains. Remove all the kings and replace them with CAPTAINS/officers- Pride is the universal folly and sin. Ben-Hadad's pride, and that of his nation, required them to believe it wasn't their fault they had lost the battle. They were sure their gods would be stronger than Israel's gods on the plain. Fielding an identical army would prove this - except that having professional officers who would lead the men to fight, would replace the kings who enjoyed getting drunk with Ben-Hadad.

202628 Ben-Hadad.. went to Aphek to fight Israel. The Israelites.. two small flocks of goats, SYRIANS/ Arameans covered the countryside- The size of the enemy army would have been depressing to the Israelites until the man of God told the king " This is what the Lord says, because the SYRIANS/ Arameans think the Lord is a god of the Hills, not of the valleys I will deliver this great army into your hands and you will know that I am the Lord- An important demonstration lesson - God is GOD, everywhere. But we need to do His will or His help is WASTED on us. For 7 days they camped over against each other- Ben-Hadad may have waited for divination to show it would be a lucky day for him. But also it made sense for an army to camp on a

adorable baby to the bite of his longer enemy, whose mistress prevent him then from biting) Perhaps he will spare your life.

Wearing Sackcloth they went to the king of Israel and said "Your servant- Ebed- Bondservant, slave, as Ahab had called himself in 209. Ben-Hadad says "Please let me live." The king answered.. "He is my brother." The men DID DILIGENTLY OBSERVE/ took this as a good sign- Nachash- To hisslike as snake, whisper words of divination. The other meaning of Nachash is Serpent/snake. The officials and Ben-Hadad were acting with serpent cunning

Footnote **24 These numbers seem too high. Shalmaneser of Assyria claims Syria contributed 22,400 men, and Ahab 12,000 to the coalition army that fought him at Qarqar in BC 854. That walls of a town could fall and crush so many soldiers is puzzling. Even if they were casemate walls (Inner and outer walls with rooms between) and the rooms packed with soldiers when the whole wall collapsed the wall would need to be a mile long. Some commentators, as usual, point out that figures are easily mis-copied. Others say it may mean 27,000 soldiers were exposed defenceless when the walls fell. Wiseman points out that Eleph- THOUSAND, and Alluph- OFFICER, were both originally written in the same way, until the vowels were inserted (perhaps wrongly) after NT times. Personally I think when faced by puzzling statements in God's Word, it's God-honouring to admit that they ARE puzzling, but that we're happy to wait for the Lord to clear the matter up for us when we are called into His Glorious presence IF we're still interested. There are so many wonderful CLEAR statements in God's Word, it's our responsibility to concentrate on responding gladly and obediently to them - Walking in the Light we have, rather than risk losing it by fretting over unimportant details, or clouding our vision with rank unbelief, Mt 6:19-24 Jn 12:35-36 1 Jn 1:4-9.

and were quick to pick up his word "Yes, your brother Ben-Hadad." When Ben-Hadad came out, Ahab had him come up into his chariot- Perhaps, following an ancient custom, Ben-Hadad had put his shoulder to the chariot wheel as a symbol that he (like the horses that pulled it) was now a humble servant of Ahab. Ahab seems to have been totally indifferent to the evil Israel had suffered from Ben-Hadad, and the need for righteous judgment. The glory of having his dreaded enemy Ben-Hadad now grovelling before him, and pleading for mercy seems to have pleased Ahab so much that he was quite willing for Ben-Hadad to live so that this situation could continue. Of course it wouldn't, and didn't, but in the meantime Ahab was flattered.

203540 By the word of the Lord one of the sons of the prophets- "Sons" in the sense of disciples and followers of the Lord's prophets, 2 Ki 2:3-7, 15:4:1, 38:5:22 6:1; 9:1. said to his neighbour "Strike me with your weapon," but the man refused- Certainly refusing would seem to have made sense. We must assume that if the man had been willing to do God's will, he would have known that he should do so.

So the prophet said "Because you have not obeyed the Lord.. a lion will kill you" - Presumably Lions, not being sinful rebels as men are, automatically respond to the will of God. This one did- killed him. The prophet found another man and said "Strike me please," so the man wounded him- Being an obedient servant of God and used by him often involves suffering but suffering in this form may well be unique.

