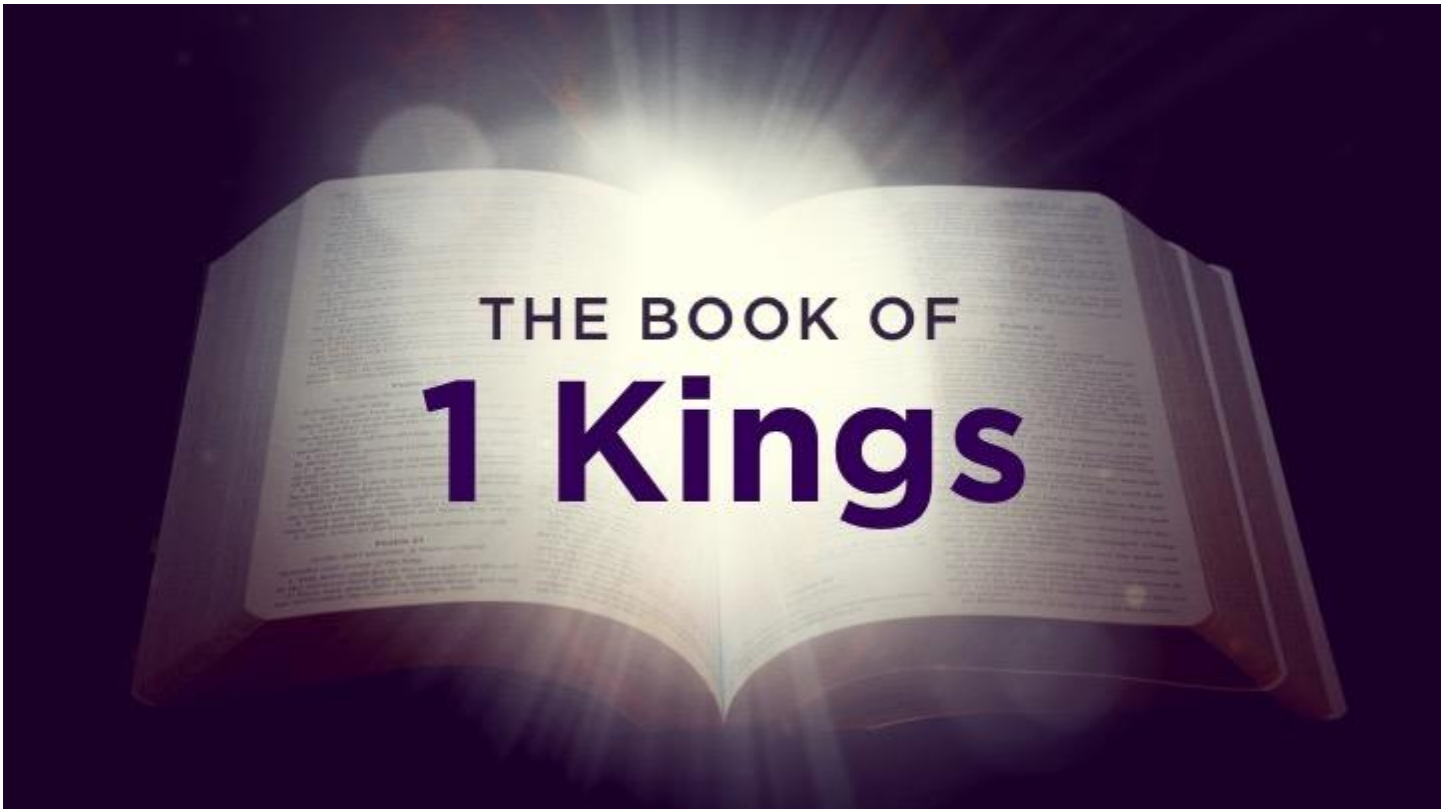


The Book of 1 Kings



Part 6 5 studies in 1 Kings

Introduction

The two books, 1 & 2 Kings, in the Hebrew Old Testament were one book. It was divided by the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translators. They summarized these books as follows: I The Reign of Solomon; II Division of the Kingdom, and Parallel History of the Two Kingdoms; III Subsequent History of Judah to the Captivity.

1 Kings opens with the Hebrew nation in its glory. 2 Kings closes with the nation in ruin. Together they cover a period of about 400 years, from 1000-600 BC.

Author

The author is not known. A Jewish tradition says it was Jeremiah. Whoever the author is, he makes frequent reference to state annals and other historical records existent in his day, such as: “The book of the acts of Solomon”; “The book of chronicles of the Kings of Judah”; and “The book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel” (1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 27 etc.).

