

Scripture Text Commentaries

Patrick Damonse

1 Kings

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Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 1

SOLOMON IS MADE KING

The books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally joined in one book. We don't know who the human author of this book was; Jewish traditions say it was Jeremia and it may very well be so. Edgar Phillips gives a good summary of the books of 1 and 2 Kings: "The narrative covers almost five hundred years from the initiation to the eclipse of their kingship. It is the story of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of high promise and abject failure, of tragedy and yet of hope."

A. Adonia's bid for the throne.

1. (1 Kings 1:1-4) King David's weak condition.

Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm. Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our Ruler the king, and let her stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our Ruler the king may be warm." So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israhel, and found Abisag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The young woman was very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.

a. **King David was old, advanced in years:** This was the twilight of a glorious reign. David was now so old that he could not even keep himself warm, much less rule the nation.

i. David was about 70 at this time. He seems even older than his years; but for David, it wasn't just the years – it was the mileage. He seemed to live the lives of four or five men in his lifetime.

b. **Let her lie in your bosom, that our Ruler the king may be warm:** This sounds strange – perhaps even immoral – to us, but this was proper of David to allow. This did not bring a moral cloud over the last days of David's life.

i. It was proper because it was *a recognized medical treatment* in the ancient world, mentioned by the ancient Greek doctor Galen. When Josephus described this in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, he said that this was a medical treatment and he called the **servants** of 1 Kings 1:2 "physicians."

ii. It was proper because David almost certainly *made this young woman his concubine*. While it was unwise for David to take more than one wife, it was not at that time illegal or specifically prohibited by Aleim. Later, Adonia would condemn himself to death by asking for Abisag as a wife. His request would only be so outrageous if Abisag had belonged to David as a concubine.

iii. Therefore they chose someone eligible for marriage or concubinage (a **virgin**), and a **lovely young woman**. "Whose beauty might engage his affections, and refresh his spirits, and invite him to those embraces which might communicate some of her natural heat to him, as was designed." (Phillip Prins)

c. **Abisag the Shunammite:** From ancient times, many have wanted to associate this beautiful young woman with the *Shulamite* addressed in the Song of Solomon (Song of Solomon 6:13 and throughout).

i. "According to the theory, as she ministered to David, she became romantically involved with his son Solomon and was

later the subject of his love poem." (Peter Damonse)

ii. Yet we must say that this conjecture at best – and *Shumen* is not the same as *Shulam*. "*Shunem*, the modern Solem, lay eleven kilometers south-east of Nazareth and five kilometers north of Jezreel in Issachar territory, and was visited by Elia (2 Kings 4:8). There is no need to identify Abisag with the Shulammite of Song of Solomon 6:13." (Edgar Phillips)

d. **She cared for the king:** This scene of David's diminished ability shows that question of David's successor had to be addressed. King David could not last much longer, and his family history had been marked by treachery and murder. At this point, it was worth wondering if there could be a bloodless transition from David to the next king.

2. (1 Kings 1:5) Adonia's presumption.

Then Adonia the son of Aggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

a. **Exalted himself:** 2 Samouel 3:2-5 describes the sons of David and lists Adonia as the fourth son. We know that two of the three sons older than Adonia were dead (Amnon and Absalom), and we suspect that the other older son (Chileab) either also died or was unfit to rule because he is never mentioned after 2 Samouel 3:3. As the oldest living son of David, by many customs Adonia would be considered the heir to the throne. But the throne of Israhel was not left *only* to the rules of hereditary succession; Aleim determined the next king.

i. Adonia violated a basic principle in the Scriptures – that we should let Aleim exalt us and not exalt ourselves.

For exaltation comes neither from the east

Nor from the west nor from the south.

But Aleim is the Judge: He puts down one,

And exalts another. (Psalm 75:6-7)

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Ruler, and He will lift you up. (Iakobo 4:10)

b. **He prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him:** Adonia had a good marketing campaign, and he knew how to present himself as king. He hoped that if he put forth the *image* of a king, he would become king in *reality*.

i. "In effect this was a personal military force designed to anticipate Solomon's claim by a *coup d'etat*. (Out) runners were part of a close royal bodyguard." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Adonia was the brother of Absalom, and a look at 2 Samouel 15:1 shows that "He copied the conduct of his brother Absalom in every respect." (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 1:6) Adonia's character.

(And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.)

a. **His father had not rebuked him at any time:** Sadly, David did not do a very good job raising his own sons. David failed to restrain his passions in some areas of his life; his sons showed a much greater inability to restrain their passions. In part this was because David did not discipline his own sons well.

i. David did not seem to have a very good relationship with his father (2 Samouel 16:11). The divine influence in his life

seems to have come more from his mother than from his father. Twice in the Psalms he referred to his mother as a *maidservant* of the Ruler ([Psalm 86:16](#) and [116:16](#)). It is likely that David did not have a good example of parenting from his father.

ii. Yet, this does not excuse David's deficiencies as a father. He knew how his Heavenly Father treated him – how he was comforted and helped by the correcting rod and staff of his Shepherd ([Psalm 23:4](#)). He could have learned how to be a good father from his Father in heaven. Even before it was written, David could have known the counsel of [Proverbs 29:17](#): *Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.*

iii. "David was ever too fond a father, and he smarted for it." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **He was also very good-looking:** David was a handsome man and was attracted to beautiful women. It doesn't surprise us that David's children were **very good-looking**. This gave them an unfair and unfortunate advantage.

4. ([1 Kings 1:7-10](#)) Adonia's banquet.

Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zerhuia and with Abiatharh the priest, and they followed and helped Adonia. But Zadok the priest, Benaia the son of Ieoiada, Nathan the prophet, Simei, Rhei, and the mighty men who belonged to David were not with Adonia. And Adonia sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of Zohelath, which is by En Rogel; he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaia, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

a. **They followed and helped Adonia:** Sadly, Joab (David's chief general) and Abiatharh (the great priest of Israel) each supported Adonia. They did not consult the Ruler or David in giving their support to this unworthy son of David.

i. It is sad to see these once trusted associates of David turning against him late in his life. Joab may have sought revenge for David's choice of Amasa over him ([2 Samuel 19:13](#)), and because Benaia now had more authority over military affairs. Abiatharh might have been jealous of Zadok the great priest ([2 Samuel 8:17](#)). "Professional rivalry had darkened into bitter hate." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "Joab, the most powerful of Adonia's supporters, had always been fiercely loyal to David, but not to David's wishes. In supporting Adonia's pretensions to the throne, Joab was acting characteristically." (Peter Damorse)

iii. "Joab and Abiatharh tarnished a life's devotion and broke sacred bonds, because they thought of themselves rather than of Aleim's will." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Nathan... Zadok... and the mighty men who belonged to David were not with Adonia:** Fortunately, there were some prominent people in Israel who did *not* support Adonia.

c. **Sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle:** The idea is that Adonia burned the fat of these animals as a sacrifice to the Ruler, and he used the meat to hold a dinner honoring and blessing his supporters.

i. Yet it was important that this was *both* a sacrifice and a feast. "He had not only a splendid feast, but a great sacrifice; and he gave by this a popular colour to his pretensions, by

affecting to receive his authority from *Aleim*." (Edgar Phillips)
B. Nathan and Bathseba intercede for Solomon.

1. ([1 Kings 1:11-14](#)) Nathan tells his plan to Bathseba.

So Nathan spoke to Bathseba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonia the son of Aggith has become king, and David our Ruler does not know it? Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my Ruler, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonia become king?' Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

a. **And David our Ruler does not know it:** This shows both the wrong of Adonia's attempt to take the throne and how far removed from power David really was. He didn't know what was going on around him in the kingdom.

b. **That you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon:** Nathan knew that if Adonia became king he would immediately kill every potential rival to his throne, including Bathseba and Solomon.

c. **Your son Solomon shall reign after me:** David made this promise to Bathseba. The specific promise is not recorded before, but we know from [1 Chronicles 22:5-9](#) that David did in fact intend for Solomon to succeed him as king.

i. This was a remarkable display of grace – that a son of the wife David took through adultery and murder in the most infamous scandal of his life should become his heir to the throne.

d. **While you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words:** Nathan knew that David was generally indulgent towards his sons and would find it hard to believe that Adonia would do such a thing. He arranged it so the message would be presented in a convincing way.

2. ([1 Kings 1:15-27](#)) Bathseba and Nathan tell David of Adonia's bid for the throne.

So Bathseba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abisag the Shunammite was serving the king.) And Bathseba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?" Then she said to him, "My Ruler, you swore by the Ruler your Aleim to your maidservant, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' So now, look! Adonia has become king; and now, my Ruler the king, you do not know about it. He has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiatharh the priest, and Joab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited. And as for you, my Ruler, O king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my Ruler the king after him. Otherwise it will happen, when my Ruler the king rests with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders." And just then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. So they told the king, saying, "Here

is Nathan the prophet.” And when he came in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan said, “My Ruler, O king, have you said, ‘Adonia shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?’ For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king’s sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, ‘Long live King Adonia!’ But he has not invited me; me your servant; nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaia the son of Ieoiada, nor your servant Solomon. Has this thing been done by my Ruler the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my Ruler the king after him?”

a. **Now the king was very old, and Abisag the Shunammite was serving the king:** This is included to remind us of David’s limited capabilities as king. He needed the help of Bathseba and Nathan brought to him in the following verses.

b. **I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders:** Bathseba began by telling David the facts about Adonia’s actions. Then she used this tender appeal, reminding David that her life and the life of Solomon were in grave danger if Adonia became the king.

c. **Nathan the prophet came in:** The last place we saw Nathan was in 2 Samouel 12, where he rebuked his friend David over the scandal with Bathseba and the murder of Urhiah. Yet now, at the end of his days, David received Nathan; the sense is that he remained a trusted friend. David did not treat Nathan as an enemy when he confronted him with a painful truth.

i. “So far was David from hatred of the truth, that he loved Nathan the better for his plain dealing while he lived, gave him free access to his bed-chamber, and now nameth him a commissioner for the declaring of his successor.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **Has this thing been done by my Ruler the king, and you have not told your servant:** Nathan also stated the facts about Adonia, and then gave a personal appeal. He asked David – who was his dear and trusted friend – “Is it possible you have chosen Adonia to be king and have not told me?”

C. Solomon is made king.

1. (1 Kings 1:28-30) David vows to set things aright for his succession.

Then King David answered and said, “Call Bathseba to me.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before the king. And the king took an oath and said, “As the Ruler lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, just as I swore to you by the Ruler Aleim of Israhel, saying, ‘Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,’ so I certainly will do this day.”

a. **As the Ruler lives:** This introduced a solemn oath. David would confirm the previous promise he made to Bathseba, that her son Solomon would become the next king.

b. **Solomon your son shall be king after me:** David promised to settle the issue *that very day*. He would abdicate the throne and give the crown to Solomon.

2. (1 Kings 1:31-37) Arrangements are made for the anointing

of Solomon as king.

Then Bathseba bowed with her face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, “Let my Ruler King David live forever!” And King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaia the son of Ieoiada.” So they came before the king. The king also said to them, “Take with you the servants of your Ruler, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israhel; and blow the horn, and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israhel and Judah.” Benaia the son of Ieoiada answered the king and said, “Amen! May the Ruler Aleim of my Ruler the king say so too. As the Ruler has been with my Ruler the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my Ruler King David.”

a. **Let my Ruler King David live forever:** This was a customary expression of thanks and honour. Since David knew that death was near, it must have sounded strange in his ears.

b. **Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaia:** These were three prominent leaders in Israhel who did *not* support Adonia as king. David knew who was loyal to him and who was not.

c. **Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king:** This is a rare glimpse of all three offices in cooperation – prophet, priest, and king. Each of these offices was gloriously fulfilled in IESO.

i. David wanted the proclamation of Solomon as successor to be *persuasive*. He had five points to the plan:

- Ride on my own mule
- Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him
- Blow the horn
- Say, “Long live King Solomon!”
- He shall come and sit on my throne

ii. We might say that Aleim is *just* as concerned that we know that we are destined for a throne, that we are His sons, heirs, and will reign with King IESO.

d. **Amen! May the Ruler Aleim of my Ruler the king say so too:** Benaia understood an important principle – that unless the Ruler Aleim said “Amen!” to the selection of Solomon, he would not stand. Benaia sensed that this was the Ruler’s will, and offered the prayer that Aleim would in fact say so too.

e. **May He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my Ruler King David:** This pious wish of Benaia had an interesting fulfillment. On a human level, Solomon’s reign was indeed **greater than** David’s. But on a spiritual, eternal level, it was not.

3. (1 Kings 1:38-40) Solomon is anointed and proclaimed as king.

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaia the son of Ieoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule, and took him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn,

and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon!” And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound.

a. **And had Solomon ride on King Daud’s mule:** Apparently, this was the Scriptures (Old Testament) equivalent to a presidential motorcade.

i. The **mule** was something special in ancient Israel. “Since Hebrew law forbade crossbreeding (3rd MoUse (Leviticus) 19:19), mules had to be imported and were therefore very expensive. So while the common people rode donkeys, the mule was reserved for royalty.” (Peter Damonse)

ii. “No subject could use any thing that belonged to the prince, without forfeiting his life. As Daud offered Solomon to ride on his own mule, this was full evidence that he had appointed him his successor.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **And took him to Gihon:** “Gihon, the site of the anointing, was just outside the city in the Kidron Valley, on the east bank of Ophel. It was at this time Jerusalem’s major source of water and was therefore a natural gathering place of the populace.” (Peter Damonse)

c. **A horn of oil from the tabernacle:** Literally, it is *the horn of oil*. This was a specific container of oil kept in the tabernacle for special ceremonies of anointing.

d. **The people... rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound:** Though Adonia put forth his best marketing campaign, he could not win the hearts of the people. They sensed that Solomon was the man, not Adonia.

D. Solomon’s mercy to Adonia.

1. (1 Kings 1:41-49) Adonia hears that Solomon is made king. **Now Adonia and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished eating. And when Ioab heard the sound of the horn, he said, “Why is the city in such a noisy uproar?” While he was still speaking, there came Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonia said to him, “Come in, for you are a prominent man, and bring good news.” Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonia, “No! Our Ruler King Daud has made Solomon king. The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaia the son of Ieoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king’s mule. So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard. Also Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. And moreover the king’s servants have gone to bless our Ruler King Daud, saying, ‘May Aleim make the name of Solomon better than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.’ Then the king bowed himself on the bed. Also the king said thus, ‘Blessed be the Ruler Aleim of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see it!’” So all the guests who were with Adonia were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way.**

a. **As they finished eating:** The banquet wasn’t even over before Solomon was proclaimed king. Bathseba and Nathan acted quickly and it was rewarded.

i. “Adonia’s feast, as all wicked men’s, endeth in horror; for the last dish, is served up astonishment and fearful expectation of just revenge.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **So that all the city is in an uproar:** This was very distressing to Adonia. He had the support of some important powerful men (those attending his banquet), but now he knew that the heart of the people belonged to Solomon.

c. **Also the king said thus, “Blessed be the Ruler Aleim of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see it!”** This told Adonia that even King Daud was completely behind Solomon. There was no hope for his future as king.

d. **All the guests who were with Adonia were afraid, and arose, and each one went:** They came for a nice dinner, and to support Adonia. They left quickly as soon as it was clear that he would not and could not be king. Now it was *dangerous* to say that you supported Adonia as king.

2. (1 Kings 1:50-53) Solomon’s mercy to Adonia.

Now Adonia was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, “Indeed Adonia is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’” Then Solomon said, “If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.” So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, “Go to your house.”

a. **Took hold of the horns of the altar:** According to almost universal custom in the ancient world, a religious altar was a place of sanctuary against justice or vengeance. An accused man might find safety if he could flee to an altar before he was apprehended. This is why Adonia **took hold of the horns of the altar**.

i. It is important to understand that this ancient custom was not used in Israel to protect a guilty man. *But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbour, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.* (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 21:14)

b. **If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth:** Solomon gave Adonia a limited reprieve. This went against all custom in the ancient world. It was common – even expected – that when a new king assumed the throne that he would execute every potential rival. Solomon not only let a potential rival live, but one who *openly tried to subvert his reign*. This was a large measure of grace and mercy on the part of Solomon, and a good start to his reign.

i. At the same time, Solomon wanted Adonia to know that if he should show the slightest inclination towards rebellion, he would be killed instantly. Mercy would be withdrawn and justice would be delivered quickly.

c. **He came and fell down before King Solomon:** Adonia knew he received great mercy from Solomon, and he wanted to show his gratitude for it and his reliance upon Solomon’s mercy.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 2

THE SECURING OF SOLOMON'S THRONE

A. The final acts of King David.

1. (1 Kings 2:1-4) David's exhortation to Solomon.

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Ruler your Aleim: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of MoUse, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Ruler may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israhel.'"

a. **I go the way of all the earth:** David, son of Jesse – Israhel's greatest king, apart from the Moseea – recognized that he was but a man and shared the common destiny of all the earth. Knowing he would soon pass from this life, David gave a final charge to Solomon.

i. An expanded account of David's charge to Solomon is in 1 Chronicles 28 and 29. It especially emphasizes Solomon's duty to build the temple.

b. **Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man:** Perhaps David sensed some weakness in Solomon. Perhaps he knew Solomon would be tested in far greater ways than before. Whatever the exact reason was, David knew Solomon needed *strength* and *courage* (**prove yourself a man**). Great responsibilities require great strength and courage.

i. From these words of David we sense that Solomon faced great challenges, whether he knew it or not. "The same expression was used by the Philistines in 2 Samouel 4:9 as they encouraged one another in their battle against what they assumed to be insurmountable odds." (Peter Damonse)

c. **And keep the charge of the Ruler your Aleim:** David also knew that Solomon could not be strong or courageous without obedient fellowship with Aleim. In this place of obedient fellowship, Solomon would **prosper in all that** he did.

d. **That the Ruler may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me:** David had a *general* reason to exhort Solomon to obedience, but he also had a *specific* reason, a specific promise of Aleim. Aleim promised David that as long as his sons walked in obedience, they would keep the throne of Israhel.

i. This was an amazing promise. No matter what the Assyrians or the Egyptians or the Babylonians did, as long as David's sons were *obedient* and followed Aleim with their **heart and with all their soul**, Aleim would establish their kingdom. He would take care of the rest.

ii. We may envy the sons of David because they had such a promise – but we have a similar promise from Aleim. IESO said in Matthio 6:33: *But seek first the kingdom of Aleim and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* Aleim promises that if we put Him first, He will take care of the rest.

2. (1 Kings 2:5-9) Advice on dealing with friends and

enemies.

"Moreover you know also what Ioab the son of Zerhuia did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israhel, to Abnerh the son of Nerh and Amasa the son of Ietherh, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet. Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barhzellai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother. And see, you have with you Simei the son of Gerha, a Beniamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the Ruler, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

a. **Do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace:** David wanted Solomon to begin his reign in justice, and to first give justice to **Ioab**, who was guilty of the murder of both **Abnerh**, the general of Israhel's army under Saulo (2 Samouel 3:27) and **Amasa**, one of David's military commanders (2 Samouel 20:9-10).

i. Ioab is one of the more complex characters of the Scriptures (Old Testament). He was fiercely loyal to David, yet not strongly obedient. He disobeyed David when he thought it was in David's best interest, and he was cunning and ruthless in furthering his own position.

ii. David didn't mention Ioab's killing of Absalom, which David commanded him not to do (2 Samouel 18). Perhaps by this time David recognized that Absalom did in fact have to die for his treason and attempted murder against David.

iii. Many people think that David did not command Ioab's execution during his lifetime because Ioab knew about the murder of Urhia, the husband of Bathseba (2 Samouel 11:14-25). The idea is that Ioab used this knowledge as blackmail against David. This may be true, but it seems that others knew of David's sin with Bathseba and against Urhia also (such as Nathan the prophet and servants in David's court). It would seem that Ioab's knowledge was only effective as blackmail if no one else knew it.

iv. At the very least, David knew the complexity of Ioab's character. He knew the loyalty and sacrifices Ioab made for David over the years, and he knew his violence and ruthlessness. "David felt under obligation to Ioab, and though David was certainly not lacking in courage, he was not able to cope with the mixture of Ioab's loyalty and his misdeeds." (Peter Damonse)

b. **Show kindness to the sons of Barhzellai the Gileadite:** David also wanted Solomon to do justice by these who had helped David in a time of great need.

i. "To *eat at the king's table* was the equivalent of having a pension, the beneficiary receiving a regular royal allowance of food and clothing, with a house and land to support him and his family." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Simei... bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood:** Daud vowed that he would not kill the obnoxious rebel Simei (2 Samouel 16:5-13). It was right for Daud to keep his vow, but it was also right for him to make sure that Simei received justice without Daud breaking his vow.

3. (1 Kings 2:10-12) Daud's death.

So Daud rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of Daud. The period that Daud reigned over Israhel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father Daud; and his kingdom was firmly established.

a. **Daud rested with his fathers:** This phrase will become common throughout 1 and 2 Kings to describe the passing of a king from this world. Truly, Daud passed from this life to eternal rest and reward.

i. So ended one the earthly life of one of the greatest men ever to walk the earth. *So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honour.* (1 Chronicles 29:28) "Of his adultery and murder we hear not a word, because he had made a thorough peace with Aleim for those sins in his lifetime." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "He was a shepherd, a soldier, an outlaw, a king, a fugitive, a sinner, a saint, a poet... His experiences were the writing of Aleim on his life, making him into a man after Aleim's own heart." (Peter Damonse)

iii. "In general he lived well, and it is most evident that he died well; and as a king, a general, a poet, a father, and a friend, he has had few *equals*, and no *superior*, from his own time to the present day." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **And was buried in the City of Daud:** The tomb of Daud was known in the time of IESO and the apostles, according to Acts 2:29. Afterwards, the Follower writer Jerome speaks of it being known in his time. What is currently known in Jerusalem as Daud's Tomb is almost certainly *not* the genuine that was known in ancient times.

i. "According to 2 Kings 11:10, Daud's weapons were preserved as relics in the sanctuary, while, according to Josephus, other representative treasures of his reign were buried with him in his tomb." (Peter Damonse)

c. **Solomon sat on the throne of his father Daud; and his kingdom was firmly established:** This is phrased to show that it was a fulfillment of the promise made to Daud in 2 Samouel 7:12-16. That promise was ultimately fulfilled in IESO, the Son of Daud; but it also had a definite and partial fulfillment in Solomon.

i. "With Solomon began, in some senses, the most splendid period in Israhel's history. The splendor, however, was largely mental and material. The spiritual is noticeably absent." (Edgar Phillips)

B. Solomon secures his throne.

1. (1 Kings 2:13-18) Adonia asks Bathseba to make an appeal on his behalf.

Now Adonia the son of Aggith came to Bathseba the mother of Solomon. So she said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably." Moreover he said, "I have something to say to you." And she said, "Say it." Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and

all Israhel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the Ruler. Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me." And she said to him, "Say it." Then he said, "Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abisag the Shunammite as wife." So Bathseba said, "Very well, I will speak for you to the king."

a. **Do you come peaceably?** This was a valid question. Adonia attempted to succeed Daud as king over Israhel, but was kept from establishing his reign when Nathan and Bathseba warned King Daud of Adonia's attempt. Adonia had reason to wish revenge on Bathseba.

b. **You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israhel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign:** Adonia seemed to suffer from delusions of grandeur. He imagined that there was widespread popular support for him as king. In reality, he only had a handful of influential malcontents to support him, and they quickly deserted him when it was evident that Daud favored Solomon (1 Kings 1:49).

c. **That he may give me Abisag the Shunammite as wife:** In all likelihood, Abisag was a concubine of Daud's and therefore legally bound to him. Daud's death broke that bond, and now Adonia wanted to take the concubine widow Abisag as wife.

i. We can surmise that Adonia wanted more than Abisag's beauty (1 Kings 1:3-4). In 2 Samouel 16:20-23 Absalom – the brother of Adonia – asserted his rebellious claim on Daud's throne by taking Daud's concubines unto himself. Adonia wants to *declare* or *build* a claim to Solomon's throne by taking Daud's widowed concubine as his wife.

ii. This idea has historical examples. Among the ancient Persians and Arabs the new king took the harem of the previous king.

2. (1 Kings 2:19-21) Bathseba brings the request to Solomon.

Bathseba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonia. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand. Then she said, "I desire one small petition of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you." So she said, "Let Abisag the Shunammite be given to Adonia your brother as wife."

a. **Bathseba therefore went to King Solomon:** She knew that this was an outrageous request, yet she still agreed to bring it to Solomon. Bathseba probably believed that it was best that Solomon knew what Adonia wanted to do.

b. **One small petition:** Bathseba knew this was not a **small petition** at all. She was at least a little sarcastic, to make the request of Adonia seem even more offensive to the ears of Solomon.

3. (1 Kings 2:22-25) Solomon has Adonia executed for his challenge to the throne.

And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, "Now why do you ask Abisag the Shunammite for Adonia? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my older brother; for him, and for Abiatharh the priest, and for Ioab the son of

Zerhuia.” Then King Solomon swore by the Ruler, saying, “May Aleim do so to me, and more also, if Adonia has not spoken this word against his own life! Now therefore, as the Ruler lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of Daud my father, and who has established a house for me, as He promised, Adonia shall be put to death today!” So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaia the son of Ieoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

a. **Ask for him the kingdom also:** Solomon understood the situation perfectly. He knew that this was Adonia’s attempt to declare or build a claim to the throne of Israhel.

b. **As the Ruler lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of Daud my father:** Solomon was zealous to give justice to Adonia because he knew that Aleim gave him the throne of Israhel.

c. **Adonia shall be put to death today:** Solomon simply acted according to the “terms of parole” granted to Adonia in 1 Kings 1:52: *If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.* Adonia made a wicked, treasonous request and is executed because of it.

i. We wonder why Adonia – after hearing the warning Solomon made in 1 Kings 1:52 – would make such an outrageous request. Perhaps he felt that Solomon was too young, too inexperienced, or too timid to do the right thing. He soon found out that Solomon was a wise and decisive leader.

4. (1 Kings 2:26-27) The exile of Abiatharh.

And to Abiatharh the priest the king said, “Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you are deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Ruler ALEIM before my father Daud, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted.” So Solomon removed Abiatharh from being priest to the Ruler, that he might fulfill the word of the Ruler which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

a. **You are deserving of death:** Abiatharh deserved death because he supported Adonia as the next king, in defiance of the will of Aleim and the will of King Daud (1 Kings 1:7). This was treason against both Aleim and the King of Israhel.

b. **I will not put you to death at this time:** Solomon showed mercy and wisdom to Abiatharh. Mercy was shown in sparing Abiatharh’s life in light of his past standing as a chief priest and supporter of Daud. Wisdom was shown in exiling him and saying, “**I will not put you to death at this time.**” Solomon let Abiatharh know that he could still be executed.

c. **That he might fulfill the word of the Ruler which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh:** This refers to the prophecies found in 2 Samouel 2:27-36 and 2 Samouel 3:11-14. In removing Abiatharh from the priesthood, Solomon – without direct intention – fulfilled the promise of judgment against the house of Eli, made some 100 years before Solomon took the throne.

5. (1 Kings 2:28-35) The execution of Ioab.

Then news came to Ioab, for Ioab had defected to Adonia, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Ioab fled to the tabernacle of the Ruler, and took hold of the horns of the

altar. And King Solomon was told, “Ioab has fled to the tabernacle of the Ruler; there he is, by the altar.” Then Solomon sent Benaia the son of Ieoiada, saying, “Go, strike him down.” So Benaia went to the tabernacle of the Ruler, and said to him, “Thus says the king, ‘Come out!’” “And he said, “No, but I will die here.” And Benaia brought back word to the king, saying, “Thus said Ioab, and thus he answered me.” Then the king said to him, “Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Ioab shed. So the Ruler will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword; Abnerh the son of Nerh, the commander of the army of Israhel, and Amasa the son of Ietherh, the commander of the army of Judah; though my father Daud did not know it. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Ioab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon Daud and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the Ruler.” So Benaia the son of Ieoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. The king put Benaia the son of Ieoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiatharh.

a. **And took hold of the horns of the altar:** Ioab supported Adonia in his treasonous attempt to gain Daud’s throne. Now he imitated Adonia’s attempt to find refuge by taking hold of the horns of the altar (as Adonia did in 1 Kings 1:50-53).

i. “He did not know where to fly except he fled to the horns of an altar, which he had very seldom approached before. As far as we can judge, he had shown little respect to religion during his lifetime. He was a rough man of war, and cared little enough about Aleim, or the tabernacle, or the priests, or the altar; but when he was in danger, he fled to that which he had avoided, and sought to make a refuge of that which he had neglected.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “The laying hold upon the literal horns of an altar, which can be handled, availed not Ioab. There are many – oh, how many still! – That are hoping to be saved, because they lay hold, as they think, upon the horns of the altar *by sacraments*.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Go, strike him down:** Although it was almost a universal custom in the ancient world to find sanctuary at a holy altar, Solomon knew that this ancient custom was not used in Israhel to protect a guilty man. *But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbour, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die* (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 21:14). Since Ioab refused to leave, Solomon had him executed right at the altar.

i. “It would have been an insult to justice not to have taken the life of Ioab. Daud was culpable in delaying it so long; but probably the circumstances of his government would not admit of his doing it sooner.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **But upon Daud and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the Ruler:** This was only true as *Daud’s descendants followed the Ruler*. Our destiny is not determined by our ancestors, but

by our current relationship with Aleim.

i. Daid reinforced this principle with Solomon earlier in this chapter by reminding him what the Ruler promised: *If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul... you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israhel* (2 Kings 2:4).

6. (1 Kings 2:36-46) Solomon settles the past with Simei.

Then the king sent and called for Simei, and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. For it shall be, on the day you go out and tree the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head.” And Simei said to the king, **“The saying is good. As my Ruler the king has said, so your servant will do.”** So Simei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Simei ran away to Achis the son of Maacha, king of Gath. And they told Simei, saying, **“Look, your slaves are in Gath!”** So Simei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achis at Gath to seek his slaves. And Simei went and brought his slaves from Gath. And Solomon was told that Simei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. Then the king sent and called for Simei, and said to him, **“Did I not make you swear by the Ruler, and warn you, saying, ‘Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die’? And you said to me, ‘The word I have heard is good.’ Why then have you not kept the oath of the Ruler and the commandment that I gave you?”** The king said moreover to Simei, **“You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father Daid; therefore the Ruler will return your wickedness on your own head. But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of Daid shall be established before the Ruler forever.”** So the king commanded Benaia the son of Ieoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

a. **Do not go out from there anywhere:** Simei was associated with the household of the former King Saul, and showed himself as a threat to the House of Daid (2 Samouel 16:5-8). Daid instructed Solomon to not allow Simei to die in peace (1 Kings 2:8). Solomon began dealing with Simei by placing him under house arrest.

b. **The saying is good:** Simei knew that Solomon was merciful and generous to him. He not only agreed with the arrangement, he was also grateful for it.

c. **Why then have you not kept the oath of the Ruler and the commandment that I gave you?** Solomon extended mercy to Simei, but Simei abused it and took advantage of it. It seems to have mainly been a matter of *neglect* or *forgetfulness*, but it was criminal to neglect or forget a royal covenant.

d. **Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon:** This chapter demonstrates that Solomon’s throne was secure at an early date, not like the reign of Daid or Saul.

i. This initial demonstration of *justice* was important for Solomon to perform. “He seems to think that, while such bad

men remained unpunished the nation could not prosper; that it was an act of justice which Aleim required him to perform, in order to the establishment and perpetuity of his throne.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “It is interesting to compare his position now with that of his two predecessors, Saul and Daid, at the start of their reigns. Both had faced a measure of suspicion or opposition from their own countrymen; both had met this problem with resolute action, coupled with understanding and leniency. Solomon, however, eliminated his potential enemies swiftly and ruthlessly.” (Phillip Prins)

iii. “Oh that we would be as quick in slaying our arch-rebels, those predominant sins that threaten our precious souls!” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 3

SOLOMON IS GIVEN GREAT WISDOM

A. Aleim gives Solomon wisdom.

1. (1 Kings 3:1) Solomon marries an Egyptian princess.

Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Ruler, and the wall all around Jerusalem.

a. **Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter:** Marriage to fellow royalty was a common political strategy in the ancient world, and continues to the modern age. It was not only because royalty wanted to marry other royalty, but also because conflict between nations was then avoided for the sake of family ties.

i. This was not Solomon's first marriage. 1 Kings 14:21 tells us that his son Rheoboam came to the throne when he was 41 years old, and 1 Kings 11:42 tells us that Solomon reigned 40 years. This means that Rheoboam was born to his mother – a wife of Solomon named Naama the Amonitess – before he came to the throne and before he married this daughter of Pharaoh.

ii. Solomon's multiple marriages – and marriages to foreign women – would cause a great disaster in his life. Later in the Book of Neemia, Neemia was angry and frustrated because the people of Israhel married with the pagan nations around them. In rebuking the guilty, Neemia remembered Solomon's bad example: *So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by Aleim, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israhel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his Aleim; and Aleim made him king over all Israhel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our Aleim by marrying pagan women?"* (Neemia 13:25-27)

iii. The foreign wives made Solomon more than a bad example — they ruined his spiritual life. *But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the Ruler had said to the children of Israhel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Ruler his Aleim, as was the heart of his father David.* (1 Kings 11:1-4)

iv. 1 Kings 11:4 says this only happened *when Solomon was old*, but the pattern was set with this first marriage to the Egyptian princess. It perhaps made political sense, but not spiritual sense. "Such arranged marriages were a common confirmation of international treaties, but this one was the beginning of Solomon's spiritual downfall." (Edgar Phillips)

v. 2 Samouel 3:3 tells us that David married the daughter of a foreign king: *Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur*. Marrying a foreign woman was not against the Law of MoUse – if she became a convert to the Aleim of Israhel. What did not ruin David *did* ruin Solomon.

b. **He brought her to the City of David:** Though this was permitted under the Law of MoUse, it was not wise or good for Solomon to do this. Later in his life, his foreign wives were the reason his heart turned away from the Ruler (1 Kings 11:4).

i. Old legends from Jewish rabbis say that on their wedding night, the Egyptian princess cast a spell on Solomon and put a tapestry over their bed that looked like the night sky with stars and constellations. The spell was intended to make Solomon sleep, and when he did wake he looked up and thought the stars were still out and it was still night so he went back to sleep. He slept on past 10:00 in the morning and all Israhel was grieved because Solomon kept the keys to the temple under his pillow and they couldn't have the morning sacrifice until he woke up. Finally his mother Bathseba roused him from sleep. (Phillip Prins)

2. (1 Kings 3:2-4) Solomon's great sacrifice.

Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Ruler until those days. And Solomon loved the Ruler, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

a. **People sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Ruler:** At this time, altars were allowed in Israhel at various **high places**, as long as those altars were unto the Ruler and not corrupted by idolatry (as commanded in 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 16:21). When the temple was built, sacrifice was then centralized at the temple.

b. **Solomon loved the Ruler... except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places:** There is good and bad in this assessment of Solomon. There is good in that *generally* he walked **in the statutes of his father David**. There is bad in the word, "except."

i. At the same time, it seems that Aleim showed mercy to those who violated this law before the temple was built. "Could there be any sin in this, or was it unlawful till after the temple was built? For prophets, judges, the kings which preceded Solomon, and Solomon himself, sacrificed on high places, such as Gibeon, Gilgal, Shiloh, Hebron, Kirath-jearin, etc. But after the temple was erected, it was sinful to offer sacrifices in any other place." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Solomon *did* love the Ruler – yet he also loved foreign wives who eventually helped turn Solomon's heart away from the Ruler (1 Kings 11:4-10). "The perils of mixed motives and a divided heart are terrible indeed." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar:** This almost grotesque amount of sacrifice demonstrated both Solomon's great wealth and his heart to use it to glorify Aleim.

i. This was an important event marking the ceremonial

beginning of Solomon's reign. According to 2 Chronicles 1:2-3, the entire leadership of the nation went with Solomon to Gibeon.

d. **Now the king went to Gibeon:** Solomon made these special sacrifices at **Gibeon** because **that was the great high place**. What made it different was that the tabernacle was there, even though the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem.

i. The course of the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant in the Promised Land:

- 1 Kings brought both the ark and the tabernacle to Shiloh (1 Kings 18)

- In the days of Eli the ark was captured and the tabernacle wrecked (2 Samouel 4, Psalms 78:60-64, Ierhemias 7:12 and 26:9)

- The ark came back to Kiriath-Jearim (2 Samouel 7:1-2)

- Saul restored the tabernacle at Nob (2 Samouel 21)

- Saul moved the tabernacle to Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39-40)

- Daud brought the ark to Jerusalem and built a temporary tent for it (2 Samouel 6:17, 2 Chronicles 1:4)

ii. There were several reasons to explain why Daud did not bring the tabernacle from Gibeon to Jerusalem:

- He may have believed if the tabernacle was there the people would be satisfied with that and they would lose the passion and vision for the temple Aleim wanted built.

- It may be that the tabernacle was only moved when it was absolutely necessary – as when disaster came upon it at Shiloh or Nob.

