

# PREACHING THROUGH I KINGS

## IN THIS BOOK WE SEE

How God kept His promise to preserve the kingly line of David to the coming of the Messiah.

Examples of the human qualities of stubbornness, selfishness, pride, and ungodliness on one side, or faithfulness, courage and godliness on the other, with the results of each.

The working of God in the history of the Jews, bringing strength for faithfulness, and withdrawing His favor from the nation when it disobeyed.

## WRITING OF THE BOOK

The books of I and II Kings were originally a unit, following directly on the books of Samuel. They were divided for the sake of convenience by those who translated the Old Testament into Greek about 200 years before Christ. The book was completed some time after the events related (See I Kings 10:19), and it mentions by name at least ten written records of history and prophecy dealing with the same period—especially the “Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” and the “Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.” Along with, and perhaps drawing from, these other, now extinct, writings, the inspired writer has preserved that which best serves the religious needs of the Lord’s people.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES ESTABLISH THE HISTORY

In 1939 the mummy of Shishak, King of Egypt, was discovered at Tanis in a sarcophagus covered with gold not native to Egypt. Was it the gold he took at Jerusalem (I Kings 14:25, 26)? At Megiddo, the stone hitching posts and mangers of Solomon’s vast stables (I Kings 9:15, 19) have been found. Their number agrees with the description given in the Bible. At Samaria the Harvard University Expedition found the foundations of Omri’s palace (I Kings 16:24) with evidence that no city was there before.

## ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

Chapters 1-4	Solomon is established on the throne.
5-8	He builds the Temple for which David has prepared.

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9-11	Solomon's splendor. His introduction of idolatry.
12-14	The kingdom is divided between Rehoboam of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel.
15:1 — 16:28	Less known kings of Israel and Judah.
16:29 — 22:40	Ahab, King of Israel, and Elijah, God's prophet.
22:41-53	Kings Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah.

### Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "School Days" (I Kings 3:4-15)
- "The Nearest Church" (I Kings 12:25-33)
- "That Juniper Tree" (I Kings 19:1-14)
- "Nothing But the Truth" (I Kings 22:12-24)

### Other Suggested Sermon Topics:

- "He That Exalteth Himself" (I Kings 1:5-10)
- "The Blood of War in Peace" (I Kings 2:1-10)
- "The Beginning of Wisdom" (I Kings 3:4-15)
- "The House of Prayer" (I Kings 8:22)
- "The Peculiar People" (I Kings 9:1-9)
- "The King Who Was Diseased in His Feet" (I Kings 15:9-15)

## QUESTIONS OVER I KINGS

1. When David was aged what son tried to install himself as king? (1:5)
2. Who did become the king after David? (1:38, 39)
3. Why was David not permitted to build the Temple? (5:3)
4. Solomon overlaid the Temple with what material? (6:21)
5. What queen came to test Solomon with questions? (10:1)
6. Rehoboam succeeded his father. Whose advice did he accept — that of the elders or that of young men? (12:8)
7. Who became the first king of the ten northern tribes? (12:20)
8. Who was the wicked wife of Ahab? (16:31)
9. Who was fed by the ravens by the brook Cherith? (17:1-6)
10. Who was ordered killed by Jezebel so her husband could obtain a vineyard? (21:1)

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SCHOOL DAYS

(I Kings 3:4-15)

INTRODUCTION — Solomon and today's young person.

Solomon had only recently come to the throne. The early days of his reign were occupied with carrying out the expressed wishes of his father. Now he must make policies and accept responsibilities himself. The story is the story of his wisdom. "The Lord giveth wisdom, and out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov. 2:6).

I. SOLOMON GOES TO GIBEON TO SACRIFICE.

—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

- A. The worship of God has always resulted in the desire to train as many as possible of the people. "When thy son shall ask . . ."
- B. Harvard College (and fifteen of the first sixteen colleges in the U.S.) were for ministers.
- C. Danger in getting away from it—as in Germany, where schools had other purpose. (Gideons examined school books in Vermont. In 1800 to 1850 they were 23% to 100% definitely Christian. Now a few references to God, Christ or the Bible; far more to mythology, and other religions.)
- D. We must learn much that the school doesn't teach.
- E. If we don't follow God's wisdom, He will raise up others who will.