Brief Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

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|--|------------------------------|
| 1. The last days of David and Solomon’s Accession | 1 Kings 1:1 – 1 Kings 2:46 |
| 2. The reign of Solomon | 1 Kings 3:1 – 1 Kings 11:43 |
| 3. History of the Divided Kingdom | 1 Kings 12:1 – 2 Kings 10:36 |
| 4. History of Judah and Israel to the fall of Northern Kingdom | 2 Kings 11:1 – 2 Kings 17:41 |
| 5. History of Judah to the fall of Jerusalem | 2 Kings 18:1 – 2 Kings 25:30 |

Alternative Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

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|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Golden Age | 1 Kings 1-11 |
| 2. The Torn Kingdom | 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17 |
| 3. The Last Days | 2 Kings 18-25 |

Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

Study 1 – A False Religion

1 Kings 12:25-33

(Sermon on 24-July-22)

Before we begin, remind yourself from the last study on 1 Kings 12:1-24, what Rehoboam did when he took over as King from his father, Solomon? How did the people of Israel react to King Rehoboam's kingship?

The people of Israel asked King Rehoboam to lighten the burden on them, as they felt that Rehoboam's father, Solomon, had burdened the people with taxes, forced labour and military service. Instead of Rehoboam, agreeing to their request; Rehoboam ignored the advice of the elders who said he should listen to the people's request; and foolishly he listened to his contemporaries and made the burden on the people heavier. This went down like a lead balloon and the people said they would have nothing to do with the House of David.

Read 1 Kings 12:25-33

1. Remind yourself of who Jeroboam is?

Jeroboam was one of King Solomon's officials and a very capable man. He had been against the forced labour projects of King Solomon. Back in chapter 11, a prophet named Ahijah had prophesied (using his new cloak as an illustration) that Solomon's kingdom would be torn apart (like Ahijah's cloak) and 10 tribes would be given to Jeroboam to rule over. Solomon had tried to kill Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40) but Jeroboam had fled to Egypt. As Rev Jason Forbes said last Sunday; 'you know things are bad in Israel, when an Israelite flees to Egypt (Israel's arch enemy) for safety. We read in 1 Kings 12:2 that Jeroboam returned to Jerusalem when Solomon, died and Rehoboam took over. Then after Rehoboam's mishandling of the people's request; the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom, made Jeroboam, King of Israel and Rehoboam was left with his own tribe, Judah, and one other tribe, Benjamin (1 Kings 12:20)

2. Locate **Shechem** and **Peniel** on the map in appendix 1. What did Jeroboam do in verse 25 and why?

Shechem is north of Jerusalem (red rectangle on map). Peniel (also red rectangle) is on east side of river Jordan. Jeroboam needed a capital city, as Jerusalem was not located within the land of the 10 tribes, but located in Judah. Therefore, realistically Jerusalem could not be the capital city. Both cities were fortified for protection.

3. What's Jeroboam's thought process in verses 25 and 26? Why?

Even though the Kingdom of Israel was now divided, it didn't mean that the people were free from their covenant responsibility in worshipping God and the annual trip to the Temple in Jerusalem. But Jeroboam feared the political implications of his people going to Jerusalem (Judah) and giving their allegiance to King Rehoboam instead of him. In his mind, Jeroboam thought 'they will kill me and return to Rehoboam'. You could say, Jeroboam was a tad insecure!

4. What's wrong with his reasoning? (cf. 1 Kings 11:37-38)

Jeroboam must have forgotten what God said in 1 Kings 11:37-38. Here's what God said:

³⁷ However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. ³⁸ If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.

Jeroboam could best secure his throne and kingdom by obedience to God, not by leading the 10 tribes into idolatry and the worship of false gods!

5. What's wrong with Jeroboam seeking advice in verse 28 and what does he decide to do?

Why is it wrong and do Jeroboam's words "**here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt**" sound familiar? (cf. Exodus 32:1-4; 2 Chronicles 11:13-15)

Jeroboam is asking advice for an evil disobedient purpose!

He does not consult the Lord.

Jeroboam wanted to know the best way to do a bad thing; but no matter what way it's done; it's still bad! There's no sugar-coating idolatry.

It is wrong because it disobeys the first two commands – worshipping other gods and making and worshipping idols.

Jeroboam's words are exactly what Moses' brother, Aaron said, back in Exodus 32:1-4 when he was sucked in to making a golden calf for the people of Israel to worship, whilst Moses was up the mountain with God.

In 2 Chronicles 11:13-15, we also find that many of Levites (the priestly tribe) abandoned Jeroboam because he appointed his own priests for the high places he built and for administering the sacrifices to the idols he made.

It's a DIY religion.

The calf was a symbol of virility and strength associated with the Canaanite god El. Another possibility is the Egyptian god, Apis, which was a god of fertility which took the form of a sacred bull.

6. Find the two cities, **Bethel and Dan**, from verse 29, on the map in appendix 1, where the golden calves were set up. Why do you think, Jeroboam chose those two locations? (cf.

Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4; 28:10-22; 31:13; 35:1-16 and Judges 17-18, especially 18:30-31)

Bethel is in the southern part of the Northern Kingdom and Dan is the northern part of the Northern Kingdom (see blue ovals on the map).

A number of reasons for these locations:

- a. There would be two convenient places to worship – one in the north of the Kingdom – and one in the south of the Kingdom*
- b. Abraham built an altar at Bethel*
- c. Jacob had a dream of a ladder to Heaven at Bethel*
- d. The tribe of Dan had renamed the city Laish and had an idol that Micah had made (Judges 18:30-31)*

7. What's ironic about the meaning of the city names, Bethel and Dan?

Bethel means "House of God" – yet they have a false god there!

Dan means "Judge" – will God judge Jeroboam favourably for building an idol there?

8. Why would worship at Bethel and Dan be considered a sin in verse 30?

It was one thing Jeroboam coming up with the idea of building the two calves for worship at Bethel and Dan; it's another thing, when as King, he has led the people of the 10 tribes to worship false gods!

Jeroboam could simply have built an altar at each location and worshipped the one true God, YHWH of Israel; instead of introducing false gods/idols. When we open the door to sin; it just keeps coming; the flood gates are open!

9. What else did Jeroboam do wrong in verse 31? Why is this wrong? (cf. 2 Chronicles 11:13-16)

He also built high places for worship and appointed non-Levites to be priests as per 2

Chronicles 11:13-16. This is wrong a) because it is false worship and b) God had appointed the Levites as the priestly tribe only.

10. What else did Jeroboam do wrong in verses 32 and 33? Whose idea, was it?

He instituted a religious festival in the day and month of his own choosing! In other words, he made his own religion! He reinvented the Feast of Tabernacles in the eighth month, on a date that Jeroboam plucked out of his own heart!

It's like Jeroboam has copied & pasted the religion of Judah in the South, and called it his own religion; and he has not followed any of God's prescribed methods of worship.

11. What do we discover about Jeroboam at the end of verse 33?

We discover that Jeroboam is the one who performs the sacrifices and offerings, rather than a God ordained priest!

12. **Ponder:** Do we have false religions today? Give some examples.

Obvious false religions like: Islam; Hinduism; Buddhism; Sikhism; Jehovah Witness;

Mormonism; Universalism; Syncretism (like Chrislam – combining Islam and Christianity);

Shintoism; Atheism; Polytheism; Bahaism; Christian Science; Scientology.

False Gospels:

The Gospel of permissive grace: *Today, many preachers say that "God loves you unconditionally" and "God loves you just as you are." Unconditional love is interpreted as unconditional acceptance of one's lifestyle. Therefore, a person does not need to let go of their sinful lifestyle to follow Jesus.*

The Gospel of social justice: In the early twentieth century, many churches left off preaching the cross of Christ and replaced it with “doing good to their fellow man.” They justified their stance with verses from the Old Testament, such as “bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” (Isaiah 1:17) and similar texts in the New Testament, where Jesus taught that when we visit His followers in prison, we are visiting Him (Matthew 25:35–40). Social concerns replaced the finished work of Christ who died and rose again to save sinners, and the gospel of God saving us from sin was almost entirely neglected.

The Gospel of New Age Spirituality: Many younger evangelicals do not feel at home in church. They gravitate to groups where they can be personally involved in honest sharing, caring for the poor, and ongoing relationships. Predictable formal worship services that follow a script often lack the vitality some of them are looking for. They are a “seeking” generation and uncomfortable with being told what to believe but are committed to finding a faith that is right for them.

False Gospel of My Sexual Preference: Is the evangelical church willing to practice the biblical teachings about church discipline? Most would say no. I spoke to one pastor who said they allow people into their membership wherever they are in their spiritual journey; unmarried couples who are living together, a homosexual couple with children, etc., are allowed to become members despite the church’s opposition to these lifestyles. But that church has concluded that those who become members must join in order to grow in their faith rather than saying, “Membership is not for you.” In short, this church was reluctant to raise the bar of church membership beyond vague generalities.

There is another reason why churches are reluctant to administer church discipline: they know the power of being shamed, despised, and targeted. They don’t want to be accused of being hateful rather than loving.

False Gospel of Interfaith Dialogue: Our culture has chosen to submit to Islam, and there’s pressure on the church to follow suit. Under the guise of tolerance, love, and some would even say, evangelism, Muslims are being invited into churches to present a special revised version of Islam. Interfaith dialogue in the church gives Muslim leaders an uncontested platform to speak publicly and invites them to present a version of Islam that simply does not exist in Muslim countries. Nor is it based on Islam’s history or its foundational writings. If a church wants to learn what Islam believes, why not invite a convert out of Islam to come into a church and share his/her story?

