

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST

BOOK OF KINGS

The history now before us accounts for the affairs of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, yet with special regard to the kingdom of God among them; for it is a sacred history. It is earlier as to time, teaches much more, and is more interesting than any common histories.

CHAPTER 1

David's declining age. (1-4) Adonijah aspires to the throne. (5-10) David makes Solomon king. (11-31) Solomon is anointed king, and Adonijah's usurpation stopped. (32-53)

1 Kings 1:1

Vs. 1-4: We have David sinking under infirmities. He was chastised for his recent sins, and felt the effects of his former toils and hardships.

1 Kings 1:5

Vs. 5-10: Indulgent parents are often chastised with disobedient children, who are anxious to possess their estates. No worldly wisdom, nor experience, nor sacredness of character, can insure the continuance in any former course of those who remain under the power of self-love. But we may well wonder by what arts Joab and Abiathar could be drawn aside.

1 Kings 1:11

Vs. 11-31: Observe Nathan's address to Bathsheba. Let me give thee counsel how to save thy own life, and the life of thy son. Such as this is the counsel Christ's ministers give us in his name, to give all diligence, not only that no man take our crown, ^{<1000>}Revelation 3:11, but that we save our

lives, even the lives of our souls. David made a solemn declaration of his firm cleaving to his former resolution, that Solomon should be his successor. Even the recollection of the distresses from which the Lord redeemed him, increased his comfort, inspired his hopes, and animated him to his duty, under the decays of nature and the approach of death.

1 Kings 1:32

Vs. 32-53: The people expressed great joy and satisfaction in the elevation of Solomon. Every true Israelite rejoices in the exaltation of the Son of David. Combinations formed upon evil principles will soon be dissolved, when self-interest calls another way. How can those who do evil deeds expect to have good tidings? Adonijah had despised Solomon, but soon dreaded him. We see here, as in a glass, Jesus, the Son of David and the Son of God, exalted to the throne of glory, notwithstanding all his enemies. His kingdom is far greater than that of his father David, and therein all the true people of God cordially rejoice. The prosperity of his cause is vexation and terror to his enemies. No horns of the altar, nor forms of godliness, nor pretenses to religion, can profit those who will not submit to His authority, and accept of his salvation; and if their submission be hypocritical, they shall perish without remedy.

CHAPTER 2

David's dying charge to Solomon. (1-4) David's charge as to Joab and others. (5-11) Solomon reigns, Adonijah aspiring to the throne is put to death. (12-25) Abiathar banished, Joab put to death. (26-34) Shimei is put to death. (35-46)

<111> **1 Kings 2:1**

Vs. 1-4: David's charge to Solomon is, to keep the charge of the Lord. The authority of a dying father is much, but nothing to that of a living God. God promised David that the Messiah should come from his descendants, and that promise was absolute; but the promise, that there should not fail of them a man on the throne of Israel, was conditional; if he walks before God in sincerity, with zeal and resolution: in order hereunto, he must take heed to his way.

<111> **1 Kings 2:5**

Vs. 5-11: These dying counsels concerning Joab and Shimei, did not come from personal anger, but for the security of Solomon's throne, which was the cause of God and Israel. It is evident Joab did not repent of the murders he had committed, but would readily repeat them to carry any purpose; though long reprieved, he shall be reckoned with at last. Time does not wear out the guilt of any sin, particularly of murder. Concerning Shimei, Hold him not guiltless; do not think him any true friend to thee, or thy government, or fit to be trusted; he has no less malice now than he had then. David's dying sentiments are recorded, as delivered under the influence of the Holy Ghost, <112> 2 Samuel 23:1-7. The Lord discovered to him the offices and the salvation of that glorious personage, the Messiah, whose coming he then foretold, and from whom he derived all his comforts and expectations. That passage gives a decided proof that David died under the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of faith and hope.

<112> **1 Kings 2:12**

Vs. 12-25: Solomon received Bathsheba with all the respect that was owing to a mother; but let none be asked for that which they ought not to

grant. It ill becomes a good man to prefer a bad request, or to appear in a bad cause. According to eastern customs it was plain that Adonijah sought to be king, by his asking for Abishag as his wife, and Solomon could not be safe while he lived. Ambitious, turbulent spirits commonly prepare death for themselves. Many a head has been lost by catching at a crown.

1 Kings 2:26

Vs. 26-34: Solomon's words to Abiathar, and his silence, imply that some recent conspiracies had been entered into. Those that show kindness to God's people shall have it remembered to their advantage. For this reason Solomon spares Abiathar's life, but dismisses him from his offices. In case of such sins as the blood of beasts would atone for, the altar was a refuge, but not in Joab's case. Solomon looks upward to God as the Author of peace, and forward to eternity as the perfection of it. The Lord of peace himself gives us that peace which is everlasting.

1 Kings 2:35

Vs. 35-46: The old malignity remains in the unconverted heart, and a watchful eye should be kept on those who, like Shimei, have manifested their enmity, but have given no evidence of repentance. No engagements or dangers will restrain worldly men; they go on, though they forfeit their lives and souls. Let us remember, God will not accommodate his judgment to us. His eye is over us; and let us strive to walk as in his presence. Let our every act, word, and thought, be governed by this great truth, that the hour is quickly coming when the smallest circumstances of our lives shall be brought to light, and our eternal state be fixed by a righteous and unerring God. Thus Solomon's throne was established in peace, as the type of the Redeemer's kingdom of peace and righteousness. And it is a comfort, in reference to the enmity of the church's enemies, that, how much soever they rage, it is a vain thing they imagine. Christ's throne is established, and they cannot shake it.

CHAPTER 3

Solomon's marriage. (1-4) His vision, His prayer for wisdom. (5-15) The judgment of Solomon. (16-28)

~~1KIN3~~ **1 Kings 3:1**

Vs. 1-4: He that loved the Lord, should, for his sake, have fixed his love upon one of the Lord's people. Solomon was a wise man, a rich man, a great man; yet the brightest praise of him, is that which is the character of all the saints, even the poorest, "He loved the Lord." Where God sows plentifully, he expects to reap accordingly; and those that truly love God and his worship, will not grudge the expenses of their religion. We must never think that wasted which is laid out in the service of God.

~~1KIN3~~ **1 Kings 3:5**

Vs. 5-15: Solomon's dream was not a common one. While his bodily powers were locked up in sleep, the powers of his soul were strengthened; he was enabled to receive the Divine vision, and to make a suitable choice. God, in like manner, puts us in the ready way to be happy, by assuring us we shall have what we need, and pray for. Solomon's making such a choice when asleep, and the powers of reason least active, showed it came from the grace of God. Having a humble sense of his own wants and weakness, he pleads, Lord, I am but a little child. The more wise and considerate men are, the better acquainted they are with their own weakness, and the more jealous of themselves. Solomon begs of God to give him wisdom. We must pray for it, ~~SOME~~ James 1:5, that it may help us in our particular calling, and the various occasions we have. Those are accepted of God, who prefer spiritual blessings to earthly good. It was a prevailing prayer, and prevailed for more than he asked. God gave him wisdom, such as no other prince was ever blessed with; and also gave him riches and honor. If we make sure of wisdom and grace, these will bring outward prosperity with them, or sweeten the want of it. The way to get spiritual blessings, is to wrestle with God in prayer for them. The way to get earthly blessings, is to refer ourselves to God concerning them. Solomon has wisdom given him, because he did ask it, and wealth, because he did not.