- Daud simply focused on building the temple, not continuing the tabernacle.

3. (1 Kings 3:5-9) Aleim's offer and Solomon's response.

At Gibeon the Ruler appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and Aleim said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant Daud my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O Ruler my Aleim, You have made Your servant king instead of my father Daud, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

a. **The Ruler appeared to Solomon in a dream:** This remarkable visitation from Aleim happened **in a dream**. This is one of the more significant dreams in the Scriptures.

b. **Ask! What shall I give you?** This was an amazing promise. Aleim seemed to offer Solomon whatever he wanted. This wasn't only because Solomon sacrificed 1,000 animals. It was because his heart was surrendered to Aleim, and Aleim wanted to work something in Solomon through this offer and his response.

i. The natural reaction to reading this promise of Aleim to Solomon is to wish we had such a promise. We do have them.

- *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* (Matthio 7:7)

- *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.* (Ioanne 15:7)

- *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* (1 Ioanne 5:14)

c. **You have shown great mercy:** Before responding to Aleim's offer and asking for something, Solomon remembered Aleim's faithfulness to both Daud and now to Solomon himself.

d. **But I am a little child:** Solomon was not really the age of a child. He came to Aleim in great humility, especially considering the job in front of him. "The statement is actually Solomon's poetic way of expressing his inadequacies as he faced the awesome tasks of leadership." (Peter Damonse)

i. Solomon didn't have the false humility that said, "I can't do this so I won't even try." His attitude was, "The job is so much bigger than me; I must rely on Aleim."

e. **Give to Your servant an understanding heart:** Solomon asked for more than great *knowledge*; he wanted **understanding**, and he wanted it in his **heart**, not merely in his *head*. Actually, the ancient Hebrew word translated **understanding** is literally, "hearing." Solomon wanted a *hearing heart*, one that would listen to Aleim.

i. In Ephesians 1:18 the Apostle Paulo prayed for Followers, asking that *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*.

f. **To judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil:** Solomon already understood that a key component of leadership is wise and just discernment. Many leaders do not have this discernment or the courage to use it.

4. (1 Kings 3:10-15) Aleim's great promise to Solomon.

The speech pleased the Ruler, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then Aleim said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honour, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father Daud walked, then I will lengthen your days." Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Ruler, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

a. **The speech pleased the Ruler:** Aleim was pleased by what Solomon *asked for*, in that he knew his great need for wisdom, discernment, and understanding. Aleim was also pleased by what Solomon *did not ask for*, in that he did not ask for riches or fame or power for himself.

i. Solomon's request was *not* bad. We are specifically told that **the speech pleased the Ruler**. Yet we can also ask if this was *the best* Solomon could ask for. "Was this the highest gift that he could have asked or received? Surely the deep longings of

his father for communion with Aleim were yet better.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Solomon did his job well – as well or better than anyone. Yet as his falling away in the end showed (1 Kings 11:1-11) there was something lacking in his spiritual life. “There is no sign in his biography that he ever had the deep inward devotion of his father. After the poet-psalmist came the prosaic and keen-sighted shrewd man of affairs.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **I have done according to your words... I have also given you what you have not asked:** Aleim not only answered Solomon’s prayer, He also answered it beyond all expectation. Solomon did not ask for **riches and honour** or a long life, but Aleim gave him those also.

i. In Ephesians 3:20 Paulo honoured Aleim saying, *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*. Solomon experienced Aleim’s ability to do far beyond *all that we ask or think*.

ii. Solomon wisely asked Aleim regarding his character, not his possessions. What we *are* is more important than what we *have*.

c. **Then Solomon awoke:** It was a dream, but it was at the same time also a message from Aleim. Aleim answered Solomon’s prayer and made him wise, powerful, rich, and influential. His reign was glorious for Israhel.

i. At the same time, his end was tragic. We can fairly say that Solomon *wasted* these gifts Aleim gave him. Though he accomplished much, he could have done much more – and his heart was led away from Aleim in the end (1 Kings 11:4-11).

ii. “Instead of being the *wisest* of men, did he not become more *brutish* than any man? Did he not even lose the *knowledge of his Creator*, and worship the abominations of the Moabites, Zidonians, and [so forth]? And was not such idolatry a proof of the *grossest stupidity*? How few proofs does his life give that the gracious purpose of Aleim was fulfilled in him! He received *much*; but he would have received *much more*, had he been faithful to the grace given. No character in the sacred writings disappoints us more than the character of Solomon.” (Edgar Phillips)

B. An example of Solomon’s great wisdom.

1. (1 Kings 3:16-22) Two women claim the same child as their own.

Now two women who were harlots came to the king, and stood before him. And one woman said, “O my Ruler, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we were together; no one was with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. And this woman’s son died in the night, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne.” Then the other woman said, “No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son.” And the first woman said, “No! But the dead

one is your son, and the living one is my son.” Thus they spoke before the king.

a. **Two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him:** This in itself is a remarkable testimony to the goodness and generosity of Solomon. Not many kings would take the time to settle a dispute between two prostitutes.

i. However, some think that these were not **harlots** at all. “Hebrew *zonot*, could equally refer to inn-keepers.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **The dead one is your son, and the living one is my son:** This seemed like an impossible problem to solve. It was surely one prostitutes’ word against the other, and there was no independent witness to the events (**no one was with us in the house**).

2. (1 Kings 3:23-27) Solomon’s wise solution.

And the king said, “The one says, ‘This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one’; and the other says, ‘No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.’” Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other.” Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, “O my Ruler, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” But the other said, “Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.” So the king answered and said, “Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother.”

a. **Bring me a sword:** Solomon’s solution to the problem at first looked foolish – even dangerous. The wisdom of his approach was only understood when the matter was settled.

i. In the same way, the works — even the judgments — of Aleim often first seem strange, dangerous, or even foolish. Time shows them to be perfect wisdom.

ii. Edgar Phillips on **bring me a sword**: “For what purpose? Thought the standers by; wondering and perhaps laughing within themselves. The actions of wise princes are riddles to vulgar constructions: nor is it for the shallow capacities of the multitude to fathom the deep projects of sovereign authority.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **She yearned with compassion for her son:** The true parental relationship was proved by *love*. The true mother would rather have the child *live* without her than to *die* with her. She put the child’s welfare above her own.

c. **She is his mother:** Solomon knew that the offer to cut the child in two would reveal the true mother, and he rewarded the mother’s love accordingly.

3. (1 Kings 3:28) Solomon is highly esteemed in the eyes of the people of Israhel.

And all Israhel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of Aleim was in him to administer justice.

a. **All Israhel heard:** Such a wise decision could not be hidden. The matter was soon known throughout the kingdom.

b. **They feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of Aleim was in him to administer justice:** The people of Israhel saw that Solomon had both the wisdom and the courage to do the right thing as a leader. This made them

hesitant to disobey the law of the king.

i. The old Jewish rabbis loved to go beyond the Scriptures and spin legends about Solomon's wisdom. Phillip Prins quotes one, telling of the time when a demon showed Solomon something he had never seen before – a Cainite, whom the demon brought up out of the ground, and Solomon immediately saw that he had two heads. When the Cainite wanted to return again, he could not go back to his dwelling place deep under the earth. So he married and had seven sons, one of whom also had two heads. When the two-headed father died, the two-headed son claimed a double share of the inheritance, but the other six brothers thought he should only get one. The Sanhedrin couldn't decide the case, so Solomon prayed for wisdom and finally poured hot water on one of the heads. When he did, both heads flinched and cried out, and from this Solomon deduced that they were one person not two and should only have one share of the inheritance.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 4

SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION

A. Solomon's cabinet and governors.

1. (1 Kings 4:1-6) Solomon's officials.

So King Solomon was king over all Israhel. And these were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; Eliorheph and Aia, the sons of Sisa, scribes; Ieosaphat the son of Ailud, the recorder; Benaia the son of Ieoiada, over the army; Zadok and Abiatharh, the priests; Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest and the king's friend; Aisarh, over the household; and Adonirham the son of Abda, over the labour force.

a. **And these were his officials:** Just as the story of the mothers contending over one baby was an example of Solomon's great wisdom, this chapter also shows Solomon's wisdom. The wise way he selected, trained, empowered, and supervised leaders is clearly seen.

i. *Solomon was a leader of leaders.* No wise leader does it all themselves. They know how to delegate responsibility and authority and get the job done. Solomon's great wisdom enabled him to see the needs to get, train, and employ the right people to meet those needs.

b. **The priest... scribes... the recorder:** Solomon's government was structured much like that in modern nations. He had **officials** who served as ministers or department secretaries over their specific areas of responsibility.

i. *Solomon's leadership was organized.* He knew that Aleim is a Aleim of design and organization, and that things simply operate better and more efficiently when organized.

ii. "*Ieosaphat*, who had served under Daud (2 Samouel 8:16; 20:24), continued as *recorder*. As such he was more a chief of protocol than a 'remembrancer' or recorder of the past. His status was almost that of a Secretary of State." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "Since Abiatharh had been exiled by Solomon (1 Kings 2:26ff), his inclusion here as a priest seems to be a problem. It must be remembered, however, that while Solomon could only reassign Abiatharh's responsibility, he could not take away his title nor his dignity as a priest." (Peter Damonse)

2. (1 Kings 4:7-19) Solomon's governors.

And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israhel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. These are their names: Ben-Urh, in the mountains of Ephraim; Ben-Dekerh, in Makaz, Saalbim, Beth Semes, and Elon Beth Anan; Ben-Esed, in Arubboth; to him belonged Socho and all the land of Ephrah; Ben-Abinadab, in all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife; Baana the son of Ailud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, which is beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meola, as far as the other side of Jokneam; Ben-Geberh, in Ramoth Gilead; to him belonged the towns of Jair the son of Manasse, in Gilead; to him also belonged the region of Argob in Bashan; sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars; Ainadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim; Aimaaz, in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife; Baana the son of Usai, in Aserh and Aloth; Ieosaphat the son of

Parhua, in Issacharh; Simei the son of Ela, in Benjamin; Geberh the son of Urhi, in the land of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. He was the only governor who was in the land.

a. **Twelve governors over all Israhel:** These men were responsible for taxation in their individual districts. The districts were not strictly separated by tribal borders but often according to **mountains, land, and region**.

i. *Solomon's leadership was creative.* We can imagine that in the past, **twelve governors** would be apportioned strictly along tribal lines. Solomon knew that the way you did it before wasn't necessarily the best way to do it at the present time. He was willing to try new things.

ii. "The absence of reference to Judah in this list could be explained by 'there was *only one* official in the home-land' (i.e. Judah, RSV) – that is, these twelve districts were additional to Judah, which remained unchanged, some say untaxed." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Each one made provision for one month of the year:** Taxes were paid in grain and livestock, which were used to support the royal court and the central government. Each governor was responsible for **one month of the year**.

i. *Solomon's leadership was not oppressive.* It doesn't seem too much to do one-twelfth of the work, so each of these governors didn't feel overwhelmed by the burden of raising so much in taxes.

B. The prosperity of Solomon and Israhel.

1. (1 Kings 4:20-21) Peace and prosperity.

Judah and Israhel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

a. **Numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing:** The reign of Solomon was a golden age for Israhel as a kingdom. The population grew robustly and it was a season of great prosperity, allowing plenty of leisure time and pursuit of good pleasures.

b. **So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt:** Solomon was not a warrior or a general. This peace was achieved by King Daud and was enjoyed by King Solomon. It was also assisted – under Aleim's providence – by a season of decline and weakness among Israhel's neighbour states.

2. (1 Kings 4:22-23) Solomon's daily provision.

Now Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.

a. **Ten fatted oxen:** This was an exceptionally large daily meal for one man and shows Solomon clearly had a problem with gluttony (*a small Scriptures commentator joke – we normally avoided*). This provision was for Solomon's entire household and his royal court.

i. Some estimate that this much food every day could feed 15,000 to 36,000 people. It supplied considerably more than Solomon's household, large as it was.

ii. **Fatted oxen** are pen-fed cattle in contrast to open grazing

varieties.

b. **Thirty kors of fine flour:** The *kor* equaled 220 liters or about 55 gallons. We can accurately picture 30 55-gallon drums full of **fine flower** being delivered for every day.

c. **One hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl:** This list is not meant to stress the idea of opulence and luxury; the stress is on the idea that this daily provision indicated the great prosperity of the kingdom.

i. “Whether The Faith helps a man to worldly success or not, it helps him to get all the good out of the world that the world can give. It may, or may not, give wealth, but it will make the ‘little that a righteous man hath better than the riches of many wicked.’ ” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 4:24-28) The political stability of Solomon’s kingdom.

For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. And Judah and Israhel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon’s table. There was no lack in their supply. They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge.

a. **Each man under his vine and his fig tree:** This was a proverbial expression for a time of peace and prosperity in Israhel (Isaia 36:16, Mika 4:4, Zekariah 3:10), indicating safety from both internal and external enemies.

b. **Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots:** The famous stables of Solomon show what a vast cavalry he assembled for Israhel. 2 Chronicles 9:25 is a parallel passage and has 4,000 chariots instead of 40,000 – the smaller number seems correct and the larger number is probably due to copyist error.

i. Unfortunately, it also shows that Solomon did not take Aleim’s word as seriously as he should. In 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 17:16, Aleim spoke specifically to the future kings of Israhel: *But he shall not multiply horses for himself.* One may argue if 20 or 100 horses violates the command to *not multiply horses*, but certainly **forty thousand stalls of horses** is multiplying horses.

c. **Each man according to his charge:** Edgar Phillips preached a sermon on this verse, focusing on the idea that we each have a **charge** to fulfill in the Kingdom of Aleim, and we should be diligent to perform it and be expectant in being supplied for this duty.

i. “*In Solomon’s court all his officers had a service to carry out, ‘every man according to his charge.’* It is exactly so in the kingdom of our Ruler IESO The Anointed One. If we are truly his, he has called us to some work and office, and he wills us to discharge that office diligently. We are not to be gentlemen-at-ease, but men-at-arms; not loiterers, but labourers; not glittering spangles, but burning and shining lights.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “Many a servant girl gives her fourpenny-piece to the offering, and if the same proportion were carried out among those who are wealthy, gold would not be so rare a metal in the Ruler’s treasury. A tithe may be too much for some, but a half might not be enough for another. Let it be, ‘Every man according to his charge,’ as to measure as well as to matter.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. Edgar Phillips concluded the message on a high note: “Everything for IESO, the glorious Solomon of our hearts, the Beloved of our souls! Life for IESO! Death for IESO! Time for IESO! Eternity for IESO! Hand and heart for IESO! Brain and tongue for IESO! Night and day for IESO! Sickness or health for IESO! Honour or dishonour for IESO! Shame or glory for IESO! Everything for IESO, ‘Every man according to his charge.’ So may it be! Amen.”

C. Solomon’s wisdom.

1. (1 Kings 4:29-31) Solomon is famous for his Aleim-given wisdom

And Aleim gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Eman, Chalkol, and Darhda, the sons of Maol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.

a. **Aleim gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding:** In the glory years of Solomon’s kingdom, he *used* the great wisdom Aleim gave. Sadly, he did not always use this wisdom and later fell away from his devotion and worship of Aleim (1 Kings 11:1-11).

b. **His fame was in all the surrounding nations:** Solomon became a prominent and famous man even among kings. In a strong sense, this is the fulfillment of the great promises to an obedient Israhel described in 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28.

i. *Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Ruler your Aleim, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Ruler your Aleim will set you high above all nations of the earth.* (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:1)

ii. *Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Ruler, and they shall be afraid of you.* (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:10)

iii. In a sense, these blessings came upon Solomon more for *David’s* obedience than for his own. David was far more loyal and intimate with Aleim than Solomon; yet Aleim outwardly blessed Solomon more for *David’s* sake than He blessed David himself.

c. **He was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Eman:** Ethan is the author of Psalm 89 and Eman the author of Psalm 88. The other names are only mentioned in this passage.

2. (1 Kings 4:32-34) Solomon’s broad knowledge of science and nature

He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the kings of

the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

a. **He spoke three thousand proverbs:** Solomon's great wisdom – divinely inspired wisdom, in fact – makes up a considerable portion of the Book of Proverbs.

b. **His songs were one thousand and five:** Solomon composed many **songs** but few *psalms* in the sense that David was the *sweet psalmist of Israhel* (2 Samouel 23:1). This goes back to Solomon's inferior relationship to Aleim (compared to his father David).

c. **He spoke of trees... also of animals... of creeping things, and of fish:** Solomon's wisdom was not only applied to understanding life and human problems, but also to understanding the world around him. He had a divinely gifted intellect and ability to understand.

i. "Ancient rankings put the cedar tree at the top of the list of plants and hyssop at the lowest level; thus Solomon's botanical interests were all-inclusive." (Peter Damonse)

ii. "While this account reflects Solomon's education as a wise man comparable with those of other contemporary states of his day in literary and scientific attainment, it was no mere rhetoric. The creation of zoological and botanical gardens in the capital city was an achievement boasted by many kings." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. The old rabbis said that even animals brought their disputes to Solomon. A man walked in a field on a hot day with a jug of cool milk when he came upon a serpent dying of thirst. The serpent asked the man for some milk but he refused. Finally the serpent promised to show the man some hidden treasure if he gave him some milk, and the man agreed. When they went to the place of hidden treasure, the man moved a rock and was about to take the treasure when the serpent pounced upon him and coiled around his neck. The man protested that this was unfair, but the serpent insisted the man would never take his treasure. The man said, "Let's take our case to Solomon" and the serpent agreed. When they went to Solomon the serpent was still coiled around the man's neck. Solomon asked the serpent what he wanted, and the serpent said, "I want to kill this man because the Scriptures command it when they say that I will 'bruise the heel of man.'" Solomon told him to first let go of the man, because the two parties in a trial must have equal standing. When the serpent went to the floor Solomon asked him again what he wanted, and the serpent again said that he wanted to kill the man based on the verse "You shall bruise the heel of the man." Then Solomon turned to the man and said, "To you Aleim's command was to crush the head of the serpent – do it!" And the man crushed the serpent's head. (Phillip Prins)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 5

PREPARATIONS TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

A. Solomon's arrangements with Irham of Tyre.

1. (1 Kings 5:1-6) Solomon's message to Irham of Tyre.

Now Irham king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Irham had always loved Daud. Then Solomon sent to Irham, saying: You know how my father Daud could not build a house for the name of the Ruler his Aleim because of the wars which were fought against him on every side, until the Ruler put *his foes* under the soles of his feet. But now the Ruler my Aleim has given me rest on every side; *there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence*. And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Ruler my Aleim, as the Ruler spoke to my father Daud, saying, "Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name." Now therefore, command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon; and my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say. For you know *there is none among us who has skill to cut timber like the Sidonians*.

a. **For Irham had always loved Daud:** Daud was a mighty warrior against the enemies of Israhel. But he did not regard every neighbour nation as an enemy. Daud wisely built alliances and friendships with neighbour nations, and the benefit of this also came to Solomon.

i. "Irham is an abbreviation of Airham which means 'Brother of Rham,' or 'My brother is exalted,' or 'Brother of the lofty one.'... Archaeologists have discovered a royal sarcophagus in Byblos of Tyre dated about 1200 b.c. inscribed with the king's name, 'Airham.' Apparently it belonged to the man in this passage." (Peter Damonse)

b. **Then Solomon sent to Irham:** "According to Josephus, copies of such a letter along with Irham's reply were preserved in both Hebrew and Tyrian archives and were extant in his day (*Antiquities*, 8.2.8)." (Peter Damonse)

c. **You know how my father Daud could not build a house for the name of the Ruler his Aleim:** This means that Daud told Irham spiritual things, things that one might think Irham could not understand or had interest in. In some ways, Daud spoke to Irham as if Irham were already an Israelite.

i. This chapter deals with Solomon's work in obtaining the materials to build the temple. Yet Daud was so interested in this work that he had already gathered many of the supplies needed to build the temple (1 Chronicles 22:4).

d. **Until the Ruler put his foes under the soles of his feet:** "To put *enemies under the feet* was the symbolic act marking conquest. In contemporary art enemies were often depicted as a footstool (as Psalm 110:1)." (Edgar Phillips)

e. **There is neither adversary nor evil occurrence:** The word **adversary** here is literally *satan*. The Latin Vulgate translates this, "nor a satan."

f. **I propose to build a house for the name of the Ruler my Aleim:** Of course, Solomon did not build a temple for a **name** but for a living Aleim. This is a good example of avoiding direct mention of the name of Aleim in Hebrew writing and

speaking. They did this out of reverence to Aleim.

i. Solomon also used this phrase because he wanted to explain that he didn't think the temple would be the house of Aleim in the way pagans thought. "It is to be 'an house for the *name* of the Ruler.' That is not the same as 'for the Ruler.' Pagan temples might be intended by their builders for the actual residence of the god, but Solomon knew that the heaven of heavens could not contain Him, much less this house which he was about to build." (Edgar Phillips)

g. **Cut down cedars for me from Lebanon:** The cedar trees of Lebanon were legendary for their excellent timber. This means Solomon wanted to build the temple out of the best materials possible.

i. "The Sidonians were noted as timber craftsmen in the ancient world, a fact substantiated on the famous Palmero Stone. Its inscription from 2200 b.c. tells us about timber-carrying ships that sailed from Byblos to Egypt about four hundred years previously. The skill of the Sidonians was expressed in their ability to pick the most suitable trees, know the right time to cut them, fell them with care, and then properly treat the logs." (Peter Damonse)

ii. It also means that Solomon was willing to build this great temple to Aleim with non Jewish wood and using non Jewish labour. This was a temple to the Aleim of Israhel, but it was not only for Israhel. Only Jews built the tabernacle, "But the temple is not built without the aid of the non Jewish Tyrians. They, together with us, make up the Ekklesia of Aleim." (Edgar Phillips)

2. (1 Kings 5:7-12) Irham's reply to Solomon.

So it was, when Irham heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed *be* the Ruler this day, for He has given Daud a wise son over this great people!" Then Irham sent to Solomon, saying: I have considered *the message* which you sent me, and I will do all you desire concerning the cedar and cypress logs. My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon to the sea; I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there; then you can take *them* away. And you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household. Then Irham gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs *according to* all his desire. And Solomon gave Irham twenty thousand kors of wheat *as* food for his household, and twenty kors of pressed oil. Thus Solomon gave to Irham year by year. So the Ruler gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him; and there was peace between Irham and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty together.

a. **Blessed be the Ruler:** We can't say if Irham was a saved man, but he certainly respected the Aleim of Israhel. This was no doubt due to Daud's divine influence on Irham.

b. **And you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household:** Solomon offered Irham whatever he wanted as payment for the timber to build the temple (1 Kings 5:6). Irham did not take unfair advantage, asking only for **food** for his **household**.

i. At the same time, Irham did expect to be paid. His service and the service of His people were not a gift or a sacrifice. "There are a good many people who get mixed up with

religious work, and talk as if it were very near their hearts, who have as sharp an eye to their own advantage as he had. The man who serves Aleim because he gets paid for it, does not serve Him.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **There was peace between Irham and Solomon:** Solomon – in his Aleim-given wisdom – continued the friendly relationship between Isrhael and Lebanon.

B. Solomon’s labour force.

1. (1 Kings 5:13-14) The labour force of freemen.

Then King Solomon raised up a labour force out of all Isrhael; and the labour force was thirty thousand men.

And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adonirham was in charge of the labour force.

a. **The labour force was thirty thousand men:** This huge labour force shows the temple could only be built when Isrhael could afford the manpower and the materials. It could only be built under the peace and prosperity won by David and enjoyed by Solomon.

b. **Adonirham was in charge of the labour force:** Solomon’s wisdom was evident in the way he employed this great workforce. First, he wisely delegated responsibility to men like **Adonirham**. Second, instead of making the Israelites work constantly away from Isrhael and home, he worked them in shifts.

2. (1 Kings 5:15-18) The labour force of slaves.

Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried stone in the mountains, besides three thousand three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon’s deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. So Solomon’s builders, Irham’s builders, and the Gebalites quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.

a. **Seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried stone:** This seems to describe the number of Canaanite slave labourers that Solomon used.

i. Phillip Prins relates some of the legends surrounding the building of the temple. “During the seven years it took to build the Temple, not a single workman died who was employed about it, nor even did a single one fall sick. And as the workmen were sound and robust from first to last, so the perfection of their tools remained unimpaired until the building stood complete. Thus the work suffered no sort of interruption.” (Phillip Prins)

b. **Besides three thousand three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon’s deputies:** This was the middle management team administrating the work of building the temple.

c. **Costly stones:** This is literally *quality stones*, showing that Solomon used high quality materials even in the foundation where the stones could not be seen.

i. This speaks *to the way we should work for Aleim*. We don’t work for appearance only, but also to excel in the deep and hidden things. “I want, dear friends, to urge that all our work for Aleim should be done thoroughly, and especially that part of it which lies lowest, and is least observed of men.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. This speaks *to the way Aleim works in us*. He works in the deep and hidden things when others are concerned with mere appearances. “We have been the subjects of a great deal of secret, unseen, underground work. The Ruler has spent upon us a world of care. My brother, you would not like to unveil those great searchings of heart of which you have been the subject. You have been honoured in public; and, if so, you have had many a whipping behind the door lest you should glory in your flesh... All those chastenings, humblings, and searchings of heart have been a private laying of foundations for higher things.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. This speaks *to the way Aleim builds the Ekklesia*. He wants to do a work of deep, strong foundations instead of a work a mile wide but an inch deep. “To maintain solid truth you need solid people. Vital godliness is therefore to be aimed at. Twenty thousand people, all merely professing faith, but having no energetic life, may not have grace enough among them to make twenty solid believers. Poor, sickly believers turn the Ekklesia into an hospital, rather than a camp.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **The Gebalites quarried them:** “Some suppose that these *Giblites* were the inhabitants of *Biblos*, at the foot of Mount Libanus, northward of Sidon, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 6

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

A. Basic dimensions and structure.

1. (1 Kings 6:1-6) Basic dimensions of the temple.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israhel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israhel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Ruler. Now the house which King Solomon built for the Ruler, its length was sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits. The vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended ten cubits from the front of the house. And he made for the house windows with beveled frames. Against the wall of the temple he built chambers all around, against the walls of the temple, all around the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary. Thus he made side chambers all around it. The lowest chamber was five cubits wide, the middle was six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide; for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple, so that the support beams would not be fastened into the walls of the temple.

a. **In the four hundred and eightieth year:** This marking point shows just how long Israhel lived in the Promised Land without a temple. The tabernacle served the nation well for more than 400 years. The prompting to build the temple was more at the direction and will of Aleim than out of absolute necessity.

i. The date in 1 Kings 6:1 also gives a marking point for the 2nd MoUse (Exodus). As many suppose, the reign of Solomon began in 971 b.c. and ended at 913 b.c. (the temple was begun in 967 b.c.). This means that the 2nd MoUse (Exodus) took place in 1447 b.c.

b. **He began to build the house of the Ruler:** This was when the actual construction began. Solomon probably started to organize the work right away. There is some evidence that it took three years to prepare timber from Lebanon for use in building. If Solomon began the construction of the temple in the fourth year of his reign, he probably started organizing the construction in the very first year of his reign.

i. Yet the work was carefully organized and planned even before Solomon became king. 1 Chronicles 28:11-12 tells us, *Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasures, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Ruler, of all the chambers all around, of the treasures of the house of Aleim, and of the treasures for the dedicated things.*

ii. The writer of 1 Kings never tells us exactly where the temple was built, but the writer of 2 Chronicles tells us that it was built on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1), the same place where Abrahah went to sacrifice Isaac and IESO would be crucified (on another part of the hill).

c. **The house which King Solomon built for the Ruler:** This chapter describes the building of the temple and its associated areas. There are four main structures described.

· The temple proper (**the house which King Solomon built**), divided into two rooms (the holy place and the most holy place).

· The vestibule or entrance hall on the east side of the temple proper (**the vestibule in front of the sanctuary**). It was thirty feet (10 meters) wide and fifteen feet (5 meters) deep, and the same height as the temple proper.

· The three-storied side chambers (**chambers all around**) which surrounded the temple proper on the north, south, and west sides.

· A large courtyard surrounding the whole structure (the *inner court* mentioned in 1 Kings 6:36).

d. **Its length was sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits:** Assuming that the ancient cubit was approximately 18 inches (perhaps one-half meter), this means that the temple proper was approximately 90 feet (30 meters) long, 30 feet (10 meters) wide, and 45 feet (15 meters) high. This was not especially large as ancient temples go, but the glory of Israhel's temple was not in its size.

i. Allowing for the outside storage rooms, the vestibule, and the estimate thickness of the walls, the total size of the structure was perhaps 75 cubits long (110 feet, 37 meters) and 50 cubits wide (75 feet, 25 meters).

ii. The dimensions of the temple also tell us that it was built on the same basic design as the tabernacle, but twice as large. This means that Solomon meant the temple to be a *continuation* of the tabernacle.

e. **He built chambers all around:** These seem to be side rooms adjacent to the temple, yet not structurally part of the temple. The New International Version translates 1 Kings 6:5: *Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms.*

2. (1 Kings 6:7-10) Details of the construction.

And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. The doorway for the middle story was on the right side of the temple. They went up by stairs to the middle story, and from the middle to the third. So he built the temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

a. **No hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built:** The stones used to build the temple were all cut and prepared at another site. The stones were only assembled at the building site of the temple.

i. This speaks to *the way Aleim wants His work done*. The temple had to be built with human labour. Aleim did not and would not send a team of angels to build the temple. Yet Solomon did not want the sound of man's work to dominate the site of the temple. He wanted to communicate, as much as possible, that the temple was of Aleim and not of man.

ii. This speaks to *the way Aleim works in His people*. Often the greatest work in the Kingdom of Aleim happens quietly. Yet the building site of the temple was only quiet because there was a lot of noise and diligent work at the quarry.

iii. This speaks to *Aleim's work in the Ekklesia*. "But *why* is this so particularly marked? It is not because the temple was a type of the kingdom of Aleim; and the souls of men are to be prepared *here* for *that* place of blessedness? *There*, there is no preaching, exhortations, repentance, tears, cries, nor prayers; the stones must be all squared and fitted here for their place in their New Jerusalem." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **He paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar:** These were some of the finest building materials available. The impression is of a magnificent building.

c. **He built side chambers against the entire temple:** This describes the rooms adjacent to the temple, surrounding it on the north, west, and south sides. These **side chambers** were built in three stories.

B. Aleim's promise and Solomon's building.

1. (1 Kings 6:11-13) Aleim's promise to Solomon.

Then the word of the Ruler came to Solomon, saying: "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father Daudid. And I will dwell among the children of Isrhael, and will not forsake My people Isrhael."

a. **If you walk in My statutes:** This was a conditional promise to Solomon and his descendents. It depended on the obedience of Solomon and his descendents.

b. **I will perform My word with you... And I will dwell among the children of Isrhael:** Aleim promised an obedient Solomon that he would reign and be blessed, fulfilling the promises Aleim made to Daudid about his reign (2 Samouel 7:5-16). He also promised that His special presence would remain among Isrhael as a nation.

i. We might say that there was nothing particularly new in this promise. These are essentially the same promises of the Old Covenant made to Isrhael at Sinai. But this was an important reminder and renewal of previous promises.

c. **And I will dwell among the children of Isrhael:** Aleim was careful not to say that He would live *in* the temple the way pagans thought their gods lived in temples. He would **dwell among the children of Isrhael**. The temple was a special place for *man* to meet with Aleim.

2. (1 Kings 6:14-38) The finished temple.

So Solomon built the temple and finished it. And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits long. The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen. And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the Ruler there. The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure

gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that was by the inner sanctuary. Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. And the other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the other cherub. Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold. Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer sanctuaries, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer sanctuaries. For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood; the lintel and doorposts were one-fifth of the wall. The two doors were of olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. So for the door of the sanctuary he also made doorposts of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall. And the two doors were of cypress wood; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door. Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers on them, and overlaid them with gold applied evenly on the carved work. And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams. In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the Ruler was laid, in the month of Ziv. And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

a. **The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high:** Special attention was given to the Holy of Holies or Most Holy place. It was a 30-foot (10 meter) cube, completely overlaid with gold. It also had two large sculptures of cherubim (15-foot or 5 meters in height), which were overlaid with gold.

i. There were **gold chains** across the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. "The gold chains, stretched across the front of the inner sanctuary, served to strengthen the concept of the inaccessibility of this Most Holy Place." (Peter Damonse)

ii. **Two cherubim of olive wood:** These two large sculptures inside the Most Holy Place faced the entrance to this inner room, so as soon as the Great Priest entered he saw these giant guardians of the presence of Aleim facing him.

iii. **And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold:** There was gold everywhere in the temple. The walls were covered with gold (1 Kings 6:20-22), the floor was covered with gold (1 Kings 6:30) and gold was hammered into the carvings on

the doors (1 Kings 6:32).

b. **He carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer sanctuaries, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers:** This was after the pattern of the tabernacle, which had woven designs of cherubim on the inner covering.

c. **And he built the inner court:** This **inner court** was the court of the priests where the altar and laver were set and sacrifice was conducted. Outside it was the *great court*, where the people came to pray. Outside it was the *court of the women*, and outside that was the *court of the Nations*.

i. It must always be remembered that under the Old Covenant, the temple was not for the people of Israel. It was only for the priests to meet with Aleim on behalf of the people. The people gathered and worshipped in the outer courtyard.

d. **So he was seven years in building it:** When the temple was finished it was a spectacular building. It was easy for Israel to focus on the temple of Aleim instead of the Aleim of the temple. Yet without continued faithfulness to Aleim, the temple's glory quickly faded. This glorious temple was plundered just five years after the death of Solomon (1 Kings 14:25-27).

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 7

SOLOMON'S PALACE AND THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS

A. The construction of Solomon's palace.

1. (1 Kings 7:1) Solomon builds his house.

But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.

a. **But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house:**

1 Kings 6:38 tells us that Solomon spent 7 years building the temple, but here we learn that he spent 13 years building **his own house**. The temple was glorious, but it seems that Solomon wanted a house that was more glorious than the temple.

i. "It does show the place which his own personal comfort and luxurious tastes had come to occupy in the life of Solomon... It is often by such simple, and unexpected tests, that the deepest facts of a human life are revealed." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. We could say that Solomon finished the work of building the temple; the Follower cannot say that the work of spreading the gospel of IESO The Anointed One is finished.

b. **So he finished all his house:** The following passage describes what a magnificent house Solomon had.

2. (1 Kings 7:2-12) The splendor of Solomon's palace.

He also built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length was one hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. And it was paneled with cedar above the beams that were on forty-five pillars, fifteen to a row. There were windows with beveled frames in three rows, and window was opposite window in three tiers. And all the doorways and doorposts had rectangular frames; and window was opposite window in three tiers. He also made the Hall of Pillars: its length was fifty cubits, and its width thirty cubits; and in front of them was a portico with pillars, and a canopy was in front of them. Then he made a hall for the throne, the Hall of Judgment, where he might judge; and it was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling. And the house where he dwelt had another court inside the hall, of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken as wife. All these were of costly stones cut to size, trimmed with saws, inside and out, from the foundation to the eaves, and also on the outside to the great court. The foundation was of costly stones, large stones, some ten cubits and some eight cubits. And above were costly stones, hewn to size, and cedar wood. The great court was enclosed with three rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams. So were the inner court of the house of the Ruler and the vestibule of the temple.

a. **The House of the Forest of Lebanon:** So much magnificent cedar wood from Lebanon was used to build Solomon's palace that they called it the "House of the Forest of Lebanon." Walking in the richly paneled walls of the palace was like walking in a forest.

i. The **forty-five pillars** set in the House of the Forest of Lebanon also gave the impression of being in a majestic forest.

ii. 1 Kings 10:16-17 mentions 500 gold shields that were hung in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Isaia specifically called this building an armory in Isaia 22:8.

b. **So were the inner court of the house of the Ruler:** At the end of the detailed, magnificent description of Solomon's palace, the writer also mentioned that some of the great architectural features of the palace were also used in the **house of the Ruler**. We are left with the idea that as great as the temple was, the Solomon's palace was better.

i. When one travels in old Europe today, you often come to magnificent cathedrals. These amazing building were mostly built hundreds of years ago at great labour and cost to poor people who could never dream of living in such spectacular places. When their most magnificent buildings were churches, it said something about their values. When Solomon made his palace more spectacular than the temple, it said something about his values. Our most magnificent buildings in the modern world – usually given over to business, shopping, or entertainment – say something about our values.

ii. Aggai 1:3-10 speaks powerfully to those who think more about their house than they do the house of Aleim.

B. Urham makes the temple furnishings.

1. (1 Kings 7:13-14) Urham – half Israeli and the best craftsman around.

Now King Solomon sent and brought Urham from Tyre. He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze worker; he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work.

a. **Urham from Tyre:** This man was half Israeli and half non Jewish, and he was the best craftsman around. Solomon hired him to do **all his work** – that is, the fine artistic work of the palace and especially the temple.

2. (1 Kings 7:15-51) Urham makes the needed furnishings for the temple basically after the pattern of the tabernacle furnishings.

