

1 KINGS - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of 1 Kings? Would He just be One among many? Who wrote this book? Did he copy from earlier sources? Were all the people involved "inspired"? Was there a great deal of "faith" exhibited during the times of 1 Kings?

"First and Second Kings were originally one book. The division into two books was first made in the Septuagint [LXX - 280-150 BC] and then in the Vulgate. Though unknown, the author of the books was probably a prophet who was deeply concerned because his people did not obey the voice of YAHWEH. This unknown author made use of various written records which were available at the time, and some of these he mentions by name: (1) the book of the Acts of Solomon (11:41); (2) the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah, cited fifteen times (14:29); (3) the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel, mentioned seventeen times (14:19). Under divine inspiration the author of 1 and 2 Kings made his choices from these sources, and composed this vital portion of the Old Testament.

"The grammar and style of the Hebrew and the content of the Books of Kings indicate that this work was completed during the Babylonian captivity, perhaps shortly after 560 B.C. (2 Kings 25:27-30). Certain words and phrases used by the writer were most common during the concluding period of the kingdom of Judah and shortly thereafter. The content of the books agrees with the evidence presented by this use of the Hebrew language. The history is treated in detail down to the captivity, and, by way of supplement, to the reign of Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon. The closing verse implies that the writer survived Jehoiachin, but there is no mention of the end of the captivity. If the writer had witnessed that event, he surely would have said something about it. That the final inspired author appears to have used earlier forms of the book or earlier sources is indicated by the expression "to this day" in 8:8 and 12:19.

"Kings records the history of the theocracy, from the last events in the life of David until the end of the theocracy in the Babylonian exile. There is no attempt, however, to give a full and complete history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in political terms. The major concerns are to show the progress of the theocratic government of the descendants of Abraham, to explain the reason for God's temporarily abandoning Israel, and to recall Israel to seek the Lord. Those facts are stressed which relate to the development of Israel's religious life (2:4; 11:11-13; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; 19:34). The Books of Kings show how God fulfilled His promise. But when both kings and people sinned grievously against Him, God brought upon them calamities which were just rewards for their unfaithfulness. However, even then God remembered His mercy to David in showing favor to Jehoiachin in the land of captivity. Because the purpose of the writer of Kings is to trace the history of God's people with reference to their adherence to or rejection of the covenant, the course of the northern kingdom (the ten tribes) is more fully detailed than that of Judah (the two tribes). The northern kingdom had separated from the theocracy and adopted semi-idolatrous worship, so that there was a greater need for the prophets to announce the divine laws. Much stress in the Books of Kings is placed upon the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha, who served as the links between the earlier period and the era of the writing prophets. The books reach a climax as the author makes it clear that the Exile was divine chastisement.

"There are three factors which make the dating of the Kings material extremely difficult: (1) the coregency system, particularly in the southern kingdom, whereby a son officially began his reign during the lifetime of his father, with both father and son receiving credit for the years of coregency; (2) the use of both the "accession-year" system (whereby the year in which a king came to the throne

was not counted as his first year) and the “nonaccession-year” system (whereby the remainder of the year in which a king was crowned was reckoned as his first year); and (3) the use of both the sacred-year (beginning with Nisan, the first month) and the civil-year (beginning with Tishri, the seventh month) methods of dating. Because of the complexity of the problems involved in the harmonization of the chronology of the Hebrew kings, many have concluded that the biblical dates are obviously contradictory and hopelessly beyond solution. Today, however, the chronological problems are basically solved, and the biblical dating has been demonstrated to be trustworthy and accurate.” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“First Kings is the first half of a single book that was divided into two parts, 1 and 2 Kings, because together they were too long to fit on one scroll. These books continue the history of Israel.” (CEV)

1 Kings tells us of the pinnacle of the history of the kingdom of Israel. During the early years of Solomon’s reign the nation was blessed with a very wise king who stayed close to God’s plan for him and led his nation to preeminence among the surrounding nations. The country was very well off economically and the whole world should have been looking to them as political and spiritual leaders. Unfortunately, instead of making the most of this opportunity and turning the eyes of the world to the worship of Yahweh, they got caught up in the quest for spiraling wages and Solomon allowed himself to be drawn away by his many wives who led him during the later part of his life to the worship of many “gods”. Solomon even reached the place where he accompanied some of his wives in the worship of Molech the Ammonite “god” who “required” the offering of babies to him in his red hot burning hands.

After Solomon’s death we see the early and very rapid deterioration of the spiritual condition of the people being led by their political and “spiritual” leaders first in the northern kingdom of Israel and later in the southern kingdom of Judah.

But there were some remarkable stories of prophets who acted in ways to slow or halt this terrible decline into idolatry and ruin. First there was the younger prophet from Judah (1 Kings 13) and a little later the drought in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18&19). Both of these prophet’s stories have important lessons for us. 1 Kings ends with the predicted death of King Ahab, perhaps the wickedest king of the northern Kingdom, and the very unusual story of the prophet Micaiah.

“First Kings continues the history of the Israelite monarchy begun in the books of *Samuel*. It may be divided into three parts: 1) The succession of Solomon as King of Israel and Judah, and the death of his father David. 2) The reign and achievements of Solomon. Especially noteworthy is the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. 3) The division of the nation into the northern and southern kingdoms, and the stories of the kings who ruled them down to the middle of the ninth century B.C.