1 Kings 3:16

Vs. 16-28: An instance of Solomon's wisdom is given. Notice the difficulty of the case. To find out the true mother, he could not try which the child loved best, and therefore tried which loved the child best: the mother's sincerity will be tried, when the child is in danger. Let parents show their love to their children, especially by taking care of their souls, and snatching them as brands out of the burning. By this and other instances of the wisdom with which God endued him, Solomon had great reputation among his people. This was better to him than weapons of war; for this he was both feared and loved.

CHAPTER 4

*Solomon's court. (1-19) Solomon's dominions, His daily provision.
(20-28) The wisdom of Solomon. (29-34)*

1 Kings 4:1

Vs. 1-19: In the choice of the great officers of Solomon's court, no doubt, his wisdom appeared. Several are the same that were in his father's time. A plan was settled by which no part of the country was exhausted to supply his court, though each sent its portion.

1 Kings 4:20

Vs. 20-28: Never did the crown of Israel shine so bright, as when Solomon wore it. He had peace on all sides. Herein, his kingdom was a type of the Messiah's; for to Him it is promised that he shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and that princes shall worship him. The spiritual peace, and joy, and holy security, of all the faithful subjects of the Lord Jesus, were typified by that of Israel. The kingdom of God is not, as Solomon's was, meat and drink, but, what is infinitely better, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The vast number of his attendants, and the great resort to him, are shown by the provision daily made. Herein Christ far outdoes Solomon, that he feeds all his subjects, not with the bread that perishes, but with that which endures to eternal life.

1 Kings 4:29

Vs. 29-34: Solomon's wisdom was more his glory than his wealth. He had what is here called largeness of heart, for the heart is often put for the powers of the mind. He had the gift of utterance, as well as wisdom. It is very desirable, that those who have large gifts of any kind, should have large hearts to use them for the good of others. What treasures of wisdom and knowledge are lost! But every sort of knowledge that is needful for salvation is to be found in the holy Scriptures. There came persons from all parts, who were more eager after knowledge than their neighbors, to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Solomon was herein a type of Christ, in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and hid for us, for he

is made of God to us, wisdom. Christ's fame shall spread through all the earth, and men of all nations shall come to him, learn of him, and take upon them his easy yoke, and find rest for their souls.

CHAPTER 5

Solomon's agreement with Hiram. (1-9) Solomon's workmen for the temple. (10-18)

<118> 1 Kings 5:1

Vs. 1-9: Here is Solomon's design to build a temple. There is no adversary, no Satan, so the word is; no instrument of Satan to oppose it, or to divert from it. Satan does all he can, to hinder temple work. When there is no evil abroad, then let us be ready and active in that which is good, and get forward. Let God's promises quicken our endeavors. And all outward skill and advantages should be made serviceable to the interests of Christ's kingdom. It Tyre supplies Israel with craftsmen, Israel will supply Tyre with corn, ^{<327>}Ezekiel 27:17. Thus, by the wise disposal of Providence, one country has need of another, and is benefited by another, that there may be dependence on one another, to the glory of God.

<119> 1 Kings 5:10

Vs. 10-18: The temple was chiefly built by the riches and labor of Gentiles, which typified their being called into the church. Solomon commanded, and they brought costly stones for the foundation. Christ, who is laid for a Foundation, is a chosen and precious Stone. We should lay our foundation firm, and bestow most pains on that part of our religion which lies out of the sight of men. And happy those who, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Who among us will build in the house of the Lord?

CHAPTER 6

The building of Solomon's temple. (1-10) Promise given concerning the temple. (11-14) Particulars respecting the temple. (15-38)

1 Kings 6:1

Vs. 1-10: The temple is called the house of the Lord, because it was directed and modeled by him, and was to be employed in his service. This gave it the beauty of holiness, that it was the house of the Lord, which was far beyond all other beauties. It was to be the temple of the God of peace, therefore no iron tool must be heard; quietness and silence suit and help religious exercises. God's work should be done with much care and little noise. Clamor and violence often hinder, but never further the work of God. Thus the kingdom of God in the heart of man grows up in silence, <1157>Mark 5:27.

1 Kings 6:11

Vs. 11-14: None employ themselves for God, without having his eye upon them. But God plainly let Solomon know that all the charge for building this temple, would neither excuse from obedience to the law of God, nor shelter from his judgments, in case of disobedience.

1 Kings 6:15

Vs. 15-38: See what was typified by this temple.

- 1.** Christ is the true Temple. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; in him meet all God's spiritual Israel; through him we have access with confidence to God.
- 2.** Every believer is a living temple, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, <1186>1 Corinthians 3:16. This living temple is built upon Christ as its Foundation, and will be perfect in due time.
- 3.** The gospel church is the mystical temple. It grows to a holy temple in the Lord, enriched and beautified with the gifts and graces of the Spirit. This temple is built firm, upon a Rock.

4. Heaven is the everlasting temple. There the church will be fixed. All that shall be stones in that building, must, in the present state of preparation, be fitted and made ready for it. Let sinners come to Jesus as the living Foundation, that they may be built on him, a part of this spiritual house, consecrated in body and soul to the glory of God.

CHAPTER 7

*Solomon's buildings. (1-12) Furniture of the temple. (13-47)
Vessels of gold. (48-51)*

1 Kings 7:1

Vs. 1-12: All Solomon's buildings, though beautiful, were intended for use. Solomon began with the temple; he built for God first, and then his other buildings. The surest foundations of lasting prosperity are laid in early piety. He was thirteen years building his house, yet he built the temple in little more than seven years; not that he was more exact, but less eager in building his own house, than in building God's. We ought to prefer God's honor before our own ease and satisfaction.

1 Kings 7:13

Vs. 13-47: The two brazen pillars in the porch of the temple, some think, were to teach those that came to worship, to depend upon God only, for strength and establishment in all their religious exercises. "Jachin," God will fix this roving mind. It is good that the heart be established with grace. "Boaz," In him is our strength, who works in us both to will and to do. Spiritual strength and stability are found at the door of God's temple, where we must wait for the gifts of grace, in use of the means of grace. Spiritual priests and spiritual sacrifices must be washed in the laver of Christ's blood, and of regeneration. We must wash often, for we daily contract pollution. There are full means provided for our cleansing; so that if we have our lot for ever among the unequalled it will be our own fault. Let us bless God for the fountain opened by the sacrifice of Christ for sin and for unequalled.

1 Kings 7:48

Vs. 48-51: Christ is now the Temple and the Builder; the Altar and the Sacrifice; the Light of our souls, and the Bread of life; able to supply all the wants of all that have applied or shall apply to him. Outward images cannot represent, words cannot express, the heart cannot conceive, his preciousness or his love. Let us come to him, and wash away our sins in

his blood; let us seek for the purifying grace of his Spirit; let us maintain communion with the Father through his intercession, and yield up ourselves and all we have to his service. Being strengthened by him, we shall be accepted, useful, and happy.