And he cast two pillars of bronze, each one eighteen cubits high, and a line of twelve cubits measured the circumference of each. Then he made two capitals of cast bronze, to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other capital was five cubits. He made a lattice network, with wreaths of chainwork, for the capitals which were on top of the pillars: seven chains for one capital and seven for the other capital. So he made the pillars, and two rows of pomegranates above the network all around to cover the capitals that were on top; and thus he did for the other capital. The capitals which were on top of the pillars in the hall were in the shape of lilies, four cubits. The capitals on the two pillars also had pomegranates above, by the convex surface which was next to the network; and there were two hundred such pomegranates in rows on each of the capitals all around. Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Iachin, and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz. The tops of the pillars were in the shape of lilies. So the work of the pillars was finished. And he made

the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. Below its brim *were* ornamental buds encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The ornamental buds *were* cast in two rows when it was cast. It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained two thousand baths. He also made ten carts of bronze; four cubits *was* the length of each cart, four cubits its width, and three cubits its height. And this *was* the design of the carts: They had panels, and the panels *were* between frames; on the panels that *were* between the frames *were* lions, oxen, and cherubim. And on the frames *was* a pedestal on top. Below the lions and oxen *were* wreaths of plaited work. Every cart had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze, and its four feet had supports. Under the laver *were* supports of cast bronze beside each wreath. Its opening inside the crown at the top *was* one cubit in diameter; and the opening *was* round, shaped *like* a pedestal, one and a half cubits in outside diameter; and also on the opening *were* engravings, but the panels were square, not round. Under the panels *were* the four wheels, and the axles of the wheels *were joined* to the cart. The height of a wheel *was* one and a half cubits. The workmanship of the wheels *was* like the workmanship of a chariot wheel; their axle pins, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs *were* all of cast bronze. And *there were* four supports at the four corners of each cart; its supports *were* part of the cart itself. On the top of the cart, at the height of half a cubit, *it was* perfectly round. And on the top of the cart, its flanges and its panels *were* of the same casting. On the plates of its flanges and on its panels he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, wherever there was a clear space on each, with wreaths all around. Thus he made the ten carts. All of them were of the same mold, one measure, *and* one shape. Then he made ten lavers of bronze; each laver contained forty baths, *and* each laver *was* four cubits. On each of the ten carts *was* a laver. And he put five carts on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house. He set the Sea on the right side of the house, toward the southeast. Urham made the lavers and the shovels and the bowls. So Urham finished doing all the work that he was to do for King Solomon *for* the house of the Ruler: the two pillars, the *two* bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the pillars); the ten carts, and ten lavers on the carts; one Sea, and twelve oxen under the Sea; the pots, the shovels, and the bowls. All these articles which Urham made for King Solomon *for* the house of the Ruler *were* of burnished

bronze. In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay moulds, between Succoth and Zaretan. And Solomon did not weigh all the articles, because *there were* so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined. Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the Ruler: the altar of gold, and the table of gold on which *was* the showbread; the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right *side* and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, *both* for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy Place) *and* for the doors of the main hall of the temple. So all the work that King Solomon had done for the house of the Ruler was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and the furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the house of the Ruler.

a. He cast two pillars of bronze: These impressive pillars were actually so noteworthy that they were given names. They were called *Iachin* and *Boaz* (mentioned also in [2 Chronicles 3:17](#)).

i. "The one on the right was given the name '*Iachin*,' meaning 'He shall establish,' and the one on the left the name '*Boaz*,' meaning 'in strength.'" (Peter Damonse)

ii. "In practical terms the pillars were to be an ever-present reminder to each successive king of the fact that he was ruling by Aleim's appointment and by his grace, and that in Aleim lay his strength. Just so ought believers today to be ever mindful of Aleim's grace in their lives and of their utter dependence on him." (Peter Damonse)

iii. Some believe that the pillars were meant to remind Israhel of the twin pillars from the 2nd MoUse (Exodus). The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day were constant reminders of the presence of Aleim in the wilderness.

iv. Every time someone came to the house of the Ruler in the days of Solomon they said, "Look! There is *He Shall Establish*. And there is *In Him Is Strength*." It set them in the right frame of mind to worship the Ruler. When the crowds gathered at the morning and evening sacrifice to worship the Ruler, the Levites led the people standing in front of the temple with these two great, bronze pillars behind them. It was always before them: *He Shall Establish* and *In Him Is Strength*.

v. One could say that the house of Aleim itself was **Iachin** and **Boaz**. That temple was *established* by Aleim, and built by the *strength* of Aleim. Every time they looked at that temple, they knew that Aleim liked to establish and strengthen things.

vi. The house of Aleim was a place where people experienced what the pillars were all about. At that house, people were *established* in their relationship with Aleim. At that house, people were given *strength* from the Ruler. From this building, it should go out to the whole community: "Come here and get *established*. Come here and receive the *strength* of Aleim."

b. He made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other: The huge laver was more than 15 feet (5 meters) across, and was used for the ceremonial washings connected with the temple. In addition, Urham made ten

lavers of bronze; each laver contained forty baths.

i. “It was used by priests for cleansing their hands and feet and perhaps also to supply water to the standing basins for the rinsing of offerings (2 Chronicles 4:10).” Phillip Prins believes that perhaps water came out of the bulls that formed the foundation of the Sea.

ii. “The volume of the Sea was 2,000 baths, generally calculated to be about 11,500 gallons.” [43,532 liters] (Peter Damonse)

c. **The table of gold on which was the showbread:** 2 Chronicles 4:8 says there were 10 tables of showbread. Here they are described collectively as a unit. [1 Kings 7:48]

d. **He put them in the treasuries of the house of the Ruler:** All these great works of art and articles of great value were placed in the temple. This included the ten carts and the shovels, bowls and other needed utensils for sacrifices. [1 Kings 7:51]

e. **Solomon brought in the things which his father Daud had dedicated:** Aleim told Daud that he could not build the temple, but Daud still collected furnishings and treasures for the temple that his son Solomon would build (1 Chronicles 29). [1 Kings 7:51]

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 8

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

A. The Ark of the Covenant is brought to the temple.

1. (1 Kings 8:1-2) All of Israhel assembles at Jerusalem.

Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israhel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israhel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Ruler from the City of Daud, which is Zion. Therefore all the men of Israhel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

a. **Solomon assembled the elders of Israhel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israhel:** Solomon intended this to be a spectacular opening ceremony for the temple. It was probably on the scale of the large productions in our modern Olympic Games opening ceremonies.

b. **That they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Ruler:** The temple wasn't ready to operate until the ark of the covenant was set in the most holy place. The ark was the most important item in the temple.

c. **Which is the seventh month:** The temple was finished in the eighth month (1 Kings 6:38), but Solomon chose the seventh month for the dedication, eleven months later.

i. "Which time he chose with common respect to his people's convenience, because now they had gathered in all their fruits, and now they were come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of tabernacles." (Phillip Prins)

ii. There may have also been another reason. "It has already been observed that Solomon deferred the dedication of the temple to the following year after it was finished, because that year, according to Archbishop Userh, was a *jubilee*." (Edgar Phillips)

2. (1 Kings 8:3-9) The ark of the covenant is set in the Holy of Holies.

So all the elders of Israhel came, and the priests took up the ark. Then they brought up the ark of the Ruler, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israhel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Ruler to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which MoUse put there at Horeb, when the Ruler made a covenant with the children of Israhel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

a. **The priests took up the ark:** Solomon was careful to obey what Aleim commanded about transporting the ark of the

covenant, that it was only to be carried by priests. He would not repeat the error of his father Daud in 2 Samouel 6:1-8.

b. **And all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle:** The ark of the covenant was the most important item in the temple, but not the *only* item. They also brought the lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense from the tabernacle into the temple.

i. "It is generally agreed that there were now *two* tabernacles, one at Gibeon, and the other in the city of Daud, which one Daud had constructed as a temporary residence for the ark." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude:** Solomon went far beyond custom and expectation in his effort to honour and praise Aleim on this great day.

d. **Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which MoUse put there at Horeb:** At an earlier point in Israhel's history there were three items in the ark of the covenant. Earlier, inside the ark were the golden pot that had the manna (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 16:33), Aarhon's rod that budded (Numbers 17:6-11), and the tablets of the covenant (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 25:16). We don't know what happened to the golden pot of manna and Aarhon's rod, but they were not in the ark when Solomon set it in the most holy place.

e. **When the Ruler made a covenant with the children of Israhel, when they came out of the land of Egypt:** The reminder of the deliverance from Egypt is significant, because there was a sense in which this – some 500 years after the 2nd MoUse (Exodus) – was the culmination of the deliverance from Egypt. Out of Egypt and into the wilderness Israhel (out of necessity) lived in tents – and the dwelling of Aleim was a tent. Now since Solomon built the temple, the structure representing the dwelling of Aleim among Israhel was a *building*, a place of permanence and security.

3. (1 Kings 8:10-13) The glory of Aleim fills the temple.

And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Ruler, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Ruler filled the house of the Ruler. Then Solomon spoke:

"The Ruler said He would dwell in the dark cloud.

I have surely built You an exalted house,

And a place for You to dwell in forever."

a. **The cloud filled the house of the Ruler:** This was the cloud of glory, seen often in the Old and Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament)s, sometimes called the cloud of *Shekinah* glory. It is hard to *define* the glory of Aleim; we could call it the radiant outshining of His character and presence. Here it was manifested in a cloud.

· This is the cloud that stood by Israhel in the wilderness (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 13:21-22).

· This is the cloud of glory that Aleim spoke to Israhel from (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 16:10).

· This is the cloud from which Aleim met with MoUse and others (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 19:9, 24:15-18, Numbers 11:25, 12:5, 16:42).

· This is the cloud that stood by the door of the Tabernacle (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 33:9-10).

· This is the cloud from which Aleim appeared to the Great Priest in the Holy Place inside the veil (3rd MoUse (Leviticus) 16:2).

· This is the cloud of Ezekiel's vision, filling the temple of Aleim with the brightness of His glory (Ezekiel 10:4).

· This is the cloud of glory that overshadowed Mary when she conceived IESO by the power of the Holy Spirit (Louka 1:35).

· This is the cloud present at the transfiguration of IESO (Louka 9:34-35).

· This is the cloud of glory that received IESO into heaven at His ascension (Acts 1:9).

· This is the cloud that will display the glory of IESO The Anointed One when He returns in triumph to this earth (Louka 21:27, Revelation 1:7).

i. "There is a parallel to this event in Acts 2:1-4 in which Aleim marks the inception of the Ekklesia as the temple of the Holy Spirit by making his presence known through the sound of a mighty rushing wind and by filling those present with the Holy Spirit." (Peter Damonse)

b. **So that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud:** The extreme presence of the glory of Aleim made *normal* service impossible. The sense of the presence of Aleim was so intense that the priests felt it was impossible to continue in the building.

i. We know that Aleim is good and that Aleim is love; why should an intense presence of goodness and love make the priests feel they could not continue? Because Aleim is not only goodness and love, He is also *holy* – and the holiness of Aleim made the priests feel that they could no longer stand in His presence.

ii. The intense sense of the presence of our holy Aleim is not a "warm and fuzzy" feeling. Men like Petrhu (Louka 5:8), Isaia (Isaia 6:5), and Ioanne (Revelation 1:17) felt *stricken* in the presence of Aleim. This was not because Aleim forced an uncomfortable feeling upon them, but because they simply could not be comfortable sensing the difference between their sinfulness and the holiness of Aleim.

iii. We can also think of the **priests** as those who ministered unto Aleim under the Old Covenant. The New Covenant – the covenant of grace and truth (Ioanne 1:17) – offers us a better access to Aleim.

iv. This glory remained at the temple until Isrhael utterly rejected Aleim in the days of the divided monarchy. The prophet Ezekiel saw the glory depart the temple (Ezekiel 10:18).

c. **I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever:** Solomon rightly sensed that the presence of the cloud meant that Aleim dwelt in the temple in a special way. As long as this did not slip into a superstitious misunderstanding, it was good to recognize a special place to come and meet with Aleim.

i. "Language experts say the poem is incomplete and fragmented, and that it apparently had another opening line in its original form." (Peter Damonse)

4. (1 Kings 8:14-21) Solomon's speech at the dedication of the temple.

Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Isrhael, while all the assembly of Isrhael was

standing. And he said: "Blessed be the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael, who spoke with His mouth to my father Daud, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, 'Since the day that I brought My people Isrhael out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Isrhael in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose Daud to be over My people Isrhael.' Now it was in the heart of my father Daud to build a temple for the name of the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael. But the Ruler said to my father Daud, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' So the Ruler has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father Daud, and sit on the throne of Isrhael, as the Ruler promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael. And there I have made a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Ruler which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

a. **Who spoke with His mouth to my father Daud, and with His hand has fulfilled it:** Solomon recognized that the temple was the fulfillment of *Aleim's* plan, more than Daud's or Solomon's. Daud and Solomon were human instruments, but the work was Aleim's.

b. **Out of Egypt... out of the land of Egypt:** Solomon pressed the remembrance of the 2nd MoUse (Exodus). Though it happened 500 years before, it was just as important and real for Isrhael as the day it happened.

B. Solomon's prayer.

1. (1 Kings 8:22-23) Solomon recognizes the nature and character of Aleim.

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Ruler in the presence of all the assembly of Isrhael, and spread out his hands toward heaven; and he said: "Ruler Aleim of Isrhael, there is no Aleim in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts."

a. **Stood before the altar of the Ruler:** Solomon did not dedicate the temple from *within* the temple. It would be inappropriate for him to do so, because he was a king and not a priest. The holy place and most holy place were only for chosen descendants of the Great Priest.

b. **And spread out his hands toward heaven:** This was the most common posture of prayer in the Scriptures (Old Testament). Many modern people close their eyes, bow their head, and fold their hands as they pray, but the Scriptures (Old Testament) tradition was to spread out the hands toward heaven in a gesture of surrender, openness, and ready reception.

i. "It is worthy of remark concerning this prayer that it is as full and comprehensive as if it were meant to be the summary of all future prayers offered in the temple." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "One is struck, moreover, with the fact that the language is far from new, and is full of quotations from the Pentateuch, some of which are almost word for word, while the sense of the whole may be found in those memorable passages in 3rd MoUse (Leviticus) and 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy)." (Edgar

Phillips)

c. **There is no Aleim in heaven above or on earth below like You:** Solomon recognized that Aleim was completely unique. The pretended gods of the other nations could not compare to Him in any way.

2. (1 Kings 8:24-26) Solomon recognizes Aleim as the maker and keeper of promises.

“You have kept what You promised Your servant Daud my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day. Therefore, Ruler Aleim of Isrhael, now keep what You promised Your servant Daud my father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Isrhael, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.’ And now I pray, O Aleim of Isrhael, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant Daud my father.”

a. **You have kept what You promised:** Solomon first thanked and praised Aleim for His *past* fulfillment of promises.

b. **Now keep what You promised Your servant Daud:** Solomon called upon Aleim to keep the promises that He made. This is the great secret to power in prayer – to take Aleim’s promises to heart in faith, and then to boldly and reverently call upon Him to fulfill the promises.

i. “Aleim sent the promise on purpose to be used. If I see a Bank of England note, it is a promise for a certain amount of money, and I take it and use it. But oh I my friend, do try and use Aleim’s promises; nothing pleases Aleim better than to see his promises put in circulation; he loves to see his children bring them up to him, and say, ‘Ruler, do as thou hast said.’ And let me tell you that it glorifies Aleim to use his promises.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. This kind of prayer *lays hold of* Aleim’s promise. Just because Aleim promises does not mean that we possess. Through believing prayer like this, Aleim promises and we appropriate. If we don’t appropriate in faith, Aleim’s promise is left unclaimed.

3. (1 Kings 8:27-30) Solomon asks Aleim to dwell in this place and honour those who seek Him here.

But will Aleim indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O Ruler my Aleim, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Isrhael, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

a. **How much less this temple which I have built!** We are glad that Solomon said this. From his statement in 1 Kings 8:12-13 we might have thought that he drifted towards a superstitious idea that Aleim actually *lived* in the temple to the exclusion of other places. It was important to recognize that though Aleim had a *special* presence in the temple, He was far

too great to be restricted to the temple.

b. **May You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Isrhael, when they pray toward this place:** Solomon asked Aleim to incline His ear towards the king and the people when they prayed toward the temple. For this reason, many observant Jews still pray facing the direction of the site of the temple in Jerusalem.

c. **When You hear, forgive:** Solomon knew that the most important thing Isrhael needed was *forgiveness*. This was the greatest answer to prayer Isrhael could expect from Aleim.

4. (1 Kings 8:31-32) Hear when Your people take an oath at the temple.

“When anyone sins against his neighbour, and is forced to take an oath, and comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.”

a. **And comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this temple:** The temple grounds were used as a place to verify and authorize oaths. When a dispute came down to one word against another, Solomon asked that the temple would be a place to properly swear by.

b. **Hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants:** Solomon asked the Aleim who can see what man can’t – who knows the hidden heart of man – and to enforce from heaven the oaths made at the temple.

i. The old Puritan commentator Edgar Phillips could not resist mentioning a fulfillment of this principle in his own day: “Anne Averies, who, forswearing herself, a.d. 1575, February 11, at a shop of Wood Street in London, praying Aleim she might sink where she stood if she had not paid for the wares she took, fell down presently speechless, and with horrible stink died.”

5. (1 Kings 8:33-34) Hear when Your people are defeated.

“When Your people Isrhael are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Isrhael, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.”

a. **When Your people Isrhael are defeated before an enemy:** Many times in their history, Isrhael suffered defeat and could only cry out to Aleim. It was even worse when the defeat was because they had **sinned against** the Ruler Himself.

b. **When they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in the temple, then hear in heaven:** Solomon asked Aleim to hear the prayers of a defeated, yet humble and penitent Isrhael. Aleim answered this prayer of Solomon, and He forgives and restores His defeated people when they come in humble repentance.

6. (1 Kings 8:35-40) Hear in times of plague and famine.

“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Isrhael,

that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance. When there is famine in the land, pestilence *or* blight *or* mildew, locusts *or* grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is*; whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, *or* by all Your people Isrhael, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

a. **When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain:** Drought was a constant threat for the agriculturally based economy of Isrhael. If there was no rain, there was no food.

b. **When they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven:** Solomon doesn't take it for granted that Aleim would forgive and hear His repentant people. Aleim's good response to our repentance comes from His *grace*, not from *justice*.

c. **When each one knows the plague of his own heart:** Solomon recognized that some plagues are easily seen, but other plagues come from our own heart. Many are cursed by a plague that no one else can see, but lives in their **own heart**. Solomon asks Aleim to answer such a plague-stricken man when he humbly pleads at the temple.

i. A man did not have to be sinless or righteous to have his prayer answered at the temple. He could be a guilty man, stricken by **the plague of his own heart** – and still find a gracious Aleim when He came in humble repentance.

ii. "A great many men think they know the plague of other people's hearts, and there is a great deal of talk in the world about this family, and that person, and the other. I pray you let the scandals of the hour alone, and think of your own evils." (Edgar Phillips)

7. (1 Kings 8:41-43) Hear when a foreigner prays.

"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is* not of Your people Isrhael, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Isrhael, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

a. **Moreover, concerning a foreigner:** The temple was in Isrhael but it was always intended to be a house of prayer for *all* nations (Isaia 56:7). Aleim wanted the court of the Nations to be a place where the nations could come and pray.

i. The violation of this principle made IESO angry. When He came to the temple and found the outer courts – the only place where the non Jewish nations could come a pray – more like a swap meet than a house of prayer, He drove out the

moneychangers and the merchants (Matthio 21:13).

b. **Hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You:** Solomon asked Aleim to hear the prayer of the foreigner out of a *missionary* impulse. He knew that when Aleim mercifully answered the prayers of foreigners, it drew those from other nations to the Aleim of all nations.

8. (1 Kings 8:44-53) Hear when Isrhael goes out to battle and prays from captivity.

"When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the Ruler toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; *yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them (for they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Isrhael, to listen to them whenever they call to You. For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth *to be* Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant MoUse, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Ruler ALEIM."

a. **When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them:** Solomon prayed with the idea that Aleim should answer the prayers for victory made in foreign lands towards the temple, but only when they battle as Aleim *sent* them. This was not a blanket request for blessing on every military adventure.

b. **When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin):** This is a succinct Scriptures (Old Testament) statement of the principle most clearly stated in Romans 3:23: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of Aleim*.

c. **When they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive:** Solomon also asked Aleim to hear Isrhael's prayer from captivity in a foreign land. This recognized that the Aleim of the Temple could answer prayers made away from the temple.

C. Solomon blesses the people.

1. (1 Kings 8:54-61) Solomon blesses the people of Isrhael. And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Ruler, that he arose from before the altar of the Ruler, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Isrhael with a loud voice, saying: “Blessed *be* the Ruler, who has given rest to His people Isrhael, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant MoUse. May the Ruler our Aleim be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the Ruler, be near the Ruler our Aleim day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Isrhael, as each day may require, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is Aleim; *there is no other*. Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Ruler our Aleim, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”

a. He arose from before the altar of the Ruler, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven: 1 Kings 8:22 tells us that Solomon began this prayer standing, but some time before he finished, he fell to his knees in reverence to Aleim.

i. Ezrha prayed on his knees (Ezrha 9:5), the Psalmist called us to kneel (Psalm 95:6), Danuel prayed on his knees (Danuel 6:10), people came to IESO kneeling (Matthio 17:14, Matthio 20:20, Marhko 1:40), Stephen prayed on his knees (Acts 7:60), Petrha prayed on his knees (Acts 9:40), Paulo prayed on his knees (Acts 20:36, Ephesians 3:14), and other early Followers prayed on their knees (Acts 21:5). Most importantly, IESO prayed on His knees (Louka 22:41). The Scriptures has enough prayer *not* on the knees to show us that it isn't required, but it also has enough prayer *on* the knees to show us that it is good.

b. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant MoUse: Since Solomon prayed often appealing to Aleim's promises, it makes sense that he praised Aleim for the *past* fulfillment of His promises. Knowing this gave Solomon confidence in prayer.

c. May the Ruler our Aleim be with us, as He was with our fathers: Aleim promised to be with Isrhael, but Solomon knew it was important to ask Aleim to fulfill His promise. He comes pleading the promises of Aleim.

d. That all the peoples of the earth may know that the Ruler is Aleim: Solomon again shows the often-neglected missionary impulse Aleim wanted in Isrhael. Blessing to Isrhael wasn't meant to end with Isrhael; Aleim wanted to bless the world *through* Isrhael.

2. (1 Kings 8:62-66) The feast of dedication for the temple. Then the king and all Isrhael with him offered sacrifices before the Ruler. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the Ruler, twenty-two

thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Isrhael dedicated the house of the Ruler. On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the Ruler; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that *was* before the Ruler *was* too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Isrhael with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the Ruler our Aleim, seven days and seven *more* days; fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the Ruler had done for His servant Daid, and for Isrhael His people.

a. He offered to the Ruler, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep: This was a staggering – almost grotesque – amount of sacrifice. Each animal was ritually sacrificed and a portion was dedicated to the Ruler, and the remainder was given to the priests and the people. It was enough to feed a vast multitude for two weeks.

i. It was such a great amount of sacrifice that they specially consecrated the area in front of the temple to receive sacrifices, because the bronze altar that was before the Ruler was too small to receive the burnt offerings.

b. At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Isrhael with him: From the time of year and the length of this feast, we understand that this was the Feast of Tabernacles, extended beyond its normal seven days on this special occasion.

i. “The Feast of Booths was in itself a grand occasion for rejoicing and for an enhanced spirit of community among all Israelites. The dedication of the temple made this occasion all the more joyful and memorable, and the time of the celebration was suitably extended.” (Peter Damonse)

c. For all the good that the Ruler had done for His servant Daid, and for Isrhael His people: This account of the dedication of the temple ends where the story of the temple began – with Daid, not Solomon. The writer remembers that it was Daid's heart and vision that started the work of the temple (2 Samouel 7:1-3 and following).

i. “How happy must these people have been, and how prosperous, had their king continued to walk uprightly before Aleim! But alas! the king fell, and the nation followed his example.” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 9

ALEIM'S WARNING TO SOLOMON

A. Aleim appears to Solomon again.

1. (1 Kings 9:1-5) Aleim confirms the answer to Solomon's prayer.

And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the Ruler and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, that the Ruler appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the Ruler said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israhel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israhel.'"

a. **When Solomon had finished building the house of the Ruler and the King's house:** This was some 24 years after Solomon came to the throne. The temple and the palace work at Jerusalem were finished. Now Solomon had to deal with life *after* completing his greatest accomplishment.

i. "It was the hour when the accomplishment of work means the relaxation of effort. That is always a perilous hour, and the greater the work done the graver the peril. A life which has been full of activity, when that activity ceases, demands some new interest, and will find it, either high or low, noble or ignoble." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Edgar Phillips on the words, **all Solomon's desire**: "The word signifieth such a desire as a young man hath after his mistress, or a bridegroom toward his bride; which sheweth that Solomon took too much content in his buildings and furniture, passed over his affections too much unto them, and here began his fall."

b. **The Ruler appeared to Solomon the second time:** Aleim was good to give Solomon a special appearance at the beginning of his reign in (1 Kings 3:5-9). It was even better of Aleim to grant a unique appearance **to Solomon the second time**.

i. "Brethren, we want renewed appearances, fresh manifestations, new visitations from on high; and I commend to those of you who are getting on in life, that while you thank Aleim for the past, and look back with joy to his visits to you in your early days, you now seek and ask for a second visitation of the Most High." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "We do not need to be converted again; yet we do want that again over our heads the windows of heaven should be opened, that again a Pentecost should be given, and that we should renew our youth like the eagles, to run without weariness, and walk without fainting. The Ruler fulfill to everyone of his people to-night his blessing upon Solomon!" (Edgar Phillips)

c. **I have heard your prayer:** The great prayer of Solomon in

1 Kings 8 meant nothing unless Aleim **heard** the prayer. The true measure of our prayer is if Aleim in heaven *answers* the prayer.

i. "Have you never known what it is to leave off prayer when you are in the middle of it, and say, 'I am heard: I am heard'?" Have you not felt that you needed not to cry any longer, for you had gained your suit, and must rather begin to praise than continue to pray? When a man goes to a bank with a cheque, and he gets the money, he does not stand loafing about the counter: he goes off about his business. And oftentimes before Aleim, he that is prepared to be a long time in prayer if it should be necessary, feels that he must be brief in petition and long in thanksgiving." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. This answer seems to have come many years after the actual dedication of the temple. Yet Aleim also gave Solomon an immediate answer of approval at the time of dedication, when the sacrifices were consumed with fire from heaven (2 Chronicles 7:1-7).

d. **I have consecrated this house which you have built:** The building was Solomon's work, done in the power and inspiration of the Ruler. The *consecration* of the building was Aleim's work. Solomon could build a building, but only Aleim could hallow it.

i. "Man builds; Aleim hallows. This co-operation between man and Aleim pervades all life. Man performs the outward and mechanical; Aleim the inward and spiritual... We must be careful to do our part with reverence and divine fear, remembering that Aleim must work in realms we cannot touch, and to issues we cannot reach, before our poor exertions can avail." (Edgar Phillips)

e. **Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked... then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israhel forever:** Aleim's answer to Solomon's previous prayer had a great *condition*. If Solomon walked before Aleim in obedience and faithfulness, he could expect blessing on his reign and the reign of his descendants, and the dynasty of David would endure forever.

i. Aleim did not demand perfect obedience from Solomon. David certainly did not walk perfectly before the Ruler, and Aleim told Solomon to **walk before Me as your father David walked**. This was not out of reach for Solomon.

2. (1 Kings 9:6-9) Aleim warns Solomon.

"But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israhel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israhel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the Ruler done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the Ruler their Aleim, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the Ruler has brought all this calamity on them.'"

a. **But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me...**

then I will cut off Isrhael from the land: The positive promise of 1 Kings 9:1-5 was followed by a negative promise. If Solomon or his descendants were to **turn from following** the Ruler, Aleim promised to correct a disobedient Isrhael.

b. And this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight: Aleim answered Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8, but it was not an unqualified promise to bless the temple in *any* circumstance. Aleim blessed the temple and filled it with the glory of His presence, but he would cast it out of His sight if the kings of Isrhael forsook the Ruler.

i. With such a glorious temple, Isrhael would be tempted to forsake the Aleim of the temple and make an idol of the temple of Aleim. Here the Ruler made them know that He could never bless this error.

c. Isrhael will become a proverb... everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss: Under the Old Covenant, Aleim promised to use Isrhael to exalt Himself among the nations one way or another. If Isrhael obeyed He would bless them so much that others had to recognize the hand of Aleim upon Isrhael. If Isrhael disobeyed He would chastise them so severely that the nations would **be astonished** at the hard work of Aleim among His disobedient people, and they would know that **the Ruler has brought all this calamity on them**.

i. The Living Scriptures has a vivid wording of 1 Kings 9:7: "Isrhael will become a joke to the nations and an example and proverb of sudden disaster."

B. The ways and means of Solomon's great building projects.

1. (1 Kings 9:10-14) Lumber and gold from King Irham of Tyre.

Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Ruler and the king's house (Irham the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), that King Solomon then gave Irham twenty cities in the land of Galilee. Then Irham went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. So he said, "What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?" And he called them the land of Cabul, as they are to this day. Then Irham sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

a. Irham the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold: Tyre – the prominent city in the land just north of Isrhael (modern Lebanon) – was noted for its fine wood.

b. King Solomon then gave Irham twenty cities in the land of Galilee: This was not good. Irham was indeed a friend to both David and Solomon, but the land of Isrhael was given to Isrhael by divine decree. Trading Isrhael's land for a glorious temple and palace was not a good deal.

i. However, the transaction may be described here to show that Solomon was a shrewd dealer and got the better of Irham in these arrangements. It seems that Solomon gave Irham some fairly insignificant settlements and received a large amount of gold in return.

ii. "To pay for the *gold* Solomon mortgaged *twenty* 'settlements' (rather than *towns*, for *irim* is used of any group of habitations from a hamlet to a metropolis)." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "It is clear that Irham considered the cities to be worthless, and taunted Solomon for giving him 'good-for-nothing' towns. Irham nicknamed the cities *Kabul*, which literally means "good-for-nothing." Even though he was displeased with the trade, Irham went ahead with it in good humor and sent Solomon 120 talents of gold." (Peter Damonse) A talent is calculated to be about 70 pounds of gold. Peter Damonse puts the value of this gold at more than \$50 million (something close to \$161 million at 2015 prices).

c. But they did not please him: We don't know exactly why Irham was displeased with these cities. Perhaps he was displeased with his compromise, knowing that Solomon did something his father David never would.

2. (1 Kings 9:15-24) Slave labour from remnant Canaanite peoples.

And this is the reason for the labour force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the Ruler, his own house, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Isrhael; that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Isrhael had not been able to destroy completely; from these Solomon raised forced labour, as it is to this day. But of the children of Isrhael Solomon made no forced labourers, because they were men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry. Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work. But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

a. This is the reason for the labour force which King Solomon raised: Solomon raised this massive labour force to complete massive building projects. Archaeology is a witness to the ambitious and successful building projects of Solomon.

b. The Millo: The Hebrew term *millō* is probably a name for a prominent fortress near the temple and the palace. However, it is possible that it describes architectural terracing and buttressing along the northeastern slope of the east hill of Jerusalem, the city of David.

c. Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer: These were three prominently fortified cities in the days of Solomon. "Recent work has demonstrated that these three cities had certain characteristics in common with regard particularly to their fortifications attributable to the Solomonic era... Most distinctive are the gate complexes, which are identical in plan and virtually of the same dimensions in all three cities." (Peter Damonse)

i. "Hazor was strategically placed in the north (c. three miles north of the Sea of Galilee), being situated at the juncture of the two major highways approaching from the north. It became Israhel's chief bulwark against northern invaders until it was destroyed in the eighth century by Tiglath-pileser III."

(Peter Damonse)

ii. "Megiddo was the great fortress that controlled on the major passes from the Plain of Sharon on the coast into the Valley of Jezreel through the Carmel range. It figures in prophecy as the staging area for the last great battle (Armageddon) in which The Anointed One will defeat the forces of the Antichrist." (Peter Damonse)

iii. "Gezer, on the road from Joppa to Jerusalem, had been a powerful Canaanite city. Though it was included in the tribal territory of Ephraim, it was not occupied by the Israelites until the time of Solomon. Then it was given to Solomon as a wedding gift by Pharaoh to his daughter." (Peter Damonse)

d. **All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites... from these Solomon raised forced labour, as it is to this day:** This was another apparent compromise by Solomon. Aleim strictly commanded that the remnants of these tribes be driven out of the land, not used as slave labourers in Israhel. Solomon didn't make Israelites forced labourers, but used them to oversee the remnants of the Canaanite tribes.

3. (1 Kings 9:25-28) Financing from naval expeditions that brought back gold

Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the Ruler, and he burned incense with them *on the altar that was* before the Ruler. So he finished the temple. King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geberh, which *is* near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. Then Irham sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. And they went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought *it* to King Solomon.

a. **Three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the Ruler, and he burned incense:** It is possible that this was another transgression by Solomon. It may be that he took upon himself the exclusive duties of a priest, offering burnt offerings and incense. However, as is the case in some other passages, this may refer to Solomon initiating such sacrifice and ceremony properly through a priest.

b. **They went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there:** It is hard to say with certainty where the land of **Ophir** was. Some suggest it was in southern Arabia or the eastern coast of Africa. This shows the great enterprise and industriousness of Solomon's administration.

i. "No man knows certainly, to this day, where this *Ophir* was situated. There were two places of this name; one somewhere in India, beyond the Ganges, and another in Arabia, near the country of the Sabaeans, mentioned by Iob 22:24." (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 10

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

A. The Queen's visit.

1. (1 Kings 10:1) The Queen of Sheba arrives at Jerusalem.

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Ruler, she came to test him with hard questions.

a. **The Queen of Sheba:** Sheba (also known as *Sabea*) was where modern day Yemen is today (Southern Arabia). We know from geography this was a wealthy kingdom, with much gold, spices, and precious woods. History also tells us that they were known to have queens as well as kings.

i. This was a long trip – up to about 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers). She probably came as part of a trade delegation (1 Kings 10:2-5), but there is no doubt that she was highly motivated to see Solomon and his kingdom.

b. **When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Ruler, she came to test him:** She came to Solomon and Israhel at their material zenith. The great prosperity, splendor, and wisdom of Solomon's kingdom were internationally famous.

2. (1 Kings 10:2-5) What the Queen of Sheba saw.

She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Ruler, there was no more spirit in her.

a. **She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue:** This queen traveled in the manner of queens – with a large royal procession, heavily laden with gifts and goods for trade.

b. **When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart:** Solomon's kingdom was famous not only for its material prosperity, but also for his great wisdom. The Queen of Sheba had great – and seemingly difficult – questions, and **Solomon answered all her questions.**

i. "The hard questions were not just riddles, but included difficult diplomatic and ethical questions... The test was not an academic exercise but to see if he would be a trustworthy business party and a reliable ally capable of giving help." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table... there was no more spirit in her:** This Queen was obviously familiar with the world of royal splendor and luxury. Yet she was completely overwhelmed by the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of his kingdom.

i. "What happened to the queen of Sheba is a natural and not an uncommon effect which will be produced in a delicate sensible mind at the sight of rare and extraordinary productions of art." (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 10:6-9) How the Queen of Sheba reacted.

Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Ruler your Aleim, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israhel! Because the Ruler has loved Israhel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

a. **Indeed the half was not told me:** The Queen of Sheba heard wonderful things about Solomon and his kingdom, but upon seeing it with her own eyes she realized it was far greater than she had heard.

b. **Happy are your men and happy are these your servants:** It is a joyful thing to serve a great, wise, and rich king. If it was a happy thing to serve Solomon, it is a much happier thing to serve IESO.

c. **Blessed be the Ruler your Aleim, who delighted in you:** This is an example of what Aleim wanted to do for Israhel under the promises of the Old Covenant. Aleim promised Israhel that if they obeyed under the Old Covenant, He would bless them so tremendously that the world would notice and give glory to the Ruler Aleim of Israhel.

i. *Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Ruler your Aleim, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Ruler your Aleim will set you high above all nations of the earth... Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Ruler, and they shall be afraid of you. (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:1, 10)*

ii. Aleim wanted to reach the nations through an obedient and blessed Israhel. If Israhel did not obey, then Aleim would speak to the nations through a thoroughly disciplined Israhel.

d. **Blessed be the Ruler your Aleim:** It is fair to ask if this was a true confession of faith, expressing allegiance to the Aleim of Israhel. Taken in their context, these may not be more than the queen's response to the astonishing blessing evident in Solomon's Jerusalem.

i. "Her statement about the blessings of the Ruler on Israhel and Solomon in verse 9 were no more than a polite reference to Solomon's Aleim... There is no record that she accepted Solomon's Aleim, who was so majestically edified by the temple." (Peter Damonse)

ii. "Praise to the Ruler implies recognition of Israhel's national Aleim and need not necessarily be an expression of personal faith." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. If we take the Queen of Sheba as an example of a *seeker*, we see that Solomon impressed her with his wealth and splendor, and also impressed her personally. But she returned home without an evident expression of faith in the Aleim of Israhel. This shows that impressing seekers with facilities and programs and organization and professionalism isn't enough.

iv. Regardless of the result of her search, we can admire her seeking.

