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1 Kings 3 - 4



1 Kings - Steve Gregg

The passage in 1 Kings 3-4 describes Solomon's reign as king. He punishes Shimei, who had committed treason against his father and predecessor, David. Solomon also builds the temple and his own house, and repairs the walls around Jerusalem. Additionally, he enters into peace treaties with neighboring nations through marriage alliances, demonstrating his diplomatic skills as a king.

Transcript

Let's pick up that story in 1 Kings 3 of Solomon. We just had him installed despite the opposition of Adonijah. Adonijah, the oldest surviving son of David, had wished to make himself king, though David was still living and Adonijah did not have David's approval.

He apparently knew that Solomon was David's favorite to replace him. And since David had not yet made a move to install Solomon, it was not clear whether Adonijah could perhaps seize the moment and get the people on his own side and become the king first. So he tried, but he failed.

And he failed because Nathan the prophet and Bathsheba told David about what Adonijah was doing and influenced David to make moves to install Solomon as the king, although David was still living, which he did. And David then gave his dying commission to Solomon and then died. And his commission to Solomon was basically to clean up some unfinished business that David had left undone.

Joab really should be punished for the murders he had committed. Shimei should be punished for his treason. And Barzillai in particular should be treated well because of his kindness he showed to the king when he was fleeing from Absalom.

So in chapter 2 we find how Solomon took care of all of that and Adonijah himself tried again to make a play for the throne and got himself killed. Joab got killed for his murders. Shimei got killed because he did not stay in Jerusalem as he had agreed to do.

And we don't read anything about Barzillai, of course, in that chapter, but apparently he was treated well, or his family. Now we continue with the reign of Solomon now that he is

firmly established and all of his opponents are gone. It says, Now Solomon made a treaty with the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter.

Then he brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem. Now this marriage to Pharaoh's daughter was the first political marriage we know of. Solomon, I think, already had one wife, an Ammonitess, at this time.

And yet he was now entering into a political marriage, which was not very uncommon in the ancient world. Peace treaties between nations would often be sealed with a marriage between a king's daughter and the other king's son or something like that. In this case, Solomon himself married the king's daughter from Egypt.

However, in history, Egypt was not known very often to have this kind of arrangement. They did occasionally, but it was very unusual, whereas other nations did this more frequently, having political marriages, alliances through marriage. Pharaoh usually avoided that, the Pharaohs in Egypt.

The fact that he went for it in this case means that Solomon's prestige was at such a high point that even Pharaoh felt it was good to have some kind of a non-aggressions pact between them. Now Egypt was much larger than Israel, but David had left Solomon a very powerful kingdom and empire. And though he didn't rule over Egypt, he was very powerful and rich, and apparently Pharaoh was willing to enter into some kind of a pact with him and give him his daughter.

Now Pharaoh's daughter was, for the time being, placed in the city of David. The city of David is sometimes used synonymously with Jerusalem, but it also sometimes distinguished from it, because up on the mound on Mount Zion was the city of David. And Jerusalem later came to encompass more area than that.

So the city of David was sort of a specific district that was no doubt heavily fortified and so forth. And we find that Solomon was going to be building the temple and his own house, apparently outside the city of David in Jerusalem. And he also was going to repair or work on the wall all around Jerusalem.

Now of course the city of David already had a wall around it. It had been, the Jebusites had lived there and had resisted conquest for centuries because they had good walls. And David's men had conquered the city by apparently going through a water access area and had conquered the city.

And no doubt it was well fortified, but when it says he's building the walls of Jerusalem, it must mean that he's expanding the size of Jerusalem and building a wall that's a larger enclosure. And perhaps he kept her in the city of David until that wall was built just for security sake. Not that he was seriously threatened by enemies, but since he married

Pharaoh's daughter, it would be a matter of good relations with Egypt to keep her safe.

And so he probably kept her in the walled city of David until he had developed other projects, including a protective wall around the whole city. Meanwhile, the people sacrificed at the high places because there was no house built for the name of Yahweh until those days. Now the high places, as I think you know, were worship areas where the Canaanites had worshipped their deities.

They were often on the tops of mounds or hills, and thus they were called high places. Though they were not always on elevated places. These areas were sometimes in flat areas as well, but mostly on the high places.

And so they came to be called the high places. These were places where the Canaanites had worshipped, and when they were driven out, the Israelites often worshipped Yahweh there or else worshipped Canaanite gods there. Or a syncretistic combination of Canaanite and Yahweh worship.

So in most cases, the high places, especially after the building of the temple, are spoken of in a pejorative way. They are the places where there is compromise. When Israel worships at the high places, they're compromising with Canaanite religion.