“In the two books of *Kings* each ruler is judged according to his loyalty to God, and national success is seen as depending on this loyalty, while idolatry and disobedience lead to disaster. The kings of the northern kingdom all fail the test, while the record of Judah’s kings is mixed.” (GNB)

Author:

“The identity of the author of Kings is unknown, although Jewish tradition holds that its author was Jeremiah. Although there can be no final certainty in the matter, the fact that Jeremiah was not only a member of a priestly, teaching family, but as God’s prophet was an eyewitness and active participant in the events surrounding Judah’s demise, argues for such a possibility. The author of Kings has used many official records and unofficial sources in compiling his history (e.g., 11:41; 14:19, 29, etc.; 2 Kings 20:20). Although the author has written Kings in a generally historically progressive fashion, he often writes thematically, grouping his facts in a way that is not strictly chronological. Thus, one must not assume that the details of a given chapter necessarily have happened after those of the preceding chapter (See 2 Kings 20:1). However, especially in the details relative to the divided kingdom, there

is a general historical progression from 1 Kings 12 to the end of 2 Kings (from the mid-tenth to the mid-sixth century B.C.). The dates for the respective kings given here result from a careful evaluation of the various dating methods used in ancient Israel as they are compared with certain established anchor dates in the ancient Near East. The difficulty of affixing precise dates is hampered by the various ways in which dates were calculated in Israel. In the northern kingdom, dating was reached by a nonaccession system (by which the year that a man became king was listed as both his first year and the last year of his predecessor). In Judah, an accession year system was used, whereby a new king's first year was calculated from the beginning of the new year in the fall after his enthronement, until about 841 B.C., after which a change was made to the nonaccession system. However, both kingdoms switched to the accession year system in the early eighth century B.C., possibly under the influence of Assyria. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that the length of the reign of some kings included a period of serving as co-regent with their fathers. Despite the complexity of the problem, a relatively accurate system of dating has been established.

"Although the historical trustworthiness of Kings has been demonstrated repeatedly, one must not read these two books simply as history. The two books are, above all, a telling of God's spiritual dealings with His vacillating people. It narrates how the people of God managed their God-given responsibilities before a sovereign and gracious God. It stands as a record of God's reward for obedience and faithfulness, and for His judgment of disobedience." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

"Evangelical biblical scholars...continue to endorse the traditional view that Jeremiah wrote the books of the Kings. They cite as evidence for his authorship his priestly origin, his prophetic activity, his access to governmental authorities at the highest level, and his great personal involvement in the complex religious, social, and political activities that occurred during the collapse and fall of Judah in the early sixth century B.C. Certainly no other single person would have been in a better position to know the spiritual situation of the day and to have access to the state records, historical information, and source material necessary for writing First and Second Kings." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

God must have been incredibly sad to see the events recorded in this book take place. The first half of the book focuses on the wonderful early years of Solomon's reign. What a contrast to the beginning of 2 Kings where we find Ahab's son attempting to consult the "god of flies" to see if he is going to die! What would you have done if you had been God watching the events of this book? Jezebel and Ahab dominate much of the later part of the book. It shows how quickly things can deteriorate. But God continues to work through prophets such as Elijah and Elisha to try to get His people's attention and cooperation once again. God performs some extraordinary miracles in this book. (See 1 Kings 17-19) In fact the days of Elijah and Elisha saw many remarkable miracles. The schools of the prophets, started by Samuel, and expanded by Elijah and Elisha must have had a good impact on the nation. These schools may have been the most important thing that these prophets accomplished during their lives.

2. What do you think of David's "hot water bottle" (1 Kings 1:1-4)? What would happen if we followed this custom with church or even government leaders today? What is implied by the statement, "but the king knew her not?" (v. 4) Was this fair to a beautiful young woman like Abishag? (Compare 1 Kings 2:13-23) How does this statement relate to Matthew 7:23, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity?"

This story tells us at least two things. First, customs were very different in those days. And, secondly, it helps to illustrate the Biblical meaning of the word "know". The beautiful young woman named Abishag turns out to be a sort of pawn in a high stakes gamble for the kingship of the country. It is very important to realize that in those days, the inheritance of the "wives" of a former king was a

very significant part of the succession process. (See 2 Samuel 12:8; 2 Samuel 16:20-22)

It should be abundantly clear that in this kind of context to “know” means to be intimate with and even to have sexual intercourse with. Is it possible that God wants to have a relationship with us that is somehow just as close and intimate as the relationship between a husband and his wife? Is it possible that we will have such loving, intimate relationships throughout eternity?

3. What is the reason God gave so much wealth and wisdom to Solomon? (1 Kings 3:1-15; 2 Chronicles 1:3-12) Why do you think God offered to give Solomon essentially anything he asked for? (1 Kings 3:5) Why did God make so many promises to Solomon? (1 Kings 3:10-15 Compare 9:1-9)

God realized that this was the golden period of opportunity for his chosen people. If Solomon had made the best possible use of all the blessings God bestowed on him, and if he had been able to lead the children of Israel in paths of faithfulness, then these gifts would have proven to be a tremendous blessing to the entire world. As it turned out, God bestowed these gifts and yet He did not limit Solomon’s freedom. It can never be said that God did not give him every possible advantage.

4. Where did all of Solomon’s wives and concubines come from? (1 Kings 3:1; 11:1-3)

Notice that the 700 wives were apparently all princesses! It was the custom in those days to seal treaties between nations by marrying the daughter of the king of one of the nations to the king or prince of the other nation. Thus most of Solomon’s wives came along with treaties. Concubines were secondary wives, probably in this case wives who were not of royal blood, but whom Solomon married for various other reasons.

5. What actually led to Solomon’s downfall? In what important ways did he differ from David his father? (1 Kings 3:3; 11:1-6,33,34) How could God say to Solomon about David, “if you will serve me in honesty and integrity, as your father David did?” (1 Kings 3:14; 9:4; 15:5; Compare 3:6)

See Handout on “**David: A Man After God’s Own Heart?**” Solomon was led away from God by his many wives and his life of ease and pleasure. At first, he probably thought that he wanted to be fair to his many wives and they would all eventually become converted. He wanted to be very ecumenical! But instead Solomon was the one who was led astray! (See Nehemiah 13:23-27)

In addition to the many wives, another major cause of his downfall was the extravagant lifestyle lived by many of the people living in Jerusalem. This was supported by a constant demand for higher wages which probably didn’t seem like a big problem, at least at first, since Solomon’s government seemed to prosper so well. But in time the greed led to corruption and fighting and eventual decay and deterioration.

6. How would you measure wisdom to determine if someone was the wisest man? (1 Kings 4:29-34) Notice that Solomon was a great scientist. If Solomon was so wise, why was his son apparently so foolish? (1 Kings 12:1-20; 2 Chronicles 10:1-19)

Wisdom was probably measured by the number of wise sayings that a person produced and by the number of difficult cases he helped to solve. The Egyptians were considered wise because of their early knowledge of so many scientific fields such as astronomy, medicine, architecture, mathematics, music, painting, embalming, and even “mystic philosophy”. Perhaps Solomon had mastered these fields as well, as it is clear that he had close connections to Egypt with Pharaoh’s daughter as his chief wife in his early years.