False Gospel of Prosperity Gospel, also known as the “Word of Faith Movement,” the believer is told to use God, whereas the truth of biblical Christianity is just the opposite—God uses the believer. Prosperity theology sees the Holy Spirit as a power to be put to use for whatever the believer wills. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a Person who enables the believer to do God’s will. The prosperity gospel movement closely resembles some of the destructive greed sects that infiltrated the early church. Paul and the other apostles were not accommodating to or conciliatory with the false teachers who propagated such heresy. They identified them as dangerous false teachers and urged Christians to avoid them.

13. How do the following New Testament passages relate to 1 Kings 12:25-33? Mark 13:22-23; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-3

In Mark 13:22-23 – Jesus warns us that false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive; and that we need to be on our guard

1 Timothy 4:1 – Paul warns that in the later times (which includes the time we are living in) that some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 – Paul warns of a time when people will no longer put up with sound doctrine but instead gather around teachers who will say what their itching ears want to hear; and so, they will turn away from the truth and turn (and believe) myths.

Galatians 1:8-9 – Paul warns against listening to anyone (including angels!) who teach a Gospel over than the Gospel of Jesus; such teachers are under God’s curse!

2 Peter 2:1-3 – Peter warns, just as there were false prophets; there will be false teachers. They will teach heresies (a belief or teaching which is contrary to Christian doctrine in God’s Word). These false teachers will attract many followers.

14. **Read John 14:5-6.** What is the answer to false religion?

The answer to any false religion, false teaching, false prophets, false Gospels; is John 14:5-6. It is an outrageous and exclusive claim of Christianity!

Jesus says to all these false religions; that there is only ONE WAY – His Way!

*Jesus says:” **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**”*

15. **Read Ephesians 5:1-20.** What should we do about false religion?

- a. Follow God’s example (v1)*
- b. Walk in the way of love – showing Jesus’ sacrificial love (v2)*
- c. Remove any sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking from our lives (vv3-5) because these things show we are idolators of ourselves!*
- d. Don’t be part of false teaching (deceptive words) (vv6-7)*
- e. Live as children of the light (Jesus being the light of the world and we being his lights) which produces goodness, righteousness and truth; and keep away from any deeds which are of darkness (vv8-14)*
- f. Be wise and make the most of the opportunities (to share Jesus) (vv15-16)*
- g. Do not be foolish – but instead follow God’s will for our life (v17)*
- h. Be filled with the Spirit (not alcohol!) and speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; giving thanks to God the Father, for everything, in the name of Jesus (vv18-20)*

What’s the **BIG IDEA** of 1 Kings 12:25-33?

Keep away from false religion – stay with the truth of Jesus



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

Jeroboam goes his own way and not God's way. Ultimately for us, Jesus is God's way and as He says "He is the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus is the answer to false religion.

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. Where's our security? In God's Word and His promises or is our security, like Jeroboam, in making ourself secure and walking by logic and not faith.
- b. Are we letting fear dictate our lives, as Jeroboam did; or are we trusting God with our fears?
- c. False religions can be appealing – like prosperity Gospel – “God wants you to be happy, successful, prosperous etc.” rather than the truth “God wants us to be holy and obedient”. Jeroboam made his religion appealing – ‘You don't need to go to Jerusalem – you have Bethel and Dan – and even brand-new gods to worship’ and “after all your descendants Abraham and Jacob worshipped there”. And the city of Dan in the book of Judges worshipped an idol; so, it must be okay. Jeroboam even throws in a quote from the golden calf incident in Exodus 32: “Behold, Israel, here is your gods that brought you out of slavery from Egypt”. But we are meant to learn from the mistakes of the characters in the Bible; not repeat them and embrace them!
- d. Our worship of God is prescribed by Him; not by ourselves, as Jeroboam did. Many today, have their own religion which is whatever makes them feel comfortable (whereas God's Word afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted); and they have statements like “God and me have an understanding” (oh, really!) or “I let my own voice and thoughts guide me through life” (in other words ‘I'm guided by myself and not by God) or “I don't need to go to church to be a Christian” (I would argue ‘yes, that's true, you don't have to, but you should want to’)
- e. What idols do we have? Sport, leisure, entertainment, technology; wealth, possessions, prosperity, success, fame etc.

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Ephesians 5:8 - For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

Finish in prayer: Thanking Jesus that He is the way, the truth and the life. Ask God to help us live as children of the light and to equip us to expose the darkness of false teaching and false religion.

Study 2 – A Tale of Two Prophets

1 Kings 13:1-34
(Sermon on 31-July-22)

Before we begin, remind yourself who Jeroboam is and **what part of Israel he rules over.**

Jeroboam was one of King Solomon's officials and a very capable man. He had been against the forced labour projects of King Solomon. Back in chapter 11, a prophet named Ahijah had prophesied (using his new cloak as an illustration) that Solomon's kingdom would be torn apart (like Ahijah's cloak) and 10 tribes would be given to Jeroboam to rule over. Solomon had tried to kill Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40) but Jeroboam had fled to Egypt. We then read in 1 Kings 12:2 that Jeroboam returned to Jerusalem when Solomon, died and Solomon's son, Rehoboam, took over. Then after Rehoboam's mishandling of the people's request; the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom, made Jeroboam, King of Israel and Rehoboam was left with his own tribe, Judah, and one other tribe, Benjamin (1 Kings 12:20).