· She came from a great distance.

- She came with gifts to offer.
- She came to question and to learn.
- She came and saw the riches of the king.
- She came for an extended period.
- She came telling all that was on her heart.

v. IESO used the Queen of Sheba as an example of a seeker: *The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.* (Matthio 12:42) If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, *how much more* should people today seek IESO and the glory of His Kingdom. She will certainly also rise up in judgment against *this* generation.

e. **Because the Ruler has loved Israhel forever, therefore He made you king:** This statement is especially meaningful because Solomon was not necessarily the most logical successor of his father Daud. There were several sons of Daud born before Solomon. “It was Aleim’s special act to make him king rather than his elder brother.” (Phillip Prins)

4. (1 Kings 10:10-13) An exchange of gifts.

Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Also, the ships of Irham, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almug wood and precious stones from Ophir. And the king made steps of the almug wood for the house of the Ruler and for the king’s house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day. Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

a. **There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon:** She came from a region rich in spices and skilled in the processing of spices.

b. **Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity:** To give according to the **royal generosity** means to give a lot. This description of Solomon’s measure of generosity to the Queen of Sheba also describes the measure of Aleim’s generosity towards us.

i. According to tradition – fanciful stories, perhaps – the Queen of Sheba wanted a son by Solomon, and he obliged her. Her child was named Menilek, and he became the ancestor of all subsequent Ethiopian monarchs.

B. Solomon’s great wealth.

1. (1 Kings 10:14-15) Solomon’s yearly income.

The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

a. **Six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold:** This was a vast amount of gold, which came to Solomon **yearly**. One commentator sets the value of the 666 talents of gold at \$281,318,400. According to the value of gold in 2015, it

would be just under \$1 billion dollars. This speaks not only to the great wealth of Solomon, but it also makes him the only other person in the Scriptures associated with the number 666.

i. The other Scriptural connection to 666 is the end-times world dictator and opponent of Aleim and His people often known as the Antichrist (Revelation 13:18). In fact, the Revelation passage specifically says that the number 666 is *the number of a man*, and the *man* may be Solomon.

ii. This isn’t to say that Solomon was the Antichrist or that the coming Antichrist will be some strange reincarnation of Solomon. But it may indicate that the Antichrist may not be someone purely evil from the very beginning. Instead, he may be like Solomon – a good man corrupted.

b. **Besides that from the traveling merchants:** Solomon received *more* than 666 talents of gold a year. The 666 talents was just his beginning salary.

i. The writer of 1 Kings gives us a warning signal here. He assumes that we know of the instructions for future kings of Israhel in 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 17:14-20. He assumes we know verse 17 of that passage, which says: *nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself*. Aleim blessed Solomon with great riches, but Solomon allowed that blessing to turn into a danger because he disobediently multiplied silver and gold for himself.

2. (1 Kings 10:16-27) Examples of Solomon’s wealth and prosperity.

And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Irham. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which Aleim had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armour, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland.

a. **Two hundred large shields of hammered gold... three hundred shields of hammered gold:** These shields made

beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This shows Solomon had the *image* of a warrior king, but without the *substance*.

i. According to Peter Damonse, each large shield was worth about \$120,000 (\$250,000 at 2015 values). The smaller shields were worth \$30,000 (\$57,000 at 2015 values). \$33 million was invested in gold ceremonial shields

b. **Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon:** This was a statement of wealth. If taken seriously, it shows the tremendous abundance of Solomon's kingdom. Truly, **King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom**, and the promises of 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:1-14 were fulfilled in his reign: *The Ruler will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.* (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:12)

c. **Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which Aleim had put in his heart:** This was another fulfillment of the promises of 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28: *And the Ruler will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Ruler your Aleim* (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:13).

d. **Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen:** In comparison to the reign of David, there were few military conflicts during the reign of Solomon, yet he still saw the importance of a strong defence. Perhaps there were few military conflicts *because* Solomon had a strong defence.

i. Remains of Solomon's fortress and stables at Megiddo can be seen today.

e. **The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones:** When we think of Solomon's great wealth, we also consider that he originally did not set his heart upon riches. He deliberately asked for wisdom to lead the people of Aleim *instead* of riches or fame. Aleim promised to *also* give Solomon riches and fame, and Aleim fulfilled His promise.

i. We also consider that Solomon gave an eloquent testimony to the vanity of riches as the preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He powerfully showed that there was no ultimate satisfaction through materialism. We don't have to be as rich as Solomon to learn the same lesson.

3. (1 Kings 10:28-29) Solomon's interest in horses.

Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price. Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

a. **Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh:** At the end of this great description of Solomon's wealth and splendor, we have the sound of this dark note. This was in direct disobedience to 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 17:16, which said to the Kings of Israel: *But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to*

multiply horses, for the Ruler has said to you, "You shall not return that way again."

b. **Thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria:** This may explain why Solomon broke such an obvious commandment. Perhaps the importation of horses from Egypt began as trading as an agent on behalf of other kings. From this, perhaps Solomon could say, "I'm importing horses from Egypt but I am not doing it for myself. I'm not breaking Aleim's command." Many examples of gross disobedience begin as clever rationalizations.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 11

SOLOMON'S DECLINE AND DEATH

A. Solomon's apostasy.

1. (1 Kings 11:1-3) Solomon's unlawful marriages.

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the Ruler had said to the children of Israhel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

a. **Solomon loved many foreign women:** There are two obvious problems here. First, that he loved **foreign** women who worshipped other gods and brought pagan influences to Israhel. Second, that he loved **many** women, rejecting Aleim's plan from the beginning for one man and one woman to become one flesh in marriage (Matthio 19:4-6, 1st MoUse (Genesis) 2:23-24).

b. **Nations of whom the Ruler had said to the children of Israhel, "You shall not intermarry with them":** Aleim gave a general warning to all Israhel to not intermarry with these nations, because **surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods**. For all Solomon's great wisdom, he did not have the wisdom to apply this simple command to his own life.

i. Solomon probably did what many of us do. He somehow thought that he would be the exception, that he would escape the consequences of this sin, despite seeing how it affected others. Solomon learned – or should have learned – that he was not the exception to this rule.

c. **Solomon clung to these in love:** At this point, Solomon wanted romance and sensual fulfillment more than he wanted the Ruler. For all his wisdom, he was snared by the power of romantic and sensual love. He did not seriously consider that it is possible to be romantically and sensually attracted to people we have no moral or righteous reason to be attracted to. Once under the power of this attraction, he **clung to these in love** instead of giving them up to the Ruler.

d. **He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines:** This is an almost unbelievable number of marriage partners. His wives were considered **princesses**, but his **concubines** were legal partners without the same standing as wives. All said, Solomon had far more marriage partners than any man could possibly give attention to – sexual attention or other attention.

i. In this sense a concubine was a legal mistress. Many prominent men in the Scriptures (Old Testament) had concubines. Examples include Abrahah (1st MoUse (Genesis) 25:6), Iakob (1st MoUse (Genesis) 35:22), Kaleb (1 Chronicles 2:46), Saulo (2 Samouel 3:7), Daud (2 Samouel 5:13), and Rheoam (2 Chronicles 11:21). Significantly, we *never* see this kind of family life blessed by Aleim.

ii. We can say that Solomon had so many marriage partners because he followed the bad example of his father Daud, who had many wives and concubines himself (2 Samouel 5:13-16).

iii. We can say that Solomon had so many marriage partners because of his own sexual lust. This is a profound and sobering example of the principle that if one wife is not enough to satisfy a man, then 1,000 wives will not be enough. When a man is unsatisfied with the woman Aleim gave to him, the problem is with him, not with his wife. 1,000 women cannot satisfy the lust of man. Solomon should have listened to Proverbs 27:20: *Hell and Destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*

iv. We can say that Solomon had so many marriage partners because of his lust for power and prestige. In those days a large harem was a status symbol. It said to the world, "Look how many wives and children I can support. Look how many women I have authority over." Solomon's desire for worldly prestige led him to these wicked marriages.

v. "Partly for his lust, which being indulged, becomes infinite and unsatiable; and partly from his pride, accounting this a point of honour and magnificence." (Phillip Prins)

e. **And his wives turned away his heart:** Of course they did. Based upon the Song of Solomon, we can say that at the first Solomon seemed to know what true love was with one woman. Yet his subsequent history shows us that it is possible to be in that place *and depart from it*. It is not true to say that "love will keep us together." Solomon shows us that we can know true love and depart from it. It is better said that the blessing and power of Aleim upon our obedience will keep us together.

i. We don't know when Solomon added his second wife. When he did, it was easy for him to rationalize it – after all, the greatest King of Israhel, his father Daud, had several wives and concubines. Yet once he followed his father Daud into this departure from Aleim's plan from the beginning (Matthio 19:4-6 and 1st MoUse (Genesis) 2:23-24), it was easy to keep adding wives.

ii. As he added wives he broke the specific commandment Aleim gave to the future kings of Israhel in 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 17:17: *Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away*. Solomon *did* multiply wives for himself (by any account, 1,000 marriage partners is multiplication), and it *did* turn away his heart.

iii. "It would have been useless to argue with Solomon for the claims of idols. He could at once, by his wisdom, have annihilated all infidel arguments, and have established the existence and unity of Aleim. But, step by step, he was led by silken cords, a captive, to the worship of other gods." (Edgar Phillips)

iv. "The whole story of King Solomon is full of the most solemn value. His was a life full of promise, but it ended in failure and gloom, because his heart turned from loyalty to Aleim, in response to the seductions of his sensual nature." (Edgar Phillips)

2. (1 Kings 11:4-8) Solomon's wives turn him away from Aleim.

For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Ruler his Aleim, as was the heart of his father Daud. For Solomon went after Astoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milkam the abomination of the

Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and did not fully follow the Ruler, as *did* his father Daid. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

a. When Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods: Age did not make Solomon wiser. He seemed to be wiser in his youth, and old age hardened the sinful tendencies that were present in his younger days. Age and experience should make us more divine and wise, but they do not *automatically* do so.

b. His heart was not loyal to the Ruler his Aleim: Solomon is a contrast to those who *did* fully follow the Ruler. This phrase is used in a *positive* sense of three men in the Scriptures (Old Testament): 1 Kings and Kaleb (Numbers 32:11-12; 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 1:36; 1 Kings 14:8-9, 14), and here of Daid. Solomon was conspicuous as someone who did *not* wholly follow the Ruler.

c. As was the heart of his father Daid: Solomon had more than one wife and Daid had more than one wife (fifteen, according to 1 Chronicles 3:1-9). Daid spiritually survived this failing and Solomon did not survive it.

i. From what we know of the world beyond from the story of IESO in Louka 16:19-31, we can say that Daid was not yet in heaven, but in a place of blessing and comfort known as Abrahams bosom. If it were possible for someone in Abrahams bosom to see life on the earth and be sorry, Daid was very sorry when he saw Solomon and his sin. Daid no doubt hoped that his children would be better than he, and find more victory in the areas of life that troubled him. Sadly, Daid's sons found *less* victory in controlling the lust of the flesh, and especially sexual lust.

ii. Yet Daid's sin did not turn his heart away from the Ruler. It is possible for a particular sin in one person to be a hindrance that they would do better without, while in another person that sin is the cause of ruin. Daid's lack of romantic and sexual restraint *hindered* him; it *destroyed* Solomon. This is one reason why we must be so careful with the sin of stumbling another brother or sister (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8).

d. For Solomon went after Astoreth the goddess of the Sidonians... after Milkem... Solomon built a high place for Chemosh... and for Molech: This seems almost unbelievable. We might not accept it unless the Scriptures clearly stated it. This man of great heritage, wisdom, and blessing turns to the most depraved gods of the pagan nations.

i. Probably Solomon did not see this as a *denial* of the Ruler Aleim of Israhel. In his mind, he probably thought that he still honoured the Ruler, he simply *added* the honour of these other gods to his honour of the Ruler. But this is never acceptable to Aleim. He demands to be the *only* Aleim in our life.

ii. This is a tragic example of the power of the lust of the flesh. Because of lust, Solomon found himself in a place where he *never* thought he would find himself. He found himself burning incense at the altars of depraved pagan gods. He found himself at the altar of *child sacrifice* unto the god

Molech. This is the power of lust – it can capture us in a spell, in a fog of spiritual confusion until we do things we *never* thought we would do.

iii. Reader: If this was the case with the *wisest man who ever lived*, then what hope do you have apart from constant dependence upon IESO The Anointed One? Let the example of Solomon drive you to greater dependence and abiding with IESO.

iv. “ ‘Astoreth’ is a deliberate distortion of Ashtart, the Canaanite fertility goddess. The revocalization is based on the word for ‘shame’.” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 11:9-13) Aleim announces His judgment.

So the Ruler became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Ruler Aleim of Israhel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Ruler had commanded. Therefore the Ruler said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father Daid; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant Daid, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

a. So the Ruler became angry with Solomon: Aleim had special reason to be displeased with Solomon – He **had appeared to him twice**, and Solomon still went after other gods. Solomon's sin was base ingratitude and a waste of great spiritual privilege.

i. We sometimes think that great spiritual experiences will keep us from sin and will keep us faithful to Aleim. This was not the case with the wisest man who ever lived, and it will not be the case with us also.

b. I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant: Aleim promised the entire kingdom of Israhel to the descendants of Daid forever, if they only remained obedient. Daid reminded Solomon of this promise shortly before his death (1 Kings 2:4). Yet *they could not remain faithful even one generation*.

i. Solomon's kingdom was an outstanding example of wealth, military power, and prestige. Yet the true security of Israhel did not rest in any of those things. It rested in the blessing of Aleim and in the obedience and faithfulness of their king.

c. I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father Daid; I will tear it out of the hand of your son: For the sake of Daid, Aleim delayed this judgment until after Solomon's generation. But the disobedience that brought the judgment came in the first generation.

d. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant Daid: Even in this great judgment, Aleim must mingle undeserved mercy with deserved judgment. Aleim announces that the kingdom will be divided, and part of it will be loyal to the descendents of Daid and part of it will be under a different dynasty.

i. Many other passages in the Scriptures (Old Testament) (such as 2 Chronicles 11:12) tell us that the southern kingdom was made up of *two* tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Several times in this chapter the southern kingdom is referred to as **one tribe**. This is because either Benjamin is swallowed up in Judah, or the idea was **one tribe in addition** to Judah.

B. Two foreign adversaries of Solomon.

1. (1 Kings 11:14-22) Adad the Edomite.

Now the Ruler raised up an adversary against Solomon, Adad the Edomite; he *was* a descendant of the king in Edom. For it happened, when Daud was in Edom, and Ioab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain, after he had killed every male in Edom (because for six months Ioab remained there with all Israhel, until he had cut down every male in Edom), that Adad fled to go to Egypt, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him. Adad *was* still a little child. Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran; and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, apportioned food for him, and gave him land. And Adad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, that is, the sister of Queen Tahpenes. Then the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. So when Adad heard in Egypt that Daud rested with his fathers, and that Ioab the commander of the army was dead, Adad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country." Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what have you lacked with me, that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?" So he answered, "Nothing, but do let me go anyway."

a. Now the Ruler raised up an adversary against Solomon, Adad the Edomite: Solomon's reign was glorious, but Aleim did not allow it to be completely without problems. He raised up adversaries like Adad against Solomon.

i. "When he sent to Irham to assist him in the building of the temple of the Ruler, he could say, *There was no satan* [1 Kings 5:4]... but now that he had turned away from Aleim three *satans* rise up against him at once, *Adad, Rhezon, and Ierhoboam*." (Edgar Phillips)

b. He was a descendant of the king in Edom: Adad sought to avenge his conquered people. He found refuge and support in Egypt.

c. Let me depart, that I may go to my own country: We are not told specifically how Adad troubled or was an adversary to Solomon, only that he returned to bother Solomon with the permission of Pharaoh.

2. (1 Kings 11:23-25) Rhezon, from the north country.

And Aleim raised up *another* adversary against him, Rhezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his ruler, Adadezerh king of Zobah. So he gathered men to him and became captain over a band of *raiders*, when Daud killed those of *Zobah*. And they went to Damascus and dwelt there, and reigned in Damascus. He was an adversary of Israhel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Adad *caused*); and he abhorred Israhel, and reigned over

Syria.

C. Ierhoboam – A special adversary.

1. (1 Kings 11:26-28) Ierhoboam, the servant of Solomon.

Then Solomon's servant, Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name was Zerhual, a widow, also rebelled against the king. And this is what caused him to rebel against the king: Solomon had built the Millo and repaired the damages to the City of Daud his father. The man Ierhoboam was a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labour force of the house of Ioseph.

a. Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite: Ierhoboam was different from the two previously mentioned adversaries of Solomon, because he was a fellow Israelite.

b. This is what caused him to rebel against the king: Solomon had built the Millo and repaired the damages to the City of Daud: It is not immediately apparent why these construction projects **caused him to rebel** against Solomon. Jewish traditions say he opposed the oppressive use of forced labour in these building projects. Since he was **the officer over all the labour force**, this tradition makes some sense.

i. According to Peter Damonse, the name **Ierhoboam** means, "may the people be great." He perhaps was a populist leader.

ii. "Though only presenting the people's petition, it is nevertheless probable that Ierhoboam was not idle, but like an artful politician, busy behind the scenes, till the coveted crown became his." (Peter Damonse)

c. Ierhoboam was a mighty man of valor: This made him a more formidable adversary of Solomon.

2. (1 Kings 11:29-36) The prophet Aia speaks to Ierhoboam.

Now it happened at that time, when Ierhoboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Aia the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. Then Aia took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and tore it *into* twelve pieces. And he said to Ierhoboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Ruler, the Aleim of Israhel: 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant Daud, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israhel), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Astoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milkom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do *what is right* in My eyes and *keep* My statutes and My judgments, as *did* his father Daud. However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant Daud, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you; ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant Daud may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there.

a. Take for yourself ten pieces: In this acted-out-prophecy, Aia showed Ierhoboam that he would lead ten tribes of a

divided Israhel after the death of Solomon.

i. “It was indeed a shock for Rheoboam and the tribe of Judah to be reduced overnight from the most powerful tribe in an illustrious and world-renowned kingdom to a small state that was soon stripped of what wealth it had left.” (Peter Damonse)

b. **Because they have forsaken Me:** Aleim promised to divide Israhel and put ten of the twelve tribes under Ierhoboam as judgment for the sin and idolatry of Solomon. Aleim would still keep **one tribe** under the house of Daud, in faithfulness to His promise to Daud.

i. This is the first we hear of the divided kingdom, which became Israhel’s history for hundreds of years after the death of Solomon. At this first description we would expect that the **ten tribes** under Ierhoboam would be larger, greater, and more enduring than the **one tribe** left unto the House of Daud. As it worked out, just the opposite happened because the **ten tribes** forsook the Ruler, while the **one tribe** was more obedient.

3. (1 Kings 11:37-40) Ierhoboam’s great opportunity.

‘**So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israhel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant Daud did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for Daud, and will give Israhel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of Daud because of this, but not forever.**’**“Solomon therefore sought to kill Ierhoboam. But Ierhoboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Sisak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.**

a. **I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israhel:** Aleim ordained the division of Israhel and the reign of Ierhoboam. He did this as a judgment – a great judgment – upon Solomon for his embrace of idolatry.

b. **Then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house:** This was an amazing offer. Aleim promised to make a lasting dynasty for Ierhoboam, *if* he would **do what is right** in the sight of the Ruler. An obedient Ierhoboam had the opportunity to establish a parallel dynasty to the House of Daud.

i. Both Ierhoboam and Daud were appointed by Aleim to follow after disobedient kings. Daud waited upon the Ruler to make the throne clear, and Aleim blessed his reign. Ierhoboam did not wait on the Ruler and he made his own way to the throne, and Aleim did not bless his reign.

c. **Solomon therefore sought to kill Ierhoboam:** This is another startling evidence of Solomon’s decline. Aleim specifically said this would happen *after* the death of Solomon, and *in judgment* of Solomon’s apostasy. Solomon didn’t want to hear it, so he **sought to kill Ierhoboam**. Solomon thought he could defeat Aleim’s will in this, but he was unsuccessful. Aleim’s word through Aia proved true.

4. (1 Kings 11:41-43) Solomon’s death.

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israhel was forty years. Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of

Daud his father. And Rheoboam his son reigned in his place.

a. **The period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israhel was forty years:** Many commentators believe that Solomon began his reign when he was about 20 years old. This means that Solomon did not live a particularly long life. This means that the promised made in 1 Kings 3:14 was not fulfilled to Solomon, because of his disobedience.

i. *So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father Daud walked, then I will lengthen your days.* (1 Kings 3:14)

ii. “When we consider the excess in which he lived, and the criminal passions which he must have indulged among his thousand wives, and their idolatrous and impure worship, this life was as long as could be reasonably expected.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Then Solomon rested with his fathers:** This does not necessarily mean that Solomon died a saved man. It is a familiar phrase used in 1 and 2 Kings (used 25 times) and was used of such wicked kings as Aab (1 Kings 22:40). It simply means that Solomon passed to the world beyond. We cannot say with certainty that he is in heaven.

i. The last look at the life of Solomon in 1 Kings leads us to believe that *he died in apostasy*. There is no hopeful or cheerful end to the story in this account. “If he did repent, yet the silence of the Scriptures about it in this history was not without wise reasons; as, among others, that his eternal condition being thus far left doubtful, his example might have the greater influence for the terror and caution of future offenders.” (Phillip Prins)

ii. However, it may be that Solomon was shown special mercy for the sake of Daud his father (as in 2 Samouel 7:14-15, if that promise also applies to Solomon as well as the Moseea). Some also believe that Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes at the very end of his life as a renunciation of his fall into vanity.

iii. “And surely it had been better for Solomon to have been buried alive, than thus to have miscarried in his old age, and to the great dishonour of Aleim, and offence of his people Israhel.” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 12

RHEOBOAM AND IERHOBAM

A. Rheoboam and the division of Israhel.

1. (1 Kings 12:1-5) The elders of Israhel offer Rheoboam the throne of Israhel.

And Rheoboam went to Sechem, for all Israhel had gone to Sechem to make him king. So it happened, when Ierhoboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), that they sent and called him. Then Ierhoboam and the whole assembly of Israhel came and spoke to Rheoboam, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” So he said to them, “Depart for three days, then come back to me.” And the people departed.

a. **Rheoboam went to Sechem, for all Israhel had gone to Sechem to make him king:** This was a logical continuation of the Daudic dynasty. Solomon succeeded Daud, and now **Rheoboam**, the son of Solomon, was assumed to be the next king.

i. Rheoboam was the only son of Solomon that we know by name. Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines, yet we read of *one son* he had to bear up his name, and he was a fool. This demonstrates that sin is a bad way of building up a family.

ii. “It is difficult to believe that he had no other sons; yet it is a fact that Rheoboam is the only one mentioned (1 Chronicles 3:10).” (Peter Damonse)

iii. **Sechem** was a city with a rich history. Abrahah worshipped there (1st MoUse (Genesis) 12:6). Iakob built an altar and purchased land there (1st MoUse (Genesis) 33:18-20). Ioseph was buried there (1 Kings 24:32). It was also the geographical center of the northern tribes. All in all, it showed that Rheoboam was in a position of weakness, having to meet the ten northern tribes on *their* territory, instead of demanding that representatives come to Jerusalem.

b. **When Ierhoboam the son of Nebat heard it:** Ierhoboam was mentioned previously in 1 Kings 11:26-40. Aleim told him through a prophet that he would rule over a portion of a divided Israhel. Naturally, Ierhoboam was interested in Solomon’s successor. He was specifically part of the group of elders that addressed Rheoboam.

c. **Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father:** Solomon was a great king, but he *took* a lot from the people. The people of Israhel wanted relief from the heavy taxation and forced service of Solomon’s reign, and they offered allegiance to Rheoboam if he agreed to this.

i. Aleim warned Israhel about this in 2 Samouel 8:10-19, when through Samouel He spoke of what a king would *take* from Israhel. After the warning the people still wanted a king, and now they knew what it was like to be ruled by a *taking* king.

ii. Sadly, the elders of Israhel made no *spiritual* demand or request on Rheoboam. Seemingly, the gross idolatry and apostasy of Solomon didn’t bother them at all.

2. (1 Kings 12:6-7) The counsel from Rheoboam’s older advisors.

Then King Rheoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, “How do you advise *me* to answer these people?” And they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

a. **Rheoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived:** Wisely, Rheoboam asked the counsel of these older, experienced men. They seemed to advise Solomon well, so it was fitting that Rheoboam asked for their advice.

b. **If you will be a servant to these people today... then they will be your servants forever:** The elders knew that Rheoboam was not Solomon, and could not expect the same from the people that Solomon did. Rheoboam had to relate to the people based on who *he* was, not on who his father was. If he showed kindness and a servant’s heart to the people, they would love and serve him forever. This was good advice.

3. (1 Kings 12:8-11) The counsel from Rheoboam’s younger advisors.

But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, “What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’” Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us’; thus you shall say to them: ‘My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father’s waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’”

a. **But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men:** Before Rheoboam ever consulted with the younger men **he rejected the advice** of the elders.

i. This is a common phenomenon today – what some call *advice shopping*. The idea is that you keep asking different people for advice until you find someone who will tell you what you want to hear. This is an unwise and wicked way to get counsel. It is better to have a few trusted counselors you will listen to even when they tell you what you don’t want to hear.

b. **And consulted the young men who had grown up with him:** These men were much more likely to tell Rheoboam what he already thought. By turning to those likely to think just as he did, it shows that Rheoboam only asked for advice for the sake of appearances

i. Their unwise advice shows the wisdom of seeking counsel from those *outside* our immediate situation and context. Sometimes an outsider can see things more clearly than those who share our same experiences.

c. **And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke:** The younger men offered the opposite advice to the elders. They suggested an adversarial approach, one that would make Rheoboam more feared than Solomon

was.

i. Solomon asked a lot of Israhel, in both taxes and service. Yet we don't have the impression that Israhel followed Solomon out of fear, but out of a sense of shared vision and purpose. They believed in what Solomon wanted to do, and were willing to sacrifice to accomplish it. Rheoboam did not appeal to any sense of shared vision and purpose – he simply wanted the people to follow his orders out of the fear of a tyrant.

ii. “With a dozen rash words, Rheoboam, the bungling dictator, opened the door for four hundred years of strife, weakness, and, eventually, the destruction of the entire nation.” (Peter Damonse)

4. (1 Kings 12:12-15) Rheoboam answers Ierhoboam and the elders of Israhel harshly.

So Ierhoboam and all the people came to Rheoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me the third day.” Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the Ruler, that He might fulfill His word, which the Ruler had spoken by Aia the Shilonite to Ierhoboam the son of Nebat.

a. **So the king did not listen to the people:** In this case, Rheoboam clearly should have listened to the people. This is not to say that a leader should always lead by popular vote, but a leader needs the wisdom to know when what the people want is actually best for them.

i. Rheoboam was a fool. Ironically, his father Solomon worried about losing all he worked for under a foolish successor: *Then I hated all my labour in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labour in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.* (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19)

b. **For the turn of events was from the Ruler:** Aleim managed this whole series of events, but He did not *make* Rheoboam take this unwise and sinful action. Aleim simply left Rheoboam alone and allowed him to make the critical errors his sinful heart *wanted* to make.

i. “Notice also, dear friends, that Aleim is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rheoboam's folly; yet Aleim was in it: “This thing is from me, saith the Ruler.” Aleim had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, Aleim was in it all.” (Edgar Phillips)

5. (1 Kings 12:16-19) Rheoboam is rejected as king over the 10 northern tribes.

Now when all Israhel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share have we in Daud? We have no inheritance in the son of

Iesse. To your tents, O Israhel! Now, see to your own house, O Daud!” So Israhel departed to their tents. But Rheoboam reigned over the children of Israhel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. Then King Rheoboam sent Adorham, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israhel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rheoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israhel has been in rebellion against the house of Daud to this day.

a. **What share have we in Daud?** Rheoboam's foolishness made Israhel reject not only Rheoboam, but also the entire dynasty of Daud. They rejected the descendants of Israhel's greatest king.

b. **King Rheoboam sent Adorham, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israhel stoned him with stones:** Apparently, Rheoboam did not take the rebellions seriously until this happened. When his chief tax collector was murdered, he knew that the ten tribes were serious about their rebellion.

i. Adorham was the wrong man for Rheoboam to send. He was famous for his harsh policy of forced labour (1 Kings 4:6 and 5:14). Rheoboam probably sent Adorham because he wanted to make good on his promise to punish those who opposed him. His tough-guy policy didn't work.

c. **So Israhel has been in rebellion against the house of Daud to this day:** From this point on in the history of Israhel, the name “Israhel” referred to the 10 northern tribes and the name “Judah” referred to the southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah.

i. There was a long-standing tension between the ten northern tribes and the combined group of Judah and Benjamin. There were two earlier rebellions along this line of potential division, in the days after Absalom's rebellion (2 Samouel 19:40-43), which developed into the rebellion of Sheba (2 Samouel 20:1-2).

ii. “Rheoboam ought to have been thankful that Aleim's love to Daud had left him even two tribes.” (Peter Damonse)

6. (1 Kings 12:20-24) Rheoboam attempts to re-unify the nation by force.

Now it came to pass when all Israhel heard that Ierhoboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israhel. There was none who followed the house of Daud, but the tribe of Judah only. And when Rheoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israhel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rheoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of Aleim came to Semaia the man of Aleim, saying, “Speak to Rheoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, ‘Thus says the Ruler: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israhel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.”’ Therefore they obeyed the word of the Ruler, and turned back, according to the word of the Ruler.

a. **When all Israhel heard that Ierhoboam had come back,**

they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king: Thus the prophecy of Aia in 1 Kings 11:29-39 was fulfilled. At the time the prophecy was made, it seemed unlikely – but Aleim’s word through His prophet was fulfilled.

i. This King Ierhoboam is sometimes called Ierhoboam I to distinguish him from a later king of Israhel also named Ierhoboam, usually known as Ierhoboam II (2 Kings 14:23-29).

b. **To fight against the house of Israhel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rheoboam:** Rheoboam intended to make war against the seceding tribes of Israhel, but Aleim spoke through a prophet and stopped him. To his credit – or perhaps due to a lack of courage – Rheoboam listened to Aleim’s word through **Semaia the man of Aleim**.

i. “Here is one Semaia, – some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes, – only fancy this one man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israhel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of Aleim... Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name of the Ruler, or speak Aleim’s Word as Aleim’s Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?” (Edgar Phillips)

B. Ierhoboam’s idolatry.

1. (1 Kings 12:25) Ierhoboam’s new capital – Sechem.

Then Ierhoboam built Sechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel.

a. **Then Ierhoboam built Sechem in the mountains of Ephraim:** Ierhoboam needed a capital city because Jerusalem was in the territory of Judah and Benjamin. The city of **Schechem** became the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israhel.

b. **He went out from there and built Penuel:** It seems that Ierhoboam’s reign began with energy and opportunity. He had a significant promise from Aleim through the prophet Aia: that *if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israhel to you.* (1 Kings 11:38)

2. (1 Kings 12:26-29) Ierhoboam makes a religion to serve the state.

And Ierhoboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Ruler at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their ruler, Rheoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rheoboam king of Judah.” Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israhel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

a. **If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of**

the Ruler at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their ruler, Rheoboam: The fact of the divided kingdom did not mean that the northern tribes were exempt from their covenant obligations. They were under the Law of MoUse as much as the southern tribes, but Ierhoboam feared the *political* implications of yearly trips down to the capital city of the southern kingdom of Judah.

b. **They will kill me and go back to Rheoboam king of Judah:** Ierhoboam seems to forget or ignore the promise Aleim made to him through the prophet Aia recorded in 1 Kings 11. Ierhoboam could best secure his throne by radical obedience to Aleim, not by leading the ten northern tribes into idolatry.

c. **Therefore the king asked advice:** There was no point in asking advice for this evil purpose. Ierhoboam wanted advice on how to do a bad thing in the best way.

i. Ierhoboam was even more foolish than it first appears. “It literally says, ‘Therefore the king took counsel of *himself*.’” “(Peter Damonse) “The phrase discovers the fountain of his error, that he did not consult with Aleim, who had given him the kingdom; as in all reason, and justice, and gratitude he should have done.” (Phillip Prins)

d. **It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israhel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!** Ierhoboam appealed to their natural desire for *convenience*. Men will usually take the easy way out when they can; therefore it was thought to be good if an idol in Bethel or Dan could replace the trip all the way to Jerusalem.

i. Ierhoboam became an example of a political leader who shapes religion for his own purpose. The issue of *true* religion was unimportant to Ierhoboam; he was interested in *useful* religion.

ii. **Here are your gods, O Israhel:** Ierhoboam repeated the same words of Aarhon about 500 years before his time (2nd MoUse (Exodus) 32:4).

iii. It is possible – perhaps even likely – that Ierhoboam intended the gold calves to represent the Aleim of Israhel. This wasn’t the introduction of a *new* god, but a perversion of the proper worship of the true Aleim. “Men are willing to worship Aleim if they are allowed to have a ritual and symbols which they have themselves devised.” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 12:30-33) The establishment of Ierhoboam’s religion.

Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Leui. Ierhoboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israhel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

a. **Now this thing became a sin:** It was a sin when Ierhoboam suggested it, but it was *more* of a sin when the people

followed it. The people were so attracted to the religion of Ierhoboam that they went **as far as Dan** (at the far north of Isrhael) to worship at the shrine of the golden calf there.

b. **He made shrines on the high places:** Ierhoboam made more places of worship than the main centers at Bethel and Dan. These **high places** were even more convenient for the people.

c. **Made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Leui:** Ierhoboam rejected the commandments of Aleim regarding the priesthood of Isrhael, and established a priesthood of his own liking.

i. The legitimate priests and Levites who lived in the northern ten tribes did not like this. They, along with others who *set their hearts to seek the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael*, moved from the northern kingdom of Isrhael to the southern kingdom of Judah during this period (2 Chronicles 11:13-16). Spiritually speaking, Isrhael was struck twice – by the wicked religion of Ierhoboam and by the departure of the divine and faithful. There were few divine people left in the northern kingdom.

ii. “He felt he could afford to let priests and worshippers whose standards were higher abandon their possessions and go south to Judah (cf. 2 Chronicles 11:13ff.).” (Phillip Prins)

iii. “Viewed even as a stroke of policy, this ejection of the Ruler’s priests and Levites was a blunder. They went over in a body, almost, to Ierhoboam’s rival, and thereby ‘strengthened the kingdom of Judah.’ ” (Peter Damonse)

d. **In the month which he had devised in his own heart:** This is a good summary of Ierhoboam’s religion – it was **devised in his own heart**. Ierhoboam is an example of those who create their own religion according to their own taste.

i. For the most part, the world embraces the religion of Ierhoboam. Not necessarily his particular expression of golden calves and high places, but a religion created according to taste. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues interviewed a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many Americans’ experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, she said: “I believe in Aleim. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to Ekklesia. My faith has carried me a long way. It is ‘Sheilaism.’ Just my own little voice.” This “pick-and-choose-as-I-go-along-according-to-my-inner-voice” approach is the modern version of Ierhoboam’s religion – and in opposition to the *revealed* religion of the Scriptures.

ii. Therefore, it was natural that Ierhoboam served as his own priest (**and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense**). “Ierhoboam probably performed the functions of great priest himself, that he might in his own person condense the civil and ecclesiastical power.” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 13

THE MAN OF ALEIM FROM JUDAH

A. A prophecy from a man of Aleim.

1. (1 Kings 13:1-2) The coming destruction of the altar in Bethel.

And behold, a man of Aleim went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Ruler, and Ierhoboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the Ruler, and said, “O altar, altar! Thus says the Ruler: ‘Behold, a child, Iosia by name, shall be born to the house of Daud; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’ ”

a. **A man of Aleim went from Judah to Bethel:** Apparently, there were no qualified messengers within the northern kingdom of Israhel. This is a sad commentary on the spiritual state of Ierhoboam’s kingdom.

i. This anonymous **man of Aleim** was used in an important way. He demonstrates that one does not need to be famous to be significantly used by Aleim.

b. **Behold, a child, Iosia by name, shall be born to the house of Daud; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you:** This is a remarkable prophecy that would be precisely fulfilled 340 years later. 2 Kings 23:15 documents the fulfillment of this prophecy in the days of Iosia, King of Judah: *Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, who made Israhel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image.*

i. This was more than a pronouncement of judgment against the altar; it also announced that the judgment would come through a ruler of Judah (**the house of Daud**). This was a special rebuke and source of concern to Ierhoboam, who was always aware of the threat from his neighbour to the south (as in 1 Kings 12:27).

ii. *We* know that this didn’t happen for some 350 years, but Ierhoboam didn’t know that in advance. He went to his grave worried about the fulfillment of this prophecy, which was a sort of immediate judgment on Ierhoboam.