It would appear from the context that Solomon obtained his “wisdom” at least partially from research and careful study. This seems to be born out by a number of statements in Ecclesiastes. It is interesting to note that Ecclesiastes seems to suggest that Solomon would be handing his kingdom

over to someone who “never worked a day in his life”! (Ecclesiastes 2:20,21, *TLB*) Rehoboam obviously showed very little wisdom in his early days. He probably had little or no contact with his father and certain was never disciplined by him.

7. Was it wise for Solomon to say that he would pay whatever wages the people of Lebanon asked? (1 Kings 5:6)

This led to a spiraling demand for more wages and spiraling taxes to pay for them. Certainly this was not God’s idea! But it is also clear that many modern Christians have been destroyed by the same pursuits. You can imagine that the Israelites would demand higher wages than Solomon was paying to the Lebanese and the demands would only escalate. (See *Prophets and Kings* 51-74) As a result of these two evils, his many wives and his opulent lifestyle the nation of Israel began to sow the seeds that would lead to its ultimate demise.

8. Why do we need all the details about the Temple and about Solomon’s house? (1 Kings 6 & 7)

The original records here were no doubt put together by some scribe or prophet, probably in Solomon’s employment as the temple and home were being built. The records that were amassed in the construction of the temple were no doubt voluminous. Since the temple was the pride of the nation, the writer felt it was appropriate to give considerable detail about the temple and how it was constructed. It gives us some kind of measure of the wealth that Solomon and David his father before him had amassed in Jerusalem. These details are obviously not essential for salvation in our day, but they are an important part of the historical background that helps us to understand the rest of the Old Testament in its fullest possible context.

9. What do you think Solomon had in mind when he sacrificed so many sheep and cattle that they couldn’t even be counted? (1 Kings 8:5, 62-64) Did they believe this would please God? (Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18,25,41; Leviticus 1:9,13,17; 2:2,9; Numbers 15:3,7,10, etc. Contrast Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:10-17, Hosea 6:6; **Micah 6:6-8**; Matthew 9:13; 12:7)

A part of the reason so many animals were sacrificed was no doubt the fact that virtually every Israelite family and in many cases perhaps several members of each family would want to bring an offering on this very specially occasion. Solomon probably wanted to show that this was a very large and impressive ceremony—the largest event of his life—and he contributed thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of animals to be sacrificed.

Those who contributed animals with the right spirit and the correct intent were no doubt blessed. If their hearts were humbly submitted to God it was a blessed day. Solomon certainly prayed an appropriate prayer. (See 1 Kings 8:22-61) and God blessed the occasion with His presence by sending his glory and filling the temple. (1 Kings 8:10)

But surely Solomon must have been fully aware of the truth about the purposes and value of such sacrifices because his father spelled it out quite clearly in Psalms 51 after his sin with Solomon’s mother! Unfortunately, Solomon’s later experience makes us wonder if some of Solomon’s sacrifices on this occasion were not given just for “show”.

10. In Solomon’s dedicatory prayer (1 Kings 8:23-53) he describes very well what happened later when they turned away from God. (1 Kings 8:46-51) Where do you think he got these insights, and if he already understood them, how could he as the wisest man who ever lived, turn away from God? Why would Solomon be attracted to the “gods” of these other wives of his? (1 Kings 11:1-13)

This is primarily a thought question. The description of what would happen if they turned away from God was already basically recorded in Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 27:11-29:29; 31:17,18.

When the children of Israel first entered the land of Palestine, it is possible that they were attracted to some of these pagan deities because the people who lived there before them claimed that the “gods” had to be treated in certain ways and sacrifices must be made to them if one was to get the rain that was so necessary for the soil to bear its crop. In Solomon’s day, this would no longer be the case, as they clearly knew that Yahweh was able to take care of their every need if they were faithful to Him. It is probably impossible for us to fully comprehend why people, and especially someone as wise as Solomon, would ignore all the warnings that had been given against idolatry and end up even sacrificing their own children to these foreign “gods”.

11. Solomon suggests that the sins of the people may prevent the rains from coming (1 Kings 8:35). What does this imply about God? (Compare Matthew 5:45) What is suggested about Solomon’s attitude toward foreigners by his prayer? (1 Kings 8:41-43)

We have no way of knowing exactly what Solomon was thinking as he prayed these words, but we do know that Palestine has always been a land of marginal rainfall and drought has been a constant threat. Solomon no doubt recognized that God could provide them with all the rain they needed if He chose to bless them by doing so. This would lead naturally to the conclusion that if they sinned and displeased God somehow, so that He chose not to bless them with the rains that were so necessary, a drought would be forthcoming. They had no large rivers like the Nile that could easily be tapped for irrigation for many portions of the land.

Solomon was clearly trying to make foreigners feel as welcome as possible on this great festival day. There were probably thousands of them there to observe this dedication. Solomon also had the words of Moses in many places to support the idea that he was suggesting that foreigners, strangers and sojourners were to be treated equally as well as Israel’s native sons if they chose to worship Israel’s God. (Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 9:14; 15:15,30; 35:15; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11,14; 23:7,8; 24:17-22; 26:11-13; 27:19; 29:11; 31:12) Those foreigners who chose to move to Palestine, settle down as immigrants and join in all the religious festivals and traditions of the Israelites were to be treated essentially as if they were Israelites.