Last Study, we saw how Jeroboam, established his own false religion in the Northern Kingdom [10 tribes], so that his people would not have to travel to Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom, to worship. This false worship included making two golden calves at Bethel and Dan to worship; and erecting convenient high places to worship; and also included Jeroboam appointing non-Levite priests and even himself, to make offerings and sacrifices on behalf of the people. All of this was described as a sin (1 Kings 12:30).

The question is: Will God stand for this sin?

Read 1 Kings 13:1-5

1. What does it say about the Northern Kingdom of Israel, if a man of God has to come from the Southern Kingdom of Judah?

It says that there was no qualified messenger within the Northern Kingdom; perhaps because the false religion had taken hold. So, God raised a "man of God" from the Southern Kingdom.

2. Where was Jeroboam and what was he doing?

Jeroboam was standing at the altar at Bethel making an offering.

The man of God prophesied against Jeroboam and the altar!

3. What future sign does the man of God give in verse 2? (cf. 2 Kings 23:15-16; 2 Chronicles 34:5). What's your thoughts on this prophecy?

The man of God prophesies against the altar with words from God.

He says that some time in the future, a son name Josiah will be born to the house of David and this son, Josiah, will sacrifice the priests and human bones will be burned on this altar.

Precisely 340 years later, this prophecy was fulfilled.

See 2 Kings 23:15-16: ¹⁵ Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin—even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also. ¹⁶ Then Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had the bones removed

from them and burned on the altar to defile it, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who foretold these things.

See 2 Chronicles 34:5: ⁵ He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem.

4. What sign does the man of God give that will happen on the very day he is speaking in verse 3?

It's difficult to for anyone to prove that the prophecy the man of God gave about Josiah would take place, until it does. So, the man of God gave a sign that very day; that the altar would split in two and the ashes on it would pour out.

5. What's Jeroboam's reaction to the man of God? What happens to Jeroboam? Why?

Having his "worship" service so rudely interrupted, Jeroboam was angry and stretched out his hand from the altar and said "seize him". But Jeroboam's outstretched hand shriveled up and he could not pull it back towards himself. Why? Because God was working through the man of God to stop Jeroboam's false worship.

6. How is the man of God's sign fulfilled in verse 5? What does this sign reveal about God?

At the same time as Jeroboam's hand malfunction; God's word prophesied through the man of God came true; revealing that a) what God Word says will happen will happen; and b) Showing God is displeased with Jeroboam's worship.

7. **Ponder:** What does this judgment say about God and what He thinks about His faithful servants?

If God has sent a faithful servant (the man of God) on a mission; then God will protect his faithful servant and ensure the mission is completed.

"This God did, partly, to chastise Jeroboam for offering violence to the Lord's prophet; partly, to secure the prophet against further violence; and partly, that in this example God might show how highly he resents the injuries done to his ministers in and for the faithful discharge of their office." (Poole)

Read 1 Kings 13:6-10

8. What does King Jeroboam ask of the man of God in verse 6? What does this say about Jeroboam and his current worship practices?

Jeroboam asks the man of God to intercede for him and pray that his hand would be restored. Jeroboam current worship practice (the worship of golden calves) is no use to him and cannot help him and he knew his only hope was in the Lord and his representative.

9. What is the man of God's response through God? What does this say about God?

The man of God interceded for Jeroboam and the king's hand was restored. This shows God's mercy and forgiveness.

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

10. What does Jeroboam ask in verse 7? Why?

Jeroboam invited the man of God for a meal and said he would give him a gift.

Why? As a way of thanking the man of God for restoring his hand.

Note: there was no repentance here!

Jeroboam was perhaps trying to give the impression that he and the man of God were on the same team; when clearly, they were not!

11. What's so impressive about the man of God's response in verses 8 to 10?

The man of God is adamant that he would not go with Jeroboam, nor eat or drink with him.

Because God had previously told the man of God – 'not to eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came'. The man of God obeyed God's word and did not return by the same way he had come to Bethel. It's impressive that the man of God stood firm when there was no doubt potential manipulation from Jeroboam.

12. **Ponder:** Why do you think God said to the man of God 'you must not eat or drink water or return by the way you came'?

To accept Jeroboam's invitation may demonstrate that the man of God condoned Jeroboam's worship practice (for which he had been sent to speak against) and would also mean the man of God is in fellowship with people committing idolatry. Also, by having fellowship with Jeroboam it would seem like the man of God was lightening God's judgment.