CHAPTER 8

The dedication of the temple. (1-11) The occasion. (12-21)
Solomon's prayer. (22-53) His blessing and exhortation. (54-61)
Solomon's peace-offerings. (62-66)

1 Kings 8:1

Vs. 1-11: The bringing in the ark, is the end which must crown the work: this was done with great solemnity. The ark was fixed in the place appointed for its rest in the inner part of the house, whence they expected God to speak to them, even in the most holy place. The staves of the ark were drawn out, so as to direct the high priest to the mercy-seat over the ark, when he went in, once a year, to sprinkle the blood there; so that they continued of use, though there was no longer occasion to carry it by them. The glory of God appearing in a cloud may signify,

1. The darkness of that dispensation, in comparison with the light of the gospel, by which, with open face, we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.
2. The darkness of our present state, in comparison with the sight of God, which will be the happiness of heaven, where the Divine glory is unveiled.

1 Kings 8:12

Vs. 12-21: Solomon encouraged the priests, who were much astonished at the dark cloud. The dark dispensations of Providence should quicken us in fleeing for refuge to the hope of the gospel. Nothing can more reconcile us to them, than to consider what God has said, and to compare his word and works together. Whatever good we do, we must look on it as the performance of God's promise to us, not of our promises to him.

1 Kings 8:22

Vs. 22-53: In this excellencies prayer, Solomon does as we should do in every prayer; he gives glory to God. Fresh experiences of the truth of God's promises call for larger praises. He sues for grace and favor from

God. The experiences we have of God's performing his promises, should encourage us to depend upon them, and to plead them with him; and those who expect further mercies, must be thankful for former mercies. God's promises must be the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hopes and expectations in prayer. The sacrifices, the incense, and the whole service of the temple, were all typical of the Redeemer's offices, oblation, and intercession. The temple, therefore, was continually to be remembered. Under one word, "forgive," Solomon expressed all that he could ask in behalf of his people. For, as all misery springs from sin, forgiveness of sin prepares the way for the removal of every evil, and the receiving of every good. Without it, no deliverance can prove a blessing. In addition to the teaching of the word of God, Solomon entreated the Lord himself to teach the people to profit by all, even by their chastisements. They shall know every man the plague of his own heart, what it is that pains him; and shall spread their hands in prayer toward this house; whether the trouble be of body or mind, they shall represent it before God. Inward burdens seem especially meant. Sin is the plague of our own hearts; our in-dwelling corruptions are our spiritual diseases: every true Israelite endeavors to know these, that he may mortify them, and watch against the risings of them. These drive him to his knees; lamenting these, he spreads forth his hands in prayer. After many particulars, Solomon concludes with the general request, that God would hearken to his praying people. No place, now, under the gospel, can add to the prayers made in or towards it. The substance is Christ; whatever we ask in his name, it shall be given us. In this manner the Israel of God is established and sanctified, the backslider is recovered and healed. In this manner the stranger is brought nigh, the mourner is comforted, the name of God is glorified. Sin is the cause of all our troubles; repentance and forgiveness lead to all human happiness.

1 Kings 8:54

Vs. 54-61: Never was a congregation dismissed with what was more likely to affect them, and to abide with them. What Solomon asks for in this prayer, is still granted in the intercession of Christ, of which his supplication was a type. We shall receive grace sufficient, suitable, and seasonable, in every time of need. No human heart is of itself willing to obey the gospel call to repentance, faith, and newness of life, walking in all the commandments of the Lord, yet Solomon exhorts the people to be

perfect. This is the scriptural method, it is our duty to obey the command of the law and the call of the gospel, seeing we have broken the law. When our hearts are unequalled thereto, feeling our sinfulness and weakness, we pray for Divine assistance; thus are we made able to serve God through Jesus Christ.

1 Kings 8:62

Vs. 62-66: Solomon offered a great sacrifice. He kept the feast of tabernacles, as it seems, after the feast of dedication. Thus should we go home, rejoicing, from holy ordinances, thankful for God's Goodness

CHAPTER 9

God's answer to Solomon. (1-9) The presents of Solomon and Hiram. (10-14) Solomon's buildings, His trade. (15-28)

1 Kings 9:1

Vs. 1-9: God warned Solomon, now he had newly built and dedicated the temple, that he and his people might not be high-minded, but fear. After all the services we can perform, we stand upon the same terms with the Lord as before. Nothing can purchase for us liberty to sin, nor would the true believer desire such a license. He would rather be chastened of the Lord, than be allowed to go on with ease and prosperity in sin.

1 Kings 9:10

Vs. 10-14: Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities. Hiram did not like them. If Solomon would gratify him, let it be in his own element, by becoming his partner in trade, as he did. See how the providence of God suits this earth to the various tempers of men, and the dispositions of men to the earth, and all for the good of mankind in general.

1 Kings 9:15

Vs. 15-28: Here is a further account of Solomon's greatness. He began at the right end, for he built God's house first, and finished that before he began his own; then God blessed him, and he prospered in all his other buildings. Let piety begin, and profit follow; leave pleasure to the last. Whatever pains we take for the glory of God, and to profit others, we are likely to have the advantage. Canaan, the holy land, the glory of all lands, had no gold in it; which shows that the best produce is that which is for the present support of life, our own and others; such things did Canaan produce. Solomon got much by his merchandise, and yet has directed us to a better trade, within reach of the poorest. Wisdom is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold, ³¹⁸⁴Proverbs 3:14.

CHAPTER 10

The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon. (1-13) Solomon's wealth. (14-29)

1 Kings 10:1

Vs. 1-13: The queen of Sheba came to Solomon to hear his wisdom, thereby to improve her own. Our Savior mentions her inquiries after God, by Solomon, as showing the stupidity of those who inquire not after God, by our Lord Jesus Christ. By waiting and prayer, by diligently searching the Scriptures, by consulting wise and experienced Christians, and by practicing what we have learned, we shall be delivered from difficulties. Solomon's wisdom made more impression upon the queen of Sheba than all his prosperity and grandeur. There is a spiritual excellencies in heavenly things, and in consistent Christians, to which no reports can do justice. Here the truth exceeded; and all who, through grace, are brought to commune with God, will say the one half was not told them of the pleasures and the advantages of wisdom's ways. Glorified saints, much more, will say of heaven, that the thousandth part was not told them, **1** Corinthians 2:9. She pronounced them happy that constantly attended Solomon. With much more reason may we say of Christ's servants, Blessed are they that dwell in his house; they will be still praising him. She made a noble present to Solomon. What we present to Christ, he needs not, but will have us do so to express our gratitude. The believer who has been with Jesus, will return to his station, discharge his duties with readiness, and from better motives; looking forward to the day when, being absent from the body, he shall be present with the Lord.

1 Kings 10:14

Vs. 14-29: Solomon increased his wealth. Silver was nothing accounted of. Such is the nature of worldly wealth, plenty of it makes it the less valuable; much more should the enjoyment of spiritual riches lessen our esteem of all earthly possessions. If gold in abundance makes silver to be despised, shall not wisdom, and grace, and the foretastes of heaven, which are far better than gold, make gold to be lightly esteemed? See in Solomon's greatness the performance of God's promise, and let it encourage us to

seek first the righteousness of God's kingdom. This was he, who, having tasted all earthly enjoyments, wrote a book, to show the vanity of all worldly things, the vexation of spirit that attends them, and the folly of setting our hearts upon them: and to recommend serious godliness, as that which will do unspeakably more to make us happy, than all the wealth and power he was master of; and, through the grace of God, it is within our reach.