The prophet stood by the road waiting for the king. He disguised himself- If, as would be appropriate, he was the prophet who had twice brought God's message to the King promising victory, it was important that the king not recognise him, so he would give his instinctive verdict, and condemn his own action by doing so. with ASHES/his headband- Epher UPON HIS FACE /over his eyes- Ayin- Eyes.

As the king passed by, the prophet called out- Tsaag- Cried for help, as the people CRIED to Pharaoh for bread, Gen 4:15 Your servant went into the battle.. someone with a captive said "Guard this man. if he is missing it will be your life for his life or you must pay a talent of silver"- An impossibly large amount of money for an ordinary man to possess. Only if he could get that much silver loot would it be worth risking losing the prisoner. While your servant was busy- Fighting for his life? But more likely collecting his own share of the loot the man disappeared." "That is your sentence" the king of Israel said- In other words, you are responsible for your failure to hold the prisoner, and the penalty which you have related to me still stands. I as your king agree to it being carried out. By giving the correct verdict on another person, Ahab showed that he should have been aware of his own guilt and avoided it, Rom 2:1-3. By this Ahab condemned himself, as King David did in response to Nathan's parable.

2041-4 The prophet TOOK THE ASHES AWAY /removed the headband.. the king recognised him. The Lord says "You set free a

Therefore it is your inheritance for this inheritance, your people for this people. Sarar/Sarar- To be obstinate, stubborn. Resentment not repentance in response to God's message. and angry the king went to his palace in Samaria- Contrast this with David's sincere repentance when rebuked by God through Nathan. Ahab may have been remorseful, but he resented God's rebuke, and showed no sign of repentance. An attitude that would steer him into more trouble. His unjustified kindness to his godless enemy Ben Hadad is followed by the ruthless killing of godly Naboth.

21:1-29 Elijah finishes his work with Ahab.

21:1-4 Later.. Ahab said to Naboth let me have your vineyard to use as a garden since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard, or.. pay you whatever it is worth- To a materialist, measuring everything in terms of cash value and advantage in this world, Ahab was acting sensibly and fairly. They would think Naboth should have gladly done the best deal he could. Often Kings and Dictators have simply taken what they wanted.

But Naboth replied "The Lord forbid"- Or it has been forbidden by the Lord, Lev 25:23-28 Num 36:7-12 that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers- Naboth wasn't a materialist. He was an Israelite, one of God's people. Under God's Law Israelites were God's tenants committed to living in the land in fellowship with Him. And also committed to passing the land onto their descendants generation after generation. If the land was "sold" under some circumstances it came back to the family at the end of seven years.

Certainly at the fiftieth year "Jubilee" ALL land went back to the descendants of the family to whom it had been originally granted. In effect every Israelite then had the chance to rise out of poverty and misfortune. That was a wonderful socio-economic provision. It was also a wonderful challenge to live in fellowship with God spiritually, and work the land in stewardship-fellowship with the One who gave it to them. Naboth's action showed that he acknowledged something of this. See Appendix III Freedom Under God - Rights & Responsibilities.

money, or for those who say exercising leadership in the world is among God's people, are exposed to the risk of this, and are in special need of our prayers. Home schooling can be a blessing, but apart from God's grace and parental wisdom, it can be a hothouse that produces rank growth of personality that would have been cut back by interaction with the brutal honesty common among children in general, who usually make sure their playmates reap what they sow.

21:5-8 His wife Jezebel asked him "Why..?" - When God/His servants ask us "Why?" by His grace it can start us thinking so that we see ourselves as God sees us, and opens the way for our repentance, restoration, and blessing. In God's order husbands and wives are to comfort and strengthen one another, but we should constantly thank God for partners who limit that to comforting and strengthening us IN DOING THE WILL OF GOD, and (prayerfully/ sensitively/ sympathetically) help us to feel uncomfortable in fleshly or worldly attitudes, and weaken our resolve to get what we want at the expense of others.

Jezebel said "Is that how you act as king?" - Amazed that a KING should allow himself to be stopped from getting what he wanted - Pagan Kings didn't act like that "LET THINE HEART BE MERRY / Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard" - Ahab had married a heathen wife in defiance of God's command. So, it's not surprising that she comforted him by involving him in defying God and getting what he wanted by deceit and murder. This was encouraging him to go on apply to his own destruction.

She wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal **25 on them,

Footnote **25 As Queen she would have had a seal of her own, for use on matters that were her personal business. A seal with JEZEBEL on it has been found. It may have been hers. Bar 932.

and sent them to the elders and nobles- By letting her act on his behalf, Ahab may have felt cleaner as she did the dirty work. He wasn't. We who minister God's word, must accept responsibility, under God, for what others may say and do as a result of the attitudes and actions they see in us, and the words they hear and read from us - in our impatient moments, as well as in our pious hours. When we stand at the Bema we will see everything as it really was, and see the effects of everything. Let us heed Paul's words and example, 2 Cor 5:7-11. And may we, in the

USA, Church leader, etc is automatically a target for accusations of present or past scandalous behaviour, whether justified or not. It seems to me that Satan is quite capable of offering "Christian Leaders," apparent success and prominence, Lk 4:5-7, that exposes them to temptation and their follies or sins are gleefully trumpeted widely by the Media.) When we hear of Godly men being prominent and praised, does that move us to criticise them? or, as it should do to pray earnestly that they may be kept from folly.

Seat two- God's Law required two witnesses when condemning to death, Deu 17:6. SONS OF BELIAL /scoundrels- In Hebrew idiom their character and actions were of their father the Devil, Jn 8:44 have them testify that he has cursed- Barak, usually to Bless but here as in CURSE God and die, Job 29. (Perhaps because Scribes felt it wrong to write that someone cursed God) God and the King. Take him out and stone him to death. The elders did as Jezebel directed them- Predictably. Even Elijah took her announcements seriously. took him outside the city- As required by God's Law, Lev 24:14-16 etc. LXX adds and his sons. Cp 2Ki 9:26 Then they sent word to Jezebel.

21:15-16 Jezebel.. said " Get up and take.. Naboth is dead. Ahab.. went to take possession- Showing no concern for HOW it happened, or for his dependents/paying them the price Like a spoiled infant his one concern was that he had got what he wanted. We can understand this as our daily news is filled with ugly stories of men and women, physically adult, but morally infantile, who, like a toddler in a tantrum, have done what they FELT LIKE DOING with total disregard for the consequences to themselves or others. There is no fear of/sense of responsibility towards GOD, before their eyes and no love for others. Cp the effect of turning from God recorded in Rom 1:18-32

21:17-19 The word of the Lord came to Elijah " Go down and meet Ahab. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession"- Whatever Elijah had heard of the matter, or not heard, God was fully informed. To this day His obedient servants find at times that what He has moved them to say has spoken directly to a situation of which they were unaware. Say to him.. the Lord says " Have you not murdered a man and seized his property.. Where the dogs have

I am going to bring disaster on you.. make your house like the house of Jeroboam.. and Baasha, because you have provoked me to anger and caused Israel to sin- It isn't that God is irritable. His love for His people, makes inevitable His anger against those who corrupt them, as any good parent is angry against those who corrupt their children.

21:23-26 The Lord says dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel- Packs of Jackal-like dogs savaged the cities in those days. An ugly and disgusting end to the life of someone whose spiritual life had been ugly and disgusting

There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, STIRRED UP/urged on by his wife- SETH- ENTICED, Deu 13:6, INCITED, 1 Sam 26:19, although the word is used in a good sense of Othniel's wife urging him to ask for ownership of springs. Josh 15:18. Apart from receiving Christ as our Saviour, the most important choice we may make is that of a life's partner. If in this we choose with God, we will never have cause to regret our choice

He behaved VERY ABOMINABLY /in the vilest manner going after the idols of the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel- Making all the fighting and slaughter involved in that, pointless

21:27-29 IT CAME TO PASS- Hayah- It was. KJV uses this formal way of translating this Hebrew word. Ahab heard.. he RENT /tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted.. and went around SOFTLY /meekly- As in Gen 3:14; Isa 8:6. Not merely the outward form of expressing regret for the actions so vividly condemned by the Lord through Elijah. He modified his behaviour by not acting without thinking first whether he should do this or that. Cp David 2 Sam 12:13

The word of the Lord came to Elijah. "Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has. I will not bring the disaster in his day"- God acts in perfect Righteousness and perfect Love. Ahab had remained unchanged by God's discipline, and display of power as in chapter 18 and grace and power as in chapter 20. But now God had given him a final blunt warning such as Jeroboam and Baasha had received and ignored. Ahab pulls back from his defiance of God, at least temporarily, and God who delights in mercy adjusts His

to invade the land that was under the protection of Israel's God. But he had no intention of giving up to Ahab the land he had promised. **26