The ban on the return route might be to avoid further contact with a cursed place and people. The man of God's obedience would also remind King Jeroboam of the obedience that should have characterized the King's own life and reign!

Read 1 Kings 13:11-19

13. What does the old prophet ask the man of God to do in verses 13 to 15? What is the man of God's response in verse 16 and 17?

Having heard what, the man of God had done, from his sons, the old prophet found the man of God sitting under an oak tree and he asked him to "come home with me and eat".

The man of God declined the invitation (as he had done with Jeroboam) – he told the old prophet that the word of the Lord had said: "you must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came".

14. How does the old prophet trick the man of God in verses 18 to 19?

The old prophet said that he too was a prophet and had been given the word of God from an angel that he was "to bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and

drink water". But unfortunately, the old prophet was lying! And unfortunately, the man of God returned with the old prophet to his house!

Read 1 Kings 13:20-25

15. What word of the Lord comes to the old prophet about the man of God in verses 20 to 22?

This time the old prophet had a genuine word from God. God spoke through the old prophet and said to the man of God "you have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore, your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors"

16. What's the fate of the man of God in verses 23 to 25? Is this fair? Yes/No/Maybe?

After the meal, the old prophet saddled up the man of God's donkey, and the latter departed. Unfortunately, he was met by a lion on the road who killed him and his body was left on the road. Some people found the man of God's body and reported it to the old prophet.

Is this fair? Well, why did the man of God listen to the old prophet's words?

- a. Because he was older perhaps?*
- b. Because the old prophet said he was a prophet too!*
- c. Because he claimed a supernatural experience (an angel gave him God's words)*
- d. Because he claimed to speak the word of the Lord*
- e. Because the old prophet had not been at this worship service and therefore seemed like he wasn't an idolator*
- f. Because the old prophet (unlike Jeroboam) didn't offer a gift/reward – only a meal.*

No matter how natural and seductive this enticement was, it was the duty of the man of God to resist it. He had a word from God to guide his actions, and should receive no other word accept through dramatic and direct confirmation by God's Spirit. His failure at this point ended his usefulness as a man of God.

"When we have received a direct command fresh from the lips of Christ, we must act on it, and not be turned aside by a different suggestion, made to us through the lips of professing Christians... Deal with God at first-hand." (Meyer)

"God never contradicts Himself in His dealings with His servants. Let us be true to His commands, refusing to be deflected from the path of obedience, even by an "apparent" angel from heaven." (Morgan)

Read 1 Kings 13:26-32

17. What did the old prophet do with the man of God's body? Why?

The old prophet realized that the body was that of the man of God who defied the Word of the Lord and so he brought the body back to his town and mourned and buried the man of God.

The old prophet could sympathize with the man of God.

It must have seemed strange to the old prophet that he also had sinned, yet the man of God's sin and disobedience had led to his death; whereas the old prophet was still alive!

Also, the old prophet perhaps wanted to relieve his guilty conscience in lying to the man of God, only for that lie, being instrumental in the man of God's demise.

God judged the man of God from Judah far more strictly than He judged Jeroboam or the prophet from Bethel. It would seem that they were guilty of worse sins (leading national idolatry and a deliberate lying prophecy), yet the man of God received worse judgment.

This is an example of an important principle of the way God works. We think that strict judgment should begin among the most ungodly, but often God begins strict judgment among His own people (1 Peter 4:17). Usually this is because God knows that the world will not be reached when His people live in compromise and disobedience!

18. What conclusion does the old prophet make about the man of God's message in verse 32?
The old prophet concludes that the message the man of God gave against the altar at Bethel and the shrines on the high places will certainly come true.

19. **Ponder:** The writer of 1 Kings leaves many questions unanswered? What questions do you have about the story? Why are these questions left unanswered?

Why was the man of God to refuse any offer of hospitality and return a different way?

What were the sons of the old prophet doing at Jeroboam's church service?

Why was the man of God sitting under the tree still north of the border, were we wrong to assume that he was to return straightaway?

Why is this old prophet so strange? Why did he lie to the man of God? What was his motive?

Why does the man of God go back with the old prophet with question his alternative word from the angel?

How is it that a true word of God comes from an old prophet who tells a lie?

Why is there no protest recorded by the man of God regarding his pending doom? Why is he not angry? Why doesn't he get angry with the old prophet?

Why was the man of God's punishment so severe?

We can only conclude that these questions are not important and that God through the writer wants us to focus on something else! Namely, the "Word of the Lord" which is mentioned 11 times.

Read 1 Kings 13:33-34

20. What lesson did Jeroboam learn from all of this?

He learned nothing.

He did not change his evil ways but instead appointed priests for the high places who were all sorts of people (i.e., not Levites). And we are told that it was this sin that led to the downfall and destruction of his kingdom.