CHAPTER 11

Solomon's wives and concubines, His idolatry. (1-8) God's anger. (9-13) Solomon's adversaries. (14-25) Jeroboam's promotion. (26-40) The death of Solomon. (41-43)

1 Kings 11:1

Vs. 1-8: There is not a more melancholy and astonishing instance of human depravity in the sacred Scriptures, than that here recorded. Solomon became a public worshipper of abominable idols! Probably he by degrees gave way to pride and luxury, and thus lost his relish for true wisdom. Nothing forms in itself a security against the deceitfulness and depravity of the human heart. Nor will old age cure the heart of any evil propensity. If our sinful passions are not crucified and mortified by the grace of God, they never will die of themselves, but will last even when opportunities to gratify them are taken away. Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. We see how weak we are of ourselves, without the grace of God; let us therefore live in constant dependence on that grace. Let us watch and be sober: ours is a dangerous warfare, and in an enemy's country, while our worst foes are the traitors in our own hearts.

1 Kings 11:9

Vs. 9-13: The Lord told Solomon, it is likely by a prophet, what he must expect for his apostasy. Though we have reason to hope that he repented, and found mercy, yet the Holy Ghost did not expressly record it, but left it doubtful, as a warning to others not to sin. The guilt may be taken away, but not the reproach; that will remain. Thus it must remain uncertain to us till the day of judgment, whether or not Solomon was left to suffer the everlasting displeasure of an offended God.

1 Kings 11:14

Vs. 14-25: While Solomon kept close to God and to his duty, there was no enemy to give him uneasiness; but here we have an account of two. If against us, he can make us fear even the least, and the very grasshopper

shall be a burden. Though they were moved by principles of ambition or revenge, God used them to correct Solomon.

1 Kings 11:26

Vs. 26-40: In telling the reason why God rent the kingdom from the house of Solomon, Ahijah warned Jeroboam to take heed of sinning away his preferment. Yet the house of David must be supported; out of it the Messiah would arise. Solomon sought to kill his successor. Had not he taught others, that whatever devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand? Yet he himself thinks to defeat that counsel. Jeroboam withdrew into Egypt, and was content to live in exile and obscurity for awhile, being sure of a kingdom at last. Shall not we be content, who have a better kingdom in reserve?

1 Kings 11:41

Vs. 41-43: Solomon's reign was as long as his father's, but his life was not so. Sin shortened his days. If the world, with all its advantages, could satisfy the soul, and afford real joy, Solomon would have found it so. But he was disappointed in all, and to warn us, has left this record of all earthly enjoyments, "Vanity and vexation of spirit." The New Testament declares that one greater than Solomon is come to reign over us, and to possess the throne of his father David. May we not see something of Christ's excellencies faintly represented to us in this figure?

CHAPTER 12

*Rehoboam's accession, The people's petition, His rough answer.
(1-15) Ten tribes revolt. (16-24) Jeroboam's idolatry. (25-33)*

1 Kings 12:1

Vs. 1-15: The tribes complained not to Rehoboam of his father's idolatry, and revolt from God. That which was the greatest grievance, was none to them; so careless were they in matters of religion, if they might live at ease, and pay no taxes. Factious spirits will never want something to complain of. And when we see the Scripture account of Solomon's reign; the peace, wealth, and prosperity Israel then enjoyed; we cannot doubt but that their charges were false, or far beyond the truth. Rehoboam answered the people according to the counsel of the young men. Never was man more blinded by pride, and desire of arbitrary power, than which nothing is more fatal. God's counsels were hereby fulfilled. He left Rehoboam to his own folly, and hid from his eyes the things which belonged to his peace, that the kingdom might be rent from him. God serves his own wise and righteous purposes by the imprudences and sins of men. Those that lose the kingdom of heaven, throw it away, as Rehoboam, by willfulness and folly.

1 Kings 12:16

Vs. 16-24: The people speak unbecomingly of David. How soon are good men, and their good services to the public, forgotten! These considerations should reconcile us to our losses and troubles, that God is the Author of them, and our brethren the instruments: let us not meditate revenge. Rehoboam and his people hearkened to the word of the Lord. When we know God's mind, we must submit, how much soever it crosses our own mind. If we secure the favor of God, not all the universe can hurt us.

1 Kings 12:25

Vs. 25-33: Jeroboam distrusted the providence of God; he would contrive ways and means, and sinful ones too, for his own safety. A practical disbelief of God's all-sufficiency is at the bottom of all our departures

from him. Though it is probable he meant his worship for Jehovah the God of Israel, it was contrary to the Divine law, and dishonorable to the Divine majesty to be thus represented. The people might be less shocked at worshipping the God of Israel under an image, than if they had at once been asked to worship Baal; but it made way for that idolatry. Blessed Lord, give us grace to reverence thy temple, thine ordinances, thine house of prayer, thy Sabbaths, and never more, like Jeroboam, to set up in our hearts any idol of abomination. Be thou to us every thing precious; do thou reign and rule in our hearts, the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 13

*Jeroboam's sin reproved. (1-10) The prophet deceived. (11-22)
The disobedient prophet is slain, Jeroboam's obstinacy. (23-34)*

 1 Kings 13:1

Vs. 1-10: In threatening the altar, the prophet threatens the founder and worshippers. Idolatrous worship will not continue, but the word of the Lord will endure for ever. The prediction plainly declared that the family of David would continue, and support true religion, when the ten tribes would not be able to resist them. If God, in justice, harden the hearts of sinners, so that the hand they have stretched out in sin they cannot pull in again by repentance, that is a spiritual judgment, represented by this, and much more dreadful. Jeroboam looked for help, not from his calves, but from God only, from his power, and his favor. The time may come when those that hate the preaching, would be glad of the prayers of faithful ministers. Jeroboam does not desire the prophet to pray that his sin might be pardoned, and his heart changed, but only that his hand might be restored. He seemed affected for the present with both the judgment and the mercy, but the impression wore off. God forbade his messenger to eat or drink in Bethel, to show his detestation of their idolatry and apostasy from God, and to teach us not to have fellowship with the works of darkness. Those have not learned self-denial, who cannot forbear one forbidden meal.

 1 Kings 13:11

Vs. 11-22: The old prophet's conduct proves that he was not really a godly man. When the change took place under Jeroboam, he preferred his ease and interest to his religion. He took a very bad method to bring the good prophet back. It was all a lie. Believers are most in danger of being drawn from their duty by plausible pretenses of holiness. We may wonder that the wicked prophet went unpunished, while the holy man of God was suddenly and severely punished. What shall we make of this? The judgments of God are beyond our power to fathom; and there is a judgment to come. Nothing can excuse any act of willful disobedience. This shows what they must expect who hearken to the great deceiver. They

that yield to him as a tempter, will be terrified by him as a tormentor. Those whom he now fawns upon, he will afterwards fly upon; and whom he draws into sin, he will try to drive to despair.