But in the 3rd year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went to see the king of Israel - Better than fighting together, but Jehoshaphat had already married Ahab's daughter Athaliah, 2 Ki 8:26 which was courting disaster. The king of Israel said to his officials "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us, and we're doing nothing to retake it" - Ben-Hadad had said he was giving it back to Ahab, 20:34 So he asked Jehoshaphat "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat replied "I am as you are." - Ahab had been trying to be GOOD, and to honor God by being sorry for himself and his sin, 21:29 He puts this behind him and goes back to pleasing himself now that the Leader of God's people befriends him and supports him in claiming his "RIGHTS!" This is a sobering thought. How often TODAY leading so-called Christians hit the news headlines in support of groups who defy God in defying what He says in His Word the Bible!

22:5-8 But Jehoshaphat also said "First seek counsel of the Lord" - To say YES first, and then see if you can get God to support you is a human failing that happens even with the Godly. We should be so living in the Lord's presence that His will is considered and done. But we find it easy to let those in whose presence we are to sway our thinking and choices. Knowing this should arm us against doing so.

Footnote **26 Israel and Syria may have in fact been allies as Ben-Hadad had promised. A stone pillar of Shalmaneser of Assyria records that at a battle at Qarqar in 853BC his army fought against an army led by Ben-Hadad, to which Ahab contributed 2,000 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers. Shalmaneser says he won the battle, but his army withdrew for about 5 years. The Assyrians having been driven off, and Syria weakened, may have encouraged Ahab to attack.

So the king brought together the prophets, about 400 So many willing to take up the responsibility of being God's messengers to the King and his government. But, presumably associated with the apostate golden calf "worship of the Lord" at Bethel and Dan. and asked them "Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead?" "Go up they answered, for the Lord will give it into the king's hand" - The TAME prophets all agree, saying in effect "Do what you want to do and God will Bless you and

he is Micaiah. The king should not say that, so Micaiah replied- That what God had to say pleased one or not, was not the main point

229-14 The king called "Bring Micaiah at once" Dressed in their royal robes the King of Israel and the King of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor- A smooth area of hard earth or flat rock. by the gate of Samaria. All the prophets were prophesying before them. Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made a pair of horns and he declared "This is what the Lord says, With these you will gore the SYRIANS/Arameans"- An acted parable. Those who believe in magic believe that such actions could help make the real thing happen. All were prophesying the same thing "Attack Ramoth Gilead.. the Lord will give it into the king's hand"- The Lord had given him victory in the last two battles, but they ignored the Lord's word in 2042

The messenger to Micaiah said "Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success. let your word agree with theirs." But Micaiah said "As surely as the Lord lives- Not an empty oath. The fact that Micaiah knew the living Lord and was in fellowship with Him meant that he would tell Ahab only what the Lord tells me."

2215-18 The king asked him "Micaiah shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead?" "Attack and be victorious he answered." In view of the verses before and after, it's obvious that while the form of words was what the king wanted, the way he said them showed them to be mockery. As if to say "Here's what you want me to say isn't it- you can believe it if you like, but it's nonsense."

The king said "How many times- To make a king look the fool he is being may be for his good but it's likely to be resented. But now he had refused the false assurance from Micaiah that he'd lapped up from the others, Ahab shouldn't complain when Micaiah speaks God's truth.

Micaiah answered "I saw all Israel scattered like sheep without a Shepherd- The Lord Himself was Israel's Shepherd, Ps 231; Isa 4011; Jer 31:10, Ezek 3412, but Rulers were supposed to be under-shepherds for Him, Num 2715-17. and the Lord said "These have no master. Let each go home in peace" The King of Israel said "Didn't I tell you- That it was the truth meant less to him than that it wasn't what he

children, and they truly are. But compare them as that at best. For times they had access to God's presence, and Satan was expected to report on his stewardship, Job 16-12, 21-6. And was used to the blessing of Job/ the glory of God - ultimately - even in doing the evil he willed. A lying spirit is pictured as doing something like that in this case. **27 The circumstances under which the Lord ordains that men be deceived are made clear in 2Th 2:10-12. It's a righteous judgment on those like Ahab who have refused to love the truth, and have delighted in wickedness.