12. What does it mean when it says that God became angry with Solomon? (1 Kings 11:9)

This is clearly spelled out in Deuteronomy 31:16-18. It was demonstrated repeatedly in the early days of the judges. (See **Judges: A Teacher’s Guide #9; Hosea - A Teacher’s Guide #13; Major Study Questions for Judges- #2; Psalms - a Teacher’s Guide - #6; Nahum - A Teacher’s Guide - #2,3; 2 Samuel - A Teacher’s Guide #5**)

God’s anger is not like human anger. God does not lose control of His emotions. But He does become very distressed as He sees us use our freedom to destroy ourselves. If freedom weren’t so important to God, He would probably step in and prevent us from destroying ourselves, but He cannot do this without violating our freedom. So God uses human language—the strongest human language available—to try to warn us of the consequences of going our own rebellious ways. Sometimes we are tempted to take this strong language and assume that God is being controlled by His emotions just as many humans would be under the same situation. But God is only using that strong language to try to get us to take Him seriously. So it is of utmost importance when reading about God’s “anger” to try to remember what that means in Biblical terms and not what it might say in Webster’s or even the Oxford Unabridged Dictionary. As you will discover as you look at the references in previous study guides, the Bible, in many places, using the language of many authors, describes God’s anger as His “letting go”, “handing over”, “turning away from”, “allowing to leave” those who seem bent on rebellion. This always results in inevitable and disastrous consequences, but not at the hands of our loving God. He will always be reaching out to sinners in the words of Hosea 11:7,8:

⁷ My people are bent on turning away from Me;

The yoke is all they are fit for—
I can love them no more.
⁸ How, oh how, can I give you up, Ephraim!
How, oh how, can I hand you over, Israel!
How can I turn you into a Sodom!
How can I treat you like a Gomorrah!
My heart recoils within me,
All my compassion is kindled.” *Phillips*

13. Why did God give ten of the tribes to Jeroboam if He had foreknowledge of how wicked he was going to be? (1 Kings 11:31) How could God have talked to Jeroboam about walking in His ways, if He knew what Jeroboam was going to do? (1 Kings 11:38)

Jeroboam was an ambitious and hard-working young man. It would be natural for him to aspire to the highest position possible in the kingdom. It is very likely that God is here only demonstrating that He knows in advance what is going to happen. The promises that He made to Jeroboam are not really different than the ones he made to many other leaders. This does not imply that God does not have foreknowledge or that He lacks the ability or power to make things come out the way He wants them to come out. It shows us how important freedom is to God. Just as He gave Solomon great wisdom and wealth but did not take away his freedom to misuse those gifts, He does not control Jeroboam either. This is a part of God’s overall demonstration of the truth about His character and government in the setting of the great controversy.

14. What is the purpose of the story of the older prophet and the “man of God” in 1 Kings 13? What should we learn from this story? Why do you think the older prophet lied? In what sense did the younger prophet defy the word of the Lord? (1 Kings 13:20-22) Did the younger prophet do anything wrong? What should he have done?

This story calls for some careful thought because it runs so counter to much of what is considered “faithful” Christianity even in our day. There are several parts of the story that we do not have recorded which might have filled in some of the details that we would like to know.

We do not know the names of either of these prophets. We do not know anything about the rest of their lives. We know very little about God’s earlier conversation with the younger prophet which is referred to in 1 Kings 13:8,9,16,17. We do not know what the usual work of either of these men was. We are not given any hints about why the older prophet chose to do what he did. Since he was apparently a “prophet of the Lord” why didn’t God send the message for Jeroboam through him? The distance from Jerusalem and even from much of the rest of Judah was not that far from Bethel (11 miles) and it would be relatively easy for a person to walk there and back even in one day.

It is important to remember that Jeroboam was intentionally trying to set this city up as a rival place of worship (Bethel means “house of God”) to prevent the ten northern tribes from worshipping at Jerusalem. Instead of following the practices and Levitical instructions for the correct worship of Yahweh he decided to allow anyone who was willing to do so to serve as a priest (1 Kings 13:33). He set up temples to worship one of the common symbols of fertility. Although Abraham camped at Bethel and set up an altar there (Genesis 12:8; 13:3), and Jacob had his vision of the ladder to heaven there (Genesis 28:10-22), down through the years Bethel became a center of wickedness until Hosea refers to it as Bethaven (“house of wickedness” - Hosea 4:15; 5:8; 10:5).

Bethel was one of the major centers for the schools of the prophets which were started by Samuel. “The first mention of the ‘sons of the prophets’ is recorded in 1 Kings 20:35, although the specific origin of the group is unknown. However, the gathering of disciples into the ‘schools of prophets’ was probably originated by Samuel (cf. 1 Samuel 10:5–13) to help combat the spiritual and moral decline

of the period. Samuel is described as 'standing as leader over them' at Ramah (1 Samuel 19:20; cf. 19:24). No further mention is made of these companies of prophets in the time of Samuel, but they appear again in the time of Elijah and Elisha, where they are called 'sons of the prophets' (1 Kings 20:35). Gilgal, **Bethel**, and Jericho appear to have been the major centers of their activities (vv. 3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 6:1; 9:1). Because of such large numbers of these prophets in existence in the time of Elijah and Elisha, there is strong evidence to assume that the schools continued uninterrupted from the time of Samuel." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

There are many questions that could be raised about the details of the story. Why wasn't the older prophet at the ceremony to denounce the evil practices of King Jeroboam? What happened to the altar and the worship of the bull calf at Bethel after this experience? Did Jeroboam make any effort to reform his ways after this experience? How many other prophets were living in those days that we know nothing about? Was the older prophet in some way connected with the "schools of the prophets?"

The major issue in this story, however, is why a "prophet" of Yahweh would lie to another prophet of Yahweh. As already mentioned we have no other details of their lives on which to base any judgment about their prophetic missions. It should be noted that many other "prophets" mentioned in the Bible lied. (1 Kings 22:22-25; 2 Chronicles 18:21-24; Jeremiah 14:14-16; 23:11-32; 27:14,16; 28:1-17; Ezekiel 13:1-16,17-23; 33:30-33; 14:9; 20:25,26; 22:28; Micah 3:11) Usually however the context of the story as we have it in our day suggests that these "prophets" were not prophets of the true God, although some seem to have claimed to be. (Jeremiah 14:14-16; 27:14,16; 28:15-17; 1 Kings 22:22-25; 2 Chronicles 18:21-24; Ezekiel 13:9) There are also many prophets of Baal and prophets of Asherah mentioned in Scripture. (See 1 Kings 18:19)

This story should be compared to other places in the Bible where we are warned against accepting religious claims. (See Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Matthew 24:5,23-26; Mark 13:6,21-23; Luke 21:8; Revelation 13:11-17) Why would the older prophet go out of his way at considerable effort to lie to the younger prophet? Was he jealous or suffering from wounded pride because God did not choose to send this very much needed message to his home town through him? Did God have anything to do with the "lie" that the older prophet told the younger prophet? What should the younger prophet have done when he heard this lie in the form of a "religious claim"?