1 Kings 13:23

Vs. 23-34: God is displeased at the sins of his own people; and no man shall be protected in disobedience, by his office, his nearness to God, or any services he has done for him. God warns all whom he employs, strictly to observe their orders. We cannot judge of men by their sufferings, nor of sins by present punishments; with some, the flesh is destroyed, that the spirit may be saved; with others, the flesh is pampered, that the soul may ripen for hell. Jeroboam returned not from his evil way. He promised himself that the calves would secure the crown to his family, but they lost it, and sunk his family. Those betray themselves who think to support themselves by any sin whatever. Let us dread prospering in sinful ways; pray to be kept from every delusion and temptation, and to be enabled to walk with self-denying perseverance in the way of God's commands.

CHAPTER 14

Abijah being sick, his mother consults Ahijah. (1-6) The destruction of Jeroboam's house. (7-20) Rehoboam's wicked reign. (21-31)

1 Kings 14:1

Vs. 1-6: “At that time,” when Jeroboam did evil, his child sickened. When sickness comes into our families, we should inquire whether there may not be some particular sin harbored in our houses, which the affliction is sent to convince us of, and reclaim us from. It had been more pious if he had desired to know wherefore God contended with him; had begged the prophet’s prayers, and cast away his idols from him; but most people would rather be told their fortune, than their faults or their duty. He sent to Ahijah, because he had told him he should be king. Those who by sin disqualify themselves for comfort, yet expect that their ministers, because they are good men, should speak peace and comfort to them, greatly wrong themselves and their ministers. He sent his wife in disguise, that the prophet might only answer her question concerning her son. Thus some people would limit their ministers to smooth things, and care not for having the whole counsel of God declared to them, lest it should prophesy no good concerning them, but evil. But she shall know, at the first word, what she has to trust to. Tidings of a portion with hypocrites will be heavy tidings. God will judge men according to what they are, not by what they seem to be.

1 Kings 14:7

Vs. 7-20: Whether we keep an account of God’s mercies to us or not, he does; and he will set them in order before us, if we are ungrateful, to our greater confusion. Ahijah foretells the speedy death of the child then sick, in mercy to him. He only in the house of Jeroboam had affection for the true worship of God, and disliked the worship of the calves. To show the power and sovereignty of his grace, God saves some out of the worst families, in whom there is some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. The righteous are removed from the evil to come in this world, to the good to come in a better world. It is often a bad sign for a family, when the best in it are buried out of it. Yet their death never can be a loss to themselves.

It was a present affliction to the family and kingdom, by which both ought to have been instructed. God also tells the judgments which should come upon the people of Israel, for conforming to the worship Jeroboam established. After they left the house of David, the government never continued long in one family, but one undermined and destroyed another. Families and kingdoms are ruined by sin. If great men do wickedly, they draw many others, both into the guilt and punishment. The condemnation of those will be savors, who must answer, not only for their own sins, but for sins others have been drawn into, and kept in, by them.

1 Kings 14:21

Vs. 21-31: Here is no good said of Rehoboam, and much said to the disadvantage of his subjects. The abounding of the worst crimes, of the worst of the heathen, in Jerusalem, the city the Lord had chosen for his temple and his worship, shows that nothing can mend the hearts of villainy men but the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. On this alone may we depend; for this let us daily pray, in behalf of ourselves and all around us. The splendor of their temple, the pomp of their priesthood, and all the advantages with which their religion was attended, could not prevail to keep them close to it; nothing less than the pouring out the Spirit will keep God's Israel in their allegiance to him. Sin exposes, makes poor, and weakens any people. Shishak, king of Egypt, came and took away the treasures. Sin makes the gold become dim, changes the most fine gold, and turns it into brass.

CHAPTER 15

Wicked reign of Abijam, king of Judah. (1-8) Good reign of Asa, king of Judah. (9-24) The evil reigns of Nadab and Baasha in Israel. (25-34)

1 Kings 15:1

Vs. 1-8: Abijam's heart was not perfect with the Lord his God; he wanted sincerity; he began well, but he fell off, and walked in all the sins of his father, following his bad example, though he had seen the bad consequences of it. David's family was continued as a lamp in Jerusalem, to maintain the true worship of God there, when the light of Divine truth was extinguished in all other places. The Lord has still taken care of his cause, while those who ought to have been serviceable thereto have lived and perished in their sins. The Son of David will still continue a light to his church, to establish it in truth and righteousness to the end of time. There are two kinds of fulfilling the law, one legal, the other by the gospel. Legal is, when men do all things required in the law, and that by themselves. None ever thus fulfilled the law but Christ, and Adam before his fall. The gospel manner of fulfilling the law is, to believe in Christ who fulfilled the law for us, and to endeavor in the whole man to obey God in all his precepts. And this is accepted of God, as to all those that are in Christ. Thus David and others are said to fulfill the law.

1 Kings 15:9

Vs. 9-24: Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. That is right indeed which is so in God's eyes. Asa's times were times of reformation. He removed that which was evil; there reformation begins, and a great deal he found to do. When Asa found idolatry in the court, he rooted it out thence. Reformation must begin at home. Asa honors and respects his mother; he loves her well, but he loves God better. Those that have power are happy when thus they have hearts to use it well. We must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not only cast away the idols of our iniquity, but dedicate ourselves and our all to God's honor and glory. Asa was cordially devoted to the service of God, his sins not arising from presumption. But his league with Benhadad arose from unbelief. Even true

believers find it hard, in times of urgent danger, to trust in the Lord with all their heart. Unbelief makes way for carnal policy, and thus for one sin after another. Unbelief has often led Christians to call in the help of the Lord's enemies in their contests with their brethren; and some who once shone brightly, have thus been covered with a dark cloud towards the end of their days.

1 Kings 15:25

Vs. 25-34: During the single reign of Asa in Judah, the government of Israel was in six or seven different hands. Observe the ruin of the family of Jeroboam; no word of God shall fall to the ground. Divine threatenings are not designed merely to terrify. Ungodly men execute the just judgments of God upon each other. But in the midst of dreadful sins and this apparent confusion, the Lord carries on his own plan: when it is fully completed, the glorious justice, wisdom, truth, and mercy therein displayed, shall be admired and adored through all the ages of eternity.

CHAPTER 16

The reigns of Baasha and Elah in Israel. (1-14) Reigns of Zimri and Omri in Israel. (15-28) Ahab's wickedness, Hiel rebuilds Jericho. (29-34)

1 Kings 16:1

Vs. 1-14: This chapter relates wholly to the kingdom of Israel, and the revolutions of that kingdom. God calls Israel his people still, though wretchedly corrupted. Jehu foretells the same destruction to come upon Baasha's family, which that king had been employed to bring upon the family of Jeroboam. Those who resemble others in their sins, may expect to resemble them in the plagues they suffer, especially those who seem zealous against such sins in others as they allow in themselves. Baasha himself dies in peace, and is buried with honor. Herein plainly appears that there are punishments after death, which are most to be dreaded. Let Elah be a warning to drunkards, who know not but death may surprise them. Death easily comes upon men when they are drunk. Besides the diseases which men bring themselves into by drinking, when in that state, men are easily overcome by an enemy, and liable to bad accidents. Death comes terribly upon men in such a state, finding them in the act of sin, and unfitted for any act of devotion; that day comes upon them unawares. The word of God was fulfilled, and the sins of Baasha and Elah were reckoned for, with which they provoked God. Their idols are called their vanities, for idols cannot profit nor help; miserable are those whose gods are vanities.