The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths. has decreed disaster for you, 2042 Zedekiah slapped Micaiah.. Which way went the spirit from the Lord from me to speak to you- Still insolently confident in the face of a true word from God Micaiah replied "You will find out" - All prophecies are tested by the events as they happen.

222628 The King ordered "Take Micaiah.. prison.. until I return safely." Micaiah declared "If you return safely the Lord has not spoken through me. HEAR KEN/Mark my words all you people"- It's more important that the people as a whole are impressed with the reality of God, and His word, than that any king get what he wanted.

222930 The King of Israel and the King of Judah went to Ramoth Gilead- Ignoring the Lord's advice, so asking for it was dishonest, Ezek 33:30-33 Lk 6:46 The king of Israel said I will disguise myself, but you wear your royal robes- **28 Against God's will Godly Jehoshaphat makes friends with goddisobeying Ahab. So Ahab repays his friendship

Footnote **27 I've assumed that Micaiah's statement was factual, not a teaching parable to explain how so many prophets were united in telling lies in the Lord's name. It isn't always possible to be sure whether a fact is being related, or, as in Judges 9, a teaching parable is being given.)

Footnote **28 Instead of making helpful comment Devries argues that Ahab couldn't have said this as in 22:10 they were already in royal robes! Ahab is talking about battle strategy at a time and place distant from 22:10. But with pages of complex argument using such clever nonsense critics try to "prove" this chapter isn't factual.

thought "This is the King of Israel"- Ahab's plan seemed to be working well. But when Jehoshaphat cried out- Zaaq- Used of an army etc being called out, Josh 8:16 etc. But also used of Israel CRYING to God for help, Ex 22:3 Judg 39, 15 6:6, etc. The latter seems to be the sense here - Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord for help, and God over-ruled so that his attacker realised he wasn't Ahab.

But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armour- God isn't foded. Ahab could disguise himself, but an unnamed nobody killed him without knowing he had. We reap what we sow, 2042 Gal 6:7-10 the king was propped up in his chariot facing the SYRIANS/Arameans- Ahab had many faults, but it seems he wasn't a coward/didn't want his army to be discouraged. All day the battle raged.. that evening he died. A cry throughout the army "Every man to his town.. his land"- As Micah had said.

2237-40 So the King died.. And they washed the chariot at a pond in Samaria where HIS ARMOUR/the prostitutes- Zondh **29 A plural form of Zanaah- Prostitute. WASHED/bathed- Possibly referring to the Shrine prostitutes associated with the worship of Baal. Figuratively Ahab had prostituted himself to Baal, so this was appropriate. And the dogs licked up his blood as the word of the Lord had declared.

NOW/AS FOR THE REST /other events Ahab's reign, the palace he built and inlaid with ivory- Excavations at Samaria have shown that Ahab's Palace was faced with polished white limestone which gave an ivory-like appearance. Also many remains of ivory inlays from walls and furniture have been found the cities he fortified- There are indications that he fortified Megiddo and Hazor. Ahab's alliance with Sidon like Solomon's alliance with Egypt, 3:1, had political and commercial benefits, and in material terms he may have stood high in secular records. Ahaziah his son succeeded him.

2241-50 Jehoshaphat.. became king.. reigned 25 years- There was an overlap apparently when he was co-ruler with his father Aza.

Footnote **29 The word is used here only. KJV translators thought because it was mentioned with the chariot it might mean armour.

the Egyptians did this to prevent them competing for the caravan trade. The Edomites weren't free to destroy them, 2247, 2Ki 3:8.

Ahaziah said "Let my men go with your men," but Jehoshaphat refused. Under God he may have learned from his experience of partnership with Ahab, 2Chr 19:2-11. The link with Israel and Sidon offered profitable use of the trade route, but see 2Chr 20:35-37. (Apparently he had worked with Ahaziah for a time.) In my youth a solemn message on "The Lord has broken your works," was used by God to warn me of the inevitable consequences of work attempted for God that ignored 2Cor 6:14-18. Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers. Jehoram his son succeeded him. A fuller account is in 2Chr 17-20.

2251-53 Ahaziah became king in Samaria. He reigned 2 years. He did evil because he walked in the ways of his father and mother. What a wicked disaster. Parents, and ministers of God's word, need to remember always the consequences of their example and teaching, and often pray for the Lord's help. He served and worshipped Baal and provoked the Lord to anger as his father had done.