21. How do the following New Testament passages relate to 1 Kings 13:1-34?

Matthew 7:15-20; 21-23

In vv15-20 - Jesus teaches us to watch out for false prophets because they come to you as wolves in sheep's clothing (as the old prophet did to the man of God).

Jesus says when someone comes with a word from God – we need to see what their fruit is? We need to ask are they a bad tree that bears bad fruit or a good tree that bears good fruit. And Jesus concludes, we will recognize them by their fruits.

So, we need to compare their “word from God” with God’s actual words (which we have in the Bible). If their word disagrees or contradicts God’s Word (as the old prophet’s word contradicting the word of God that the man of God received) then we reject it. If it’s a prophecy, put it on the shelf and let time prove it is correct?

In vv21-23 – Jesus also teaches that there are true and false disciples. The old prophet spoke in God’s name saying he had word from an angel but he lied. Jesus is saying there will be people even in our day who claim all sorts of things in His Name; but only those who do the will of the Father who is in Heaven are true disciples. The man of God did the will of the Father but they got sucked in by someone not doing the will of the Father but claiming to be! We need to be alert, all the time!

2 Corinthians 11:14-15

Paul warns that Satan masquerades as an angel of light and Satan’s servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness.

1 Peter 4:17

Peter says God’s judgment begins with God’s household. This was the case with the man of God. But Peter also says ‘what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the Gospel?’

1 John 5:16-17

According to John here; that are times when a sin can lead to physical death (as in the case of the man of God but more significantly to the ultimate demise of Jeroboam and his kingdom).

1 John 4:1-4

John exhorts us to not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Paul says we are to test all prophecies; hold on to what is good and reject every kind of evil.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **1 Kings 13:1-34**?

The Word of the Lord is paramount.



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

- a. In comparison to Jeroboam the King cum-priest; the man of God and the old prophet; Jesus is the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King.
- b. At the end of the chapter, we hear of the ultimate demise of Jeroboam's kingdom – in comparison to Jesus' Everlasting Kingdom.
- c. The Big Idea of the passage is the Word of God – which is of course Jesus – the Word made flesh and dwelling amongst us (John 1:14)

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. There are consequences when we disobey God's Word
- b. God requires unswerving obedience of His Word. God doesn't like it when we disobey His Word – we can ignore His Word at our peril
- c. There is grace and mercy in God's Word
- d. There is safety and security in God's Word
- e. God's Word and prophecy are irrevocable and God never contradicts Himself!

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

1 Kings 13:2 - By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar: "Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'

Finish in prayer: Thank God for His Word which He breathes out and which is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we can be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Ask God to give us wisdom to discern whether what people say aligns with His Holy Word.

Study 3 – The Beginning is the Beginning of the End

1 Kings 14:1-20
(Sermon on 7-Aug-22)

Before we begin, remind yourself what the prophet Ahijah said to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:34-39; especially verses 37-38. Has Jeroboam done that? (cf. 1 Kings 12:25-33)

Back in 1 Kings 11 – God said this to Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah:

³⁴ "But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees. ³⁵ I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. ³⁶ I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. ³⁷ However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. ³⁸ If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. ³⁹ I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever."

God's promise to Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah is conditional.

Jeroboam has not done what God commanded; he has not walked in obedience to God and he has not done what is right in God's eyes by obeying His decrees and commands, as King David did. Instead, he built two golden calves and introduced false worship.

Read 1 Kings 14:1-6

1. Jeroboam's son Abijah becomes ill; what does Jeroboam tell his wife to do? Why the disguise?

Jeroboam tells his wife to disguise herself and go to the prophet Ahijah (the prophet who told Jeroboam he would be given the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom). She is to disguise herself because Jeroboam knew that he had rejected God and the word of God's prophet; and wanted a favourable word from Ahijah (rather than the anticipated "jaundiced view" from Ahijah), when asking for his son to be healed.

Jeroboam wanted to know from Ahijah what will happen to his son, Abijah, as though the latter was a fortune-teller; rather than asking the prophet to pray to God for His healing! Jeroboam even thought he could butter up the prophet Ahijah with some gifts of bread, cakes and honey!

2. We are told Ahijah the prophet's sight has gone? Is that relevant?

We are told Ahijah's sight has gone because of his age; perhaps to make us think Ahijah won't be able to recognize Mrs Jeroboam's disguise.

3. What does the Lord reveal to Ahijah in verse 5?

The Lord reveals to Ahijah that Mrs Jeroboam will come and ask about her son who is ill; and the prophet is to give her an answer that God will reveal; and she will pretend to be someone else.

4. What surprise does Mrs Jeroboam get in verse 6?

When Mrs Jeroboam arrives at Ahijah's house; he says "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent to you with some bad news."