1 Kings 16:15

Vs. 15-28: When men forsake God, they will be left to plague one another. Proud aspiring men ruin one another. Omri struggled with Tibni some years. Though we do not always understand the rules by which God governs nations and individuals in his providence, we may learn useful lessons from the history before us. When tyrants succeed each other, and massacres, conspiracies, and civil wars, we may be sure the Lord has a controversy with the people for their sins; they are loudly called to repent and reform. Omri made himself infamous by his wickedness. Many wicked

men have been men of might and renown; have built cities, and their names are found in history; but they have no name in the book of life.

1 Kings 16:29

Vs. 29-34: Ahab did evil above all that reigned before him, and did it with a particular enmity both against Jehovah and Israel. He was not satisfied with breaking the second commandment by image-worship, he broke the first by worshipping other gods: making light of lesser sins makes way for greater. Marriages with daring offenders also embolden in wickedness, and hurry men on to the greatest excesses. One of Ahab's subjects, following the example of his presumption, ventured to build Jericho. Like Achan, he meddled with the accursed thing; turned that to his own use, which was devoted to God's honor: he began to build, in defiance of the curse well known in Israel; but none ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered. Let the reading of this chapter cause us to mark the dreadful end of all the workers of iniquity. And what does the history of all ungodly men furnish, what ever rank or situation they move in, but sad examples of the same?

CHAPTER 17

Elijah fed by ravens. (1-7) Elijah sent to Zarephath. (8-16) Elijah raises the widow's son to life. (17-24)

<117> **1 Kings 17:1**

Vs. 1-7: God wonderfully suits men to the work he designs them for. The times were fit for an Elijah; an Elijah was fit for them. The Spirit of the Lord knows how to fit men for the occasions. Elijah let Ahab know that God was displeased with the idolaters, and would chastise them by the want of rain, which it was not in the power of the gods they served to bestow. Elijah was commanded to hide himself. If Providence calls us to solitude and retirement, it becomes us to go: when we cannot be useful, we must be patient; and when we cannot work for God, we must sit still quietly for him. The ravens were appointed to bring him meat, and did so. Let those who have but from hand to mouth, learn to live upon Providence, and trust it for the bread of the day, in the day. God could have sent angels to minister to him; but he chose to show that he can serve his own purposes by the meanest creatures, as effectually as by the mightiest. Elijah seems to have continued thus above a year. The natural supply of water, which came by common providence, failed; but the miraculous supply of food, made sure to him by promise, failed not. If the heavens fail, the earth fails of course; such are all our creature-comforts: we lose them when we most need them, like brooks in summer. But there is a river which makes glad the city of God, that never runs dry, a well of water that springs up to eternal life. Lord, give us that living water!

<117> **1 Kings 17:8**

Vs. 8-16: Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, and some, it is likely, would have bidden him welcome to their houses; yet he is sent to honor and bless with his presence a city of Sidon, a Gentile city, and so becomes the first prophet of the Gentiles. Jezebel was Elijah's greatest enemy; yet, to show her how powerless was her malice, God will find a hiding-place for him even in her own country. The person appointed to entertain Elijah is not one of the rich or great men of Sidon; but a poor widow woman, in want, and desolate, is made both able and willing to

sustain him. It is God's way, and it is his glory, to make use of, and put honor upon, the weak and foolish things of the world. O woman, great was thy faith; one has not found the like, no not in Israel. She took the prophet's word, that she should not lose by it. Those who can venture upon the promise of God, will make no difficulty to expose and empty themselves in his service, by giving him his part first. Surely the increase of this widow's faith, so as to enable her thus readily to deny herself, and to depend upon the Divine promise, was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as the increase of her meal and oil in the kingdom of providence. Happy are all who can thus, against hope, believe and obey in hope. One poor meal's meat this poor widow gave the prophet; in recompense of it, she and her son did eat above two years, in a time of famine. To have food from God's special favor, and in such good company as Elijah, made it more than doubly sweet. It is promised to those who trust in God, that they shall not be ashamed in evil time; in days of famine they shall be satisfied.

 **1 Kings 17:17**

Vs. 17-24: Neither faith nor obedience shut out afflictions and death. The child being dead, the mother spake to the prophet, rather to give vent to her sorrow, than in hope of relief. When God removes our comforts from us, he remembers our sins against us, perhaps the sins of our youth, though long since past. When God remembers our sins against us, he designs to teach us to remember them against ourselves, and to repent of them. Elijah's prayer was doubtless directed by the Holy Spirit. The child revived. See the power of prayer, and the power of Him who hears prayer.

CHAPTER 18

Elijah sends Ahab notice of his coming. (1-16) Elijah meets Ahab. (17-20) Elijah's trial of the false prophets. (21-40) Elijah, by prayer, obtains rain. (41-46)

1 Kings 18:1

Vs. 1-16: The savors judgments, of themselves, will not humble or change the hearts of sinners; nothing, except the blood of Jesus Christ, can atone for the guilt of sin; nothing, except the sanctifying Spirit of God, can purge away its pollution. The priests and the Levites were gone to Judah and Jerusalem, ^{<H112>}2 Chronicles 11:13,14, but instead of them God raised up prophets, who read and expounded the word. They probably were from the schools of the prophets, first set up by Samuel. They had not the spirit of prophecy as Elijah, but taught the people to keep close to the God of Israel. These Jezebel sought to destroy. The few that escaped death were forced to hide themselves. God has his remnant among all sorts, high and low; and that faith, fear, and love of his name, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, will be accepted through the Redeemer. See how wonderfully God raises up friends for his ministers and people, for their shelter in difficult times. Bread and water were now scarce, yet Obadiah will find enough for God's prophets, to keep them alive. Ahab's care was not to lose all the beasts; but he took no care about his soul, not to lose that. He took pains to seek grass, but none to seek the favor of God; fencing against the effect, but not inquiring how to remove the cause. But it bodes well with a people, when God calls his ministers to stand forth, and show themselves. And we may the better endure the bread of affliction, while our eyes see our teachers.

1 Kings 18:17

Vs. 17-20: One may guess how people stand affected to God, by observing how they stand affected to his people and ministers. It has been the lot of the best and most useful men, like Elijah, to be called and counted the troublers of the land. But those who cause God's judgments do the mischief, not he that foretells them, and warns the nation to repent.