2. (1 Kings 13:3-5) Signs to confirm the prophet’s words.

And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the Ruler has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.” So it came to pass when King Ierhoboam heard the saying of the man of Aleim, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Arrest him!” Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of Aleim had given by the word of the Ruler.

a. **He gave a sign the same day:** The prophecy of the man of Aleim would not be fulfilled for hundreds of years, so an immediate sign was given to confirm the word to the present-day hearers.

b. **Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out:** This would be a convincing sign, and a direct rebuke to the idolatrous worship at that altar.

c. **Arrest him!** Ierhoboam’s reaction was immediate – he sought to silence the messenger rather than respond to the message. The prophecy from the man of Aleim was like most every message of coming judgment – an implicit invitation to repentance. Ierhoboam obviously did not accept this invitation.

i. “If Ierhoboam would not have IEUE’s *priests*, Aleim sends His *prophet* into his land.” (Peter Damonse)

d. **His hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself:** Aleim confirmed His word of judgment in two ways. First, He judged the disobedient king at the precise point of his most glaring sin (the outstretched hand against the man of Aleim). Second, He fulfilled the immediate word against the altar (**the altar also was split apart**).

i. “This Aleim did, partly, to chastise Ierhoboam for offering violence to the Ruler’s prophet; partly, to secure the prophet against further violence; and partly, that in this example Aleim might show how highly he resents the injuries done to his ministers in and for the faithful discharge of their office.” (Phillip Prins)

3. (1 Kings 13:6) Ierhoboam’s plea.

Then the king answered and said to the man of Aleim, “Please entreat the favour of the Ruler your Aleim, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.” So the man of Aleim entreated the Ruler, and the king’s hand was restored to him, and became as before.

a. **Please entreat the favour of the Ruler your Aleim, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored:** Under the evident judgment of Aleim, Ierhoboam had no use for golden calves or their altars. He knew that his only hope was in the Ruler and in His representative.

i. As the subsequent chapters will show, Ierhoboam didn’t really repent here; or if he did, it was only for a moment. Wanting to receive something from Aleim is not the same as repentance.

b. **So the man of Aleim entreated the Ruler, and the king’s hand was restored to him:** To his credit, the man of Aleim showed great grace to Ierhoboam. He quickly moved from being under arrest to being an intercessor for his persecutor. This was great mercy from the man of Aleim, and especially from Aleim – who answered his prayer.

i. Aleim did this, “Partly, to assure him that the stroke was from Aleim; partly, because he repented of that violence which he intended against the prophet, for which Aleim inflicted it; and partly, that the goodness of Aleim to him might have led him to repentance; or if he continued impenitent, leave him without all excuse.” (Phillip Prins)

4. (1 Kings 13:7-10) The man of Aleim declines Ierhoboam’s invitation.

Then the king said to the man of Aleim, “Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.” But the man of Aleim said to the king, “If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was

commanded me by the word of the Ruler, saying, ‘You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.’” So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

a. **I will give you a reward:** Ierhoboam quickly – and naturally, given the circumstances – embraced the man of Aleim as a friend. He wanted to **refresh** and **reward** him, without any *repentance* from the sin the man of Aleim had denounced.

b. **If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place:** The man of Aleim refused the invitation, based on a prior warning from Aleim. To accept Ierhoboam’s invitation would demonstrate fellowship with his idolatry.

B. The man of Aleim’s disobedience and death.

1. (1 Kings 13:11-17) An old prophet in Bethel invites the man of Aleim to dinner.

Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of Aleim had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” For his sons had seen which way the man of Aleim went who came from Judah. Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, and went after the man of Aleim, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, “Are you the man of Aleim who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” And he said, “I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. For I have been told by the word of the Ruler, ‘You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.’”

a. **Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel:** It seems that this was a faithful prophet to the Ruler. This demonstrates that not every divine person left Israhel for Judah; some still remained behind.

i. “Probably once a prophet of the Ruler, who had fallen from his steadfastness, and yet not so deeply as to lose the knowledge of the true Aleim, and join with Ierhoboam with his idolatries.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Come home with me and eat bread:** This prophet from Bethel invited the unnamed man of Aleim to his home, as Ierhoboam had invited him. The man of Aleim refused, under the same reason he refused Ierhoboam – that Aleim had specifically told him to return to Judah without accepting hospitality, and to return a different way (also in 1 Kings 13:10).

2. (1 Kings 13:18-19) The prophet from Bethel lies to the man of Aleim from Judah.

He said to him, “I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Ruler, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (He was lying to him.) So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

a. **He was lying to him:** The prophet from Bethel gave a false word from Aleim, trying to persuade the man of Aleim from

Judah to change his course from doing exactly what Aleim told him.

i. “As he found the man of Aleim sitting under an oak, probably *faint* with *fatigue* and *fasting*, for he had no refreshment, his *humanity* might have led him to practise this deception, in order to persuade him to take some refreshment.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “But his sin was great; for he did not only tell a premeditated lie, but also made Aleim a liar, and to contradict himself, and all this without any pretence of necessity, or benefit to himself.” (Phillip Prins)

b. **An angel spoke to me:** Perhaps this was true, and perhaps it was a *deceiving* angel. Satan and his messengers can appear as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

c. **So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water:** The man of Aleim from Judah listened to the lie from the prophet of Bethel. He did this for several reasons:

- The prophet from Bethel was probably older (*an old prophet*, 1 Kings 13:11) and had the respect of the man of Aleim.

- The prophet from Bethel identified with the man of Aleim (**I too am a prophet as you are**).

- The prophet from Bethel claimed a spectacular experience (**an angel spoke to me**).

- The prophet from Bethel claimed to speak for the Ruler (**by the word of the Ruler**).

- The prophet from Bethel did not seem to be an idolater who should be shunned (**Bring him back with you to your house**).

- The prophet from Bethel offered no reward, other than simple food (**he may eat bread and drink water**).

i. No matter how natural and seductive this enticement was, it was the duty of the man of Aleim to resist it. He had a word from Aleim to guide his actions, and should receive *no other word* accept through dramatic and direct confirmation by Aleim’s Spirit. His failure at this point ended his usefulness as a man of Aleim.

ii. “When we have received a direct command fresh from the lips of The Anointed One, we must act on it, and not be turned aside by a different suggestion, made to us through the lips of professing Followers... Deal with Aleim at first-hand.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. “Aleim never contradicts Himself in His dealings with His servants. Let us be true to His commands, refusing to be deflected from the path of obedience, even by an angel from heaven.” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 13:20-22) The prophet from Bethel prophesies the doom of the man of Aleim.

Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Ruler came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of Aleim who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the Ruler: ‘Because you have disobeyed the word of the Ruler, and have not kept the commandment which the Ruler your Aleim commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Ruler said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.’”

a. **The word of the Ruler came to the prophet who had brought him back:** This prophet from Bethel spoke a *lie* in the name of the Ruler in 1 Kings 13:18. Now he received a *true* prophecy while the man of Aleim from Judah ate at his table.

b. **Because you have disobeyed the word of the Ruler:** Aleim promised great judgment against the man of Aleim from Judah for his disobedience. This was a hard test, but he failed it. He should have **kept the commandment which the Ruler your Aleim commanded**, no matter how subtle and innocent the temptation was to disobey.

c. **Your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers:** Aleim judged the man of Aleim from Judah far more strictly than He judged Ierhoboam or the prophet from Bethel. It would seem that they were guilty of worse sins (leading national idolatry and a deliberate lying prophecy), yet the man of Aleim received worse judgment.

i. “For a body to lie unburied was a curse, hence the emphasis on detail of the place of burial. It was a disgrace to be buried away from the family among strangers.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. This is an example of an important principle of the way Aleim works. We think that strict judgment should begin among the most wicked, but often Aleim begins strict judgment among His own people (1 Petrho 4:17). Usually this is because Aleim knows that the world will not be reached when His people live in compromise and disobedience.

iii. “By permitting himself to be seduced by the old prophet, when he should have acted only on the expressly declared counsel of Aleim, he committed *the sin unto death* [1 Ioanne 5:16-17]; that is, such a sin as Aleim will punish with the death of the body, while he extends mercy to his soul.” (Edgar Phillips)

4. (1 Kings 13:23-25a) The word of the prophet from Bethel is fulfilled.

So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse.

a. **A lion met him on the road and killed him:** The word – the *second* word – of the prophet from Bethel was fulfilled. He didn’t say that the man of Aleim would perish by a lion, but that he would not be buried in the tomb of his fathers.

i. “Lions were attested in Palestine until at least the thirteenth century a.d.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse:** This demonstrates that this was no mere accident, but something unique from Aleim. The lion did not attack the donkey (**the donkey stood by it**), nor did he attack the **men who passed by**. This lion was on a special mission of judgment from Aleim, and seems to be more obedient than the man of Aleim from Judah was.

5. (1 Kings 13:25b-32) The man of Aleim is given a decent burial and the prophet from Bethel testifies to his prophecy.

Then they went and told it in the city where the old

prophet dwelt. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, “It is the man of Aleim who was disobedient to the word of the Ruler. Therefore the Ruler has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the Ruler which He spoke to him.” And he spoke to his sons, saying, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled it. Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of Aleim, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, “Alas, my brother!” So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of Aleim is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he cried out by the word of the Ruler against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.”

a. **So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him:** The old prophet from Bethel was sympathetic to the man of Aleim from Judah, even in his disobedience and resulting judgment. The prophet from Bethel was not a particularly righteous man or good prophet, having used a lying prophecy to lead the man of Aleim into sin and judgment. He recognized the common weakness of this fellow servant of Aleim.

i. How strange it was for the old prophet to look upon the carcass of the dead prophet, and to realize: “My sin was worse than his.” The ways of Aleim’s judgment are sometimes past finding out, and only understandable from eternity.

b. **He laid the corpse in his own tomb:** Not in the tomb of the man of Aleim from Judah’s fathers, in fulfillment of the previous prophecy.

c. **When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of Aleim is buried; lay my bones beside his bones:** Though he lied to him, led him into sin, and prophesied judgment against him, the prophet from Bethel still respected the man of Aleim from Judah. Perhaps he understood that the word he spoke against the Ierhoboam required a courage he did not have; therefore he confirmed the word of the man of Aleim against Ierhoboam and the altar at Bethel.

6. (1 Kings 13:33-34) No repentance from Ierhoboam.

After this event Ierhoboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Ierhoboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

a. **After this event Ierhoboam did not turn from his evil way:** He should have turned, but he did not. Aleim’s dealing with the man of Aleim from Judah was warning enough to Ierhoboam, but it was a warning he ignored.

i. “All these wonderful accidents, as Aleim’s hammers, did but beat upon cold iron.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **He became one of the priests of the high places:** In ancient Israhel, Aleim commanded a strict separation between the office of king and priest. Ierhoboam blurred this separation and **this thing was the sin of the house of Ierhoboam.**

i. Ierhoboam had great opportunity, especially in light of the promise of Aleim through Aia recorded in 1 Kings 11:38: *Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant Daudid did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for Daudid, and will give Israhel to you.* Ierhoboam did not obey Aleim and honour His commandments, and he never fulfilled his potential or promise.

ii. The same principle works in servants of Aleim today. We are not called because of obedience, or used out of merit; but our disobedience hinders our potential for full use. Paulo put it this way in 2 Timotheo 2:21: *Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter [works of dishonour], he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.* Aleim uses vessels of honour, separation, usefulness, and preparation to their fullest potential.

iii. In his failure, Ierhoboam became the prototype of the disobedient kings of Israhel. The phrase *He did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of Ierhoboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israhel sin* was used of many subsequent kings of Israhel. These include:

- Baasa (1 Kings 15:33-34)
- Omrhi (1 Kings 16:25-26)
- Aazia (1 Kings 22:51-52)
- Ieorham (2 Kings 3:1-3)
- Ieu (2 Kings 10:29-31)
- Ieoaz (2 Kings 13:1-2)
- Ieoas (2 Kings 13:10-11)
- Ierhoboam II (2 Kings 14:23-24)
- Zekarhia (2 Kings 15:8-9)
- Menaim (2 Kings 15:17-18)
- Pekaia (2 Kings 15:23-24)
- Peka (2 Kings 15:27-28).

iv. One curious exception was Aab, who was noted as *worse* than Ierhoboam (1 Kings 16:30-31).

v. Ierhoboam had great opportunity, but instead became a great curse to every generation of the northern kingdom after that. Even at the end of the Kingdom of Israhel, Ierhoboam's sin was remembered: *For He tore Israhel from the house of Daudid, and they made Ierhoboam the son of Nebat king. Then Ierhoboam drove Israhel from following the Ruler, and made them commit a great sin. For the children of Israhel walked in all the sins of Ierhoboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the Ruler removed Israhel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israhel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.* (2 Kings 17:21-23)

vi. All in all, Ierhoboam is an example of sinful failure.

- He failed despite great blessing and favour from Aleim.
- He failed for the sake of mere political advantage.
- He failed and led an entire nation into idolatry.
- He failed despite specific warnings to repent.

· He failed despite specific judgment and deliverance from that judgment.

· He failed despite a clear message and example of integrity.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 14

THE END OF IERHOBAM AND RHEOBOAM

A. The end of Ierhoboam, King of Israhel.

1. (1 Kings 14:1-3) Ierhoboam sends his wife on a mission.

At that time Abia the son of Ierhoboam became sick. And Ierhoboam said to his wife, “Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Ierhoboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Aia the prophet is there, who told me that *I would be king over this people*. Also take with you ten loaves, *some* cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child.”

a. **At that time Abia the son of Ierhoboam became sick:** Ierhoboam was a king, but even kings have trouble common to men. His sick son troubled him and prompted him to seek the help of a prophet.

i. “Prophets were commonly consulted on health matters (2 Kings 1:2; 4:22, 40; 5:3).” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Ierhoboam:** This was a familiar pattern for Ierhoboam. In his time of need, he turned to the true Aleim and men of Aleim. He knew that idols could not help him in any true crisis. Yet he also knew that he had rejected Aleim and His prophets, and so he told his wife to wear a **disguise**.

i. “How foolish! Ierhoboam thought that the old prophet could penetrate the veil that hid the future, but not the disguise in which his wife wished to conceal herself.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **He will tell you what will become of the child:** Ierhoboam did not tell his wife to pray for their son, or to ask the prophet to pray. He wanted to use Aia the prophet as a fortuneteller instead of seeking him as a man of Aleim.

i. “It would have been more pious if he had begged the prophet’s prayers, and cast away his idols from him; then the child might have been restored to him, as his hand was. But most people would rather be told their fortune than their faults or their duty.” (Edgar Phillips??)

2. (1 Kings 14:4-6) Ierhoboam’s wife meets with Aia the prophet.

And Ierhoboam’s wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Aia. But Aia could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. Now the Ruler had said to Aia, “Here is the wife of Ierhoboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman.” And so it was, when Aia heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, “Come in, wife of Ierhoboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news.”

a. **Aia could not see:** As it turned out, there was no reason for the wife of Ierhoboam to wear a disguise. Old age made Aia unable to see.

b. **The Ruler had said to Aia, “Here is the wife of Ierhoboam, coming to ask you something about her son”:** The woman’s disguise and Aia’s blindness didn’t matter, because Aleim told Aia the truth of the matter.

c. **I have been sent to you with bad news:** From this, the wife

of Ierhoboam learned two things. First, that the news was bad. Second, that though she thought she was sent to Aia by her husband, in truth Aia was sent by Aleim with a message to her and Ierhoboam.

3. (1 Kings 14:7-11) Aia declares Aleim’s judgment on the house of Ierhoboam.

“Go, tell Ierhoboam, ‘Thus says the Ruler Aleim of Israhel: “Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israhel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of Daud, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant Daud, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only *what was right* in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back; therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Ierhoboam, and will cut off from Ierhoboam every male in Israhel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Ierhoboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ierhoboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the Ruler has spoken!”’

a. **You have done more evil than all who were before you:** Saul was a bad man and a bad king. Solomon was a good king but a bad man. Though both men were bad, Ierhoboam was far worse. He became the measuring line for the bad kings of Israhel to come.

i. Aleim compared Ierhoboam unfavorably with Daud with the words, **as my servant Daud** “who though he fell into some sins, yet, first, he constantly persevered in the true worship of Aleim, from which thou are revolted; secondly, he heartily repented of and turned from all his sins, whereas thou are obstinate and incorrigible.” (Phillip Prins)

b. **And have cast Me behind your back:** This was a powerful description of intense contempt towards Aleim, as in [Ezekiel 23:35](#) – *Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, therefore you shall bear the penalty Of your lewdness and your harlotry.*

i. “The last reason implies a neglect, a scorning of Aleim. It is the same figure of speech used to describe Aleim’s forgiveness of our sins. He puts them behind His back, or in other words, He forgets them. That is good news when it describes Aleim’s treatment of our sins [[Isaia 38:17](#)], but it is tragically bad news when it describes a person’s treatment of Aleim.” (Peter Damonse)

c. **I will bring disaster on the house of Ierhoboam, and will cut off from Ierhoboam every male:** Ierhoboam *could have* had a lasting dynasty, but he wasted the promise of Aleim with his unbelief, idolatry, and outright rejection of Aleim.

i. **Every male:** “Means literally ‘he who urinates against the wall.’” (Peter Damonse)

4. (1 Kings 14:12-16) The immediate judgment and the distant judgment.

“Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israhel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Ierhoboam who shall come to the grave, because in him

there is found something good toward the Ruler Aleim of Israhel in the house of Ierhoboam. Moreover the Ruler will raise up for Himself a king over Israhel who shall cut off the house of Ierhoboam; this is the day. What? Even now! For the Ruler will strike Israhel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israhel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the Ruler to anger. And He will give Israhel up because of the sins of Ierhoboam, who sinned and who made Israhel sin.”

a. **When your feet enter the city, the child shall die:** Ierhoboam sent his wife to discover the fate of his son. The bad news was that the child would die. Yet his death would be a demonstration of mercy, because at least he would be buried in honour and properly mourned. Such great judgment was coming upon the house of Ierhoboam that all would see that by comparison, this son was *blessed* in his death.

b. **He will uproot Israhel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River:** This would finally be fulfilled some 300 years later. Aleim knew that the root of Ierhoboam’s apostasy will eventually result in the bitter fruit of national exile.

5. (1 Kings 14:17-18) The immediate judgment is fulfilled. Then Ierhoboam’s wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israhel mourned for him, according to the word of the Ruler which He spoke through His servant Aia the prophet.

a. **According to the word of the Ruler which He spoke through His servant Aia the prophet:** The prophecy about Israhel’s national exile would not be fulfilled for centuries. Yet it was demonstrated as true because the immediate prophecy of the death of Ierhoboam’s son was exactly fulfilled.

6. (1 Kings 14:19-20) The death of Ierhoboam and the summary of his reign.

Now the rest of the acts of Ierhoboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israhel. The period that Ierhoboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place.

a. **He rested with his fathers:** 2 Chronicles 13:20 tells us that *the Ruler struck him, and he died*. “He died not the common death of all men, but by some remarkable stroke: beside the loss of five hundred thousand of his men in one battle with Abia king of Judah (2 Chronicles 13:17).” (Edgar Phillips)

B. The end of Rheoboam, king of Judah.

1. (1 Kings 14:21-24) Judah’s sin provokes Aleim to jealousy. **And Rheoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rheoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Ruler had chosen out of all the tribes of Israhel, to put His name there. His mother’s name was Naama, an Ammonitess. Now Judah did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred**

pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Ruler had cast out before the children of Israhel.

a. **Judah did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins:** These sins provoked the Ruler to jealousy because they were essentially sins of idolatry. Israhel turned their back on the Aleim who loved and redeemed them, and like an unfaithful spouse, they pursued spiritual adultery with idols.

b. **There were also perverted persons in the land:** This specifically describes prostitutes associated with the worship of idols. It is possible that the term **perverted persons** refers to both men and women cultic prostitutes. However, the term was used in 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 23:17-18 in distinction to feminine cultic prostitutes.

c. **They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Ruler had cast out before the children of Israhel:** Considering the depth of depravity among the Canaanite nations, this is a strong statement.

2. (1 Kings 14:25-26) Aleim chastises Rheoboam through Egypt.

It happened in the fifth year of King Rheoboam that Sisak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Ruler and the treasures of the king’s house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made.

a. **In the fifth year of King Rheoboam:** This was not so far from the time of Daud and Solomon, years of strength and security in Israhel. No foreign enemy ever did as much against Aleim’s people during the time of Daud and Solomon as happened during this occasion during the reign of Rheoboam.

b. **Sisak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:** Both 2 Chronicles and archeology confirm this account. The record in 2 Chronicles 12 gives many details that the writer of 1 Kings summarized. From 2 Chronicles 12 we learn:

- Exactly why this attack succeeded: *When Rheoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the Ruler, and all Israhel along with him (2 Chronicles 12:2).*

- That Sisak brought an allied army of nations against Judah (2 Chronicles 12:3).

- That Sisak *took the fortified cities of Judah* on his way to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 12:4).

- That as the enemy army approached Jerusalem, the Prophet Semaia led the leaders of Judah in genuine repentance (2 Chronicles 12:6).

- In response to their repentance, Aleim allowed Jerusalem to remain – but as servants of Sisak, king of Egypt (2 Chronicles 12:7-8).

i. “Sheshonq I (Sisak) had founded the Egyptian (Libyan) Dynasty XXII (945-924 b.c.) and his raid into Palestine in this year (925 b.c.) is well attested on the Amon temple reliefs at Thebes (Karnak). From the one hundred and fifty place-names recorded there, his aim seems to have been to reassert Egyptian control over the main trade routes throughout

Palestine and the Negeb.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **He took away the treasures of the house of the Ruler and the treasures of the king’s house:** Solomon left great wealth to his son Rheoboam, both in the temple and in the palace. After only five years, that wealth was largely gone.

d. **He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made:** 1 Kings 10:16-17 mentions these 500 shields, 200 large and 300 small. These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This was an example of the emphasis of *image* over *substance* that began in the days of Solomon and worsened in the days of Rheoboam.

i. “Rheoboam made in their stead shields of bronze, and with these pathetically tried to keep up former appearances. It is like souls, who, when despoiled of their freshness and power by the enemy, laboriously endeavor to keep up an outward appearance of spiritual prosperity; or, like a fallen Ekklesia, shorn of its strength, and robbed of its purity, seeking to hide its helplessness, and cover its nakedness, with the tinsel of ritualism, spurious revivalism, union, and anything that promises to give them some appearance.” (Peter Damonse)

ii. According to Peter Damonse, each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was invested in gold ceremonial shields – and now in the hands of the Egyptians.

3. (1 Kings 14:27-28) The decline of the Kingdom of Judah under Rheoboam.

Then King Rheoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king’s house. And whenever the king entered the house of the Ruler, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

a. **King Rheoboam made bronze shields in their place:** The replacement of gold with bronze is a perfect picture of the decline under the days of Rheoboam. The dynasty of David went from gold to bronze in five years.

i. “They wished to emphasize how far Rheoboam fell in a mere few years. He had inherited an empire; five years later, master of a small state, he could protect his capital itself only by denuding his palace of its treasures. Solomon’s court had despised silver; his son’s court had to be content with bronze!” (Phillip Prins)

b. **And committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard:** In the days of Solomon, the gold shields hung on display in the House of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Kings 10:16-17). Under Rheoboam, the replacement bronze shields were kept in a protected guardroom until they were specifically needed for state occasions.

4. (1 Kings 14:29-31) Rheoboam’s death and the summary of his reign.

Now the rest of the acts of Rheoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Rheoboam and Ierhoboam all their days. So Rheoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother’s name was Naama, an Ammonitess.

Then Abiam his son reigned in his place.

a. **Now the rest of the acts of Rheoboam:** 2 Chronicles summarized Rheoboam like this: *And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Ruler.* (2 Chronicles 12:14) This speaks to the lack of his of personal relationship with the Ruler.

i. “He was born of a heathen mother, and begotten of an apostate father. From such an impure fountain could sweet water possibly spring?” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “The account ends with the note that Rheoboam’s mother was Naama, an Ammoniteess. Is this not the writer’s way of reminding us that it was Solomon’s marriage to foreign wives that started the precipitous decline in the first place?” (Peter Damonse)

b. **There was war between Rheoboam and Ierhoboam all their days:** These two were very different. Rheoboam governed as a tyrant, started bad and humbled himself to Aleim towards the end of his life (2 Chronicles 12:6-7). Ierhoboam governed as a populist, started with great promise but ended terribly.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 15

THE REIGNS OF ABIAM, ASA, NADAB AND BAASA

A. Two kings of Judah.

1. (1 Kings 15:1-8) The reign of King Abiam (known as Abia in 2 Chronicles 13).

In the eighteenth year of King Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, Abiam became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacha the granddaughter of Abisalom. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the Ruler his Aleim, as was the heart of his father Daudid. Nevertheless for Daudid's sake the Ruler his Aleim gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; because Daudid did *what was* right in the eyes of the Ruler, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Urhia the Hittite. And there was war between Rheoboam and Ierhoboam all the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abiam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abiam and Ierhoboam. So Abiam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of Daudid. Then Asa his son reigned in his place.

a. **Abiam became king over Judah:** This son of Rheoboam only **reigned three years**, showing that Aleim did not bless his reign.

i. From the comparing this account with 2 Chronicles 13 we learn that Abiam knew something of the Ruler, and knew how to preach – but he did not uproot the idolatry and sexual immorality that was introduced by Rheoboam. The successor of Abiam (Asa) removed the centers of the sexually-charged idolatry that was so common in this land (1 Kings 15:12-13).

b. **His heart was not loyal to the Ruler his Aleim, as was the heart of his father Daudid:** This was the real problem with Abiam's reign – his lack of a real personal relationship with Aleim. Daudid sinned during his reign, but his heart stayed **loyal to the Ruler his Aleim**.

i. 2 Chronicles 13 fills in more interesting details about the reign of Abiam (called Abia in 2 Chronicles). It tells us how there was war between Ierhoboam of Israhel and Abiam of Judah, and how Abiam challenged Ierhoboam on the basis of righteousness and faithfulness to Aleim. Ierhoboam responded with a surprise attack, and victory seemed certain for Israhel over Judah – but Abiam cried out to the Ruler, and Aleim won a victory for Judah that day. 2 Chronicles 13:18 says of that war, *Thus the children of Israhel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Ruler Aleim of their fathers.*

ii. “For Daudid's sake and in response to his faith, he was allowed a spectacular victory over the encircling Israelites whom he had challenged, for being even more apostate than he... This is an instance of Aleim blessing the unworthy for the sake of the worthy.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. Yet Chronicles also tells us his standing at the end of his brief reign: *But Abia grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters* (2

Chronicles 13:21). In the midst of his victory and good leadership for Judah, he never had the relationship with the Ruler he should have had.

c. **For Daudid's sake the Ruler his Aleim gave him a lamp in Jerusalem:** Aleim preserved the dynasty of Daudid in Jerusalem for the sake of Daudid, not because of the character or quality of his descendants.

i. “Chronicles spells his name Abia, which means ‘IEUE is my father.’ Kings spells the name Abiam, which means ‘my father is Yam.’ Yam was a Canaanite sea-god. Could it be that he started out as Abia, a follower of IEUE, and ended up as Abiam, a follower of a false god?” (Peter Damonse)

2. (1 Kings 15:9-11) Summary of the reign of King Asa of Judah.

In the twentieth year of Ierhoboam king of Israhel, Asa became king over Judah. And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name was Maacha the granddaughter of Abisalom. Asa did *what was* right in the eyes of the Ruler, as *did* his father Daudid.

a. **Asa became king over Judah:** This great-grandson of Solomon took the throne Judah at the end of Ierhoboam's reign in Israhel, after his father's brief reign.

b. **Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Ruler, as did his father Daudid:** The kings of Judah were usually measured against Daudid, the founder of their dynasty. In contrast to his father Abia (1 Kings 15:3), Asa followed in the same heart as Daudid.

i. The phrase **his father Daudid** shows us that in Hebrew literature the word **father** can be used of an ancestor in general, instead of strictly referring to one's father. Daudid was actually the great-great-grandfather of Asa.

3. (1 Kings 15:12-15) The reforms of King Asa of Judah.

And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. Also he removed Maacha his grandmother from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Aserha. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the Ruler all his days. He also brought into the house of the Ruler the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.

a. **He banished the perverted persons from the land:** These state-sanctioned homosexual idol-temple prostitutes were introduced into Judah during the reign of Rheoboam (1 Kings 14:24). Asa's father Abiam didn't remove these perversions and idols, but King Asa did.

b. **Also he removed Maacha his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Aserha:** This demonstrates the thoroughness of Asa's reforms. He was able to act righteously even when his family was wrong, in particular his own grandmother. “It is in a man's own family circle that his faithfulness is put fairly to the test.” (Peter Damonse)

i. “Maacah was apparently the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (2 Chronicles 13:2) and Tamarh (2 Samouel 14:27), hence the granddaughter of Absalom, Daudid's rebellious son.” (Peter

Damonse)

ii. **By the Brook Kidron:** “The *Kidron Valley* east of Jerusalem was then the city’s main rubbish dump.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. **An obscene image:** “This image is described as ‘obscene’ in our English translation, but the Hebrew word is closer in meaning to ‘frightening,’ ‘horrible,’ or ‘abominable.’ Some commentators believe it was some sort of phallic symbol consistent with the fertility cult of Aserha.” (Peter Damonse)

iv. “From the whole, it is pretty evident that the image was a mere *Priapus*, or something of the same nature, and that Maacha had an assembly in the grove where the image was set up, and doubtless worshipped it with the most impure rites. What the Roman *Priapus* was I need not tell the learned reader; and as to the unlearned, it would not profit him to know.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **But the high places were not removed:** 2 Chronicles 14:3 says that Asa did remove the high places, but it mentions these high places in connection with *altars of the foreign gods*. Therefore Asa removed the high places that were dedicated to idols, but not the ones that were dedicated to the Ruler.

d. **Nevertheless Asa’s heart was loyal to the Ruler all his days:** Asa’s loyal heart was shown in his reforms against idolatry and state-sanctioned perversion, and in his restoration of certain **silver and gold utensils** to the temple.

4. (1 Kings 15:16-24) Asa buys the favour of Ben-Adad, King of Syria.

Now there was war between Asa and Baasa king of Israhel all their days. And Baasa king of Israhel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the Ruler and the treasuries of the king’s house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-Adad the son of Tabrhimmon, the son of Ezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, “Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasa king of Israhel, so that he will withdraw from me.” So Ben-Adad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israhel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacha, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. Now it happened, when Baasa heard it, that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah. Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasa had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jeosaphat his son reigned in his place.

a. **Baasa king of Israhel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa**

king of Judah: This continues the struggle for dominance between the northern kingdom of Israhel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Baasa gained the upper hand in the days of Asa because he effectively blocked a main route into Judah at the city of Ramah. He hoped this military and economic pressure on Judah would force Asa into significant concessions.

b. **Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the Ruler and the treasuries of the king’s house:** Asa used this treasure to buy the favour of Ben-Adad of Syria, so that he would withdraw support from Israhel. Apparently, Baasa of Israhel could not stand against Judah by himself – he needed the backing of Syria.

i. 2 Chronicles 16:7-10 tells us that Aleim was not pleased by this, and delivered this word by the prophet Anani: “*Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Ruler your Aleim, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Ruler, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Ruler run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.*” (2 Chronicles 16:7b-9)

ii. Sadly, Asa did not respond to this word properly. *Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time* (2 Chronicles 16:10). Asa shows us the tragedy of a man who rules well and seeks the Ruler for many years, yet fails in a significant challenge of his faith and then refuses to hear Aleim’s correction.

iii. “Wherein he committed three great faults, amongst many others. First, He alienated things consecrated to Aleim without necessity. Secondly, He did this out of carnal fear and distrust of that Aleim whose power and goodness he had lately experienced. Thirdly, He did this for an ill intent, to hire him to the breach of his league and covenant with Baasa, and to take away part of that land which by right, and the special gift of Aleim, belonged to the Israelites.” (Phillip Prins)

c. **The rest of all the acts of Asa... are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?** 2 Chronicles 14-16 provides many more details regarding the reign of Asa.

- He encouraged national piety: *He commanded Judah to seek the Ruler Aleim of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.* (2 Chronicles 14:4).

- He built fortified cities and presided over a long period of peace (2 Chronicles 14:6).

- In response to Asa’s prayer, Aleim defeated a huge Ethiopian army that came against Judah (2 Chronicles 14:9-13).

- He had an encouraging word from the prophet Azariah that encouraged him to continue his reforms (2 Chronicles 15:1-9).

- Asa led a national re-commitment to the covenant (2 Chronicles 15:10-15).

d. **But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet:** 2 Chronicles gives us the more complete analysis: *his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Ruler, but the*

physicians. (2 Chronicles 16:12). This happened after he refused to hear Aleim's word of correction through Anani the seer.

i. Some think that Asa's foot ailment was gout, "but gout was uncommon in Palestine and ancient Egypt and it is more likely, in view of Asa's age, the severity of the disease and death within two years, to have been a peripheral obstructive vascular disease with ensuing gangrene." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Edgar Phillips on Asa: "It is the record of a faulty life, but one in which the deepest thing, that of desire, was right; and so it is the record of a life, the influence of which was a blessing rather than a curse. It is a revealing story."

iii. All in all, Asa was a good man who did not finish well. The last years of his life were marked by unbelief, hardness against Aleim, oppression against his people, and disease. Age and time do not necessarily make us better; they only do if we continue to follow Aleim in faith.

iv. "Ierhemia 41:9 refers to a pit (or cistern) made by Asa 'for fear of Baasa king of Isrhael.' Aleim would thus, in this incidental way, remind us by this late and last historical notice of King Asa what was the beginning of his decline – 'the fear of man, which bringeth a snare.' " (Peter Damonse)

B. Two kings of Isrhael.

1. (1 Kings 15:25-32) The short reign of Nadab, king of Isrhael.

Now Nadab the son of Ierhoboam became king over Isrhael in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Isrhael two years. And he did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Isrhael sin. Then Baasa the son of Aia, of the house of Issacharh, conspired against him. And Baasa killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Isrhael laid siege to Gibbethon. Baasa killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Ierhoboam. He did not leave to Ierhoboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the Ruler which He had spoken by His servant Aia the Shilonite, because of the sins of Ierhoboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Isrhael sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael to anger. Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Isrhael? And there was war between Asa and Baasa king of Isrhael all their days.

a. **And he did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of his father:** Nadab, this son of Ierhoboam did as his father did, continuing in his idolatry and hardness towards Aleim.

i. 2 Chronicles 11:14 specifically tells us that *both* Ierhoboam and his sons were responsible for driving Aleim's priests out of the land of Isrhael. In this, Nadab directly shared in the sins of his father Ierhoboam.

ii. "Nadab's name means *willing*; and he appears to have been too willing to continue in, and perpetuate, the sin of his iniquitous father." (Peter Damonse)

b. **Baasa killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah,**

and reigned in his place. And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Ierhoboam: This was the end of the dynasty of Ierhoboam. Had Ierhoboam remained obedient to the Ruler, Aleim promised him a lasting dynasty like the house of David (1 Kings 11:38). Because of Ierhoboam's sin, though he enjoyed a long reign, his son only reigned two years before assassination of Nadab and the murder of all Ierhoboam's descendants.

i. "Thus Aleim made use of one wicked man to destroy another." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "Nadab was king little more than one year, but since it covered parts of two years, Hebrew time measurement reckons his reign as two years." (Peter Damonse)

c. **According to the word of the Ruler which He had spoken by His servant Aia:** This word is recorded in 1 Kings 14:7-16.

i. "So ended the first of the nine dynasties that for two hundred and fifty years ruled (or misruled) the kingdom of Isrhael." (Peter Damonse)

2. (1 Kings 15:33-34) The reign of Baasa, king of Isrhael.

In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasa the son of Aia became king over all Isrhael in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. He did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of Ierhoboam, and in his sin by which he had made Isrhael sin.

a. **Baasa the son of Aia became king over all Isrhael:** As expected with a man who came to the throne through assassination, Baasa was a wicked man and ushered in a dreadful period for Isrhael, both spiritually and politically.

b. **He did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of Ierhoboam:** The summary puts it simply. Though Baasa was not a genetic descendent of Ierhoboam (having murdered his family), he was certainly a *spiritual* descendent of Ierhoboam.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 16

FIVE SUCCESSIVE KINGS OF ISRHAEL

A. Two short dynasties over Israhel: Baasa and Zimrhi.

1. (1 Kings 16:1-4) Baasa's rebuke and prophecy of judgment.