Appendix I HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Ahab, Jezebel & Elijah

Ahab is THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE caught between JEZEBEL and ELIJAH. Modern mankind are still pressured by the materialistic world, yet faced with the challenge of God's Word. As a normal human being he doesn't want to be particularly GOOD, or BAD. He just wants to do what he feels like doing, get on well in this world, without being pushed around by other people, or hearing what God wants him to do.

He's a KING, a FREE MAN with the right to do what he wants to do. Well YES! God HAS given every one of us SOVEREIGNTY over our lives. The freedom to CHOOSE how we'll react to life's opportunities, and temptations. And God has given us the RESPONSIBILITY to choose wisely, KNOWING THAT WHATEVER WE SOW, WE WILL REAP! If not NOW, eternally!

viewing it from afar shows it up as NOT a good idea, as the rich man in Lk 16:19 realised. People say "You can always stop the bus and get off when you want to." Can you? Actually, NO! Ask any alcoholic or other drug addict - The freedom to START is there, but there is little freedom to STOP.

God in His Word clears away all the uncertainty and shows us that there are TWO options only - The TRUTH, or the LIE. The RIGHT and the WRONG. LOVE or HATE. BUILD or DESTROY. GOD or the DEVIL. HEAVEN or HELL. But, just as the God of this world binds men's eyes against the truth of the Gospel, he also binds the eyes of Christians to the responsibilities Salvation places upon them, and to the consequences of our self-willed actions, 2Pet 1:1-11; 1 Jn 2:11. We're safe from folly and sin only as we put God and His Kingdom FIRST in our lives, Mt 6:18-33 Gal 1:3-5; Phil 3:7-21; Col 3:1-17; 1 Jn 1:5-10, etc. This involves us making the choice Paul did in Gal 2:20.

As an example of this "blindness" two women have said to me "I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT! I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD! They were believers who had been in an Assembly, found married life dull - caring for young children, having little money to spend on entertainment as paying off the mortgage on their house came first, etc. They had walked out of it into new relationships, and their lives were now a mess and misery. But they couldn't go back to their home and children as their husbands had remarried. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY is spoken by God in LOVE to protect us from ourselves and wrong choices. So is THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT IDOLATRY - Put anything else in God's place and live for it. When we do, while it LOOKS like FREEDOM, doing "My own thing," we soon prove the truth of our Lord's words "Those who sin become the slave of sin." The only freedom possible to man is the freedom of SONSHIP when the Son of God sets us free, Jn 8:34-36.

(Learn to be careful about the words you use, the world skilfully twists their meaning so they lose their bite on our conscience "That was a bit NAUGHTY wasn't it?" SOUNDS different from "What a ROTTEN thing to do" But the NAUGHTY figs, KJV Jer 24:2, were ROTTEN figs. Our English language is ever being changed with a view to trivialising words that might reach men's consciences. The more often we use honest words that make sin sound like SIN the kinder we are.)

Pity poor Ahab and his folly. But be WARNED by Ahab. He thought he could ignore God and get away with it. No-one can. No-one does.

If all they hear from us is casual complaining remarks about the weather, the Government, aches and pains, work and family, they MAY believe there's a God in Heaven, but will have no reason to believe there's a God in our life, or that He is worth knowing. Even if we speak to them for God, they may well brush us off as Ahab did with Elijah, but that is THEIR RESPONSIBILITY, THEIR CHOICE, we've opened the door to them. Some years ago the manager of a timber yard said to one of the men "Heh, Harry, I want to know something. When I give orders to the other men they complain, and curse, but you just say OK, and go and do it- WHY?" Harry said "Well you see Boss, I'm not really working for you. My Real BOSS is up there" pointing sky-wards. The manager said "Yeah, I thought that was it, but spare us the sermon!" and hurried back to the safety of his office.

We may have little experience of sentry duty, but I once spent midnight on duty ready to warn anyone against smoking as they crossed a bridge as 100 gallons of petrol had leaked into the creek. God says we're ALL on sentry duty, committed to passing on His warning to the God-ignoring people that they will die in their sins, and suffer the consequences, unless they repent. And that He pleads with them to turn to Him from evil and avoid eternal death, Ezek 3:17-19, 33:1-11; Acts 1:8, 2 Cor 5:18-20. They MAY repent, or they may not, but WE HAVE OPENED TO THEM THE DOOR OF LIFE, AND THAT WE MUST DO.