Now it was somewhat more tolerated before the temple was built. Although there was a tabernacle, the tabernacle didn't have the ark in it, and therefore their worship center was kind of disrupted. And they seem to have allowed worship on the high places, although if they worshipped pagan deities on the high places, that was not okay.

However, there were high places that actually ceremonies to Yahweh were conducted at, even by Samuel. And at this point, the tabernacle that Moses had built stood on the high place of Gibeon, which was the great high place. And it says the people in those days were worshipping in the high places.

It doesn't say here whether they were doing it to Yahweh or to pagan gods. But the fact that it says because there was no house built for the name of Yahweh until those days, it may mean that because they didn't have a central place to worship Yahweh, they tended to worship other gods, or they worshipped whatever or wherever they happened to find convenient. And so there was sloppy worship in those days, very compromised.

Now Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burnt incense at the high places. Now that exception means that that was a violation. But he loved the Lord.

And to say he loved the Lord usually means he kept the covenant. It's not necessarily talking about his emotions as well as his behavior, that he served Yahweh and he did not violate the covenant and worship other gods. And so he apparently worshipped Yahweh at the high places, and that was not a good thing.

But it was still tolerated until the house of God was built. Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

Now that event is talked about at the very beginning of 2 Chronicles. In 2 Chronicles 1, and there we're given much more information about Gibeon, this high place, than we have in Kings. And we find out, as we might have wondered where it had gone, that the tabernacle was there.

And we had not heard that it had gone there, I don't think, previously. But in 2 Chronicles 1, it says in verse 3, 3 Then Solomon and all the congregation with him went to the high place that was at Gibeon, 4 for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness. 5 But David had brought up the ark of the covenant of God from Chirim to the place David had prepared for it, 6 for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

And so, the ark was in Jerusalem, but the tabernacle of meeting was at Gibeon. Now, tabernacle of meeting is a term that is used occasionally in the book of Exodus, and it's a little unclear whether this means the tabernacle where the priests ministered, or whether it means a specific tent that Moses set up where he used to meet with Yahweh. There is some ambiguity in the book of Exodus about this.

We read of Moses going to the tabernacle of meeting, and being in the tabernacle of meeting with God, and leaving, and Joshua remained at the tabernacle of meeting. This may have been a separate tent from the main tabernacle. And so, it may not be that we're talking about the tabernacle that we read so much about in Exodus here, being in Gibeon, but rather the other tent that God met with Moses in, and so that would have been a sacred relic too.

And they may have set it up in Gibeon to increase the sanctity of the place, because the tent that Moses had met with God in was there. I'm not really sure, and I'm not sure that it can be determined. In 2 Chronicles 1, verse 5 says, Bezalel, of course, is the man in the days of Moses, who constructed and oversaw the construction of the furniture of the tabernacle.

And so, the bronze altar that's mentioned here is the original bronze altar. Now, the tent of meeting, if that was the one that Moses actually was in and not the main tabernacle, might have been in very poor repair by this time, because this is several hundred years after Moses' time, and tents are not the kind, even buildings fall into disrepair in hundreds of years, but a tent would be in very poor repair. Now, if it was the tabernacle that was the worship center in Exodus, it may be that curtains and so forth had been replaced as necessary, so that the same building was still there.

The boards that were covered with gold and so forth would be long-lasting. The curtains

and the veils and the tarps over the top and so forth would very possibly be replaced as necessary, as holes would develop or as they got moldy or whatever, they would maybe replace them, but the building remained the same building. I don't know very much about this because we're only given this reference, and I'm not really sure what to make of it.

But at least some remnant of the days of Moses was still preserved at Gibeon. The bronze altar was there, a tabernacle was there that had been a tabernacle of meeting in the days of Moses, so that made it a special place, and that's where Solomon went and offered a thousand sacrifices on this occasion. We don't know what the occasion was.

It doesn't say why he went there on that particular occasion, but it may have been an inaugural feast or something like that, an inaugural worship service for him to be more formally recognized as king. It's not really made clear why he went there on this occasion, but he went there to worship. At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, Ask, What shall I give you? And Solomon said, You have shown great mercy to your servant David, my father, because he walked before you in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with you.

You have continued this great kindness for him, and you have given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day. Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child. I do not know how to go out or to come in.

Now, going out and coming in is a euphemism for leadership, and we've encountered it a number of times already. Even Moses used it when he was getting too old, and a leader often is said to be one who goes out and comes in before the people. Anyway, when Solomon said I'm a little child, he's simply being humble.

He wasn't really a very little child. He's an adult, but he's saying I'm as inexperienced as a child. I've never ruled a nation before, and there's a lot of people to rule.

He says, Your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore, give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to judge this great people of yours? So, in other words, he asked for wisdom to be a good ruler, and the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing, and God said to him, Because you have asked this thing and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice. Behold, I have done according to your words.

See, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given

you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So, if you walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.

Then Solomon awoke, and indeed it had been a dream, and he came to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants. So, he offered initially a thousand offerings on this altar, that was the original altar from the tabernacle, which is at Gibeon. He had this dream and this promise from God, and then he returned to his home in Jerusalem, and he offered a lot more offerings there before the Ark of the Covenant.

Now, the promise that God made him was that he would be the wisest king and the richest king, and that he apparently was in his lifetime. And we have in the next portion of this chapter a sample, just one case of his passing judgment in a way that made a reputation for himself of being very wise. But I would point out to you something in how God speaks, because it's something that comes up in the rest of Scripture as well, and that is that there's a hyperbole, what would be called an exaggeration, that is very common in Scripture, and if we don't understand that, we will misunderstand some passages.

In verse 12, he said, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. Now, this statement, there's no one like you before, and no one like you after, sounds like, in all history, he's the top guy, he's the wisest that would ever, ever live. And taking those words literally, that's what it would mean.

However, this is a fairly common figure of speech in Scripture, so that it's actually a hyperbole, it's basically just saying you will be exceptional, very exceptional. You know, perhaps even unique in your time and unique with reference to a long time before and after you, but not necessarily all time. After all, Jesus himself referred to himself as one greater than Solomon, when he said that the queen of Sheba will rise up in judgment against this generation, because she came from a far away place to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but he says, but one greater than Solomon is here.

In other words, the wisdom Jesus was given was greater than the wisdom of Solomon, so obviously someone did arise after Solomon that exceeds him. But that shouldn't be surprising, it's not a violation of what God is saying here, because that kind of language is used in Scripture when it's not really talking about literal, unique events, but simply things that are strikingly unusual. For example, in the plague of locusts that we have in Exodus chapter 10, when the locust plague came, in Exodus chapter 10, verse 6, it says, They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians, which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen since the day that they were on earth to this day.

And it actually goes on further, I'm looking for the verse that says that there were no locusts like them before or ever. That's verse 14. It says about these locusts, Previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them.

Okay, so these locusts are unique in history, supposedly. There had never been any like them before, and there will never be any like them afterward. And yet in the book of Joel, which is much later, that was Exodus 10, 14.

But in Joel chapter 2, Joel is talking about a locust plague, and he likens the locusts to an army coming to devastate the agricultural life of Judah. And it says in Joel 2, verses 1 and 2, Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm in my holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for a day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, this is really locusts, great and strong, the like of whom has never been, nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.

Now, here's a uniquely severe locust plague. How do I know it's locusts he's talking about? Well, you have to read the book of Joel as a whole. This is the subject.

If you look at chapter 1, for example, he says in verse 4, What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten. What the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

This is a locust plague we're describing here. And it's described like an army of men, like the locusts are marching in, invading. And it says, a people, meaning the locusts, come great and strong, the like of whom has never been, nor will there ever be such after them.

And yet that was the same thing said about the locust plague in Exodus chapter 10, verse 14. Obviously, there are two different locust plagues. And yet the severity of each of them is said to be uniquely severe, such as there would never be before or after them.

And therefore, it's clear that we're using a hyperbole there. Now, where this really comes into importance in interpreting something in the New Testament is when you come to Matthew 24. Because in Matthew 24, in verse 21, Jesus said, For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

That's the same kind of hyperbole. Now, he is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem as the context makes clear. And he even says it will happen in that generation in verse 34.

And so, he is talking about a disaster that occurred in that generation and it resulted in not one stone of the temple being left standing on another, as the opening part of this

chapter tells us. So, this was the destruction of Jerusalem. And he says, this is such a disaster that there has not been such like it since the beginning of the world, nor will there ever be afterward.

Yet, God had done something almost exactly like it in 586 BC when the Babylonians came and did the exact same thing to Jerusalem that the Romans did in AD 70. It was just the two were almost like twin events. But before God did that in 586 BC, he predicted it.

In Ezekiel chapter 5, in these interesting words, in Ezekiel 5 9, God is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem that would come by the Babylonians' hands. And in Ezekiel 5 9, he says, and I will do among you what I have never done and the like of which I will never do again because of all your abominations. So, if you look at it like the previous verse, indeed I, even I am against you, I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations.

This is talking about the Babylonians coming and destroying Jerusalem. He says, I will do among you the like of which I have never done and which I will never do again. And yet, he did it again in AD 70.