This story certainly warns us against accepting statements that sometimes seem so appealing and so humble and "faithful" like "God has said it; I believe it; And that settles it for me"! Such an approach to accepting religious claims would make us totally vulnerable when Satan appears masquerading as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)

So what should the younger prophet have done when the older prophet lied to him? It would be very impolite and even dangerous to immediately reject any statement made by a "prophet" of Yahweh! (See 1 Kings 20:35-43) But we should not immediately believe everything that we are told either! The only safety in such a situation would be to inquire of God as to the correct path to follow. Eve should have done this before eating of the fruit of the tree!! (Genesis 3:1-13) We should reverently but respectfully investigate and inquire before accepting any religious claim. We try to train our children to be very careful in all other areas of life, but we sometimes suggest that in religious matters all that is necessary is "only believe, only believe"!

This is certainly illustrated by all the different religious claims being made on television even in our day. If we were to try to believe every one of them, we would have to believe many contradictory things! The author of Hebrews may have had this in mind when he wrote Hebrews 5:11-6:3. And Paul suggests something similar in Ephesians 4:13-15. Surely this is why we are told to test all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and even test the spirits (1 John 4:1).

Faith must be built on a very careful investigation of the truth, with a real desire to follow that truth wherever it leads or we will be deceived.

"The man of God is known by what he flees from, what he follows after, what he fights for, and what he is faithful to. Scripture teaches one more lesson about the man of God: he must be obedient. In 1 Kings 13 a man of God was struck down because he disobeyed God by eating and drinking in a place

where he had been told not to eat and drink. There is nothing inherently sinful about eating and drinking, but in this case it was against the revealed will of God. So the man of God must be attentive to God's leading, and strictly obedient." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

15. What was the purpose for including the curse against the house of Jeroboam? (1 Kings 14:10-16) Notice the incredible list of sins committed during Jeroboam's time. Is it fair that Jeroboam's whole line should be punished because of his sins? (Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:1-32 see especially 18:19,20)

This section is included in order to explain what happened to this particular dynasty of Israel. It helps to understand that God is still active and in at least one sense is still in control. Yahweh wants us to understand that when He steps back and allows history to take its course it is not that He has lost control or that He doesn't know—even in advance—what is going to happen. God certainly wants us to realize that although Jeroboam had been told that he would be the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Yahweh had promised to bless him abundantly if he and his children obeyed Yahweh, when he refused and set up his own temples and forms of worship, God had the power and ability not only to predict what was going to happen next, but to make it happen if necessary.

16. Why were there so many "high places" and "Asherah poles?" (1 Kings 11:7,8; 12:31,32; 13:32,33; **14:23**; 22:43) What was an "Asherah pole" and how was it used? Who was Asherah? (1 Kings 15:13; 16:33; 18:19; 2 Kings 13:6; 21:3,7 23:4,7 Compare Judges 3:7; 2 Chronicles 19:3; 24:18; 33:3)

ASHERAH

"Asherah signifies the name of the goddess herself: 'Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves ["Asherah"] four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table' (1 Kings 18:19). The Canaanites believed that 'asherah ruled the sea, was the mother of all the gods including Baal, and sometimes was his deadly enemy. Apparently, the mythology of Canaan maintained that 'asherah' was the consort of Baal, who had displaced El as their highest god. Thus her sacred objects (poles) were immediately beside altars to Baal, and she was worshiped along with him.'" - From *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Asherah was the Phoenician goddess of vegetation. She is also referred to in Ugaritic (extra-Biblical) literature as "Lady of the gods" or "Mistress of the gods" and "mother of 70 deities" and "Lady of the Sea". She was the female counterpart of Baal and her worship seemed to be a particularly dangerous attraction for the Israelites. The symbol of this "goddess" was a wooden pole or tree trunk and thus she was often worshiped in groves of trees on tops of hills otherwise known as "high places".

17. If you had been God what would you have done with these kings? (1 Kings 16) Did God have anything to do with what took place, or is the Bible just giving a "national history" of the children of Abraham? Did these events take place because God caused them to happen or because of human "might and power"? Was God powerless to change the course of events we have recorded here?

God must have had some very interesting conversations with the angels during this period of Israel's history. I'm sure the angels must have wondered if God was accomplishing anything at all in His working with the children of Israel. While God has the power and ability to do essentially anything He chooses to do, He will not violate our freedom and He must have wept as He watched things deteriorate under these wicked kings.

See #15 above. Much of what happened in these brief histories probably happened as the natural course of human history. But the events of these kings lives were part of the unfolding plan that God knew would answer the questions that had been raised in the great controversy over His character and government.

18. What would you think if your pastor (apparently not married) went off to live for some time with a widow in another land as Elijah did? (1 Kings 17:8-16)

We are reminded once again that customs were different in those days. It is clear that this arrangement worked out for the mutual benefit of all involved. It is a little ironic that while Ahab and Jezebel were searching the world for Elijah whom they accused as being responsible for the drought, Elijah was living in Zarephath (in the New Testament it is known as Sarepta - Luke 4:26) only a short distance from Sidon, Jezebel's home town and center for the worship of Baal!

Elijah was apparently given an upstairs room and continued to share meals with the widow and her son. Later he even miraculously raised the son back to life when he died. (1 Kings 17:17-24)

19. Why did God send the long period of drought on Israel? (1 Kings 17:1) How do you think Elijah felt facing the 850 prophets of Jezebel on top of Mt. Carmel? Why would God use this dramatic method of challenging their "gods"? (1 Kings 18:1-40) Compare the ten plagues of Egypt.

Since the Northern Kingdom of Israel had come under the influence of Ahab and Jezebel who were determined to introduce the worship of Baal and Asherah, both of whom were thought to be gods of vegetation and fertility, it is quite reasonable for Yahweh to challenge these "gods" by stopping the rains. This reminds us of the plagues of Egypt where each plague was specifically addressed at one of the Egyptian "gods". The fact that this was a direct challenge to their "gods" is suggested also by Elijah's message to Ahab and the people at the end of the drought.