1 Kings 18:21

Vs. 21-40: Many of the people wavered in their judgment, and varied in their practice. Elijah called upon them to determine whether Jehovah or Baal was the self-existent, supreme God, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of the world, and to follow him alone. It is dangerous to halt between the service of God and the service of sin, the dominion of Christ and the dominion of our lusts. If Jesus be the only Savior, let us cleave to him alone for every thing; if the Bible be the word of God, let us reverence and receive the whole of it, and submit our understanding to the Divine teaching it contains. Elijah proposed to bring the matter to a trial. Baal had all the outward advantages, but the event encourages all God's witnesses and advocates never to fear the face of man. The God that answers by fire, let him be God: the atonement was to be made by sacrifice, before the judgment could be removed in mercy. The God therefore that has power to pardon sin, and to signify it by consuming the sin-offering, must needs be the God that can relieve from the calamity. God never required his worshippers to honor him in the manner of the worshippers of Baal; but the service of the devil, though sometimes it pleases and pampers the body, yet, in other things, really is cruel to it, as in envy and drunkenness. God requires that we mortify our lusts and corruptions; but bodily penances and severities are no pleasure to him. Who has required these things at your hands? A few words uttered in assured faith, and with fervent affection for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, or thirstings after the Lord's image and his favor, form the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, which availeth much. Elijah sought not his own glory, but that of God, for the good of the people. The people are all agreed, convinced, and satisfied; Jehovah, he is the God. Some, we hope, had their hearts turned, but most of them were convinced only, not converted. Blessed are they that have not seen what these saw, yet have believed, and have been wrought upon by it, more than they that saw it.

1 Kings 18:41

Vs. 41-46: Israel, being so far reformed as to acknowledge the Lord to be God, and to consent to the execution of Baal's prophets, was so far accepted, that God poured out blessing upon the land. Elijah long continued praying. Though the answer of our fervent and believing

supplications does not come quickly, we must continue earnest in prayer, and not faint or give over. A little cloud at length appeared, which soon overspread the heavens, and watered the earth. Great blessings often arise from small beginnings, showers of plenty from a cloud of a span long. Let us never despise the day of small things, but hope and wait for great things from it. From what small beginnings have great matters arisen! It is thus in all the gracious proceedings of God with the soul. Scarcely to be perceived are the first workings of his Spirit in the heart, which grow up at last to the wonder of men, and applause of angels. Elijah hastened Ahab home, and attended him. God will strengthen his people for every service to which his commandments and providence call them. The awful displays of Divine justice and holiness dismay the sinner, extort confessions, and dispose to outward obedience while the impression lasts; but the view of these, with mercy, love, and truth in Christ Jesus, is needful to draw the soul to self-abasement, trust, and love. The Holy Spirit employs both in the conversion of sinners; when sinners are impressed with Divine truths, they should be exhorted to set about the duties to which the Savior calls his disciples.

CHAPTER 19

Elijah flees to the wilderness. (1-8) God manifests himself to Elijah. (9-13) God's answer to Elijah. (14-18) The call of Elisha. (19-21)

1 Kings 19:1

Vs. 1-8: Jezebel sent Elijah a threatening message. Carnal hearts are hardened and enraged against God, by that which should convince and conquer them. Great faith is not always alike strong. He might be serviceable to Israel at this time, and had all reason to depend upon God's protection, while doing God's work; yet he flees. His was not the deliberate desire of grace, as Paul's, to depart and be with Christ. God thus left Elijah to himself, to show that when he was bold and strong, it was in the Lord, and the power of his might; but of himself he was no better than his fathers. God knows what he designs us for, though we do not, what services, what trials, and he will take care that we are furnished with grace sufficient.

1 Kings 19:9

Vs. 9-13: The question God put, What doest thou here, Elijah? is a reproof. It concerns us often to ask whether we are in our place, and in the way of our duty. Am I where I should be? whither God calls me, where my business lies, and where I may be useful? He complained of the people, and their obstinacy in sin; I only am left. Despair of success hinders many a good enterprise. Did Elijah come hither to meet with God? he shall find that God will meet him. The wind, and earthquake, and fire, did not make him cover his face, but the still voice did. Gracious souls are more affected by the tender mercies of the Lord, than by his terrors. The mild voice of Him who speaks from the cross, or the mercy-seat, is accompanied with peculiar power in taking possession of the heart.

1 Kings 19:14

Vs. 14-18: God repeated the question, What doest thou here? Then he complained of his discouragement; and whither should God's prophets go with their complaints of that kind, but to their Master? The Lord gave him

an answer. He declares that the wicked house of Ahab shall be rooted out, that the people of Israel shall be punished for their sins; and he shows that Elijah was not left alone as he had supposed, and also that a helper should at once be raised up for him. Thus all his complaints are answered and provided for. God's faithful ones are often his hidden ones, Psalms 83:3, and the visible church is scarcely to be seen: the wheat is lost in chaff, and the gold in dross, till the sifting, refining, separating day comes. The Lord knows them that are his, though we do not; he sees in secret. When we come to heaven we shall miss many whom we thought to have met there; we shall meet many whom we little thought to have met there. God's love often proves larger than man's charity, and far more extended.

1 Kings 19:19

Vs. 19-21: Elijah found Elisha by Divine direction, not in the schools of the prophets, but in the field; not reading, or praying, or sacrificing, but plowing. Idleness is no man's honor, nor is husbandry any man's disgrace. An honest calling in the world, does not put us out of the way of our heavenly calling, any more than it did Elisha. His heart was touched by the Holy Spirit, and he was ready to leave all to attend Elijah. It is in a day of power that Christ's subjects are made willing; nor would any come to Christ unless they were thus drawn. It was a discouraging time for prophets to set out in. A man that had consulted with flesh and blood, would not be fond of Elijah's mantle; yet Elisha cheerfully leaves all to accompany him. When the Savior said to one and to another, Follow me, the dearest friends and most profitable occupations were cheerfully left, and the most arduous duties done from love to his name. May we, in like manner, feel the energy of his grace working in us mightily, and by unreserved submission at once, may we make our calling and election sure.

CHAPTER 20

*Benhadad besieges Samaria. (1-11) Benhadad's defeat. (12-21)
The Syrians again defeated. (22-30) Ahab makes peace with
Benhadad. (31-43)*

1 Kings 20:1

Vs. 1-11: Benhadad sent Ahab a very insolent demand. Ahab sent a very disgraceful submission; sin brings men into such straits, by putting them out of the Divine protection. If God do not rule us, our enemies shall: guilt dispirits men, and makes them cowards. Ahab became desperate. Men will part with their most pleasant things, those they most love, to save their lives; yet they lose their souls rather than part with any pleasure or interest to prevent it. Here is one of the wisest sayings that ever Ahab spake, and it is a good lesson to all. It is folly to boast of any day to come, since we know not what it may bring forth. Apply it to our spiritual conflicts. Peter fell by self-confidence. Happy is the man who is never off his watch.

1 Kings 20:12

Vs. 12-21: The proud Syrians were beaten, and the despised Israelites were conquerors. The orders of the proud, drunken king disordered his troops, and prevented them from attacking the Israelites. Those that are most secure, are commonly least courageous. Ahab slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. God often makes one wicked man a scourge to another.

1 Kings 20:22

Vs. 22-30: Those about Benhadad advised him to change his ground. They take it for granted that it was not Israel, but Israel's gods, that beat them; but they speak very ignorantly of Jehovah. They supposed that Israel had many gods, to whom they ascribed limited power within a certain district; thus vain were the Gentiles in their imaginations concerning God. The greatest wisdom in worldly concerns is often united with the most contemptible folly in the things of God.