Now, did God break his promise? No, it's just that he's using a figure of speech that is used frequently enough that his readers are supposed to recognize that he's not really saying there would never ever be anything like it ever again. It's just a matter of emphasis that this is an almost uniquely devastating event, but not quite as unique as the words would suggest if they were taken quite literally because there was something as disastrous that happened in AD 70. And Jesus spoke about that in the same language, like there's never been before and will never be afterwards.

So, when Solomon is told that he'll be made so wise that there has not been anyone like you before you nor shall there arise after you, this does not have to be taken in a literal sense. It would be a mistake. But it does mean that he was about as wise as they get.

And an example of his wisdom is given in the rest of this chapter in verses 16 and following. 1 Kings 3, 16 says, Then two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him. And one woman said, O my Lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house, and I gave birth while she was in the house.

Then it happened the third day after I had given birth that this woman also gave birth, and we were together. There was no one with us in the house except the two of us in the house. And this woman's son died in the night because she lay on him.

She smothered him in her sleep. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while your maidservant slept and laid him in her bosom and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I arose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was dead.

But when I examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had born. Then the other woman said, No, but the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son. And the first woman said, No, but the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son.

Thus they spoke before the king. And so the king very wisely ordered that a DNA test be done. Solved the problem.

Actually, there was no way to solve the problem because it was one woman's word against another. It's interesting, these women were both harlot. And they lived together.

Must have lived in a house of prostitution or something. And they both got pregnant around the same time. Both had babies about the same time.

Now, it's clear that prostitution was apparently not illegal in Israel because here they are coming before the king with their problem. And it's made obvious that these are prostitutes and they're not expecting to be arrested. They're coming because one has a complaint against the other.

The fact that prostitutes could come before the king with their problem directly shows how simple earlier times were. That a common citizen, even a citizen of low caste in society, if they had a complaint, they could often come directly to the king himself. Which would be so difficult to do in any more complex society where you've got a lot of lower courts to go through.

On the other hand, it's possible they did go through lower courts first. It may be that they had gone to lower judges and they couldn't figure out what to do. So finally, their case was bumped up to the Supreme Court where the king himself would hear it.

That was true even in Paul's day, you know. Paul was able to appeal his case directly to the Caesar. But only Roman citizens could do that.

The average subject people could not do that. But Paul had to go through the lower courts first. The lower courts were not able to solve his problem and therefore he appealed to Caesar and he could actually appeal to Caesar.

But it took years to get on Caesar's court calendar. Paul had to wait at least two years before he would stand before Caesar, even once he had arrived in Rome. But it's interesting how in the older kingdoms, you know, a person could actually talk to the king himself.

Be like, I guess we could go to the Supreme Court with our case. We have that right too. But it just seems such an anomaly for two women who were prostitutes to be able to come and plead the case before the guy who's ruling a huge empire, you know, that he would handle a case of this type.

Anyway, the king said in response to them, the one says, this is my son who lives and your son is the dead one. And the other one says, no, but your son is the dead one and my son is the living one. Then the king said, bring me a sword.

So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, divide the living child in two and give half of it to one and half to the other. Now, I don't know if Solomon was holding the sword or if he had a soldier there with the sword.

But giving that order is a little risky because the soldier might actually carry it out. Unless he had informed the soldier, hey, don't do this right away. Obviously, this is a test.

He didn't want to kill the baby. But giving an order like that, a king giving an order can result in that happening. So maybe he himself was holding the sword.

But he just said, well, listen, this is an easy thing to solve. We can't tell whose baby it is. So we'll just give you each half and be happy.

Then the woman whose son it was spoke to the king for she yearned with compassion for her son. And she said, oh, my lord, give her the living child and by no means kill him. But the other said, let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.

These women were not highly intelligent, at least the second one was not. I mean, she gave herself away rather obviously. And the reason she had stolen her neighbor's child was not because she desperately wanted to have a living child, apparently, but she didn't want her rival, her roommate, to have a child and her not have one.

It was like the woman who had the living child had one up on the one who was childless. And so that neither of them would have a child would be okay, but not that one of them would. And so the woman who didn't care about the child obviously revealed her colors and said, let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.

So the king answered and said, give the first woman the living child and by no means kill him. She is his mother. And, of course, he was right.

And it would have been a hard... I mean, we all know this story is a very famous story, so probably it's hard to imagine how difficult it would be to come up with a solution like that. Once you read the solution, oh, yeah, that's obvious. It's like when Jesus says, well, whoever... is that coin got Caesar's face? Well, give Caesar what's Caesar's.

Oh, sure, that's obviously a great answer. That solves the problem. And yet, once we hear the great answer, we may not realize how difficult it would be to come up with it on your own in a situation like that.

I know that I used to read the Sherlock Holmes stories a lot and Sherlock Holmes always

figured out things that no one else could figure out. But then he'd explain it at the end how he did it and it turned out to be not so impressive at all. In fact, he even said so.