Baal was considered to be the chief "god" of the Canaanites. In order to attain to this position he challenged the earlier chief "god" of the Canaanites, El. According to their mythology, Baal was the mortal enemy of Mot the "god" of the sea. At one point, Baal was killed in conflict with one of the other "gods"—perhaps Mot. Baal's sister, Anath, became very angry and demanded that Mot resurrect Baal. When Mot refused, Anath killed him, and carried the body of her "brother" to the mountain of the gods where he was resurrected to new life. After that, it was believed that the death and resurrection of Baal became an annual "event". Each year as Baal died, the dry summer season would begin. This was commemorated with mourning. Each fall, as the rains began again, turning the fields green, it was believed that Baal was raised to life. This was celebrated with joyous and licentious feasting.

"An Evil Queen:

"Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon and Tyre (Phoenicia), an ardent worshiper of Melquart, the Baal of Tyre. In a political marriage designed to cement an alliance between Israel and Tyre, she became the wife of Israel's evil king Ahab (1 Kin. 16:31).

"Jezebel's domineering influence on Ahab allowed her to bring a fanatical form of Baal worship with her—into her home, into the nation, and even into the temple itself. Four hundred fifty prophets of Baal joined her retinue, along with a similar number of prophets of Asherah, the female consort of Baal. Corrupt, sensual practices involved in the worship of Baal were observed throughout the country, as she demanded that her god be considered equal to Israel's God (*Yahweh*). Her insistence on the equality of Baal with God brought her into direct conflict with Elijah, the prophet of God.

"Repeatedly Jezebel had opportunity to see that *Yahweh* was the true God. Baal was powerless to provide life-giving rains during the drought which occurred as Elijah had prophesied. In a dramatic contest on Mount Carmel, the prophets of Baal were unable to call down fire to their altar, though they danced and chanted, even slashing their own bodies while Elijah taunted them. After Elijah's simple prayer to God for a demonstration of His power to His people, the fire fell on the altar built by Elijah and consumed the sacrifice (1 Kin. 18:23–38). Elijah instructed the people to seek out and destroy the prophets of Baal (v. 40). In raging fury, Jezebel sent word to Elijah that she would do the same to him. Jezebel also focused her royal power to a willful and wicked advantage. She arranged for the murder of Naboth and the greedy confiscation of his vineyard which Ahab had coveted (1 Kin. 21:15).

"Elijah finally delivered the pronouncement of God's judgment on the royal pair. After Ahab's

death, Jezebel wielded her evil power as Queen Mother during the reigns of her sons. She never repented. Defiant and decadent to the end, she applied facial make-up and mocked the newly anointed king who had killed her sons. The eunuchs of her own household threw her to a gruesome death in the field whose owner she had murdered. Elijah's prophecy that her body would be torn apart by dogs came true (2 Kin. 9:10).

"Jezebel personifies the principle of reaping what is sown (see Gal 6:7). She also demonstrates the power and influence of evil, although allowed by God for a limited time in chastisement of His own people when they are disobedient, ultimately never triumphs.

"See also 1 Kin. 16:31; 19:1, 2; 21:5–16; 2 Kin. 9:10, 22, 30–37; notes on Idolatry (Is. 42); Influence (Esth. 4); Wives (Prov. 31); chart on The Queens of the Old Testament." (*Woman's Study Bible*)

20. Why was Obadiah, a faithful servant of God, working for Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 18:1-4)?
1 Kings 18:4: "and when Jezebel was killing the Lord's prophets, Obadiah took a hundred of them, hid them in caves in two groups of 50, and provided them with food and water.)" (*GNB*)

This is not the same Obadiah who later wrote the book by that name. This Obadiah no doubt felt that he needed to keep his position in Ahab's court to try in a quiet and probably secretive way to prevent Ahab and Jezebel from completely eliminating the worship of Yahweh. It is clear from the passage that he had been somewhat successful, at least for a while in preserving some of Yahweh's "prophets". Who were all these "prophets"? Probably students from the schools of the prophets that had been started by Samuel and were greatly expanded after this story by Elijah and Elisha.

"**1 Kings 18:4.** Associations of **prophets**, forming a sort of school of the prophets, seem to have existed since Samuel's day (1 Sam. 10:5–18). These prophets apparently met together for study, prophesying, service, and mutual spiritual encouragement (cf. 1 Sam. 19:20, 24; 2 Kin. 2:3–7, 15; 4:1, 38; 6:1; 9:1). Apparently the great prophets exercised leadership over such schools (2 Kin. 6:1–7)." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

"Over twenty thousand caves have been found in the vicinity of Mt. Carmel, many of them capable of holding fifty men." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

21. How could Elijah claim to be the only one left who was serving the Lord (1 Kings 19:10,14) if he knew about Obadiah and his 100 prophets?

Elijah in his depression had apparently forgotten about Obadiah and his hiding of the prophets. If the presence of those prophets had been general knowledge, Jezebel would no doubt have destroyed them. Elijah may even have thought that by this time Jezebel may have killed them.

22. What is the Lord trying to teach us from the experience of Elijah on Mt. Sinai? Would you rather have Elijah's experience on Mt. Carmel or his experience at the "mouth of the cave" on Mt. Sinai? (1 Kings 19:11,12) Who caused the wind, earthquake and fire if the Lord was not in them? Does this tell us anything about how the Lord would like to communicate with us today?

This story is one of the great stories of the Old Testament. God challenges the "gods" Baal and Asherah to a competition on Mt. Carmel. The request was obviously so fair and the outcome would show so clearly who was the real "God" that it was hard to argue against the proposal. No doubt the many "prophets" of Baal and Asherah thought they could somehow slip some fire under the sacrifice and then they would have immediately destroyed Elijah! But Yahweh made sure that no fire came anywhere near that pagan altar. Finally when it was Elijah's and Yahweh's turn, and the fire consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the water, the truth was inescapable! Elijah calling down fire

from heaven is probably the hero of almost every modern TV preacher! But unfortunately, we learn a hard lesson here. Did this astounding miracle witnessed by almost the entire nation of Israel lead to a massive conversion? About 6 weeks later Elijah still thought that he was the only servant of Yahweh left! Like the story of the flood and the destruction of the firstborn in Egypt, shows of force or power—even impressive miracles—usually don't lead to big conversions! Once again the TV preachers are wrong. It just doesn't work. But the shows of power are so impressive that almost every TV evangelist prays for them!