II. GOD SAID, "ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE."

- A. What do you seek in life and in school?
  - 1. The question must be faced. Refusal to make a choice is itself a choice to follow the downward path of least resistance.
  - 2. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be . . ." (Matt. 7:7).
- B. The worthwhile gift is of God.
  - 1. Who has the key to the things that God has made?
  - 2. William Lyon Phelps said that a knowledge of the Bible without college is better than the reverse.

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III. SOLOMON GAVE THANKS FOR FORMER BLESSINGS BEFORE MAKING REQUEST.

- A. God is not forgotten in any step.
- B. Thus he was prepared to receive what God would give.

IV. THE CHOICE—UNDERSTANDING OF GOOD AND ILL. 'Wisdom' covers a multitude of sins and virtues.

- A. First a sense of need—without it nothing could be given. "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

- B. The gift asked is an eternal gift. Property, honor, and life itself are for time, wisdom for eternity.

- C. It is an unselfish gift—that he may serve God's people.

- D. It is a practical gift. There is purpose in it. Wisdom to be applied.

- E. "That I may discern right and wrong."

- 1. He might have asked for political skill, shrewdness—here for truth.

- 2. What are our purposes? Lawyer, preacher, workman, manufacturer, engineer, salesman, doctor.

- 3. Purposes and habits fixed in school days—Wisdom to get good grades and gain favor—or honesty to learn?

V. THE GIFT IS GRANTED—AND MORE. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord . . ." (Mal. 3:10).

- A. Byproducts of education—measured in terms of greater income; rentals; sales.

- B. In America, a land of liberty, meeting better than any other her own needs and those of a suffering world.

VI. SOLOMON SACRIFICES—TRUE WISDOM IS TOWARD GOD, AND NOT AWAY.

The present age is either one of hopeless, fearful cynicism, or great faith.

*"Come . . . and learn of me"* (Matt. 11:28, 29).

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THE NEAREST CHURCH  
(I Kings 12:25-33)

INTRODUCTION —

Jeroboam was in many ways far ahead of his time.

I. THERE WAS MUCH IN THE INCIDENT FOR WHICH EXCUSE MIGHT BE FOUND.

A. Worshipping the same God.

1. "These are the Gods that brought you out of Egypt."
2. So now, "We are all going to the same place."

B. Teaching with familiar symbols.

1. From Egypt, the worship of the ox Apis and the calf Mnevis.
2. There was heifer worship in Palestine.
3. In the same manner as the use of images in modern churches (or "worship centers," etc.), it could be argued that they were using familiar symbols to teach the heathen concerning the true God.

C. Need for national unity.

1. Jeroboam feared that worship in Jerusalem would divide his kingdom.
2. This was a prime factor in the establishment of the church of England in the days of Henry VIII.

D. Convenience.

Here it could be argued that Jeroboam was showing special kindness to the poor, who could not afford to go to Jerusalem to worship.

In spite of all arguments, Jeroboam was always known as "Jeroboam . . . who made Israel to sin."

II. SOME OBJECTIONS CAN BE PLAINLY SEEN.

A. Jeroboam destroyed the very quality of worship itself by making it subservient to other interests.

B. He made religion to serve the state. — But how about bond drives, political campaigns, special days to serve government agencies, all carried on in churches?

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- C. He made convenience more important than conviction in religion.
  - 1. Said in effect, "Your comfort is more important than God's command."
  - 2. Apply to:
    - Your friends.
    - Your convenience.
    - The good feeling of going where you are appreciated.
    - The up-and-coming organization, etc.
  - 3. In all these things the very throne of God is challenged by the "worshiper."

### III. One objection is paramount.

- A. He set the authority of his reason above the authority of the will of God as revealed in the Law and the prophets.
- B. This objection seems to fit also—
  - 1. Those who follow denominational teaching in spite of the Bible.
  - 2. Those who "don't just believe in their way of doing, but it is better to go there than not to go to church at all."

## CONCLUSION —

In every city the Restoration movement is a tribute to those who refused to acknowledge convenience as the most important thing in religion. How shall those who have consulted the easy way find comfort in the presence of Him who took the way of the Cross, simply because it was God's will?

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THAT JUNIPER TREE  
(I Kings 19:1-14)

INTRODUCTION —

The “juniper tree” has come to mean the place of despondency. An experience not limited to any one group of people. Like the rain, it comes on the just and the unjust, the evil and good, old and young.