Then the word of the Ruler came to Ieu the son of Anani, against Baasa, saying: "Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israhel, and you have walked in the way of Ierhoboam, and have made My people Israhel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, surely I will take away the posterity of Baasa and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasa and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields."

a. **I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israhel:** 1 Kings 15:27 tells us that Baasa was head of a conspiracy to kill Nadab, the son of Ierhoboam. It tells us nothing of Aleim's hand with Baasa, but here we learn that behind-the-scenes Aleim moved even *through* the conspiracy of Baasa against Nadab.

i. "Baasa was of plebian stock, yet his name, *he who lays waste*, tells only too accurately what kind of a ruler he proved himself to be." (Peter Damonse)

b. **You have walked in the way of Ierhoboam... I will make your house like the house of Ierhoboam:** Because Baasa was a wicked king after the pattern of Ierhoboam he would face the same judgment as Ierhoboam and his house. This had special relevance to Baasa because he was the instrument of judgment Aleim used to bring justice to the house of Ierhoboam.

i. "Aleim, who looks upon the heart, sees him but as an assassin for the accomplishment of his ambitious designs, slaying king Nadab and the entire house of Ierhoboam." (Peter Damonse)

c. **You have walked in the way of Ierhoboam... I will make your house like the house of Ierhoboam:** Baasa was not a blood descendant of Ierhoboam, but he was a spiritual descendent of this great idolater of the northern kingdom. Because he walked in the way of Ierhoboam the house of Baasa would face the same judgment as the house of Ierhoboam.

d. **The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasa and dies in the city:** This same judgment was promised and fulfilled against the house of Ierhoboam (1 Kings 14:11). It was considered a special disgrace to have your dead corpse desecrated and kept from proper burial.

2. (1 Kings 16:5-7) The death of Baasa.

Now the rest of the acts of Baasa, what he did, and his might, *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israhel?* So Baasa rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Ela his son reigned in his place. And also the word of the Ruler came by the prophet Ieu the son of Anani against Baasa and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the Ruler in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Ierhoboam, and because he killed them.

a. The word of the Ruler came by the prophet Ieu:

Apparently Ieu had a long career as a prophet. 2 Chronicles 19:2 mentions another word of Ieu the son of Anani. Some 50 years after this word to Baasa, he spoke to Ieosaphat the King of Judah.

i. Ieu the Prophet also wrote specific books of history regarding kings of Israhel (2 Chronicles 20:34). His father Anani is also mentioned in 2 Chronicles 16:7-10, where it describes how he suffered imprisonment because he was a faithful prophet in speaking to King Asa.

b. **Because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the Ruler in provoking Him to anger:** The Scriptures tells us that by nature, Aleim *is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy* (Psalm 103:8). Because He is *slow to anger*, it took a lot of wickedness on the part of Baasa to succeed in **provoking Him to anger**.

c. **In being like the house of Ierhoboam, and because He killed them:** In 1 Kings 16:2 Aleim said that He lifted Baasa out of the dust and set him as ruler over Israhel. In doing this Aleim used Baasa to bring judgment upon the house of Ierhoboam; yet Aleim did not *cause* Baasa to do this, so He rightly judged Baasa even though Aleim used the wickedness of Baasa in bringing judgment upon Ierhoboam.

i. Aleim did not need to coerce a reluctant Baasa to conspire against and assassinate Nadab the son of Ierhoboam. That wicked desire was already in the heart of Baasa. In using Baasa to bring judgment on the house of Ierhoboam, Aleim only needed to let Baasa do *what he wanted to do*. Therefore it was proper of Aleim to judge Baasa for something that ultimately furthered Aleim's eternal plan.

ii. "Aleim is ever represented in Scripture as *doing* those things which, in the course of his providence, he *permits* to be done." (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 16:8-14) The two year reign of Ela.

In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Ela the son of Baasa became king over Israhel, and reigned two years in Tirzah. Now his servant Zimrhi, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimrhi went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasa; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. Thus Zimrhi destroyed all the household of Baasa, according to the word of the Ruler, which He spoke against Baasa by Ieu the prophet, for all the sins of Baasa and the sins of Ela his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israhel sin, in provoking the Ruler Aleim of Israhel to anger with their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Ela, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israhel?

a. **Ela the son of Baasa became king over Israhel, and reigned two years in Tirzah:** The hope of every king is to pass the throne on to his son and to further a lasting dynasty. Because Baasa was a wicked king, Aleim did not bless his dynasty and his son only **reigned two years**.

b. **And Zimrhi went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place:** Even as Baasa gained the throne through assassination, so the son of Baasa was assassinated by Zimrhi, an officer in the army of Israhel.

c. **Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasa:** This was common practice in the ancient world, and was exactly what Baasa did to the house of Ierhoboam (1 Kings 15:29). Daud's treatment of the house of Saulo was a glorious exception to this common practice.

i. This massacre was an exact fulfillment of the word of the Ruler through the Prophet Ieu, the son of Anani (1 Kings 16:2-4).

ii. "In less than fifty years the first two dynastys of Israhel's kings had come to an end and every member of their families been exterminated. Aleim meant to make their doom an example to those who should thereafter live wicked." (Peter Damonse)

4. (1 Kings 16:15-20) The seven-day reign of Zimrhi.

In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimrhi had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. Now the people who were encamped heard it said, "Zimrhi has conspired and also has killed the king." So all Israhel made Omrhi, the commander of the army, king over Israhel that day in the camp. Then Omrhi and all Israhel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. And it happened, when Zimrhi saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the Ruler, in walking in the way of Ierhoboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israhel sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimrhi, and the treason he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israhel?

a. **Zimrhi had reigned in Tirzah seven days:** The man who assassinated Ela, the son of Baasa, did not enjoy a blessed reign. His end came soon.

b. **So all Israhel made Omrhi, the commander of the army, king over Israhel that day:** This shows that the democratic influence in Israhel was greater than is often thought. The people – especially it would seem the army – simply did not want Zimrhi to reign as king over them. They therefore rejected his authority and appointed **Omrhi, the commander of the army, king over Israhel.**

c. **When Zimrhi saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had committed:** Zimrhi is one of the few suicides in the Scriptures, along with Samson (Judges 9:54), Saulo (2 Samouel 31:4) and Ahithophel (2 Samouel 17:23).

i. The Scriptures never approves of suicide. It is sin; the sin of self-murder. Yet, we are wrong if we regard it as the unforgivable sin, and anyone who does commit suicide has given in to the lies and deceptions of satan, whose purpose is

to kill and destroy (Ioanne 10:10).

ii. "Suicide is always the ultimate action of cowardice. In the case of Saulo, and in many similar cases, it is perfectly natural; but let it never be glorified as heroic. It is the last resort of the man who dare not stand up to life." (Edgar Phillips)

d. **In walking in the way of Ierhoboam:** Zimrhi only reigned seven days, but in those days he **walked in the way of Ierhoboam.** Aleim allowed many of the wicked kings of Israhel to reign much longer than this, but He was under no obligation to do so. Aleim is within His rights to bring judgment sooner rather than later.

i. "Let Zimrhi's end warn intentional regicides and traitors." (Peter Damonse)

B. The fourth dynasty of the northern kingdom of Israhel: The House of Omrhi.

1. (1 Kings 16:21-28) The 12-year reign of Omrhi, King of Israhel.

Then the people of Israhel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omrhi. But the people who followed Omrhi prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omrhi reigned. In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omrhi became king over Israhel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. Omrhi did evil in the eyes of the Ruler, and did worse than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israhel sin, provoking the Ruler Aleim of Israhel to anger with their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Omrhi which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israhel? So Omrhi rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Aab his son reigned in his place.

a. **The people of Israhel were divided into two parts... So Tibni died and Omrhi reigned:** Omrhi defeated the forces loyal to Tibni, so Tibni died – presumably, killed by Omrhi after the defeat of his forces.

i. "*The people of Israhel* fell into a civil war; yet neither this nor any other of Aleim's dreadful judgments could win them to repentance; which is an evidence of their prodigious impiety and incorrigibleness, and how ripe they were for ruin." (Phillip Prins)

ii. "The division of the kingdom between Tibni and Omrhi began in the *twenty-seventh* year of Asa; this division lasted *five years*, during which Omrhi, had but a *share* of the kingdom. Tibni dying, Omrhi came into the possession of the *whole* kingdom, which he held *seven years*; this was in the *thirty-first* year of Asa." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **He built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria:** This became the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israhel. Omrhi built a capital that was politically neutral (being a new city with no previous tribal associations) and in a strong defensive position (on top of a

hill).

i. “Excavations at Samaria... show that Omerhi was the first builder on the one-hundred-metre-high hill. This site was a good choice, for it was to withstand several sieges.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **He walked in all the ways of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat:** This makes Omerhi the sixth king of Israhel since the division of the once-unified kingdom. Ierhoboam was the first king, and each of the five kings after him followed in the evil ways of Ierhoboam.

i. “He seems to have formulated laws [see [Mika 6:16](#)], making Ierhoboam’s calf-worship, or other forms of idolatry, obligatory throughout his realm, which remained in force till the end of the kingdom, more than two hundred years later.” (Peter Damonse)

ii. In the records of secular history, Omerhi is one of the more *successful* and famous kings of ancient Israhel. “Omerhi’s fame as a monarch, while downplayed by the author of Kings, was widely recognized in other places. The Moabite stone, discovered in 1868, refers to him as the conqueror of Moab. Assyrian inscriptions make mention of him as a great warrior. For years the Assyrians referred to Israhel as ‘the house of Omerhi.’ ” (Peter Damonse)

iii. “His name means *heaping*; and by his iniquity he helped to heap up wrath against his dynasty, executed finally, thirty-six years later, on his great-grandson Iorham, to the total extinction of the guilty house.” (Peter Damonse)

2. ([1 Kings 16:29-34](#)) Aab begins his 22 year reign.

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Aab the son of Omerhi became king over Israhel; and Aab the son of Omerhi reigned over Israhel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Aab the son of Omerhi did evil in the sight of the Ruler, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Iezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Aab made a wooden image. Aab did more to provoke the Ruler Aleim of Israhel to anger than all the kings of Israhel who were before him. In his days Iel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abirham his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Ruler, which He had spoken through 1 Kings the son of Nun.

a. **In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah:** Asa reigned for 41 years in total ([1 Kings 15:10](#)). During his 41 years there were seven different kings of Israhel.

b. **Aab the son of Omerhi did evil in the sight of the Ruler, more than all who were before him:** Each of the previous kings of Israhel walked in the wicked pattern of Ierhoboam. Aab distinguished himself in being *worse* than Ierhoboam.

i. His father Omerhi was a political and economic success for Israhel but a spiritual failure. Aab picked up where his father left off. “Reinforcing the father-son relationship is the name *Aab*, which can be translated ‘brother of the father’ or ‘resembling the father.’ ” (Peter Damonse) It can be said of

some sons, “He has his father’s eyes.” It could be said of Aab, “He has his father’s lies.”

ii. Ierhoboam intended to serve the Ruler through idolatrous images (such as the golden calf) and in disobedient ways (altars and high places other than Jerusalem). Aab introduced the worship of completely new, pagan gods. In his disobedience Ierhoboam said, “I will worship the Ruler, but do it my way.” Aab said, “I want to forget about the Ruler completely and worship Baal.”

iii. In his later years, Solomon tragically worshipped pagan gods. Yet Omerhi and Aab were far worse in that they *commanded* the worship of idols. “He made *statutes* in favour of idolatry, and obliged the people by law to commit it. See [Mika 6:16](#), where this seems to be intended: *For the statutes of Omerhi are kept, and all the works of the house of Aab.*” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **He took as wife Iezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him:** Even as the foreign wives of Solomon led to his spiritual downfall, so Aab’s foreign wife **Iezebel** led him and the nation into deep idolatry.

i. Ethbaal means, *With Baal*. “Iezebel’s name may come from a cultic cry used in the worship of Baal meaning ‘Where is Baal?’ Translated into Hebrew the name was also a verbal pun that the Israelites must have relished. *Zebel* in Hebrew means *dung!*” (Peter Damonse)

ii. Iezebel was “A woman infamous for her idolatry, and cruelty, and sorcery, and filthiness.” (Phillip Prins)

iii. Edgar Phillips on the bad reign of Aab: “This came to pass, not so much because his character was more depraved: but because he was a weak man, the tool of a crafty, unscrupulous, and cruel woman: and some of the worst crimes that have ever been committed have been wrought by weak men, at the instigation of worse – but stronger – spirits than themselves.”

iv. “So well known was the hostility of Iezebel to all good, that his marrying her was esteemed the highest pitch of vice, and an act the most provoking to Aleim, and destructive to the prosperity of the kingdom.” (Edgar Phillips)

v. “Had a secular historian been recording these events, the marriage of Aab and Iezebel would likely have been applauded as a prudent political move. Both Phoenicia and Israhel were being threatened by Syria, and the marriage gave Aab a powerful military ally at a crucial time.” (Peter Damonse)

vi. It seemed like the marriage partnership between Tyre and Israhel was ideal for Israhel. Tyre was at the height of its glory. “Her colonies dotted the shores of the Mediterranean as far as Spain; her ships whitened every sea with their sails, and ventured to the coasts of our own Cornwall for tin; her daughter, Carthage, nursed the lion-cup Hannibal, and was strong enough to make Rome tremble.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **In his days Iel of Bethel built Jericho:** It seems that Aab wanted to challenge the prophecy of 1 Kings after the destruction of the city. *Then 1 Kings charged them at that time, saying, “Cursed be the man before the Ruler who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.”* ([1 Kings 6:26](#)) If Aab did think that he could rebuild Jericho

without being affected by this curse, he was wrong: **He laid its foundation with Abirham his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Ruler, which He had spoken through 1 Kings the son of Nun.**

i. We don't know how the sons of Iel died; they may have died as a curse or Iel may have sacrificed them. "Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a practice in ancient scriptural times called 'foundation sacrifices' in which children were buried, maybe alive, in the foundations of buildings." (Peter Damonse)

ii. This was a merciful warning to Aab that he ignored. Aleim told him, "You cannot go against my word without paying the price. Iel of Bethel, the man you directed to rebuild Jericho, has found this to be true. Take this warning seriously." Yet Aab did not take this warning seriously.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 17

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF ELIA

A. Elia prays for drought and experiences Aleim's provision.

1. (1 Kings 17:1) Elia tells of the Ruler's judgment.

And Elia the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Aab, "As the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

a. **Elia the Tishbite:** At this crucial time in the history of Judah and Isrhael, the Prophet **Elia** suddenly appeared. He became the dominant spiritual force in Isrhael during the dark days of Aab's apostasy.

i. The name **Elia** means, *IEUE is my Aleim*. In the days when Aab's government officially supported the worship of Baal and other gods, even the *name* of this prophet told the truth.

ii. It was a crucial time in the history of Isrhael. It looked as if the worship of the true Aleim might be completely eliminated in the northern kingdom. "The land swarmed with the priests of Baal and of the groves – proud of Court favour; glorying in their sudden rise to power; insolent, greedy, licentious, and debased. The fires of persecution were lit, and began to burn with fury." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "The whole land seemed apostate. Of all the thousands of Isrhael, only seven thousand remained who had not bowed the knee or kissed the hand to Baal. But they were paralysed with fear; and kept so still, that their very existence was unknown by Elia in the hour of his great loneliness." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **There shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word:** This was a dramatic demonstration against the pagan god Baal, who was thought to be the sky god, the god of the weather. Elia showed that through his prayers to the Aleim of Isrhael, IEUE was mightier than Baal.

i. "The old religion against the new; the child of nature against the effeminate child of the courts; camel's hair against soft clothing; moral strength against moral weakness." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Elia was not merely the *prophet* of this drought – in the sense of prayer, he was *the cause* of the drought. He prayed and it happened. Iakobo 5:17-18 makes this clear: *Elia was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

c. **As the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael lives, before whom I stand:** This statement of Elia shows the source of his strength. It is specifically said *Elia was a man with a nature like ours* (Iakobo 5:17). Yet he showed a strength greater than most of us in our life with Aleim. We must pay attention to these indications to the source of Elia's strength.

i. **As the Ruler Aleim of Isrhael lives:** Everyone else felt that the Ruler was dead, but for Elia the Ruler lived. He was the supreme reality of Elia's life.

ii. **Before whom I stand:** He stood in the presence of Aab, but he was conscious of the presence of someone greater than any earthly king. Gabriel himself could not choose a higher title (Louka 1:19).

2. (1 Kings 17:2-5) Elia escapes to Cherith.

Then the word of the Ruler came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the Ruler, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.

a. **Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith:** The drought announced by Elia in the previous verse was a great threat to the northern kingdom of Isrhael and the reign of Aab. Therefore his life was in danger, and Aleim sent him to **the Brook Cherith** for his own safety.

i. Aleim led Elia one step at a time. He did not tell him to go to Cherith until he first delivered the message to Aab. He did not tell him to go to Zarephath until the brook dried up at Cherith. Aleim led Elia by faith, one step at a time, and Elia followed in faith.

ii. **Hide by the Brook Cherith:** Through this Aleim taught Elia the value of the *hidden* life. He had just become famous as an adversary of Aab, so mighty that his prayers could stop the rain. At the moment of his new-found fame, Aleim wanted Elia to **hide** and be alone with Aleim. "We must not be surprised, then, if sometimes our Father says: 'There, child, thou hast had enough of this hurry, and publicity, and excitement; get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook – hide thyself in the Cherith of the sick chamber; or in the Cherith of disappointed hopes; or in the Cherith of bereavement; or in some solitude from which the crowds have ebbed away.' " (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "Elia could not be alone, so long as he had Aleim and himself to converse with. A good man is never less alone, than when alone." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there:** The escape to the Brook Cherith was for more than protection. It was also to train Elia in dependence upon the Ruler. In a season of drought, he had to trust that Aleim could keep this brook flowing. He also had to accept food from **the ravens**, which were unclean animals.

i. The name **Cherith** comes from the ancient Hebrew root meaning, *to cut away, to cut up or off*. This shows that Aleim had some cutting to do in the life of Elia during this period.

ii. **I have commanded the ravens to feed you there:** There is an emphasis on the word **there**. Aleim promised that the ravens would feed Elia as he stayed at Cherith. Of course, theoretically the ravens could feed him anywhere – but Aleim commanded that it be at Cherith. Elia perhaps wanted to be somewhere else, or be preaching, or doing anything else. Yet Aleim wanted him **there** and would provide for him **there**.

3. (1 Kings 17:6) Elia's provision.

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

a. **The ravens brought him bread and meat:** Every bit of food that came to Elia came from the beak of an unclean animal. Elia had to put away his traditional ideas of clean and unclean or he would die of starvation. Through this, Aleim taught Elia to emphasize the spirit of the law before the letter

of the law.

i. Edgar Phillips drew two points of application from this event, likening the food the ravens brought to spiritual food. First, he recognized that Aleim may bring a good word to us through an unclean vessel, a spiritually unclean like a raven. Second, that one can bring spiritual food to others and still be unclean spiritually themselves. “But see, too, how possible it is for us to carry bread and meat to Aleim’s servants, and do, some good things for his Ekklesia, and yet be ravens still!” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening:** As faithfully as He provided manna for Israhel in the wilderness, Aleim provided for Elia’s needs. He came to trust more than ever in the miraculous provision of Aleim.

i. “A little boy, having read this incident with his widowed mother on wintry night, as they sat in a fireless room, beside a bare table, asked her if he might set the door open for Aleim’s ravens to come in; he was so sure that they must be on their way. The burgomaster of that German town, passing by, was attracted by the sight of the open door, and entered, inquiring the cause. When he learnt the reason, he said, ‘I will be Aleim’s raven’; and relieved their need then and afterwards.” (Edgar Phillips)

4. (1 Kings 17:7) Elia and the dry brook.

And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

a. **After a while that the brook dried up:** Elia saw the flow of the brook slow down until it **dried up**. His source of water was gone.

i. “Ah, it is hard to sit beside a drying brook – much harder than to face the prophets of Baal on Carmel.” (Edgar Phillips) Edgar Phillips also mentioned different kinds of drying brooks we might experience:

- The drying brook of popularity, ebbing away as from Ioanne the Baptist.
- The drying brook of health, sinking under a creeping paralysis, or a slow consumption.
- The drying brook of money, slowly dwindling before the demands of sickness, bad debts, or other people’s extravagance.
- The drying brook of friendship, which for long has been diminishing, and threatens soon to cease.

ii. “Why does Aleim let them dry? He wants to teach us not to trust in His gifts but in Himself. He wants to drain us of self, as He drained the apostles by ten days of waiting before Pentecost. He wants to loosen our roots ere He removes us to some other sphere of service and education. He wants to put in stronger contrast the river of throne-water that never dries.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Because there had been no rain in the land:** This was the drought Elia prayed for. He did not pray for rain to come again, even for his own survival. He kept the purpose of Aleim first, even when it adversely affected him.

B. Aleim provides for Elia through a widow.

1. (1 Kings 17:8-9) Aleim calls Elia to go to Zarephath.

Then the word of the Ruler came to him, saying, “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”

a. **Arise, go to Zarephath:** Aleim led Elia from the dry brook to a *non Jewish* city. This was an unusual and challenging move for Elia to make.

i. Aleim kept transplanting Elia: From home, to Jezreel, to Cherith, to Zarephath. This transplanting made him stronger and stronger.

ii. We should also remember that this was the general region that the wicked queen Izebel was from. “Elia was visiting enemy territory and showing the power of Aleim in an area where Baal was worshipped, though ineffective through drought.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you:** Widows were notorious for their poverty in the ancient world. Aleim told Elia to go to a non Jewish widow and receive provision; it probably seemed to make more sense to wait beside a dry brook.

i. When He was rejected by His own people, IESO used this example of Elia’s coming to the widow of Zarephath as an illustration of Aleim’s right to choose a people to Himself: *Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israhel in the days of Elia, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elia sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.”* (Louka 4:24-26)

2. (1 Kings 17:10-11) Elia addresses a widow.

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”

a. **Indeed a widow was there gathering sticks:** This showed that she was a poor woman, gathering meager scraps for firewood. Elia perhaps thought that Aleim would lead him to an unusual *rich* widow, but Aleim led him to a poor non Jewish widow.

i. “You learn this from the fact that she had not even firewood. Now, there was no reason why she should not have had that even in time of famine of bread, for there was no famine of wood, unless she had been extremely poor.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Aleim told Elia (1 Kings 17:9) that He *commanded* a widow to feed the prophet. Yet this woman seemed unaware of the command. This shows how Aleim’s unseen hand often works. “She does not appear to have been at all aware that she was to feed a prophet. She went out that morning to gather sticks, not to meet a guest. She was thinking about feeding her son and herself upon the last cake; certainly she had no idea of sustaining a man of Aleim out of that all but empty barrel of meal. Yet the Ruler, who never lieth, spoke a solemn truth when he said, ‘I have commanded a widow woman there.’ He had so operated upon her mind that he had prepared her to obey the command when it did come by the lip of his servant the prophet.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Please bring me a little water in a cup... Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand:** Elia boldly put this request in faith. Common sense and circumstances told him that the

widow would not give so generously to a Jewish stranger, but faith made him ask.

i. “This was certainly putting the widow’s faith to an extraordinary trial: to take and give to a stranger, of whom she knew nothing, the small pittance requisite to keep her child from perishing, was too much to be expected.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Aleim indeed chose this woman, but He chose her for more than a miracle. He chose her for *service*. “The choice of this woman, while it brought such blessedness to her, involved service. She was not elected merely to be saved in the famine, but to feed the prophet. She must be a woman of faith; she must make the little cake first, and afterwards she shall have the multiplication of the meal and of the oil. So the grace of Aleim does not choose men to sleep and wake up in heaven, nor choose them to live in sin and find themselves absolved at the last; nor choose them to be idle and go about their own worldly business, and yet to win a reward at the last for which they never toiled. Ah, no! the sovereign electing grace of Aleim chooses us to repentance, to faith, and afterwards to holiness of living, to Follower service, to zeal, to devotion.” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 17:12) The response of the widow of Zarephath.

So she said, “As the Ruler your Aleim lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

a. **As the Ruler your Aleim lives:** This polite address showed that she respected Aleim, yet recognized that the Aleim of Israhel was *Elia’s* Aleim and not her own.

b. **I do not have bread:** Elia quickly found out that she was not only poor, but *desperately* poor. Elia found her right before she was going to prepare her last morsel of food for herself and her son – and then resign themselves to death.

4. (1 Kings 17:13-14) Elia’s words to her.

And Elia said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Ruler Aleim of Israhel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Ruler sends rain on the earth.’ ”

a. **Do not fear:** This was Aleim’s first word to the widow through Elia. Her present crisis rightly made her afraid, and Aleim wanted her to put away fear and replace it with trust in Him.

b. **Go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first:** This was an audaciously bold request from the prophet. He asked this destitute widow to **first** give *him* something from her last bit of food. This seemed like the worst kind of predatory fund-raising.

c. **The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Ruler sends rain on the earth:** This shows why Elia could make such an audacious request. It was because Aleim told him that He would provide a never-ending supply of food for the widow, her son, and Elia himself. He asked the widow to put her trust in this great promise of Aleim.

5. (1 Kings 17:15-16) The widow’s obedience and Aleim’s great blessing.

So she went away and did according to the word of Elia; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Ruler which He spoke by Elia.

a. **So she went away and did according to the word of Elia:** The widow actually did it – she willingly gave at great risk, based on her trust in the promise of Aleim.

b. **She and he and her household ate for many days:** Aleim fulfilled the promise to the widow, her son, and Elia. Aleim used her as a channel of supply and her needs were met as a result.

i. “Why did not Aleim give her a granary full of meal at once, and a vat full of oil instantly? I will tell you. It was not merely because of Aleim’s intent to try her, but there was wisdom here. Suppose he had given her a granary full of meal, how much of it would have been left by the next day? I question whether any would have remained, for in days of famine men are sharp of scent, and it would soon have been noised about the city, ‘The old widow woman who lives in such-and-such a street, has a great store of food.’ Why, they would have caused a riot, and robbed the house, and perhaps, have killed the woman and her son. She would have been despoiled of her treasure, and in four and twenty hours the barrel of meal would have been as empty as it was at first, and the cruse of oil would have been spilled upon the ground.” (Edgar Phillips)

C. Elia raises the widow’s son.

1. (1 Kings 17:17-18) The widow’s grief at the death of her son.

Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elia, “What have I to do with you, O man of Aleim? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?”

a. **After these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick:** We can imagine the happy days of provision in the household of the widow. Their needs were supplied by a continuing miracle of Aleim. Yet those happy days were eventually covered by a dark shadow: the sickness and death of the widow’s son.

i. The death of the son was a double blow to the widow. Not only did she suffer as any mother who loses a child, but she also suffered as one who lost her only hope for the future. The expectation was that her son would grow and provide for her in her old age. Now that expectation was shattered.

b. **Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?** At the death of her son, the widow indirectly blamed Elia. She more directly blamed herself and her unnamed **sin**. Whatever her sin was, the guilty memory of it was always close to her.

2. (1 Kings 17:19-20) Elia’s prayer.

And he said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the Ruler and said, “O Ruler my Aleim, have You

also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?”

a. **He took him out of her arms:** This vivid detail shows that the widow clutched the dead child tightly in her arms.

b. **The upper room where he was staying:** The term **upper room** “Refers to a temporary shelter or room on the roof, accessible from outside the house. Such structures are common in the Near East. This arrangement would allow the widow not only her needed privacy but would safeguard her reputation.” (Peter Damonse)

c. **Then he cried out to the Ruler:** Elia prayed with great heart and intimacy with Aleim. He brought this seemingly unexplainable and irredeemable tragedy to Aleim in prayer. Since he knew Aleim led him to this widow, Elia laid this **tragedy** on Aleim and asked Him to remedy it.

3. (1 Kings 17:21-24) The son is raised from the dead.

And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Ruler and said, “O Ruler my Aleim, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.” Then the Ruler heard the voice of Elia; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elia took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elia said, “See, your son lives!” Then the woman said to Elia, “Now by this I know that you *are* a man of Aleim, *and* that the word of the Ruler in your mouth *is* the truth.”

a. **He stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Ruler:** This was an unusual prayer technique, but Elia had no precedent for this. It was not because of his prayer technique, but because of his faith that Aleim answered this prayer.

i. There is an almost irresistible desire to embellish on these wonderful accounts of the power of Aleim. Peter Damonse speak of one such attempt: “Syriac translation, followed by Jerome, that the lad was the prophet Iona is totally unsatisfactory and historically impossible (cf. 2 Kings 14:25).”

b. **O Ruler my Aleim, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him:** “A prayer full of powerful arguments. Thou art *the Ruler*, that canst revive the child; and *my Aleim*, and therefore wilt not, do not, deny me. She is *a widow*; add not affliction to the afflicted; deprive her not of the great support and staff of her age. She hath given me kind entertainment; let her not fare the worse for her kindness to a prophet, whereby wicked men will take occasion to reproach both her and religion.” (Phillip Prins)

c. **Then the Ruler heard the voice of Elia:** The son was raised and Aleim provided for the widow on every level – not only with the miraculous supply of food, but also with the resuscitation of her son.

i. “This first example in the Scriptures of revival from death cannot be explained away as contactual magic nor as the prophet’s life-force transmitted by the mouth-to-mouth method of resuscitation.” (Edgar Phillips)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 18

ELIA'S VICTORY AT CARMEL

A. Elia meets Aab.

1. (1 Kings 18:1-2) The end of the drought.

And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Ruler came to Elia, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Aab, and I will send rain on the earth." So Elia went to present himself to Aab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.

a. **In the third year:** This remarkable drought lasted three and one-half years by the fervent prayer of Elia.

b. **Go, present yourself to Aab:** Earlier Aleim told Elia to *hide* himself. Now it was time to *present* himself. There is a time to hide and be alone with Aleim, and there is also a time to present our self to the world. Some wish to always remain hidden when they should step up and **present** themselves.

i. Elia simply obeyed Aleim's command. Though it happened through the prayers of Elia, his prayers were sensitive to the leading of Aleim. The drought did not begin or end as a result of Elia's will, but at Aleim's will.

2. (1 Kings 18:3-14) Elia meets Obadiah.

And Aab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Ruler greatly. For so it was, while Iezebel massacred the prophets of the Ruler, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) And Aab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock. So they divided the land between them to explore it; Aab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elia met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my ruler Elia?" And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elia is here.'" So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Aab, to kill me? As the Ruler your Aleim lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elia is here"'! And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Ruler will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Aab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Ruler from my youth. Was it not reported to my ruler what I did when Iezebel killed the prophets of the Ruler, how I hid one hundred men of the Ruler's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elia is here."' He will kill me!"

a. While Iezebel massacred the prophets of the Ruler, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water: This man Obadiah was a brave man who stood for Aleim and His prophets in a difficult time.

i. This may be the same Obadiah whose prophecy against Edom is recorded among the Minor Prophets. It is a little difficult to be certain, because there were 13 Obadiahs in the Scriptures (Old Testament). The Hebrew name **Obadiah** means "Worshipper of IEUE" or "Servant of IEUE."

· An Obadiah was sent out by King Ieosphat of Judah to teach the law in the cities of Judah (2 Chronicles 17:7)

· An Obadiah was one of the overseers who helped repair the temple in the days of Iosiah, King of Judah (2 Chronicles 34:12)

· An Obadiah was a priest in the days of Neemia (Neemia 10:5)

ii. **One hundred prophets:** "*Prophets*: this name is not only given to such as are endowed with an extraordinary spirit of prophecy, but to such ministers as devoted themselves to the service of Aleim in preaching, praying, praising Aleim, and the like." (Phillip Prins)

iii. "Account for it how you may, it is a singular circumstance that in the center of rebellion against Aleim there was one whose devotion to Aleim was intense and distinguished. As it is horrible to find a Iouda among the apostles, so it is grand to discover an Obadiah among Aab's courtiers. What grace must have been at work to maintain such a fire in the midst of the sea, such godliness in the midst of the vilest iniquity!" (Edgar Phillips)

iv. "That Obadiah would have little difficulty in finding caves for the sons of the prophets can be seen in that over two thousand caves have been counted in the Mount Carmel area." (Peter Damonse)

b. **Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elia met him:** The drought was so severe that King Aab himself and his trusted servant Obadiah were out searching for pastureland. Aleim arranged this unexpected meeting between Obadiah and the Prophet Elia.

i. "We might have supposed that he would set himself to alleviate the miseries of his people; and, above all, that he would have turned back to Aleim: but no – his one thought was about the horses and mules of his stud; his only care was to save some of them alive... What selfishness is here! Mules and asses before his people! Seeking for grass, instead of seeking for Aleim!" (Edgar Phillips)

c. **How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Aab, to kill me?** Obadiah knew that King Aab conducted an exhaustive search for Elia, to punish him for the drought that his prayers imposed on Israhel. Obadiah feared that if he announced that he met Elia and the prophet disappeared again, Aab would punish Obadiah for letting Elia get away.

3. (1 Kings 18:15-16) Elia assures Obadiah that he will meet with Aab.

Then Elia said, "As the Ruler of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." So Obadiah went to meet Aab, and told him; and Aab went to meet Elia.

a. **I will surely present myself to him today:** Kindly and wisely, Elia responded to Obadiah's legitimate fears. He would not make Obadiah a martyr on Elia's behalf.

4. (1 Kings 18:17-19) Elia and Aab trade accusations.

Then it happened, when Aab saw Elia, that Aab said to

him, *“Is that you, O troubler of Isrhael?”* And he answered, *“I have not troubled Isrhael, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Ruler and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Isrhael to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Aserha, who eat at Iezebel’s table.”*

a. **Is that you, O troubler of Isrhael?** Aab was easily the worst, most wicked king that Isrhael ever had. Yet he did not hesitate to blame the divine prophet Elia for the problems of Isrhael. If Aab would at least stop the active persecution of the people of Aleim, Aleim would relent in the drought. But the wicked king of Isrhael found it easier to blame the divine prophet.

i. According to his theology, it made sense for Aab to blame Elia. Aab believed in Baal, so much so that his government promoted and supported Baal worship and persecuted the worshippers of IEUE. Aab believed that Elia had angered the sky-god Baal and therefore Baal withheld rain. Aab probably thought that Baal would hold back the rain until Elia was caught and executed.

ii. Instead, Aab should have turned to the Word of Aleim. 5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 28:23-24 promised that drought would come to a disobedient Isrhael.

b. **Now therefore, send and gather all Isrhael to me on Mount Carmel:** Elia challenged King Aab to gather the idol prophets of Baal and Aserha for this meeting at Mount Carmel.

i. *“Gather to me all Isrhael, by their deputies, or heads, or representatives, that they may be witnesses of all our transactions.”* (Phillip Prins)

ii. 1 Kings 18:36 makes it clear that Elia did all this at the command of Aleim. This wasn’t his clever idea or strategy. This was a Aleim-inspired plan that Elia obeyed.

iii. It was important to confront and eliminate these prophets of Baal *before* Aleim sent rain to the land of Isrhael. It was crucial that everyone understand that the rain came from IEUE, not from Baal.

c. **Who eat at Iezebel’s table:** This refers to fact that these prophets of Baal and Aserha were sponsored and supported by the government of Isrhael, having a special patron in the wicked Queen Iezebel.

i. *“Iezebel was not content with a private chapel, nor with her husband’s readiness to pay lip-service to Baal; she meant to dethrone the Aleim of Isrhael, and make her Baal the chief deity and her faith in the official state religion.”* (Phillip Prins)

B. Elia’s victory on Mount Carmel.

1. (1 Kings 18:20-21) Elia challenges Isrhael to make a decision.

So Aab sent for all the children of Isrhael, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elia came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Ruler is Aleim, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

a. **Aab sent for all the children of Isrhael:** It is hard to know why Aab did this, carrying out the instructions of Elia.

Perhaps he hoped that the people would be so angry with Elia for the last three years of drought that this crowd would turn against the prophet.

b. **And gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel:** These prophets of Baal *hated* Elia. They loved the favour of King Aab and Queen Iezebel, and they enthusiastically promoted the persecution of any true follower of IEUE. But over the last three years they had been severely humbled by Elia and the drought sustained by his prayers. All their cries to the weather-god Baal were ineffective for three years. They *hated* this prophet of Aleim who humiliated them and their sham priesthood so thoroughly.

i. *“See, with what malignant glances his every movement is watched by the priests. No tiger ever watched its victim more fiercely! If they may have their way, he will never touch yonder plain again.”* (Edgar Phillips)

ii. *“That lone man, of heroic soul, stemmed the fearful torrent of idolatry, and like a rock in mid-current, firmly stood his ground. He, alone and single-handed, was more than a match for all the priests of the palace and the groves, even as one lion scatters a flock of sheep.”* (Edgar Phillips)

c. **How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Ruler is Aleim, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him:** This was a logical and useful question. In general, the people of Isrhael were in a spiritually lukewarm condition. They wanted to give some devotion to *both* IEUE and Baal, but the Aleim of Isrhael was not interested in such divided devotion.

i. Spiritually speaking, Isrhael was like an unfaithful partner in a marriage who doesn’t want to give up their marriage partner, but also does not want to give up their illicit lover. The marriage partner has a legitimate claim to the *exclusive* devotion of their spouse.

ii. **How long will you falter:** The ancient Hebrew word translated **falter** means “to limp, halt, hop, dance, or leap.” (Peter Damonse) It is the same word used in 1 Kings 18:26 where the prophets of Baal leaped about the altar. It may be that Elia meant, “How long will you dance between two opinions?”

iii. Edgar Phillips had a slightly different understanding: “Literally, ‘How long hop you about upon two boughs?’ This is a metaphor taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle.”

iv. The appeal of Elia made it clear that there was a *difference* between the service of Baal and the service of IEUE. Perhaps in the minds of many, there was not a great difference – the only important thing was to have *some kind* of religion, and to be sincere about that, following your heart to whatever god your heart might lead you to. Yet Elia knew that it could never be this way. You either served Baal *or* you served IEUE; there was a difference.

v. Elia’s appeal also called his hearers to account for the period of time in which they had not made a decision between IEUE and Baal. **“How long,”** he asked them. “How many more sermons do you want? How many more Sundays must roll away wasted? How many warnings, how many sicknesses, how many toilings of the bell to warn you that you must die? How many graves must be dug for your family before you will be impressed? How many plagues and pestilences must ravage

this city before you will turn to Aleim in truth? How long halt you between two opinions?” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **But the people answered him not a word:** There was no objection and no repentance. They lacked the courage to either defend their position or to change it. They were willing to live unexamined lives of low conviction.

i. Elia could so accurately see their hearts because he could see their *actions*. It was as if he said, “I know you are not decided in opinion, because you are *not decided in practice*. If Aleim be Aleim, *follow him*; if Baal, *follow him*. You are not decided in practice.” (Edgar Phillips)

2. (1 Kings 18:22-24) Elia proposes a test between Aleim and Baal.