Some 40+ days later Elijah learned a lesson that not many even want to learn. God sent the wind but He did not have anything to say through the wind. Although God no doubt caused the earthquake, He doesn't prefer to speak through earthquakes. When the fire came, Elijah must have been certain that God was in the fire. Just think about the Mt. Carmel experience! But God did not choose to speak through the fire. God spoke rather through the "sound of a quiet whisper". God doesn't want us to obey Him and reverence Him because He has great power. God wants us to get to know Him as a Friend and respect Him because He tells us the truth. Truth doesn't need to shout. To those who really care about the truth, the quiet evidence of truth is all that is needed. When Elijah learned this lesson He was just about ready for translation. What about us?

23. Why would God send Elijah to anoint Hazael as king of Syria—Israel's worst enemy? (1 Kings 19:15) What is implied by 1 Kings 19:17,18?

Syria was Israel's worst enemy at this point in history. But each of these men who are mentioned by name was to accomplish some task that would further the cause of God. Elisha never slew anyone by the sword as far as we know, but He certainly furthered the cause of God. God is here showing that He takes an interest in everything that takes place all over the world and has everything fully under His control.

24. Why did Benhadad's officials claim that Israel's "gods" were mountain "gods"? (1 Kings 20:23)

In ancient times it was thought that each "god" was the "god" over a certain territory and belonged to that territory. The Syrians must have thought that since Samaria is located in the hills Yahweh was a "god" of the hills. Or perhaps they were still thinking of Baal who often had hills or mountains named after him. Since Yahweh controls the whole earth, none of this really matters to Him! Of course, it is also quite likely that the Syrians were just looking for an excuse for their loss in battle!

25. How did God bring about such an enormous slaughter of Syrians with just a relatively few Israelites? (1 Kings 20:26-30)

There are numerous examples in Scripture that demonstrate that God can slay with many or with few, in fact, He often does best with no "help" at all! Then no human can claim that the victory is his! Compare 1 Kings 20:13-21,28-34; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:1-23; Isaiah 37:36; Judges 7:1-8:28.

26. Why would the Bible include a story like the story of Micaiah and the "lying prophets"? (1 Kings 22:1-28 Compare 2 Chronicles 18:2-19:2) What do you think of Micaiah's explanation of the source of their lying? (1 Kings 22:19-28; compare Micah 3:5,11 and 2 Samuel 24:1 contrasted with 1 Chronicles 21:1) Was this an authentic vision of heaven? (Compare 2 Kings 22:19 and Isaiah 6:1; Job 1:6) Did God directly deceive all these lying prophets? (See Ezekiel 14:9; 20:25,26; compare Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7) Did Ahab need a "lying spirit" to convince him to go up into battle or did he have his mind made up already about what he was going to do? (See James 1:13-15) Compare *2 Chronicles Study Guide #10*.

There are lots of interesting factors in this story that need to be considered before we draw any

conclusions. First of all let's consider other parallel incidents in other parts of Scripture:

Lying prophets: Jeremiah 14:14-16; 23:11-32; 27:14,16; 28:1-17; 1 Kings 22:22-25; 2 Chronicles 18:21-24; Deuteronomy 13:1-3
Ezekiel 13:1-16: False male prophets
Ezekiel 13:17-23: False female prophets—used “magical scarves and wristbands”

Deuteronomy 18:21,22; Jeremiah 28:9; Ezekiel 33:30-33: people regarding true prophecies as entertainment; they will learn the truth when the prophets predictions come true!

It is hard to accept a message that is contrary to one's personal desires! “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still!”

Did God cause them to lie: Ezekiel 14:9: If a prophet is deceived it is because I have deceived him.

Ezekiel 20:25,26: I gave them laws that are not good...

Ezekiel 22:28: They see false visions and make false predictions. I have not spoken through them.

Micah 3:11: Prophets who see visions according to the fees they receive!

Why are the people so easily led astray by false leaders? They don't think for themselves. Bad leadership is only a serious problem when you have blind followers!

Does the Devil attend God's councils in heaven? Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Daniel 7:9,10

Christians believe that God hears their prayers. Doesn't He also have the ability to listen to and even read the thoughts of the Devil? Don't we believe that God is omniscient? Don't we also believe based on our understanding of the above passages and our understanding of God's character that He conducts His “business” in the open? Does this imply that God is fully aware of Satan's plans at all times and vice versa? The Devil doesn't need to go to “heaven” to make his case heard in the councils of heaven. When this story was taking place, it is very possible that the Devil spoke up claiming that Ahab was one of his subjects, and God said, “Ahab has done just about everything possible to rebel against Me. He doesn't listen to anything I tell him, and he continues to promote the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth following the direction of his wife Jezebel. At this point there is nothing more that I can do for him, so I will allow the devil to take control of his future.” But now the devil has another problem. He wants Micaiah to say what he wants Micaiah to say, but he wants it to look like it is a command or direction from God. So long as Micaiah is cooperating with God, the devil cannot take over and control him, but with God's cooperation he can tell the truth and make it look like God is sending a message through Micaiah for Ahab to go to battle. That is what he planned to do anyway!

The limitations of time and space that we automatically assume when we think of such stories probably don't apply to God or the Devil. If we remove these limitations, it is quite easy to see how the story could be completely true just as reported.

“Spirits” from the Lord In the Ancient Aramaic translations from the Hebrew Old Testament know as the Targums, the lying “spirit” is identified as the devil. In this story the Devil comes before God requesting to go and destroy Ahab. God allows him to go.

Does that make God responsible?

God will allow us to believe a lie if we refuse to believe the truth.

God's "dirty work": Does God get the Devil to do His "dirty work" for Him? In Christian tradition, isn't it always Satan who keeps the fires of Hell burning?

God or the Devil: Who is doing what in this story?: 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Samuel 31:1-4; 1 Chronicles 10:1-4,13,14

Does God send evil? Isaiah 45:7; Lamentations 3:38; Amos 3:6

Ahab and the truth: Is there any evidence at all in this story that Ahab really wanted to know the truth? Who was "tempting" Ahab to go to battle? Did Ahab have any real fears that he might die? James 1:13-15; 1 Kings 20:41-43.