He even said, once you explain it, you're not impressed. He said, it just seems so simple. Anyone could have figured that out.

But it's not always easy to figure out when you're trying to come up with it. It's like we were playing Password the other day. The person who knows the answer, they just think it's so simple.

Why can't you get the word right? But the one who doesn't have any clue what the answer is, or has a clue, but not much more than a clue, it's not so easy. In all the realm of possible answers, the right one doesn't always just commend itself, obviously. But when you hear it, you say, of course, that's obvious.

That's clear. And so here, with his solution, we think, of course, that's what I'd do too. That'd be the obvious thing to do.

But if we'd never read or heard this story, would we have come up with it? I mean, what a brilliant thing it really was to play on the psychological nature of these women, knowing that as prostitutes, they weren't starting families, and so having a baby wasn't as important to the one who didn't love the baby, who didn't own it, as it was just a competition she had with her roommate. And so he knew the mother would never approve of this. He took his chances that the other woman would approve, but he seemed to know what motivated these women enough to know that the other woman would not mind dividing the child and would give herself away.

So all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered, and they feared the king, for they saw that wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. Now, this must have been only one of thousands of cases he had to hear in the course of his 40 years of reigning, but it's given just as sort of a case in point. Now, this is a case of the kind of thing that happened when he's adjudicated.

He had the wisdom to come up with the right answer when no one else could figure it out. Now, Chapter 4 says, King Solomon was king over all Israel, and these were his officials. Azariah, the son of Zadok, the priest.

Elehorath and Ahijah, the sons of Shishah, scribes. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, the recorder. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, over the army.

He took Joab's place. Zadok and Abiathar, the priests. Now, Abiathar had been deposed in favor of Zadok, but apparently this is mentioned because Abiathar initially, before he was deposed, was also a priest at the beginning of Solomon's reign, but Zadok was the main one who replaced him.

Azariah, the son of Nathan, over the officers. Now, Nathan could be, of course, the prophet Nathan, but Nathan was a fairly common name in Israel. David even had another son named Nathan, who never amounted to anything special, but it might have been one of Solomon's cousins or whatever was, or nephews, I should say, was on his administration.

Son of Nathan, over the officers. Zebud, the son of Nathan, a priest, and the king's friend. Now, the king's friend is not just a statement that they were Facebook friends or that kind of friends, but they were, it was an official office.

The king's friend was his special counselor. And the last person who held that office under David was Hushai, and it was he who spoiled the counsel of Ahithophel when Absalom was trying to wage war against David. Hushai, who was David's friend, feigned being now Absalom's friend and gave counsel that gave David the advantage against Absalom and saved David's life.

But the king's friend was a special officer who was basically a wise counselor. Interesting that Solomon, the wisest of all men, would need a wise counselor, but he apparently did. And we know that he had more than one counselor.

In fact, in Proverbs, he said, in the multitude of counselors, there's safety. Though he was the wisest man, he apparently saw a need to counsel with other people who were wise as well. And when he died and Rehoboam, his son, needed counsel, he went first to the older counselors who had counseled Solomon, his father.

And he didn't take their counsel and say he took the counsel of young counselors, but I just always found it interesting that Solomon had counselors who counseled him, because it seemed like he'd be the counselor par excellence himself. And we don't know if he took their counsel, because he ended up doing some foolish things after all. Ahishar, over the household, and Adoniram, the son of Abda, over the labor force.

And Solomon had 12 governors over all Israel who provided food for the king and his household. Each one made provision for one month of the year. So these men would be probably one from each tribe that would provide one month out of each year, all the things necessary to feed the king's palace.

And so we have their names. Ben-Hur was the first one, who later was, of course, a famous charioteer. No, not really.

That's different. Ben-Hur, different era. Ben-Hur was in the mountains of Ephraim.

Ben-Dikur in Mekaz, Sheolbim, Beth-Shemesh, and Elan, Beth-Hanan. That's apparently the places where he lived or actually collected or ruled over to get the food for the household. Ben-Hesed in Aruboth.

To him belongs Sukkot and all the land of Hefer. Ben-Adab in all the regions of Dor. Now you might wonder, how come so many people are named Ben in that society? Of course, Ben means son of.

Ben means son of in Hebrew. So these men were named the son of Hur, the son of Dikur, the son of Hesed, the son of Ben-Adab. What their actual names were are not given for some reason.

It says in verse 11 that this man, Ben-Adab, had Taphath, the daughter of Solomon, as a wife. So he was a son-in-law to the king. Baanah, the son of Ahilud, in Tainak, Megiddo, and all Beth-Shean, which is beside Zeratan, below Jezreel from Beth-Shean, to Abel-Meholah, as far as the other side of Cocneum.