Then Elia said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the Ruler; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Ruler; and the Aleim who answers by fire, He is Aleim.” So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken.”

a. **I alone am left a prophet of the Ruler:** This was not true and Elia had reason to know that it was not true. In the recent past Obadiah told him that he sheltered 100 prophets of Aleim against the persecution of Jezebel and Ahab.

b. **Let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves:** In this proposed test, Elia was careful to give the prophets of Baal every potential advantage. They picked the two bulls, and picked which one they would sacrifice and which one Elia would sacrifice.

c. **And the Aleim who answers by fire, He is Aleim:** The fire would not come from either Elia or the prophets of Baal. It had to be supernatural in origin, and supplied by either Baal or IEUE.

i. Again, Elia gave plenty of advantage to the prophets of Baal. It was thought that Baal was the sky-god, ruler of the weather and the sender of lightning (thought to be fire from the sky). If Baal were real, he certainly could send fire from heaven.

ii. To put Aleim and himself on the line before the gathered nation of Israëel took a lot of faith. Elia learned this faith over the many months of daily dependence on Aleim, both at the Brook Cherith and at the widow’s house at Zarephath.

iii. Of course, Elia had plenty of reasons for confidence in the Ruler Aleim. First, he was following express instructions from the Ruler (1 Kings 18:36). Second, he knew from the history of Israëel that Aleim could and would send fire from heaven upon a sacrifice (Judges 6:20-21 and 2 Chronicles 7:1-7).

3. (1 Kings 18:25-27) The prophets of Baal pray for fire from their god.

Now Elia said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.” So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But there was no voice; no

one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was, at noon, that Elia mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.”

a. **Called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!”** The prophets of Baal had a devoted prayer life. Here they prayed long and with great passion. Yet because they did not pray to the *real* Aleim, their prayer meant nothing. **There was no voice; no one answered.**

b. **They leaped about the altar which they had made:** The prophets of Baal had a energetic prayer life. Their worship was filled with enthusiasm and activity. Yet because it was not directed to the *real* Aleim, their prayer meant nothing.

c. **Elia mocked them:** Elia could not resist the opportunity to mock the prophets of Baal for their evidently foolish faith.

i. “Elia’s irony bordered on sarcasm.” (Peter Damson) The words **meditating** and **busy** can be translated “to be engaged in business” and may be a euphemism for bodily elimination.

ii. “Rabbi S. Jarchi gives this the most degrading meaning; I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English; *Fortassis ad locum secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exoneret*; ‘Perhaps he has gone to the ———.’ This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete.” (Edgar Phillips)

4. (1 Kings 18:28-29) The prophets of Baal work harder at their prayer.

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

a. **They cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them:** The prophets of Baal were utterly *sincere* and completely *devoted* to their religion. They were so committed that they expressed it in their own blood. They had zeal, but without knowledge – therefore their zeal profited them *nothing*.

i. “The practice of self-inflicted wounds to arouse a deity’s pity or response is attested in Ugarit when men ‘bathed in their own blood like an ecstatic prophet.’” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “This was done according to the *rites* of that barbarous religion; of the blood of the bullock would not move him they thought their *own blood* might; and with it they smeared themselves and their sacrifice.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention:** This is the sad result of worshipping an imaginary god or the god of our own making. We may dedicate great sincerity, sacrifice, and devotion to such gods but it means nothing. There is no one there to answer.

5. (1 Kings 18:30-35) Elia prepares his altar.

Then Elia said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Ruler that was broken down. And Elia took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Iakob, to whom the word of the Ruler had come, saying,

“Isrhael shall be your name.” Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Ruler; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, **“Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.”** Then he said, **“Do *it* a second time,”** and they did *it* a second time; and he said, **“Do *it* a third time,”** and they did *it* a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

a. **Come near to me:** When it was Elia’s turn to sacrifice, he first wanted to get the *attention* of the people. This was for their benefit, not his own or really primarily for the benefit of Aleim. They needed to pay attention so they would see that the Ruler was a true Aleim, in contrast to the silent Baal.

b. **He repaired the altar of the Ruler that was broken down:** Elia was very aware that he repaired something that once stood strong. There was once an altar of the Ruler at Carmel and in Isrhael in general. Elia looked to *revive* something that *once was*.

c. **Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood:** In wanting to make a deep impression upon the people, Elia required more of IEUE than he did of Baal. Elia did not even suggest to the prophets of Baal that they wet down their sacrifice once or twice, much less three times. Yet Elia did this, confident that it was no harder for Aleim to ignite a wet sacrifice than it was for Him to set a dry one ablaze.

i. “There can be no question of trickery, such as the use of naphtha [a flammable liquid often used as a solvent] instead of water, or mirrors for ignition as suggested by some scholars. The opposition was observant and close.” (Edgar Phillips)

6. (1 Kings 18:36-37) Elia’s prayer.

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elia the prophet came near and said, “Ruler Aleim of Abrahama, Isaak, and Isrhael, let it be known this day that You are Aleim in Isrhael and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Ruler, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Ruler Aleim, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.”

a. **At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice:** Some 50 years before this, Ierhoboam the King of Isrhael officially disassociated the citizens of the northern kingdom from the worship of the Aleim of Isrhael at the temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Elia still remembered the **evening sacrifice** that was offered according to Aleim’s commandment every day at the temple in Jerusalem.

b. **Let it be known this day that You are Aleim in Isrhael and I am Your servant:** Both were important. It was important for the people of Isrhael to know who their Aleim was, and who *Aleim’s servant* was.

c. **And that I have done all these things at Your word:** This also was essential, and helps us to understand the whole event. Elia did this according to the word of Aleim. It wasn’t prompted because of his own cleverness, because of presumption or because of vainglory. *Aleim* led Elia to this showdown with the prophets of Baal.

i. “It was no whim of his to chastise the nation with a drought. It was no scheme of his, concocted in his own brain, that he should put the Aleimhead of IEUE or of Baal to the test by a sacrifice to be consumed by miraculous fire.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Edgar Phillips recommended that believers use the same principle in prayer, especially those who preach the Word of Aleim: “Go you to the mercy-seat with this as one of your arguments, ‘Ruler, I have done according to thy word. Now let it be seen that it is even so. I have preached thy word, and thou hast said, “It shall not return unto me void.” I have prayed for these people, and thou hast said, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”; let it be seen that this is according to thy word.’”

7. (1 Kings 18:38-40) The result: IEUE answers by fire.

Then the fire of the Ruler fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Ruler, He is Aleim! The Ruler, He is Aleim!” And Elia said to them, **“Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!”** So they seized them; and Elia brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

a. **Then the fire of the Ruler fell:** The prophets of Baal had passion, commitment, sincerity, devotion, and great energy. What they did *not* have was a Aleim in heaven who answered by **fire**.

i. “The action of this fire was in every case *downward*, contrary to the nature of all earthly and material fire.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “Elia’s petition had lasted less than a minute but produced spectacular results. The difference lay in the One addressed.” (Peter Damonse)

b. **The fire of the Ruler fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench:** When the fire of Aleim fell, its work was *beyond expectation*. It would have been enough if merely the cut-up pieces of bull on the altar were ignited, but Aleim wanted more than simple vindication – He wanted to *glorify* Himself among the people.

c. **Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Ruler, He is Aleim! The Ruler, He is Aleim!”** At this moment, the people were completely persuaded. Asked to choose between Baal and IEUE, there was no choice to make – obviously, the Ruler was Aleim.

i. Tragically, this was only a momentary persuasion. This was no lasting revival in Isrhael. The people were decidedly persuaded, but not lastingly changed.

d. **Elia said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!”** Since this was a contest between IEUE and Baal, the prophets of each deity had to be responsible for their respective results. The great sin of King Aab was his official sponsorship of the prophets of Baal, and now that the fraud of Baal was exposed, his prophets had to answer for it and were dealt with according to the Law of MoUse (5th MoUse (Deuteronomy) 13:5, 13-18; 17:2-5, and 18:9-22).

i. Elia simply demanded that the prophets of Baal receive the treatment they promoted for the prophets of IEUE.

C. Elia goes to Jezreel.

1. (1 Kings 18:41-44) Elia prays for rain.

Then Elia said to Aab, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is the sound of abundance of rain.*” So Aab went up to eat and drink. And Elia went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said, “*There is nothing.*” And seven times he said, “Go again.” Then it came to pass the seventh *time*, that he said, “*There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!*” So he said, “Go up, say to Aab, ‘Prepare *your chariot*, and go down before the rain stops you.’”

a. **Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain:** Elia knew that once the *official* worship of Baal had been defeated, the purpose for the drought was fulfilled. Rain was on the way. Elia and Aab would now each do what they wanted to do – Elia would pray and Aab would eat.

b. **He bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees:** This was an unusual posture of prayer for Elia. He wasn’t kneeling, he wasn’t sitting, he wasn’t standing, and he didn’t lay prostrate before the Ruler. This shows that the power in prayer resides in faith in the living Aleim.

i. “We scarcely recognize him, he seems so to have lost his identity. A few hours before, he stood erect as an oak of Bashan; now, he is bowed as a bulrush. Then as Aleim’s ambassador he pleaded with man; now as man’s intercessor he pleads with Aleim. It is not always so – that the men who stand straightest in the presence of sin bow lowest in the presence of Aleim.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **It came to pass the seventh time:** This was stubbornly *persistent* prayer. It was as if Elia would not take “no” for an answer, because he had confidence that Aleim’s will was to send rain. He stubbornly furthered the will of Aleim by his persistent prayer.

i. “Go again seven times; let us not be dejected for some disappointments, but continue to wait upon Aleim, who will answer me, and that speedily.” (Phillip Prins)

ii. “Aleim’s promises are given, not to restrain, but to incite to prayer. They show the direction in which we may ask, and the extent to which we may expect an answer. They are the mould into which we may pour our fervid spirits without fear.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!** Elia prayed, asking in faith for Aleim to send the rain. Elia obviously *sensed* this was the will of Aleim, yet it was his fervent prayer that brought the rain. The evidence of the rain came slowly and in a small way, but out of this small evidence Aleim brought a mighty work.

i. In the November 9, 1904 edition of *The Life of Faith*, a London newspaper dedicated to the deeper life movement, a writer named Jessie Penn-Lewis reported on a remarkable work just beginning in Wales under the ministry of men like Evan Roberts and Seth 1 Kings. She reported that a *cloud no bigger than a man’s hand* had arisen in Wales. It was a fitting description of the clear but small beginning of what became a mighty work.

ii. Edgar Phillips used this text as an illustration of the small signs that precede a mighty work of Aleim. He spoke of four “certain signs and tokens for good which prayerful faith clearly perceives when an awakening, a genuine revival is about to come.” Followers should regard the following things as clouds, **as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea.**

- A growing dissatisfaction with the present state of things, and an increasing anxiety among the members of the Ekklesia for the salvation of souls.

- When this anxiety leads believers to be exceedingly earnest and importunate in prayer.

- When ministers begin to take counsel one with another, and to say, “What must we do?”

- When we shall see the doctrine of the individual responsibility of each Follower fully felt and carried out into individual action.

e. **Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you:** This was a word of faith from Elia to Aab. Based only on the sighting of a **cloud** that was **as small as a man’s hand**, he knew a torrent was on the way.

2. (1 Kings 18:45-46) Elia’s amazing 14 mile tree-country run. **Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Aab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the Ruler came upon Elia; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Aab to the entrance of Jezreel.**

a. **There was a heavy rain:** Aleim’s word through Elia was proved true. The long drought was over, and it was demonstrated that the prayers of Elia both *withheld* the rain and then subsequently *brought* the rain.

b. **Then the hand of the Ruler came upon Elia; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Aab:** This was an obviously supernaturally empowered 14-mile tree-country run. We don’t know exactly why it was important to Aleim for Elia to reach Jezreel first; perhaps it was so that he would be the first to tell Queen Iezebel.

i. “To demonstrate that he was neither ashamed of, nor afraid for, what he had done, though he knew how Iezebel would resent it, but durst venture himself in the midst of his enemies, as being confident of the Divine power and protection.” (Phillip Prins)

ii. “That Elia could have made such a run is assured in the Arab runners could easily cover one hundred miles in two days.” (Peter Damonse)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 19
ALEIM ENCOURAGES DISCOURAGED ELIA

A. Elia flees to the wilderness.

1. (1 Kings 19:1-3) Iezebel's threat.

And Aab told Iezebel all that Elia had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Iezebel sent a messenger to Elia, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

a. **Aab told Iezebel all that Elia had done:** The report came as a great shock to this champion of Baal and Astarte worship in Israhel. She thought so much of these priests that she supported them from the royal treasury – and now they were dead at the hand of Elia.

b. **So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time:** Iezebel heard about **all that Elia had done**, encompassing the great confrontation at Mount Carmel. Yet her response was *not* to say, "The silence of Baal and the fire from IEUE proves that I am wrong and IEUE is Aleim." Instead, she responded with a vow to kill within 24 hours the man who *exposed* the lie of Baal worship and *displayed* the glory of IEUE.

i. "He probably thought that the miracle at Carmel would have been the means of effecting the conversion of the whole court and of the country, but, finding himself mistaken, he is greatly discouraged." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **When he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba:** We cannot say for certain if this was led of Aleim or not. It is clear that Aleim wanted to protect Elia, but we cannot say if Aleim wanted to protect him at Jezreel or protect him by getting him out of Jezreel. Nevertheless, Elia went about 80 miles south to Beersheba.

i. "Probably Elia had played into Iezebel's hand. Had she really wanted Elia dead, she surely would have seized him without warning and slain him. What she desired was that Elia and his Aleim be discredited before the new converts what had aided Elia by executing the prophets of Baal." (Peter Damonse)

ii. "Elia failed in the very point at which he was strongest, and that is where most men fail. In Scripture, it is the wisest man who proves himself to be the greatest fool; just as the meekest man, MoUse, spoke hasty and bitter words. Abrahah failed in his faith, and Iob in his patience; so, he who was the most courageous of all men, fled from an angry woman." (Edgar Phillips)

2. (1 Kings 19:4) Elia's depression.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Ruler, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

a. **He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness:** *Beyond* the distant city of Beersheba, Elia secluded himself even more.

b. **And he prayed that he might die:** This mighty man of prayer – mighty enough to make the rain and the dew stop for

three and a half years, and then mighty enough to make it start again at his prayer – now **he prayed that he might die**.

i. Thankfully, this was a prayer *not answered* for Elia. In fact, *Elia was one of the few men in the Scriptures to never die!* We can imagine that as he was caught up into heaven, he smiled and thought of this prayer – and the blessed *no* that answered his prayer. To receive a *no* answer from Aleim can be better than receiving a *yes* answer.

c. **It is enough:** We sense that Elia meant, "I can't do this anymore, Ruler." The work was stressful, exhausting, and seemed to accomplish nothing. The great work on Mount Carmel did not result in a lasting national revival or return to the Ruler.

i. Perhaps Elia had especially hoped that the events on Mount Carmel would turn around Aab and Iezebel and the leadership of Israhel in general. If so, Elia forgot that people reject Aleim *despite* the evidence, not *because* of the evidence.

ii. "Elia said, 'It is enough,' yet it was not enough even for his own enjoyment, for the Ruler had more blessings in store for him... It was so with Elia, for he was to have that wonderful revelation of Aleim on Mount Horeb. He had more to enjoy, and the later life of Elia appears to have been one of calm communion with his Aleim; he seems never to have had another fainting fit, but to the end his sun shone brightly without a cloud. So it was not enough; how could he know that it was? It is Aleim alone who knows when we have done enough, and enjoyed enough; but we do not know." (Edgar Phillips)

d. **Now, Ruler, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!** When Elia examined the apparent failure of his work, he instinctively set the blame on his own unworthiness. It was because he was a sinner as the rest of his ancestors that the work seemed to fail.

B. Aleim's ministry to the despairing Elia.

1. (1 Kings 19:5-8) Aleim ministers to the physical needs of Elia.

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the Ruler came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of Aleim.

a. **As he lay and slept under a broom tree:** This was the mercy of Aleim extended to Elia. Physically speaking, he needed rest and replenishment. Aleim gave him rest **under a broom tree**, and provided miraculous food for the replenishment.

i. Aleim first ministered to Elia's physical needs. This is not always His order, but physical needs are important. Sometimes the most *spiritual* thing a person can do is get enough rest and replenishment.

ii. "And how many are there at this day that sit under Elias's juniper, willing and wishing to lay down that heavy burden imposed upon them by the Almighty!" (Edgar Phillips)

b. **So he ate and drank, and lay down again:** Elia received this rest and replenishment repeatedly from the Ruler. One quick nap and one quick meal wasn't enough.

i. "Before entering into that communion with him which was for the correction of his false attitude of fear, He commanded him to eat, thus ministering to his physical weakness." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. "The spirit needs to be fed, and the body needs feeding also. Do not forget these matters; it may seem to some people that I ought not to mention such small things as food and rest, but these may be the very first elements in really helping a poor depressed servant of Aleim." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "It was very gracious for Aleim to deal this with his servant. We might have expected rebuke or remonstrance, chiding or chastisement; but we would hardly have expected such loving, gentle treatment as this." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you:** Aleim set Elia on a 200 mile, 40 day trip to Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai. This shows that Aleim did not demand an *immediate* recovery from Elia. He allowed the prophet time to recover from his spiritual depression.

i. "Elia's forty-day journey is not without significance. Indeed, a straight trip from Beesheba would require little more than a quarter of that time. Therefore the period is designedly symbolic. As the children of Israhel had a notable spiritual failure and so were to wander forty years in the wilderness, so a defeated Elia was to spend forty days in the desert." (Peter Damonse)

2. (1 Kings 19:9-10) Aleim allows Elia to vent his frustrations. **And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Ruler came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elia?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Ruler Aleim of hosts; for the children of Israhel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."**

a. **He went into a cave:** Literally, the Hebrew is definite describing *the cave*. "The cave may well have been the specific 'clift of the rock' where Aleim appeared to MoUse (av, 2nd MoUse (Exodus) 33:22) rather than the 'cave-region' generally." (Edgar Phillips)

i. "Perhaps no spot on earth is more associated with the manifested presence of Aleim than that sacred mount." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **What are you doing here, Elia?** Aleim knew the answer to this question, but it was good for Elia to speak to the Ruler freely and to unburden his heart.

i. "Aleim has ways of teaching all of us in our bones and in our flesh, but he specially knows how to do this with those upon whom he puts any honour in his service. You must not marvel, if Aleim should be pleased to bless you to the conversion of souls, that he should also make you sometimes smart." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **I have been very zealous for the Ruler Aleim of hosts:** Elia protested to Aleim, "I have faithfully served You and now look at the danger I am in." To Elia – and many servants of Aleim since – it seemed unfair that a faithful servant of Aleim

should be made to suffer.

d. **I alone am left:** This was not *accurate*, but if reflected how Elia felt. Even back at the confrontation at Mount Carmel Elia said *I alone am left a prophet of the Ruler* (1 Kings 18:22). Discouraging times make Aleim's servants feel more isolated and alone than they are.

e. **I alone am left; and they seek to take my life:** Strangely, the reasons Elia provided were actually important reasons for him to remain alive. If he really was the last prophet or believer alive, should not he seek to live as long as possible? If the enemies of Aleim like Iezebel wanted him dead, should he not seek to defeat her wicked will? Elia here powerfully showed the *unreasonable nature* of unbelief and fear.

3. (1 Kings 19:11-12) Aleim reveals Himself to Elia.

Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Ruler." And behold, the Ruler passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Ruler, but the Ruler was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Ruler was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Ruler was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

a. **Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Ruler:** Aleim knew what the depressed and discouraged Elia needed. He needed a *personal encounter with Aleim*. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with Elia's *theology*, but at the time there was something lacking in his experience.

b. **Behold, the Ruler passed by:** Aleim brought His presence before Elia, but first to show *where He was not*. The Ruler was **not in the wind**, He was **not in the earthquake**, He was **not in the fire**. Like many others, Elia probably only looked for Aleim in dramatic manifestations. Certainly, Aleim sometimes appears in such ways but He often appears in less dramatic surroundings.

i. "This same lesson has to be learned over and over by us all: let us repeat it, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Ruler.' It is to be lamented that the most of professors obstinately cling to the fatal error of looking for displays of power of one kind or another. I hear that a certain Ekklesia is seeking for a very clever man: she thinks that Aleim is in the wind... That still small voice will be hushed and silent, while the boastings of your wisdom resound like a howling wind or a thunder unaccompanied by rain." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **After the fire a still small voice:** This final phenomenon was a marked contrast to the previous manifestations. Aleim actually met Elia in the quiet whisper of a voice instead of the earth-shaking phenomenon that had gone before.

i. Edgar Phillips called the **still small voice** a *gentle whisper*.

ii. "And now the thunder ceased, and the lightning was gone, and the earth was still, and the wind was hushed, and there was a dead calm, and out of the midst of the still air there came what the Hebrew calls 'a voice of gentle silence,' as if silence had become audible. There is nothing more terrible than an awful stillness after a dread uproar." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. Elia perhaps thought that the dramatic display of power at Mount Carmel would turn the nation around. Or perhaps he thought that the radical display of Aleim's judgment against the priests of Baal following the vindication at Mount Carmel

would change the hearts of the nation. Neither of these worked. This example is important for Follower ministers today, especially preachers. It shows that *displays of power* and *preaching Aleim's anger* don't necessarily change hearts. Instead, the **still small voice** of Aleim speaking to the human heart is actually more powerful than outward displays of power or displays of Aleim's judgment.

iv. "Because the success of Carmel melted like the morning mist, he thought that his career had been a failure all along, and that he had brought no one to reverence IEUE; but he was reading with the eyes of unbelief, and his imagination was leading him rather than the facts of the case. Here are seven thousand people scattered up and down the country to whom Aleim has blessed Elia's testimony. If he had not blessed his big things as he had desired, yet his little things had prospered greatly. It was Elia's daily conduct rather than his miracles which had impressed these seven thousand and led them to hold fast their integrity." (Edgar Phillips)

4. (1 Kings 19:13-15) After this ministry, Aleim gives Elia work to do.

So it was, when Elia heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elia?" And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Ruler Aleim of hosts; because the children of Isrhael have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." Then the Ruler said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Azael as king over Syria.

a. **He wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave:** Immediately, Elia sensed that Aleim was present in the *still small voice* in a way that He was not in the previous, more dramatic phenomenon. Because he sensed the special presence of Aleim, Elia immediately humbled himself when he **wrapped his face in his mantle**.

i. "Through horror and dread of Aleim's presence, being sensible that he was neither worthy nor able to endure the sight of Aleim with open face." (Phillip Prins)

ii. "He first wrapped his mantle about his face — he became subdued and awe-stricken — full of reverence. Oh! it is a great thing when a sinner is willing to wrap his face when he is confounded, and say, 'I cannot defend my course; I am guilty.' We know that if at our judgment-seat a man pleads guilty, he is punished; but at the judgment-seat of the gospel whoever pleads guilty is forgiven. Wrap your face." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **What are you doing here, Elia?** Aleim asked Elia the same question — and received the same response — as in 1 Kings 19:9-10. There was something helpful for Elia in this question and answer process.

c. **Go, return on your way... anoint Azael as king over Syria:** Aleim gave Elia *something to do*. He needed a task to focus on so he could avoid excessive introspection. He needed to stop looking at himself and his own (admittedly difficult) circumstances. He needed to get on with what Aleim wanted him to do.

i. "Then the Ruler did what perhaps was best of all for Elia, *he gave him some more work to do*. He sent him off about his Master's business again; and I warrant you that, when Elia went back over that road, it was with a very different step from that which brought him down to Beersheba. He had come along terrified and distressed; but now he goes back with the majesty that belongs to the Tishbite, he is afraid of no Iezebel now." (Edgar Phillips)

5. (1 Kings 19:16-18) Further assurance to Elia.

"Also you shall anoint Ieu the son of Nimsi as king over Isrhael. And Elisa the son of Saphat of Abel Meola you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Azael, Ieu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Ieu, Elisa will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Isrhael, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

a. **You shall anoint Ieu the son of Nimsi as king over Isrhael:** Aleim had more work for Elia to do. He would also demonstrate Aleim's choice of **Ieu** to be the king to succeed the corrupt Aab and his wife Iezebel.

b. **Elisa the son of Saphat of Abel Meola you shall anoint as prophet in your place:** Aleim gave something else to the discouraged and depressed prophet, beyond work to do. He also gave him *a friend* and a *successor*.

i. Elia needed a *friend*; the core of his complaint before Aleim was that he was alone. Aleim let him know that there was a man ready to learn from the great prophet and be his disciple and companion.

ii. Elia also needed *hope*, and since Elisa would be raised up as a successor to Elia's prophetic office, Elia then knew that his work would continue even after his death.

c. **It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Azael, Ieu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Ieu, Elisa will kill:** This was another source of encouragement to Elia. With this promise he knew that ultimately justice would be done, and Aleim would not allow the institutionalized persecution and promotion of idolatry to go unpunished.

d. **Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Isrhael, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal:** This was a final encouragement to Elia. He repeatedly bemoaned that he was alone among the true followers of Aleim (1 Kings 18:22; 19:10; and 19:14). This both assured Elia that he was not alone and that his work as a prophet had indeed been fruitful.

i. This showed Elia that his *quiet ministry* over the years actually bore more fruit than the *spectacular ministry* at Mount Carmel. "Yet, all the while that vile idolatry was spreading in Isrhael, the worship of the true Aleim was being retained by seven thousand faithful souls, though Elia did not know that there was even one beside himself. How were they won to IEUE? Certainly not by Elia's impressive demonstration on the top of Carmel, for they were loyal to the Ruler before that... The still small voice had been doing for Isrhael what Elia could not do." (Edgar Phillips)

6. (1 Kings 19:19-21) The call of Elisa.

So he departed from there, and found Elisa the son of Saphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elia passed by him

and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elia, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” So *Elisa* turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elia, and became his servant.

a. **He departed from there, and found Elisa the son of Saphat:** Elia did what the *still small voice* of Aleim told him to do. He happened to do it in reverse order than Aleim described to him in the previous passage. Perhaps Elia believed that he *first* needed a friend and apprentice.

b. **Who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him:** Elia found Elisa and commissioned him to ministry when Elisa was at work.

c. **Elia passed by him and threw his mantle on him:** The mantle was the symbol of Elia’s prophetic authority. This was a dramatic symbol that said, “I call upon you to join in my work as a prophet.”

i. “The *mantle*, or *pallium*, was the peculiar garb of the prophet, as we may learn from Zekariah 13:4; and this was probably made of *skin dressed with the hair on*. See also 2 Kings 1:8.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **What have I done to you?** This question “Could mean, ‘Go back, but remember what I have done to you.’ It might be a rebuke at any delay in following.” (Edgar Phillips)

i. “Elia’s reply indicates that he himself had not called Elisa; it was Aleim’s call. Whether Elisa would follow that call was his own decision.” (Peter Damonse)

e. **Took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate:** This demonstrated Elisa’s complete commitment to following Elia. He destroyed the tools of his trade in a going away party for his family and friends.

i. “Elisa must have had a considerable estate, when he kept *twelve* yoke of oxen to till the ground. If, therefore, he obeyed the prophetic call, he did it to considerable secular loss.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. “Hereby he showed how willingly and joyfully he forsook all his friends, that he might serve Aleim in that high and honourable employment.” (Phillip Prins)

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 20

ALEIM LEADS ISRHAEL TO TWO VICTORIES OVER SYRIA

A. Ben-Adad comes against Samaria.

1. (1 Kings 20:1-6) The demands of Ben-Adad, king of Syria. Now Ben-Adad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. Then he sent messengers into the city to Aab king of Israhel, and said to him, “Thus says Ben-Adad: ‘Your silver and your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.’” And the king of Israhel answered and said, “My ruler, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have *are* yours.” Then the messengers came back and said, “Thus speaks Ben-Adad, saying, ‘Indeed I have sent to you, saying, “You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children”; but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it*.’”

a. Ben-Adad the King of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings were with him: This was a formidable military attack against Israhel. Though they were outwardly strong politically and militarily during the reign of Aab, they were not strong enough to discourage such an attack.

i. “Ben-Adad may be the same king Asa enlisted against Baasa in 1 Kings 15:18; or he may be that king’s son or grandson by the same name.” (Peter Damonse)

ii. “The *thirty-two* kings would include minor tribal chiefs.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. My ruler, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have are yours: Aab’s response to Ben-Adad fit his general personality. He was a man concerned with the luxuries and comforts of living, and so he did not have the character to stand in the face of such a threat. Aab surrendered unconditionally to Ben-Adad.

i. Aab believed he was in no position to resist Ben-Adad. No doubt, the national and military might of Israhel was greatly weakened by the three and a half year drought and famine that had just ended.

c. They shall search your house and the houses of your servants: This was a greater demand than what Ben-Adad made at first. “When Aab agreed to his terms readily, Ben-Adad demanded the additional right to unlimited search of the palace and the houses of Aab’s officials so as to carry away anything of value.” (Peter Damonse)

2. (1 Kings 20:7-9) Aab is counseled by his elders to resist.

So the king of Israhel called all the elders of the land, and said, “Notice, please, and see how this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him.” And all the elders and all the people said to him, “Do not listen or consent.” Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Adad, “Tell my ruler the king, ‘All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.’” And the

messengers departed and brought back word to him.

a. The king of Israhel called all the elders of the land: It was wiser for Aab to seek the counsel of the elders of the land *before* he surrendered to the Syrians. Now, in the brief time between the message of surrender and the actual abduction of his women and the plundering of his goods he sought counsel.

b. Do not listen or consent: The elders of Israhel rightly saw that such surrender to Ben-Adad and the Syrians was the first step to a total loss of sovereignty for Israhel. If they wanted to remain a kingdom at all, they had to resist this threat.

c. But this thing I cannot do: Aab told Ben-Adad that he would do *most* of what he requested, but not *all*. But to deny a tyrant on one point is to deny him on every point. Aab could expect a harsh reaction.

3. (1 Kings 20:10-12) Ben-Adad threatens and readies his army.

Then Ben-Adad sent to him and said, “The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me.” So the king of Israhel answered and said, “Tell him, ‘Let not the one who puts on *his* armour boast like the one who takes *it* off.’” And it happened when Ben-Adad heard this message, as he and the kings *were* drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, “Get ready.” And they got ready to attack the city.

a. The gods do so to me, and more also: Jezebel swore a similar oath of vengeance against Elia (1 Kings 19:2).

b. Let not the one who puts on his armour boast like the one who takes it off: Though it was uncharacteristically bold speech from Aab, it was also a wonderful piece of wisdom. The idea is that you should do your boasting *after* the battle, not before.

c. They got ready to attack the city: Syria and its allies readied, and the city of Samaria braced for a furious attack.

B. Victory for Israhel.

1. (1 Kings 20:13-15) The prophet promises victory.

Suddenly a prophet approached Aab king of Israhel, saying, “Thus says the Ruler: ‘Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the Ruler.’” So Aab said, “By whom?” And he said, “Thus says the Ruler: ‘By the young leaders of the provinces.’” Then he said, “Who will set the battle in order?” And he answered, “You.” Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israhel; seven thousand.

a. A prophet approached Aab king of Israhel: This nameless prophet does not seem to be either Elia or Elisa. He was one of the 7,000 in Israhel that were quietly faithful to IEUE.

i. Edgar Phillips had an interesting (though unlikely) idea: “It is strange that on such an occasion we hear nothing of Elia or Elisa. Is it not possible that this was one of them disguised?”

b. Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the Ruler: This was a generous promise of Aleim towards Aab and Israhel. Their hardened idolatry

and rejection of Aleim *deserved* divine abandonment. Aleim had every right to just leave them alone and let them perish without His help. Yet Aleim is rich in mercy, and He showed that mercy to Aab and Isrhael.

i. There is a small irony in the statement, **“and you shall know that I am the Ruler.”** Aab saw the victory of IEUE over the pagan god Baal on Mount Carmel – yet he was not completely convinced. Graciously, Aleim would give him even *more* evidence.

c. **So Aab said, “By whom?”** Aab looked around at his army and military leaders and naturally wondered how Aleim could bring a victory against a mighty enemy with them. Aab wondered who would lead the battle and Aleim told him, **“You.”** Aleim wanted to win this victory by working through the unlikely people Aab already had.

i. Whenever a work for Aleim is to be done, we often ask Aab’s question: **“By whom?”** When many Follower leaders ask Aleim that question, they expect Aleim will answer by bringing someone new to them, a leader or champion that can do the work or at least help with it. However, Aleim’s normal way of working is to use the people already with the Follower leader, even if they seem to be a very unlikely army.

ii. Aleim would do this work against Syria and Ben-Adad with an army of only **seven thousand**. Undoubtedly, these were not the same **seven thousand** that stayed faithful to Aleim in Isrhael, but there was a correspondence between their numbers to show that Aleim could and would work through each group.

2. (1 Kings 20:16-21) Victory for Isrhael.

So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Adad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post. The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Adad sent out a patrol, and they told him, saying, “Men are coming out of Samaria!” So he said, “If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive.” Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Isrhael pursued them; and Ben-Adad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. Then the king of Isrhael went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

a. **Ben-Adad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post:** The same sinful heart that made Ben-Adad attack Isrhael also made him a drunk. In part, his own weak character defeated him.

b. **If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive:** It may be that Ben-Adad *intended* to say that if the men from Isrhael had come for war, they should be attacked and killed. Perhaps he spoke in a drunken confusion, giving foolish orders to his soldiers.

c. **The Syrians fled, and Isrhael pursued them:** Aleim blessed the army of Isrhael and the leaders that Aab had, even blessing Aab’s own leadership of the army. Despite great odds, they won the battle.

i. “The battle strategy appears to have been to send out the small but well trained advance party who could perhaps draw

near to the Syrians without arousing too much alarm and then, at a given signal, initiate a charge that, joined by Aab’s main striking force, would both catch the drunken Arameans off guard and throw them into confusion. The plan was more successful than Aab dared to imagine.” (Peter Damonse)

3. (1 Kings 20:22) The prophet advises preparation.

And the prophet came to the king of Isrhael and said to him, “Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you.”

a. **The prophet came to the king of Isrhael:** This nameless prophet again advised Aab. The victory over Ben-Adad did not end the conflict between Isrhael and Syria.

b. **Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do:** The prophet directed Aab to prepare for a Syrian attack in the coming spring. The prophet knew that Aleim works through the careful preparation of His people.

C. A second victory over Syria.

1. (1 Kings 20:23-25) The Syrians try again.

Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, “Their gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places; and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they.” And he listened to their voice and did so.

a. **Their gods are gods of the hills:** The idea of the *localized deity* was prominent in the ancient world. They felt that particular gods had authority over particular areas. Because the recent victory was won on hilly terrain, the **servants of the king of Syria** believed that the Aleim of Isrhael was a localized deity with power over the hills, not the plains.

i. Here they imagined that Aleim could be molded into an image that they wanted or could relate to. “The art of god-making is very common among men. Instead of going to revelation to see what Aleim is, and humbly believing in him as he reveals himself, men sit down and consider what sort of Aleim he ought to be, and in so doing they are no wiser than the man who makes a god of mud or wood or stone.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Many today think that Aleim is a Aleim of hills but not of the plains. They think Aleim is a Aleim of the past but not of the present. They think Aleim is a Aleim of a few special favorites but not of all His people. They think that Aleim is Aleim of one kind of trial, but not of another kind. “Depend upon it, since satan could not kill the Ekklesia by roaring at her like a lion, he is now trying to crush her by hugging her like a bear. There is truth in this, but it is not all the truth. Do you really think, my brethren, that Aleim cannot preserve his Ekklesia in the particular trial through which she is now passing? Is he the Aleim of the hills of persecution, but not the Aleim of the valleys of prosperity?” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. “Will Aleim aid a Whitfield and not help a poor local preacher holding forth upon the green? Will he assist the earnest minister who addresses thousands, and desert the

simple girl who teaches a dozen little children the old, old story of the tree? Is this after the fashion of Aleim, to patronise the eminent and neglect the lowly? Does IESO despise the day of small things?" (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they:** The action they recommended was logical, given their theology. Their theological belief directed their advice and action.