1 Kings 20:31

Vs. 31-43: This encouragement sinners have to repent and humble themselves before God; Have we not heard, that the God of Israel is a merciful God? Have we not found him so? That is gospel repentance, which flows from an apprehension of the mercy of God, in Christ; there is forgiveness with him. What a change is here! The most haughty in prosperity often are most abject in adversity; an evil spirit will thus affect a man in both these conditions. There are those on whom, like Ahab, success is ill bestowed; they know not how to serve either God or their generation, or even their own true interests with their prosperity: Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness. The prophet designed to reprove Ahab by a parable. If a good prophet were punished for sparing his friend and God's, when God said, Smite, of much sorer punishment should a wicked king be thought worthy, who spared his enemy and God's, when God said, Smite. Ahab went to his house, heavy and displeased, not truly penitent, or seeking to undo what he had done amiss; every way out of humor, notwithstanding his victory. Alas! many that hear the glad tidings of Christ, are busy and there till the day of salvation is gone.

CHAPTER 21

Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard. (1-4) Naboth murdered by Jezebel. (5-16) Elijah denounces judgments against Ahab. (17-29)

1 Kings 21:1

Vs. 1-4: Naboth, perhaps, had been pleased that he had a vineyard situated so near the palace, but the situation proved fatal to him; many a man's possessions have been his snare, and his neighborhood to greatness, of bad consequence. Discontent is a sin that is its own punishment, and makes men torment themselves. It is a sin that is its own parent; it arises not from the condition, but from the mind: as we find Paul contented in a prison, so Ahab was discontented in a palace. He had all the delights of Canaan, that pleasant land, at command; the wealth of a kingdom, the pleasures of a court, and the honors and powers of a throne; yet all avails him nothing without Naboth's vineyard. Wrong desires expose men to continual vexations, and those that are disposed to fret, however well off, may always find something or other to fret at.

1 Kings 21:5

Vs. 5-16: When, instead of a help meet, a man has an agent for Satan, in the form of an artful, unprincipled, yet beloved wife, fatal effects may be expected. Never were more wicked orders given by any prince, than those Jezebel sent to the rulers of Jezreel. Naboth must be murdered under color of religion. There is no wickedness so vile, so horrid, but religion has sometimes been made a cover for it. Also, it must be done under color of justice, and with the formalities of legal process. Let us, from this sad story, be amazed at the wickedness of the wicked, and the power of Satan in the children of disobedience. Let us commit the keeping of our lives and comforts to God, for innocence will not always be our security; and let us rejoice in the knowledge that all will be set to rights in the great day.

1 Kings 21:17

Vs. 17-29: Blessed Paul complains that he was sold under sin, ^{<1274>}Romans 7:14, as a poor captive against his will; but Ahab was willing, he sold

himself to sin; of choice, and as his own act and deed, he loved the dominion of sin. Jezebel his wife stirred him up to do wickedly. Ahab is reprov'd, and his sin set before his eyes, by Elijah. That man's condition is very miserable, who has made the word of God his enemy; and very desperate, who reckons the ministers of that word his enemies, because they tell him the truth. Ahab put on the garb and guise of a penitent, yet his heart was unhumbled and unchanged. Ahab's repentance was only what might be seen of men; it was outward only. Let this encourage all that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the holy gospel, that if a pretending partial penitent shall go to his house reprov'd, doubtless, a sincere believing penitent shall go to his house justified.

CHAPTER 22

Jehoshaphat makes a league with Ahab. (1-14) Micaiah predicts the death of Ahab. (15-28) Death of Ahab. (29-40) Jehoshaphat's good reign over Judah. (41-50) Ahaziah's evil reign over Israel. (51-53)

1 Kings 22:1

Vs. 1-14: The same easiness of temper, which betrays some godly persons into friendship with the declared enemies of religion, renders it very dangerous to them. They will be drawn to wink at and countenance such conduct and conversation as they ought to protest against with abhorrence. Whithersoever a good man goes, he ought to take his religion with him, and not be ashamed to own it when he is with those who have no regard for it. Jehoshaphat had not left behind him, at Jerusalem, his affection and reverence for the word of the Lord, but avowed it, and endeavored to bring it into Ahab's court. And Ahab's prophets, to please Jehoshaphat, made use of the name of Jehovah: to please Ahab, they said, Go up. But the false prophets cannot so mimic the true, but that he who has spiritual senses exercised, can discern the fallacy. One faithful prophet of the Lord was worth them all. Worldly men have in all ages been alike absurd in their views of religion. They would have the preacher fit his doctrine to the fashion of the times, and the taste of the hearers, and yet to add. Thus saith the Lord, to words that men would put into their mouths. They are ready to cry out against a man as rude and foolish, who scruples thus to try to secure his own interests, and to deceive others.

1 Kings 22:15

Vs. 15-28: The greatest kindness we can do to one that is going in a dangerous way, is, to tell him of his danger. To leave the hardened criminal without excuse, and to give a useful lesson to others, Micaiah related his vision. This matter is represented after the manner of men: we are not to imagine that God is ever put upon new counsels; or that he needs to consult with angels, or any creature, about the methods he should take; or that he is the author of sin, or the cause of any man's telling or believing a lie. Micaiah returned not the blow of Zedekiah, yet, since he boasted of the Spirit, as those commonly do that know least of the Holy Spirit's

operations, the true prophet left him to be convinced of his error by the event. Those that will not have their mistakes set right in time, by the word of God, will be undeceived, when it is too late, by the judgments of God. We should be ashamed of what we call trials, were we to consider what the servants of God have endured. Yet it will be well, if freedom from trouble prove not more hurtful to us; we are more easily allured and bribed into unfaithfulness and conformity to the world, than driven to them.

1 Kings 22:29

Vs. 29-40: Ahab basely intended to betray Jehoshaphat to danger, that he might secure himself. See what they get that join with wicked men. How can it be expected that he should be true to his friend, who has been false to his God! He had said in compliment to Ahab, I am as thou art, and now he was indeed taken for him. Those that associate with evil-doers, are in danger of sharing in their plagues. By Jehoshaphat's deliverance, God let him know, that though he was displeased with him, yet he had not deserted him. God is a friend that will not fail us when other friends do. Let no man think to hide himself from God's judgment. God directed the arrow to hit Ahab; those cannot escape with life, whom God has doomed to death. Ahab lived long enough to see part of Micaiah's prophecy accomplished. He had time to feel himself die; with what horror must he have thought upon the wickedness he had committed!

1 Kings 22:41

Vs. 41-50: Jehoshaphat's reign appears to have been one of the best, both as to piety and prosperity. He pleased God, and God blessed him.

1 Kings 22:51

Vs. 51-53: Ahaziah's reign was very short, not two years; some sinners God makes quick work with. A very bad character is given of him; he listened not to instruction, took no warning, but followed the example of his wicked father, and the counsel of his more wicked mother, Jezebel, who was still living. Miserable are the children who not only derive a sinful nature from their parents, but are taught by them to increase it; and most unhappy parents are they, that help to damn their children's souls. Hardened sinners rush forward, unawed and unmoved, in the ways from which others before them have been driven into everlasting misery.