Aren't you glad to know that? Now you can just picture where it is. Then there's Ben-Geber in Ramoth-Gilead. To him belong the towns of Jeor, the son of Manasseh, in Gilead.

To him also belong the regions of Ar-Gab and Be-Shean, 60 cities with walls and bronze gate bars. Ahan-Adab, the son of Edo, in Mahaniim. Ahimez in Naphtali.

He took Bazimath, the daughter of Solomon, as a wife. So he's another of the king's son-in-laws, was in this 12. Abay-anah, the son of Hushai, in Asher and Aloth.

Perhaps Hushai is the same Hushai who was David's friend. Jehoshaphat, the son of Paruah, in Issachar. Shimei, the son of Elah, in Benjamin.

And Geber, the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, in the country of Sion, king of the Amorites, of Og of Be-Shean. And he was the only governor who was in the land. Apparently in that land.

Now, these are their names. Their names do not become important to us. None of these men play any role in the stories ahead of us.

So knowing their names is not as valuable to us as it would have been to people living at that time, in all likelihood. Now, verse 20, Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude. And that, of course, is simply a notice that God's promise to Abram had been fulfilled.

Because God told Abram that his children, his offspring would be as the sand of the seashore. For multitudinous, we find that that's essentially how Judah and Israel are. That too is obviously a hyperbole.

Because the total population of Israel in the time of Solomon is estimated to be about about 5 million people. And therefore, there's certainly a lot more sands than that on the seashore. But the idea would be that they're extremely numerous.

As he had said to God when God said, what do you want? He said, your people, in chapter 3, verse 8, there are great people too numerous to be numbered or counted. Well, with difficulty, they could be counted. But we have a lot of hyperbole in the scripture.

And that's an important thing to note. Because many times people just feel like they should take everything in the Bible literally. And typically, the scripture uses a lot of hyperbole in figures of speech.

It says, they were eating and drinking and rejoicing in verse 20. So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river, that's the Euphrates, to the land of the Philistines, which would be on the Mediterranean coast. As far as the border of Egypt in the south, and they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

That's a lot of range. I don't know how many miles it is from, say, the Jordan River, east, northeast really, to the Euphrates. But it's quite some distance.

And all the kingdoms in that region served Solomon, which just means they paid tribute to him. They had been conquered. They were tributaries to him.

And so he was gathering wealth from all those regions. That's a lot of kingdoms to gather wealth from. And therefore, he became extremely rich.

And it says, now Solomon's provision for one day was 30 cores of fine flour, 60 cores of meal. Now, cores are about five bushels each. And I don't know how many of you are familiar with bushels anymore.

But a lot of times, farm produce was measured in bushels. Most of us have probably seen a bushel basket. So we have some idea of what a bushel looks like.

But there were five bushels in a core. And there were 30 cores of fine flour from which the pastries and breads were made, of course. So 30 cores would be 150 bushels of flour.

And twice that many cores of meal. Probably the meal was for bread and the fine flour for pastries. And then 10 fatted oxen, 120 oxen from the pastures and 100 sheep.

Now, fatted oxen were different from oxen from the pastures. The fatted oxen would be especially fattened up and not out free-ranging. But then there were also oxen that were free-range oxen that were brought in.

100 sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl. Now, this is each month. Solomon's household ate this.

Not Solomon himself, but all his administration, all the people that were government officials. For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the river. That is, again,

the Euphrates, from Tysa even to Geza, namely over all the kings on this side of the river.

And he had peace on every side all around him. That's quite a large buffer against invasion. If he had all the people this side of, or that is, to the west of the Euphrates were his allies and his subjects, then anyone invading would have to come from further away than that and have to cover a lot of territory to get to him.

And so he just lived a secure life during his entire lifetime. And Jude and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. This narrative is full of typical Hebrew idioms.

From Dan to Beersheba, we've encountered many times before. Dan in the north, Beersheba to the south, that means the whole country. Every man under his vine and fig tree is frequently used in scripture to simply mean a person enjoying a tranquil life, sitting under his vine and his fig tree.

It's not necessary to assume that every man literally had one fig tree and one vine. Some may have had more and some may have had less, but the point is that the imagery is used of a sort of complacency, really, and security, and just an easy life, sitting under your vine and fig tree. You'll find that expression numerous times in the Bible.

Now, Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen. Now, this verse, 26, is a little problematic because we have in Chronicles the same information, but it says not 40,000 stalls, but it says 4,000 stalls for his chariots, or his chariot horses. And so, these are parallel accounts.

And one says he had 40,000 and the other says 4,000. Now, some have found ways to try to harmonize those two, but most scholars assume that this is just a case of a textual, a copyist error. Such copyist errors are known to exist in the manuscripts.