2. (1 Kings 20:26-28) The armies muster and Aleim promises victory.

So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Adad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israhel. And the children of Israhel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israhel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside. Then a man of Aleim came and spoke to the king of Israhel, and said, "Thus says the Ruler: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The Ruler is Aleim of the hills, but He is not Aleim of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the Ruler.' "

a. **Now the children of Israhel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside:** When Ben-Adad came to avenge their previous loss, he came with overwhelming force. Ben-Adad didn't want to risk another humiliation.

b. **Because the Syrians have said, "The Ruler is Aleim of the hills, but He is not Aleim of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand:** Aleim took the bad theology of the Syrians as a personal insult. Our bad and wrong ideas about Aleim always take away from His glory and majesty, never adding to them.

i. "Aleim resents their blasphemy, and is determined to punish it. They shall now be discomfited in such a way as to show that Aleim's power is every where, and that the multitude of a host is nothing against him." (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 20:29-30) A second victory for Israhel against Syria.

And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israhel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians in one day. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left. And Ben-Adad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

a. **The children of Israhel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians in one day:** This was clearly a miracle, yet it was a miracle working *through* the existing Israeli army, not by another outside agency. Aleim wanted to show that as unlikely as it seemed, Aleim *could* work through this outwardly weak and ineffective instrument.

b. **Then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left:** After the great victory on the battlefield, Aleim moved in other extraordinary ways to defeat the Syrians, who had defamed His character through their bad understanding of Him.

i. "The 27,000 killed in Aphek would include everyone in the

city when the walls fell." (Edgar Phillips)

4. (1 Kings 20:31-34) Aab's willingness to make peace with an enemy of Aleim.

Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israhel are merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israhel; perhaps he will spare your life." So they wore sackcloth around their waists and *put* ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israhel and said, "Your servant Ben-Adad says, 'Please let me live.' " And he said, "*Is he still alive? He is my brother.*" Now the men were watching closely to see whether *any sign of mercy would come* from him; and they quickly grasped *at this word* and said, "Your brother Ben-Adad." So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Adad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot. So Ben-Adad said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then Aab said, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

a. **Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israhel:** Not long before this Ben-Adad spoke severe threats against Aab and the Kingdom of Israhel (1 Kings 20:1-6). Now he humbled himself as much as he could to win mercy and favour from the unexpectedly triumphant King of Israhel.

i. "The rope around the head was a sign of supplication, the figure being that of the porter at the wheel of the victor's chariot." (Peter Damonse)

ii. Sinners should come to Aleim the King with the same manner as Ben-Adad. They should come with *sincerity*, with *humility*, with *surrender*, with *earnestness*, and with close watching to **see whether any sign of mercy would come** to them.

b. **Is he still alive? He is my brother:** Aab felt a kinship towards this pagan king with exceedingly pagan ideas of Aleim. Perhaps Aab wanted Ben-Adad and Syria's friendship as protection against the powerful and threatening Assyrian Empire. If so, he looked for friends in the wrong places.

i. "This was not courtesy, but foolery. Brother Ben-Adad will ere long fight against Aab with that life which he had given him (*chapter 22:31*)." (Edgar Phillips)

c. **I will send you away with this treaty:** Aab had no business making this treaty. The victory was the Ruler's and did not belong to Aab; he had no right to negotiate away the victory.

5. (1 Kings 20:35-38) A prophet prepares to confront the king. **Now a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbour by the word of the Ruler, "Strike me, please." And the man refused to strike him. Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the Ruler, surely, as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall kill you." And as soon as he left him, a lion found him and killed him. And he found another man, and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him, inflicting a wound. Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes.**

a. **A certain man of the sons of the prophets:** This seems to be a different prophet from the man mentioned earlier in the chapter. This is another reminder that the 7,000 faithful followers of IEUE were active in Israhel.

i. “Although he is not named, Josephus believed the anonymous ‘man of Aleim’ introduced in verse 35 was Mikaia who figures so prominently in the next story. He suggested it was in retaliation for Mikaia’s prophetic condemnation that the king put him in prison.” (Peter Damonse)

ii. “This is the first reference to these special bands of prophets (2 Kings 2:3-7, 15; 4:1, 4:38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1) who appear during the critical period of the Omride dynasty but are otherwise not well attested.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Strike me, please:** Directed by Aleim, the prophet needed an injury to display to King Aab. When his neighbour refused, the prophet announced coming judgment on the neighbour – through the unusual method of a lion attack (**a lion found him and killed him**).

i. The **neighbour** was not just another man in the kingdom of Israhel. The implication was that he was a fellow member of the **sons of the prophets**. He himself was a man given to following Aleim and sensitive to Aleim’s work in the prophets. He should have known better. Though this is not as clear in the New King James translation, it is more clear in other translations: *his companion* (NIV), *a certain member of a company of prophets said to another* (NRSV) *another* (NASB) *to another man* (NLB).

ii. “This seems a hard measure, but there was ample reason for it. This person was also one of the sons of the prophets, and he knew that Aleim frequently delivered his counsels in this way, and should have immediately obeyed; for the smiting could have had no evil in it when Aleim commanded it, and it could be no outrage or injury to his fellow when he himself required him to do it.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes:** Ready with his injury, the prophet waited for the arrival of King Aab so he could deliver his message from Aleim to the king.

6. (1 Kings 20:39-40) The prophet gives an object lesson.

Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, “Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, ‘Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’ While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” Then the king of Israhel said to him, “So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.”

a. **Your servant went out into the midst of the battle:** After the pattern of other prophets, this anonymous prophet brought a message to King Aab through a made-up story.

b. **While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone:** The prophet’s story told of a man who was responsible to guard the life of another, and proved himself unfaithful. In the story, the guilty man’s excuse was that he was **busy here and there** – which was no excuse at all. He should have paid attention to the job he had to do.

i. “This was likely enough to happen on a battlefield. It would not be possible to hold your prisoner, and to busy yourself about other things at the same time.” (Edgar Phillips)

ii. The prophet’s made-up story with the fictional excuse becomes *real* in the life of many, especially many ministers of the Gospel. “If a man is called to preach the Word, and becomes busy over a hundred things other than that of his central work, and so loses the opportunity to preach, his failure is complete. That which is our Aleim-appointed work, we must do. If we fail in that, the fact that we have been ‘busy here and there,’ doing all sorts of other things, is of no avail.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. **He was gone:** Even as the fictional prisoner escaped, so many opportunities escape us in the Follower life. “I want you all to remember this morning that if any portion of life has not been spent in Aleim’s service *it is gone*. Time past is gone. You can never have it back again, not even the last moment which just now glided by.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it:** In the prophet’s story, he was unfaithful in guarding something that was entrusted to him. Aab rightly judged that he should be held responsible for his failure to guard what was entrusted to him.

7. (1 Kings 20:41-43) The rebuke from Aleim.

And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israhel recognized him as one of the prophets. Then he said to him, “Thus says the Ruler: ‘Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.’ ” So the king of Israhel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.

a. **The king of Israhel recognized him as one of the prophets:** This showed why the prophet found it wise to disguise himself as a soldier recently returned from battle, and why the wound was necessary. Aab consciously shielded himself from the prophets.

b. **Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people:** Aleim intended that Ben-Adad should be utterly destroyed, but He *also intended* that this happen by the hand of the army of Israhel. Aleim was interested in more than the mere death of Ben-Adad, but also in the way that death came about.

c. **So the king of Israhel went to his house sullen and displeased:** Aab was **sullen and displeased**, but he was not *repentant*. He had the sorrow of being a sinner and knowing the consequences of sin, without having the sorrow for the sin itself.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 21

THE MURDER OF NABOTH

A. Naboth is murdered for his vineyard.

1. (1 Kings 21:1-3) Naboth refuses to give up his land.

And it came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Aab king of Samaria. So Aab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money." But Naboth said to Aab, "The Ruler forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!"

a. **Give me your vineyard:** This account begins as a simple attempted real estate transaction. Aab wanted the vineyard near his royal house in Jezreel so that he might have it as a **vegetable garden**. He was willing to trade for the land or to pay for it.

b. **The Ruler forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!** Naboth's response was an emphatic "No." His rejection of the otherwise reasonable offer was rooted in the ancient Israelite idea of the land. They believed that the land was an inheritance from Aleim, parceled out to individual tribes and families according to His will. Therefore land was never really sold, only leased – and that only under the most dire circumstances. Real Estate offices in ancient Israhel didn't do very good business.

i. "For Aleim hath expressly, and for divers weighty reasons, forbidden the alienation of lands from the tribes and families to which they were allotted, 3rd MoUse (Leviticus) 25:15, 23, 25; Numbers 36:7; Ezekiel 46:18." (Phillip Prins)

2. (1 Kings 21:4-7) Aab pouts before Iezebel.

So Aab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. But Iezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?" He said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you another vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' " Then Iezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israhel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

a. **Aab went into his house sullen and displeased:** This seemed entirely characteristic of Aab. He seemed to be a spineless, pouting man who reacted this way when he met any kind of adversity.

i. "So the scene is a vivid picture of peevish Aab turning his face to the wall and refusing to eat. He was like a sulking child who could not get his own way." (Peter Damonse)

ii. "Poor soul! He was ruler over ten-twelfths of the land, and became miserable because he could not get a poor man's vineyard added to all that he possessed!" (Edgar Phillips)

b. **You now exercise authority over Israhel... I will give you**

the vineyard of Naboth: Iezebel's manner of speech revealed who really exercised **authority** in the palace of Israhel.

i. "Alas, was it not *she* that governed it really, with more daring wickedness than Aab, her puppet husband?" (Peter Damonse)

3. (1 Kings 21:8-14) Iezebel plots and orders the murder of Naboth.

And she wrote letters in Aab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth. She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honour among the people; and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, "You have blasphemed Aleim and the king." Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die. So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Iezebel had sent to them, as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them. They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honour among the people. And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed Aleim and the king!" Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died. Then they sent to Iezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

a. **She wrote letters in Aab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles:** This shows that Aab was in agreement with what Iezebel did and had to know *something* of her plot.

i. "She involved Aab by the use of his seal on the directives to the local magistrates. The use of the king's royal, dynastic, administrative or even personal seal to gain his authority would require Aab's collusion." (Edgar Phillips)

ii. Alexander Edgar Phillips noted three types of dangerous characters in this chapter: (1) Aab who was wicked and weak. (2) Iezebel who was wicked and strong. (3) The Elders of Jezreel, who were wicked and subservient.

b. **Proclaim a fast:** The idea was that some evil or calamity came upon Israhel, and a scapegoat had to be found for the evil. Iezebel intended that Naboth be revealed as the scapegoat.

c. **Seat Naboth with high honour among the people:** This was a treacherous plan; first, to set Naboth in a high place of **honour** and then to destroy him with lies from the mouths of **scoundrels**.

d. **Naboth has blasphemed Aleim and the king!** IESO was charged with similar crimes, accused of offending both Aleim and Caesar. Naboth, just like IESO, was completely innocent of such accusations and was murdered without cause. The stoning of Naboth over a piece of land for a vegetable garden shows the brutal and amoral character of Iezebel and Aab.

i. 2 Kings 9:26 indicates that the crime was even worse than this, connecting the murder of Naboth with the *blood of his sons*. It is likely that the entire family of Naboth was murdered, so no heirs were left to claim his property.

4. (1 Kings 21:15-16) Aab takes possession of Naboth's land.

And it came to pass, when Iezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Iezebel said to Aab, "Arise,

take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” So it was, when Aab heard that Naboth was dead, that Aab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

a. Aab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth: This added evil to evil. Even with Naboth dead, the land did not belong to Aab or the royal house of Israhel. It belonged to the heirs or family of Naboth. Aab probably claimed the land as a royal right because the crown seized the land of any executed criminal.

i. Although, “Some say that Aab was his next kinsman, his sons being dead; which they judge more likely, because his land was next to the king’s.” (Phillip Prins) “Hence some make Naboth to have been Aab’s uncle; but that is uncertain.” (Edgar Phillips)

B. Elia confronts Aab.

1. (1 Kings 21:17-24) Aleim pronounces judgment upon Aab. Then the word of the Ruler came to Elia the Tishbite, saying, “Arise, go down to meet Aab king of Israhel, who lives in Samaria. There he is, in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Ruler: “Have you murdered and also taken possession?” ‘ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Ruler: “In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.”’ “ So Aab said to Elia, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” And he answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Ruler: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Aab every male in Israhel, both bond and free. I will make your house like the house of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasa the son of Aia, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israhel sin.’ And concerning Iezebel the Ruler also spoke, saying, ‘The dogs shall eat Iezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’ The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Aab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.”

a. Arise, go down to meet Aab: Aab ran out to get his new toy (the land gained by betrayal, lies, and murder) and instead he ran into the prophet of Aleim.

b. Have you murdered and also taken possession? Elia did what few other men had the courage to do – confront this wicked, brutal, and amoral king and queen of Israhel. He pointedly charged them with the two crimes of both murder and theft of Naboth’s land.

i. We notice that Elia confronted Aab (**you murdered**) over the sin of Iezebel and her wicked associates. Aleim clearly held Aab responsible for this sin as *husband*, as *king*, and as *beneficiary* of this crime.

ii. “This is added to show that temptations to sin are no excuse to the sinner.” (Phillip Prins)

c. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours: This was a strong and startling prophecy. It was not fulfilled, because Aab died in *Samaria* and the dogs licked his blood *there* (1 Kings 22:38),

instead of in Jezreel where Naboth was murdered.

i. This unfulfilled prophecy has needlessly troubled some. Various explanations have been made, including the ideas that Elia meant a general area and not a specific place, or that there were pools or streams that carried the blood from Aab’s chariot to the waters of Jezreel, or that this was fulfilled in the blood that ran in the veins of Aab’s son Iorham (2 Kings 9:25). A far better explanation is found in the fact that because of Aab’s sorrow and repentance at the end of the chapter, Aleim relented from this judgment and instead brought it upon Aab’s son (in 2 Kings 9:24-26) as the Ruler said He would in 1 Kings 21:29.

ii. “And see how literally the prediction concerning *his son* was fulfilled, see 2 Kings 9:25, where we find that the body of Ieorham his son, just then slain by an arrow that had passed through his heart, was thrown *into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite*; and there, doubtless, the dogs licked his blood, if they did not even devour his body.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. Have you found me, O my enemy? “Though the king knew it not, Elia was his best friend; Iezebel his direst foe.” (Edgar Phillips)

i. “To the widow of Zarhephath Elia was an angel of light; whilst to Aab he was an enemy... What you are, determines whether Elia will be your friend or your enemy.” (Edgar Phillips)

e. You have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Ruler: “See a similar form of speech, Romans 7:14. Thou hast totally abandoned thyself to the service of sin. *satan* is become thy *absolute master*, and thou his *undivided slave*.” (Edgar Phillips)

f. I will take away your posterity, and cut off from Aab every male in Israhel: This was a severe judgment against anyone, in particular against a king. A king’s legacy was in his **posterity** succeeding him on the throne, and here Aleim announced an end to the dynasty of Omrhi (Aab’s father). His dynasty would come to a dead end just like the dynasties of **Ierhoboam** and **Baasa**.

i. Aab never possessed the vineyard of Naboth. He held it, but that very fact became to him a torment. However fine the vintage, for him the grapes were acrid, poisonous... That which is gained by fraud is never possessed.” (Edgar Phillips)

g. The dogs shall eat Iezebel by the wall of Jezreel: Though the prophecy of judgment was focused against Aab, it did not forget Iezebel. His end would be both horrible and disgraceful.

2. (1 Kings 21:25-26) Aab’s great wickedness.

But there was no one like Aab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Ruler, because Iezebel his wife stirred him up. And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Ruler had cast out before the children of Israhel.

a. There was no one like Aab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Ruler, because Iezebel his wife stirred him up: Aab’s sin was multiplied not only because of the sin itself, but because by his permission, **his wife stirred him up** to do it.

i. This reminds us of what Aleim said to Adam in pronouncing the curse after the sin in the Garden of Eden: *Because you*

have heeded the voice of your wife (1st MoUse (Genesis) 3:17). Apparently, Aleim holds husbands who follow their wife into sin to a special accountability.

b. **According to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Ruler had cast out:** In likening the sin of Aab to the sin of the **Amorites**, Aleim prepared the ground for the future eviction of Isrhael from the Promised Land. As the **Amorites** were cast out of Canaan for their continued idolatry and rejection of Aleim, so would the northern kingdom of Isrhael.

3. (1 Kings 21:27-29) Aab humbles himself and Aleim relents from judgment in his life.

So it was, when Aab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. And the word of the Ruler came to Elia the Tishbite, saying, “See how Aab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.”

a. **When Aab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body:** For all his wickedness, Aab received this prophecy of judgment exactly as he should have. He understood that the prophecy of judgment was in fact an invitation to repent, humble one’s self, and to seek Aleim for mercy.

i. “But this humiliation or repentance of Aab’s was only external and superficial, arising from the terror of Aleim’s judgments; and not sincere and serious, proceeding from the love of Aleim, or a true sense of his sin, or a solemn purpose of amendment of his life, as appears, because all the particulars of his repentance here, are external and ritual only; nor is there the least intimation of any one sign or fruit of his true repentance, as that he restored Naboth’s land, or reproved his infamous wife; but in the very next chapter you find him returning to his former vomit.” (Phillip Prins)

ii. Three years later, Aab was dead under Aleim’s judgment. “I will recompense his temporary repentance with a temporary deliverance.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days:** Aleim honoured Aab’s initiative. This shows the power of both prayer and humble repentance. If Aab *did not* humble himself in this way, then the judgment would have come in his own day. This shows that Aleim gave the prophecy of judgment as an invitation to repentance, and Aleim opened to the door of mercy when Aab properly responded to that invitation.

i. There is no record of Iezebel’s humility or repentance. Therefore we can expect that Aleim’s judgment will come upon her *exactly* as He first announced.

ii. “The *penitent* heart ever meets the *merciful* eye of Aleim; repentance is highly esteemed by the Father of compassion, even where it is comparatively shallow and short-lived.” (Edgar Phillips)

iii. This shows us the character of Aleim’s mercy: *it is given to the undeserving*. By nature, the innocent do not *need* mercy. Aab was a great sinner, but he won great mercy (in this life) through humble repentance. The worst sinner should not disqualify himself from receiving Aleim’s mercy, if that sinner

should only approach Aleim in humble repentance.

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for 1 Kings 22

THE DEATH OF AAB

A. Aleim foretells Aab's doom.

1. (1 Kings 22:1-4) Aab sets his eyes upon Ramoth-Gilead.

Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israhel. Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Ieosaphat the king of Judah went down to *visit* the king of Israhel. And the king of Israhel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" So he said to Ieosaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?" Ieosaphat said to the king of Israhel, "I *am* as you *are*, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

a. **Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?** Previously, the King of Syria promised to return certain cities to Israhel (1 Kings 20:34) in exchange for leniency after defeat in battle. Apparently this was a city that Ben-Adad never returned to Israhel and it was in a strategically important location.

b. **Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?** King Aab of Israhel asked King Ieosaphat of Judah to help him in this dispute against Syria. This made some sense, because Ramoth-Gilead was only 40 miles from Jerusalem.

2. (1 Kings 22:5-9) Ieosaphat proposes that they seek Aleim in the matter.

Also Ieosaphat said to the king of Israhel, "Please inquire for the word of the Ruler today." Then the king of Israhel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for the Ruler will deliver *it* into the hand of the king." And Ieosaphat said, "*Is there not still a prophet of the Ruler here, that we may inquire of Him?*" So the king of Israhel said to Ieosaphat, "*There is still one man, Mikaia the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Ruler; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.*" And Ieosaphat said, "*Let not the king say such things!*" Then the king of Israhel called an officer and said, "**Bring Mikaia the son of Imlah quickly!**"

a. **Please inquire for the word of the Ruler today:** Considering the generally adversarial relationship between Aab and the prophets of IEUE, this was a bold request for Ieosaphat to ask of Aab. It wasn't surprising that Aab picked prophets who would tell them that they wanted to hear.

b. **Go up, for the Ruler will deliver it into the hand of the king:** When Aab gathered the prophets they were not *faithful* prophets of the Ruler. These were prophets happy to please their kings, and to tell them what they wanted to hear. Ieosaphat still wanted to hear from a prophet of IEUE, the Ruler (**Is there not still a prophet of the Ruler here, that we may inquire of Him?**).

c. **I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil:** Aab hated the messenger because of the message. His real conflict was with Aleim, but he focused his hatred against the prophet Mikaia. Yet he was willing to

listen to the King of Judah when he advised that Aab *should* listen to the Prophet Mikaia.

3. (1 Kings 22:10-12) An object lesson from the unfaithful prophets.

The king of Israhel and Ieosaphat the king of Judah, having put on *their* robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. Now Zedekia the son of Chenaana had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the Ruler: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Ruler will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

a. **Sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria:** This illustrates the ancient custom of holding court and making decisions at the gates of the city. There were even thrones for high officials to sit on at the gates of the city of Samaria.

b. **Thus says the Ruler:** These unfaithful prophets (such as **Zedekia**) prophesied in the name of the Ruler, but they did not prophesy truthfully. Many commentators believe these prophets were *pagan* prophets, perhaps representatives of Aserha or other pagan gods or goddesses. Yet they clearly prophesied in the name of **the Ruler**. It is best to regard these *not as pagan prophets*, but unfaithful prophets to the true Aleim.

i. Perhaps these were true followers of IEUE who were seduced by Aab's sincere but shallow repentance three years before (1 Kings 21:27-29). After that, they began to align with Aab uncritically. Three years later they were willing to prophesy lies to Aab if that was what he wanted to hear.

c. **With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed:** Zedekia used a familiar tool of ancient prophets – the object lesson. He used **horns of iron** to illustrate the thrust of two powerful forces, armies that would rout the Syrians. Zedekia had the agreement of 400 other prophets (**all the prophets prophesied so**).

i. This must have been a vivid and entertaining presentation. We can be certain that every eye was on Zedekia when he used the **horns of iron** to powerfully illustrate the point. It was certainly persuasive to have 400 prophets speak in agreement on one issue. No matter how powerful and persuasive the presentation, *their message was unfaithful*.

4. (1 Kings 22:13-16) The prophecy of Mikaia, the faithful prophet.

Then the messenger who had gone to call Mikaia spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." And Mikaia said, "As the Ruler lives, whatever the Ruler says to me, that I will speak." Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Mikaia, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the Ruler will deliver *it* into the hand of the king!" So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Ruler?"

a. **As the Ruler lives, whatever the Ruler says to me, that I will speak:** The assistants of King Aab tried to persuade Mikaia to speak in agreement with the 400 other prophets. Mikaia assured him that he would simply repeat what Aleim said to him.

i. This was a dramatic scene. Mikaia was brought out from prison (1 Kings 22:26 indicates that he came from prison). We see a prophet in rags and chains stand before two kings, ready to speak on behalf of the Ruler.

ii. "This might have daunted the good prophet, but that he had lately seen the Ruler sitting upon His throne with all the host of heaven standing by Him, and hence he so boldly looked in the face these two kings in their majesty; for he beheld them as so many mice." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Go and prosper, for the Ruler will deliver it into the hand of the king!** When Mikaia said this, his tone was probably mocking and sarcastic. He said similar *words* to the 400 unfaithful prophets, but delivered a completely different *message*.

c. **How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Ruler?** King Aab recognized the mocking tone of Mikaia's prophecy and knew it contradicted the message of the 400 prophets. He demanded that Mikaia tell **nothing but the truth** – which Aab believed and hoped was the message of the 400 other prophets.

5. (1 Kings 22:17-18) Mikaia speaks the true prophecy from the Ruler.

Then he said, "I saw all Israhel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Ruler said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.' " And the king of Israhel said to Ieosaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

a. **I saw all Israhel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd:** Mikaia was challenged to tell the truth, and now he changed his tone from mocking to serious. He said that not only would Israhel be defeated, but also that their leader (*shepherd*) would perish.

b. **Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?** King Aab said that he wanted the truth – but he couldn't handle the truth. What he didn't consider was that though Mikaia prophesied *evil* towards Aab, he prophesied *truth*.

i. "Aab knew in his heart that Mikaia would not fear or flatter him, but only declare the word of IEUE. This he construed into personal hatred... Hatred of the messenger of Aleim is clear evidence of willful wickedness." (Edgar Phillips)

6. (1 Kings 22:19-23) Mikaia reveals the inspiration behind the 400 prophets.

Then Mikaia said, "Therefore hear the word of the Ruler: I saw the Ruler sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. And the Ruler said, 'Who will persuade Aab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Ruler, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The Ruler said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of

all his prophets.' And the Ruler said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' Therefore look! The Ruler has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Ruler has declared disaster against you."

a. **I saw the Ruler sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by:** King Aab and others at the court found it hard to explain how one prophet could be right and 400 prophets could be wrong. Here Mikaia explained the message of the 400 prophets. It is possible that this was just a parable, but it is more likely that Mikaia had an accurate prophetic glimpse into the heavenly drama behind these events.

b. **On His right hand and on His left:** Since the **right hand** was the place of favour, this may indicate that Aleim spoke to the *combined host of heaven*, both faithful and fallen angelic beings.

i. Some people forget that satan and his fellow fallen angels have access to heaven (Iob 1:6, Revelation 12:10). There is a well-intentioned but mistaken teaching that *Aleim can allow no evil in His presence*, meaning that satan and other fallen angels could not be in His presence. These passages show that Aleim *can* allow evil in His presence, though He can have no *fellowship* with evil and one day all evil will be removed from His presence (Revelation 20:14-15).

c. **Who will persuade Aab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?** Aleim wanted to bring judgment against Aab, so He asked this group of the **host of heaven** for a volunteer to lead Aab into battle.

d. **I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets:** Apparently, one of the *fallen* angels volunteered for this task. Since Aab wanted to be deceived, Aleim would give him what He wanted, using a willing fallen angel who worked through willing unfaithful prophets.

i. "It is rather a personified spirit of prophecy (Zekariah 13:2; 1 Ioanne 4:6), for even the false prophets may be governed by supernatural or spiritual forces rather than merely human reason. It represents the power of a lie in the mouth of someone opposed to the truth and speaking for his own ends." (Edgar Phillips)

7. (1 Kings 22:24-28) The reaction of the false prophets and Aab.

Now Zedekia the son of Chenaana went near and struck Mikaia on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the Ruler go from me to speak to you?" And Mikaia said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!" So the king of Israhel said, "Take Mikaia, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Ioas the king's son; and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace." ' " But Mikaia said, "If you ever return in peace, the Ruler has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

a. **Now Zedekia the son of Chenaana went near and struck Mikaia:** Zedekia responded the way many do when they are defeated in argument – he responded with violence.

b. **Put this fellow in prison:** King Aab responded the way many tyrants do when they are confronted with the truth. Aab

wanted Mikaia imprisoned and deprived (**feed him with the bread of affliction and water of affliction**).

i. **Take Mikaia, and return him** tells us that they took Mikaia from the prison to speak to these kings.

ii. “The phrase ‘*bread of affliction and water of affliction*’ may be translated ‘bread and water of scant measure.’” (Peter Damonse)

c. **If you ever return in peace, the Ruler has not spoken by me:** The prophet Mikaia made one final and ultimate appeal. He was willing to be judged by whether his prophecy came to pass or not.

B. Aab dies in battle.

1. (1 Kings 22:29-30) Ieosaphat and Aab go into battle.

So the king of Isrhael and Ieosaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. And the king of Isrhael said to Ieosaphat, “I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes.” So the king of Isrhael disguised himself and went into battle.

a. **So the king of Isrhael and Ieosaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead:** It is easy to understand why King Aab of Isrhael went to this battle; he didn’t want to believe that Mikaia’s prophecy was true and wanted to courageously oppose it. It is less easy to understand why King Ieosaphat of Judah went to this battle with Aab. He should have believed the prophecy of Mikaia and known that the battle would end in disaster and the death of at least Aab.

i. It may be that Ieosaphat had a *fatalistic* attitude towards the will of Aleim, figuring that if it all was Aleim’s will then there was nothing he or anyone else could do about it.

b. **I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes:** Going into the battle, Aab did not want to be identified as a king and therefore be a special target. He thought this would help protect him against Mikaia’s prophecy of doom. It is more difficult to explain why Ieosaphat agreed to go into the battle as the only clearly identified king. Perhaps he was either not very smart or he had very great faith.

2. (1 Kings 22:31-36) Ieosaphat is saved and Aab dies in battle.

Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, “Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Isrhael.” So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Ieosaphat, that they said, “Surely it is the king of Isrhael!” Therefore they turned aside to fight against him, and Ieosaphat cried out. And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Isrhael, that they turned back from pursuing him. Now a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Isrhael between the joints of his armour. So he said to the driver of his chariot, “Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded.” The battle increased that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, “Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!”

a. **Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Isrhael:** Aab’s previous mercy to Ben-Adad did not win

any lasting favour with the rulers of Syria. This strategy of the Syrian army made Aab’s counter-strategy of disguising himself in battle seem very wise.

i. “Thus doth the unthankful infidel repay the mercy of his late victor... but Aleim had a holy hand in it.” (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Ieosaphat cried out:** Finding himself as the only identifiable king in the battle, Ieosaphat found himself quickly in danger. He **cried out** unto the Ruler and was rescued when **they turned back from pursuing him**.

i. 2 Chronicles 18:31 makes it clear that the Ruler heard Ieosaphat’s cry and rescued him.

ii. After the close escape at Ramoth Gilead, Ieosaphat rededicated himself to the spiritual reform of Judah: *he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Ruler Aleim of their fathers* (2 Chronicles 19:4).

c. **Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Isrhael:** This seemed to be pure chance. It was a **certain man**, and he pulled his **bow at random** – but it struck as if it were a sin-seeking missile. Aleim orchestrated the unintended actions of man to result in an exercise of His judgment.

i. “And now what joy could Aab’s black soul, ready to depart, have of his ivory house? Who had not rather be a Mikaia in the jail than Aab in the chariot? Wicked men have the advantage of the way, divine men of the end.” (Edgar Phillips)

d. **The king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening:** Aab faced the end of his life bravely, dying **propped up in his chariot** to inspire his troops. When his death became known the battle was over.

i. “It appears that the Israelites and Jews maintained the fight the whole of the day; but when at evening the king died, and this was known, there was a proclamation made, probably with the consent of both Syrians and Israelites, that the war was over.” (Edgar Phillips)

3. (1 Kings 22:37-40) Aleim’s word to Aab is fulfilled.

So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. Then someone washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed, according to the word of the Ruler which He had spoken. Now the rest of the acts of Aab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Isrhael? So Aab rested with his fathers. Then Aazia his son reigned in his place.

a. **So the king died:** The word through the Prophet Mikaia proved true. King Aab never returned to Samaria or Isrhael in peace.

b. **The dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed:** This was an *almost* fulfillment of Aleim’s word through Elia in 1 Kings 21:19, where Elia prophesied that dogs would lick the blood of Aab. This proved true, but not in the *place* Elia said it would happen. Aleim relented from His original judgment against Aab announced in 1 Kings 21, but because of Aab’s false repentance and continued sin a very similar judgment came upon him.

c. **According to the word of the Ruler which He had**

spoken: There was another prophecy fulfilled in the death of Aab. It was the word from the anonymous prophet of 1 Kings 20:42, that Aab spared Ben-Adad's life at the expense of his own.

d. The ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built: By materialist standards the reign of Aab was a success. He was generally militarily successful and enjoyed a generally prosperous economy. Yet spiritually his reign was a disaster, one of the worst ever for Israhel.

C. The reigns of Ieosaphat and Aazia.

1. (1 Kings 22:41-50) Summary of the reign of Ieosaphat.

Ieosaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Aab king of Israhel. Ieosaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azuba the daughter of Sili. And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Ruler. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. Also Ieosaphat made peace with the king of Israhel. Now the rest of the acts of Ieosaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. There was then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king. Ieosaphat made merchant ships to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geberh. Then Aazia the son of Aab said to Ieosaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Ieosaphat would not. And Ieosaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of Daudid his father. Then Ieorham his son reigned in his place.

a. Ieosaphat the son of Asa: Asa was a good king and Ieosaphat his son followed in his footsteps and did **what was right in the eyes of the Ruler**.

i. The writer of 1 Kings actually summarized many of the remarkable accomplishments of Ieosaphat, who was one of the better kings of Judah. From 2 Chronicles we learn many of Ieosaphat's other accomplishments.

· He sent teachers of Aleim's Word out to his entire kingdom (2 Chronicles 17:7-10). "By this little band of princes, Levites and priests, sixteen in all, Ieosaphat did more toward impressing the surrounding nations with a sense of his power than the largest and best-equipped standing army could have secured to him." (Peter Damonse)

· He established a permanent military garrison along the northern frontier (2 Chronicles 17:1-2, 12).

· He trained and equipped a sizeable army (2 Chronicles 17:14-19) that was able to quell a Transjordan invasion (2 Chronicles 20:1-30).

· He placed Edom under Judean control, controlling an important caravan route to the south (2 Kings 3:8-27; 2 Chronicles 20:36).

· Aleim blessed his reign so much that the fear of the Ruler came upon neighboring nations so that they did not make war against Ieosaphat (2 Chronicles 17:10).

· Ieosaphat was also an able administrator, implementing judicial reforms (2 Chronicles 19:5-11) and religious reforms (2 Chronicles 17:3-9).

· Ieosaphat was also the king connected to the famous incident when the army of Judah saw a great victory won as the Levites led the battle with praise (2 Chronicles 20:15-23).

b. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away: Ieosaphat did not do *everything* he should have as a king. Yet he reformed Israhel even more deeply than Asa did (**the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land**).

i. "In 2 Chronicles 17:6, it is expressly said, that he *did take away the high places*. Allowing that the text is right in 2 Chronicles the two places may be easily recognized. There were *two kinds of high places* in the land: 1. Those used for *idolatrous* purposes. 2. Those that were *consecrated to Aleim*, and were used before the temple was built. The former he did take away, the latter he did not." (Edgar Phillips)

c. There was then no king in Edom: "This note is introduced by the writer to account for Ieosaphat's building ships at *Ebion-geber*, which was in the *territory* of the *Edomites*, and which showed them to be at that time under the Jewish yoke." (Edgar Phillips)

d. Let my servants go with your servants in the ships: After a disastrous shipping venture Ieosaphat was tempted to make an alliance with Israhel, but **Ieosaphat would not**. This was to his credit. He learned the lesson of not entering a partnership with the wicked.

i. 2 Chronicles 20:35-37 tells us more about this shipping venture with Israhel. It tells us that Ieosaphat *did* make an alliance with Aazia and it ended in disaster. The Ruler told Ieosaphat why: *Because you have allied yourself with Aazia, the Ruler has destroyed your works* (2 Chronicles 20:37). It was *after* this word of the Ruler that Ieosaphat turned down the offer of a continued alliance with King Aazia of Israhel.

e. Then Ieorham his son reigned in his place: Ieosaphat gave his son Ieorham to Athaliah in marriage, the daughter of Aab and Iezebel (2 Chronicles 18:1). This was a serious error because the reign of Aazia was a spiritual and national disaster for Judah because Ieorham *walked in the ways of the kings of Israhel, just as the house of Aab had done, for he had the daughter of Aab as a wife* (2 Chronicles 21:6). The ill effects of this were felt even to the next generation, because Aazia the son of Ieorham was also a bad king for Judah (2 Chronicles 22:2-4).

2. (1 Kings 22:51-53) The evil reign of King Aazia of Israhel, the son of Aab.

Aazia the son of Aab became king over Israhel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Ieosaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israhel. He did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Ierhoboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israhel sin; for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the Ruler Aleim of Israhel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

a. He reigned two years over Israhel: Aab reigned 22 years, but his son only reigned two years. Though his repentance was shallow, when Aab repented after an announcement of

judgment in 1 Kings 21, Aleim relented from the immediate judgment and promised to bring judgment in the days of Aab's son. Aazia's short reign was a fulfillment of this prophecy in 1 Kings 21:29.

i. "By comparing this verse with verse 41, it appears that Aazia was made king by his father, and reigned in conjunction with him, a year or two before Aab's death." (Phillip Prins)

b. **He did evil in the sight of the Ruler, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Ierhoboam:** Considering the sinful ways of Ierhoboam, Aab, and Iezebel, there is hardly anything worse that could be said of a king.

i. "It is a dark catalogue of iniquity, yet only what might be expected of the offspring of such a couple as Aab and Iezebel." (Peter Damonse)

ii. With this, the Book of 1 Kings ends on a low note. It began with the promise of the twilight of Isrhael's greatest king, Daudid. It ends with the sad reign of one of the most wicked kings over one of the kingdoms coming from the divided tribes of Isrhael.