Ahab had twice before defeated Benhadad even though Benhadad had 32 other "rulers" helping him. But those two times he had been commanded to do so by Jehovah. They were victorious against enormous odds. (See 1 Kings 20:15,27,29,30) Who actually was responsible for the victories? (1 Kings 20:13,28; contrast 1 Kings 20:41-43)

Similar stories: 1 Samuel 28:3-25: Witch of Endor
Luke 16:16:19-31: Rich Man and Lazarus

Is this whole story just a dramatic way for God to say, "Ahab refuses to listen to Me, and has decided to do what he wants to do no matter what, so I will let him reap the consequences of his own behavior?"

Do we need to "interpret" these stories? SDA's want to carefully "interpret" the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Billy Graham takes that story quite literally as his main key text for the immortality of the soul and hell. Is it safe to take any part of Scripture "literally"? If you want to take the Bible "literally" how do you deal with Proverbs 31:6,7 and Deuteronomy 14:22-29?

What "process" should we follow in dealing with the Micaiah story? Does this whole story suggest an approach to Scripture that is very important for our understanding of all of Scripture? Does God at times call His angels together to ask them for suggestions as to how He can deceive someone here on planet Earth because He can't think of a good way to do it Himself? Is this part of Scripture "inspired" and "profitable"? (See 2 Timothy 3:16)

Did God intend for this story to be recorded in just this way? Or was this story mainly the prophet putting things down the way he understood them?

It should be clear from this story that Ahab had no desire to discover what God's will or the truth was. All he wanted to do was his own will. Ahab wanted to show off before Jehoshaphat and he thought he could once again defeat the Syrians. Because Yahweh's name and power had been called into question so many times by Ahab and Jezebel, God chose to demonstrate His power in this way. God clearly predicted each event in this series before it happened. But Ahab chose to ignore God's final warning to him, even though God had helped him so obviously in the recent past.

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EGW Comments:

"God Alone Can Countermand His Orders.--The man of God had been fearless in delivering his

message of rebuke. He had not hesitated to denounce the king's false system of worship. And he had refused Jeroboam's invitation, even though promised a reward. But he allowed himself to be over-persuaded by the one who claimed to have a message from heaven. {2BC 1033.5}

"When the Lord gives a man a command such as He gave this messenger, He Himself must countermand the order. Upon those who turn from the voice of God to listen to counter orders, the threatened evil will come. Because this messenger obeyed false orders, God permitted him to be destroyed" (MS 1, 1912). {2BC 1033.6}

"Although Solomon had longed to prepare the mind of Rehoboam, his chosen successor, to meet with wisdom the crisis foretold by the prophet of God, he had never been able to exert a strong molding influence for good over the mind of his son, whose early training had been so grossly neglected. Rehoboam had received from his mother, an Ammonitess, the stamp of a vacillating character. At times he endeavored to serve God and was granted a measure of prosperity; but he was not steadfast, and at last he yielded to the influences for evil that had surrounded him from infancy. In the mistakes of Rehoboam's life and in his final apostasy is revealed the fearful result of Solomon's union with idolatrous women. {Prophets and Kings 88.2}

"The tribes had long suffered grievous wrongs under the oppressive measures of their former ruler. The extravagance of Solomon's reign during his apostasy had led him {89} to tax the people heavily and to require of them much menial service. Before going forward with the coronation of a new ruler, the leading men from among the tribes determined to ascertain whether or not it was the purpose of Solomon's son to lessen these burdens. "So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee." {Prophets and Kings 88.3}

"Desirous of taking counsel with his advisers before outlining his policy, Rehoboam answered, "Come again unto me after three days." And the people departed. {Prophets and Kings 89.1}

"And King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants forever." 2 Chronicles 10:3-7. {Prophets and Kings 89.2}

"Dissatisfied, Rehoboam turned to the younger men with whom he had associated during his youth and early manhood, and inquired of them, "What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?" 1 Kings 12:9. The young men suggested that he deal sternly with the subjects of his kingdom and make plain to them that from the very beginning he would brook no interference with his personal wishes. {Prophets and Kings 89.3}

"Flattered by the prospect of exercising supreme authority, Rehoboam determined to disregard the counsel of the older {90} men of his realm, and to make the younger men his advisers. Thus it came to pass that on the day appointed, when "Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam" for a statement concerning the policy he intended to pursue, Rehoboam "answered the people roughly, . . . saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Verses 12-14. {Prophets and Kings 89.4}

"Had Rehoboam and his inexperienced counselors understood the divine will concerning Israel, they would have listened to the request of the people for decided reforms in the administration of the government. But in the hour of opportunity that came to them during the meeting in Shechem, they failed to reason from cause to effect, and thus forever weakened their influence over a large number of the people. Their expressed determination to perpetuate and add to the oppression introduced

during Solomon's reign was in direct conflict with God's plan for Israel, and gave the people ample occasion to doubt the sincerity of their motives. In this unwise and unfeeling attempt to exercise power, the king and his chosen counselors revealed the pride of position and authority. {Prophets and Kings 90.1}

"The Lord did not allow Rehoboam to carry out the policy he had outlined. Among the tribes were many thousands who had become thoroughly aroused over the oppressive measures of Solomon's reign, and these now felt that they could not do otherwise than rebel against the house of David. "When all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What {91} portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents." Verse 16. {Prophets and Kings 90.2}

"The breach created by the rash speech of Rehoboam proved irreparable. Thenceforth the twelve tribes of Israel were divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin composing the lower or southern kingdom of Judah, under the rulership of Rehoboam; while the ten northern tribes formed and maintained a separate government, known as the kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their ruler. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the rending of the kingdom. "The cause was from the Lord." Verse 15. {Prophets and Kings 91.1}

"For three years Rehoboam tried to profit by his sad experience at the beginning of his reign; and in this effort he was prospered. He "built cities for defense in Judah," and "fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, {93} and store of victual, and of oil and wine." He was careful to make these fortified cities "exceeding strong." 2 Chronicles 11:5, 11, 12. But the secret of Judah's prosperity during the first years of Rehoboam's reign lay not in these measures. It was their recognition of God as the Supreme Ruler that placed the tribes of Judah and Benjamin on vantage ground. To their number were added many God-fearing men from the northern tribes. "Out of all the tribes of Israel," the record reads, "such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon." Verses 16, 17. {Prophets and Kings 92.1}