We instinctively say "But I'm no ELIJAH, his very NAME was a challenge "Eli- My God. Jah- Jehovah." People pointed to him and said, There's the prophet "My God is Jehovah!" We think "I couldn't be like that!" And that's True. But then Elijah couldn't be like that, but he did learn to talk to God about everything - he prayed. And people who talk to God in prayer sometimes hear God tell them things to Be, Do, and Say, and THEN comes the battle to respond to the challenge to obey God, Heb 4:7-11. The hardest work we may ever do is to work at giving up our works, and entering into the "REST" of His finished work, and letting Him use us in His present work. But as we respond, God works.

ground was still wet, and the grass was growing. The Prophets of Baal were still dead. Jezebel was still his enemy and God's enemy. But our PHYSICAL STATE has changed. The adrenalin rush that saw us through the big effort leaves us Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, and Spiritually exhausted. That's not sinful on our part. If we felt on top of the world all the time we'd be insufferable to work with. And become useless to God. We get "I" trouble enough as it is - "I've done so much for God I'm the only worker!" Sleeping, eating and drinking became Elijah's work for God for a while. At times it's His work for us too. Our "batteries" are flat and need re-charging.

3. Elijah, and all God's servants need to GET BACK TO GOD.. begin again with God. Self-despair sees HALF of the truth. The other half of the truth is that while we're hopeless failures in the things of God, God is an Almighty Saviour who can use us to do our little bit, and to recruit others to do their share too.

Appendix III FREE DOM UNDER GOD -

Rights & responsibilities

Throughout the ancient world Kings were usually God-kings, free to act ruthlessly and self-indulgently as their "gods" were believed to do. That a common man should defy them was unthinkable. The Israelites were unique. They were God's people, in God's land, by God's gracious gift, and King and Commoner alike were required to follow the Law of the Lord - live in harmony with the character of their Holy, Wise, Righteous God of Love. In Western Civilisation, the concept of the value of the individual, and his rights before God and Man (that led to freeing slaves, fair working conditions, equality before Law, democratic government) owes much more to the Bible than it does to the democracy of Greece where most of the people had no vote, and were often slaves. Under Roman law if a slave killed his master, every slave that man owned was killed, even if they were many miles away at the time. In Greek/Roman civilisations unwanted infants were put out with the rubbish, to die, or to be reared as slaves and prostitutes.

Out and about, even if people who get in the way get killed.

Instead of the Bible providing youngfolk with role models, the TV has taken over that task. In 1968, at a meeting of School Principals, we were addressed by a University Professor who had recently taken up a position locally. He said he had done so because he expected to gain 20 years of peaceful living as TV was still a novelty here. His words were "Educationists may argue that sensational TV is a safety valve for the viewers' violent impulses. That optimism is based on the responses of those who had already developed moral standards before watching TV. Those who from infancy face its programmes will demand ever-increasingly explicit violence and sex as they grow up. And by their late teens will have become dissatisfied with WATCHING it, and will go out on the streets AND MAKE IT HAPPEN!

But whatever evil and folly mankind may invent and sink into, God remains God. Jezebel may SEEM all powerful. But His Salvation provided in Christ, His living Word, and Indwelling Spirit remain with us, and make triumphant life possible, as we choose it, Rom 8; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 5:1-7:1; Gal 2:20 Eph 3:14-21; Heb 12:1-4; 1 Pet 1:1-25 2 Pet 1:1-11, Jude 20-25 etc.

E. Read 5.8.98.

(Criticism/Correction/ Addition is welcomed. Please feel free to reproduce or use this material in any way you wish, to the glory of God.)

Other booklets:

LISTENING TO THE LORD- 1 Kings 1-8; Habakkuk, Ruth, Haggai; Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 2 Peter & Jude; Revelation.

LOOKING TO THE WORD OF GOD- Abortion Protests & Lessons from Sodom; God's Word in English; Guidance The Believer & Evil; Outline of Pre-Reformation Church History; A N Groves & the Brethren Movement Reformation towards the NT Pattern.

Copies of these are gladly supplied free from E. Read, F2/55 Middleton Road, Christchurch 4, New Zealand.