The manuscripts have not come down without any copyist errors. And anyone who studies the manuscripts knows that because they know that there are variants in different manuscripts. Obviously, all of them are copies that someone made of the Bible in ancient times, but some of them, the passages, read different from each other in the different copies.

So, somebody copied something wrong and that has happened from time to time. So, it's possible that he had 4,000 stalls for his chariot horses and that some copyist copying down 1 Kings wrote down 40,000. Alternatively, but maybe not as likely, is that he had 40,000 stalls for his chariot horses.

I mean, this man didn't even have any wars he fought, but he had all this military equipment. And that somebody in Chronicles had miscopied his 4,000. The alternative is

that there's some way to harmonize the two.

And I've heard attempts, but I'm not really, I'm not as impressed with the likelihood of a harmonization being successful as I am with the simple expedient that somebody copied something wrong, which happens all the time. And not all the time, but frequently enough that it's not a problematic suggestion. And if somebody says, but I don't like the idea that there could be a mistake in the Bible that one of them says there was 40,000 when it was really 4,000 or one of them says 4,000 when it was really 40,000.

Well, deal with it. It's not a problem with the inspiration of Scripture. It had to do with the transmission of Scripture.

There are people who believe that God sovereignly and perfectly preserved the text of the Scripture throughout all of history. And they often see this as the Textus Receptus. These people usually don't, really are not dealing with the facts very well because the Textus Receptus is not some monolithic body of text that has been passed on down unchanged.

The Textus Receptus was made by a man commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church to take various Greek texts and to combine them into one text by taking the most likely reading from each of the texts where there are variants. And Erasmus was the man who did this and he made the Textus Receptus. It was his own creation from a lot of different manuscripts that didn't all agree with each other.

Furthermore, he didn't even have a Greek text of Revelation so he back translated from a Latin Vulgate of Revelation and he back translated it into Greek. He made his own Greek version from scratch. That's the Textus Receptus from which the King James and the New King James are written.

Now, I don't have any serious complaints about the Textus Receptus but it's always strange to me to hear people acting as if the Textus Receptus came down to us unchanged from ancient times. I think, don't you know where it came from? Don't you know how it was written? I mean, what are you thinking? The truth of the matter is there are thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament and all that I said about the Textus Receptus has to do with the New Testament. And then there are numerous manuscripts of the Old Testament and they don't all agree word for word with each other.

But, that's not a complaint about the inspiration of Scripture. That's just a statement about how human beings preserve written records by copying them and sometimes make mistakes. But, the mistakes are of such a minor nature that anyone who would let that shake them up is strange.

I mean, I don't know why anyone would be concerned if we had lost the original number of chariot stalls, horse stalls, that Solomon had. I mean, the information is of no value to

us. It's just a historical matter.

It wasn't even valuable for Solomon since he never fought any wars. They were just for show. So, I mean, I don't have any problem at all with the idea that 1 Kings, somebody copied down the wrong number.

It was 4,000, but they copied down wrongly. It's 40,000. Added a cipher or whatever.

It's not hard to imagine how that can be done and it's something that isn't alarming in any way to me. Unless someone's looking, sometimes people look at the Bible as a magic book. They really do.

They really just think the book is a magic book fell from God between leather covers and they're not really familiar with how the Bible came into being, how it was preserved, how it was collected, how the manuscripts are studied and so forth. It's just not that simple, but it's not a problem either because we have excellent scholarship comparing all excellent manuscripts and having very little problem finding out what the best reading is of every passage, although there are variations in different manuscripts because people who made them copied something wrong or spelled something wrong or put the word order different or did some minor thing like that. The Old Testament, just so you understand what the nature of that is in the Old Testament manuscripts, for hundreds of years, the oldest manuscripts available to us of the Old Testament were the Masoretic Text and they dated from about the year 1000 A.D. That is to say that the Masoretic Text, which is a Hebrew Old Testament manuscript, the oldest one we had.

We had newer ones. We didn't have any older than that. The oldest one we had was from about the year 1008 A.D. Now, think about it.

The Old Testament was written in the B.C. period and therefore manuscripts that are written or came into existence in 1008 are late copies of a document that by that time had been copied for over 1,500 years. And so many people assume that you can't really trust it to be very true to the original because no one knows how many copy errors may have occurred in the course of time. But then they found the Dead Sea Scrolls and that was very helpful because the Dead Sea Scrolls also had Hebrew copies of the Old Testament.