I. CAUSE OF DESPONDENCY.

(Put Elijah under the scrutiny of a psychiatrist.) Appearance from nowhere, springing to prominence; promise of drought, experience at Cherith, then at Serepta. Reappearance and the contest at Carmel. Return to Samaria ahead of the rain. Jezebel's threat, and Elijah's flight.

A. Partly a matter of exhaustion. Experience of the years as a fugitive. The heavy drain of Carmel—the flight of at least 100 miles.

B. Emotional reaction from a high and stirring occasion.  
— Ask yourselves—

Sometimes more dramatic as in a quick score by opposition after a fumbled touchdown. More commonplace as in basketball—you make the basket; other side gets ball. So in things of the spirit—“Let him that thinketh he standeth . . .” (I Cor. 10:12). E.g. Simon Peter after the Confession. Apostles after the Transfiguration. So the necessity for care of the new converts, especially in case of high emotion.

C. Loneliness—the servant was present, but there was not fellowship there.

D. Idleness—the great occasion is over and he has nothing to which to lay hand.

II. NATURE AND RESULT OF DESPONDENCY.

A. God's servant becomes useless. It was near the wind-up of affairs for Elijah.

B. Man of high courage appears as a coward.

III. GOD'S CARE FOR THE DESPONDENT.

- A. Patience, and nothing of derision.
  - 1. First no mention of chiding.
  - 2. Provides food and protection.
- B. Take a square look at situation from a long way off—  
“What are you doing here?”
- C. The assurance and reminder of God's presence in little things for every day. The Mount of God, fire, wind, earthquake, “gentle whisper.”
- D. The assurance of human fellowship. Seven thousand faithful. Companionship of Elisha—thus the church.
- E. Work to do—Arise and go. See “Fear not, from hence forth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5:10). “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15).

CONCLUSION —

Is life worth living? Yes, so long  
As there is wrong to right  
Wail of the weak against the strong  
Or tyranny to fight;  
Long as there lingers gloom to chase  
Or streaming tear to dry;  
One kindred woe, one sorrowing face  
That smiles as we draw nigh . . .  
— *Wm. Cullen Bryant*



PREACHING THROUGH I KINGS  
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH  
(I Kings 22:12-24)

INTRODUCTION — The story of Micaiah.

1. Chides Ahab (under guise) for allowing Ben-Hadad to go. Josephus says Ahab put him in prison then.
2. Called to confer with Ahab and Jehoshaphat in regard to Ramoth Gilead. Messenger urges him to speak well. "What God says." "Go and prosper"—an evident mockery of the four hundred. "Sheep without a shepherd." "Who shall convince Ahab that he may go up to Ramoth and be destroyed?"
3. Josephus mentions apparent contradiction between Elijah and Micaiah, for Elijah had said that dogs would lick Ahab's blood in Naboth's vineyard.
4. Fulfillment in every detail.
5. "If you return in peace at all, then God has not spoken by me."

I. UNPLEASANT TRUTH HATED.

1. "If the world hath hated you . . ." (John 15:18).
2. "Because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Love of lies—

- "No matter what you believe."
- "All will be saved."
- "No such thing as evil."
- "Go to church best suited."
- "Choose own baptism."
- "Once in grace, always in grace."

II. UNPLEASANT TRUTH RESPECTED.

1. "What man convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46).
2. Spiritualism's self-condemning salve.

III. UNPLEASANT TRUTH PRESENTED.

1. Difficulties to the one presenting it. Lack of favor. Gallery of heroes—Hebrews 11:35 ff.
2. Who follows in their train?

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How may we know the truth?

By their fruits.

Search the Scriptures daily.

Truth above policy.

Stand, or blown with every wind.

### IV. UNPLEASANT TRUTH REJECTED.

1. Ahab rejects because it is unpleasant. So Agrippa rejected Paul. Herod, John the Baptist.
2. So the doctrine of hell is widely rejected, with need of Christian conversion for salvation. "Heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."
3. Jehoshaphat rejected it because he was already committed to false course. How many others like him . . .

### V. UNPLEASANT TRUTH FULFILLED.

1. Truth is not broken—men break themselves on it.
2. Josephus: "And as what things were foretold should happen to Ahab by the two prophets came to pass, we ought thence to have high notions of God, and everywhere to honor and worship him, and never to suppose that what is pleasant and agreeable is worthy of belief before what is true."

### CONCLUSION —

"Truth forever on the scaffold."

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again—

The eternal years of God are hers;

But error, wounded, writhes in pain,

And dies among his worshipers.

— *Wm. Cullen Bryant*