And the Dead Sea Scrolls were brought into being in the first century A.D. That means that when they were able to open the Dead Sea Scrolls and read the Old Testament copies there, they were reading a manuscript of the Hebrew Bible that was a thousand years older than the Masoretic Text. Which means that the Dead Sea Scrolls preserved the Hebrew text in a form that it was known in the time of Christ whereas the Masoretic Text preserved a form of the text as it was known a thousand years later. And we didn't have anything in between.

But when they compared them, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text, 95% they were word for word the same. Even though they had been copied for a thousand years in between that time, there was no more than 5% variation. And they say the variation that existed was of inconsequential points like the difference between 40,000 and 4,000 chariots or something.

That kind of an issue. Nothing that really is relevant to a Christian's faith or walk with God. And so that's just how the Bible has come down to us.

There are some instances. Like we saw that there was a man, Elhanan, who is credited with killing Goliath in 2 Samuel. In the Hebrew manuscripts it says Elhanan killed Goliath, the Gittite.

Now the parallel in Chronicles says Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath which is almost certainly the correct reading. But in the manuscripts of 2 Samuel, the words the brother of had been neglected, had fallen out. Some copyist had failed to copy them.

So as it reads in 2 Samuel, it says that Elhanan killed Goliath. Well, Elhanan didn't kill Goliath, David did. So we fortunately have the cross reference in Chronicles that preserves the original reading.

And that is probably the case in a case like this too. There was one number originally and one of the two documents preserves the original number. The other seems to have made an error.

There are more ingenious ways to try to say that both numbers are correct, but they seem to me unnecessary. They're just not necessary. There's such a simple and unobjectionable answer to it that seems to be the obvious to me.

But others will take other approaches. Now verse 27, These governors, each man in his month, provided food for the king Solomon, for all who came to the king Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply.

They also brought barley and straw to the proper place for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge. And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding and largeness of heart, like the sand of the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

There were wise men throughout the eastern world and throughout Egypt that were known philosophers, men who gave, you know, proverbs and things like that, as Solomon himself did, but he was wiser than all of them in the estimate of this writer, and no doubt correctly, because God said he would make him wiser. For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezraite, and Heman, Calchol, and Darda, the sons of Mahal. These must have been very witty men, though we don't know who they were, but they are the standard.

They were the standard in wisdom and Solomon exceeded them. And his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs.

Now we have, I think, less than a thousand, certainly less than a thousand of Solomon's proverbs in the book of Proverbs. So at least two thirds of the proverbs he wrote or spoke did not, were not preserved, at least not to the present time. And his songs were one thousand and five.

Now he wrote a lot of songs, we only have one of them recorded, and it's on cassette tape, so it's not very good quality. No, it's recorded in the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon is called the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

It was his favorite song of all the thousand and five songs that he recorded. I shouldn't say recorded, because when we talk about people recording songs, it does have the idea of audio recordings, but that we have record of, I should say. We have record of only one of his songs.

And also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall, that is the largest tree and the smallest weed. He spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. Notice he was a naturalist.

Now some of his proverbs make reference to animals, like the ant, for example, or the coney, or some other animals are sometimes mentioned, the horse, or the pig. But aside from the proverbs, he apparently discoursed on these natural subjects. In other words, he made it an interest of his to study trees and plants and animals.

He was a naturalist, and he became apparently somewhat expert for his day on these things. So that men of all the nations, from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now, again the hyperbole, all the kings of the earth, I don't think the king of the Mayas came over, or the king of the aboriginals in Australia.

This is obviously, again, a hyperbole. And the reason I point this out, is because this narrative is full of hyperbole, as the Bible typically is. And it's good to know.

It's important to know, because there are passages that we would take quite differently if we don't recognize the presence of hyperbole in the Bible. So Solomon became internationally famous for his wisdom, for his wealth, and for everything, the splendor of his kingdom. In fact, Solomon in all his glory is a phrase that Jesus himself used of Solomon.

Solomon in all his glory is a way of speaking of the splendor and the honor that he enjoyed. I would just point out, as we close, that the realm that he ruled over, the borders that are mentioned, in verse 21, for example, of this chapter, all the kingdoms from the river Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, to the border of Egypt, these are

essentially the same borders that God spoke to Abraham about when he said, I will give your seed all this land. And although all this territory that's mentioned didn't become part of Israel per se, it became part of Israel's empire.

And therefore, God did give them all this land. And they had power over it. They ruled over it.

And so God did fulfill his promise in giving Israel all the land that he said he would give them. And that's only mentioned at this point because there are people who say that didn't happen. Primarily dispensationalists.

They say that God has never given Israel all the land that he promised Abraham. They've never, Israel has never included the border of the Euphrates. But they're wrong.

The Bible says he did. And therefore, there are not unfulfilled promises about this yet to be fulfilled in the future necessarily, which is what some people claim from that information. All right, well, we're done with this class.