Read 1 Kings 14:7-11

5. What does the Lord say He has done for Jeroboam in verses 7 to 8a?

The Lord says, He has raised Jeroboam up from amongst the people and appointed him ruler over His people, Israel. The Lord says He tore the kingdom away from the house of King David and gave it to Jeroboam. All matters of God's grace!

6. What does the Lord say Jeroboam is guilty of in verses 8b and 9?

The Lord says:

Jeroboam has not been like David who kept God's commands and followed God with all his heart, doing what was right in God's eyes.

Instead, Jeroboam, has done more evil than all who lived before him; Jeroboam has made for himself gods, idols made of metal; and he has aroused God's anger and turned his back on God!

Ironically the expression used "turned your back on me" is the same expression that is used to describe what God does when "He puts all our sins behind His back" (Isaiah 38:17)

7. What does the Lord say will be **done** about this disobedience in verses 10 and 11?

God will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam.

God will cut off from Jeroboam every last male ("male" here literally means "he who urinates against the wall") in Israel -slave or free.

God will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone.

Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city and the birds will feed on those who die in the country!

Read 1 Kings 14:12-18

8. What will happen to Jeroboam's son in verse 12? What mercy/grace is there in verse 13?

As soon as Mrs Jeroboam sets foot in the city, her son will die!

The grace/mercy is that all Israel will mourn for the boy – but the boy will be the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried because the boy is the only one that the Lord God has found anything good in!

9. What will happen to Jeroboam's dynasty in verse 14?

God will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam. God has set the wheels in motion already!

10. What does God prophesy in verse 15? When is this fulfilled?

Israel will be uprooted and scattered into exile beyond the river Euphrates.

This begins to happen in 733BC and completes in 722-720BC – see 2 Kings 17:7-23 – when the Northern Kingdom is exiled to Assyria. [Note: Jeroboam reigned from 933 to 911BC – so this prophecy has to wait nearly 200 years or so!]

11. What is the reason given for God’s judgment in verse 16? Is this harsh? (cf. Exodus 20:1-6; Exodus 34:14)

The reason for God’s judgment is because of the sins that Jeroboam committed and caused Israel to commit.

This is not harsh because God is a Holy, Holy, Holy God and in Exodus 20:1-6; God clearly stipulates that Israel was to have no other gods before Him and that they were not to make for themselves any images (idols) and bow down and worship them; because God is a jealous God (also mentioned in Exodus 34:14) punishing the children for the sins of the parents to 3rd, 4th generation BUT showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments.

12. What happens when Mrs Jeroboam returns home in verses 17 and 18?

God’s prophecy concerning Jeroboam’s son, Abijah, is fulfilled. As soon as Mrs Jeroboam stepped over the threshold of the house, her son died. He was buried and all Israel mourned, just as the prophet Ahijah had said.

Read 1 Kings 14:19-20

13. The writer gives a very brief summary (no details) of Jeroboam’s reign in verses 19 and 20? Are we meant to see that the writer’s focus and concern is on Jeroboam’s worship practices? What do you think?

To the writer, what is important is Jeroboam’s relationship with God. The writer wants us to see that Jeroboam has not walked in obedience to God; and has in fact created his own religion and worshipped false gods. In doing so, Jeroboam, has also led the people of Israel into false worship too; which is culpable.

14. **Ponder:** How would you summarize Jeroboam’s reign?

Jeroboam reigned for 22 years. His reign was full of false worship and disobedience to the Lord as well as constant warring with the Southern Kingdom (Judah) which ends in his death in 2 Chronicles 13.

The phrase “sins of Jeroboam” is used throughout the books of 1 & 2 Kings as a reminder of his dreadful reign (1 Kings 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:19, 26’ 22:52; 2 Kings 10:31; 13:6, 11; 14:24; 15:18, 24, 28; 17:21-23). It’s like the beginning of the Northern Kingdom was the beginning of the end!

Read Luke 14:25-27

15. What is Jesus’ teaching here? How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 14:1-20?

This is a very difficult teaching from Jesus – He is not literally saying that we should hate our father, mother, wife, husband, children, brothers and sisters – but in comparison to loving God and His Son, Jesus – it is as though we hate them. In other words, God (as He commands in Exodus 20:1-6) is a jealous (in a holy sense) God and He must be number one priority and we should not worship any gods (or any person or any thing) before Him! Because that puts us in Jeroboam territory!

Read Acts 5:1-11

16. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 14:1-20?

At the end of Acts 4 in v32 – we read that all the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but shared everything they had.

The chapter finishes with Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas, selling a field he owned and bringing the proceeds and putting them at the Apostles' feet.

We then read in Acts 5 that Ananias and Sapphira also sold a piece of property but instead of following the practice of Acts 4 and giving "all" the proceeds to the Church (the Apostles) they secretly kept some back for themselves.

They had the right to keep some back but they were not honest in declaring that because they wanted to "look good" in front of everyone and make out they were giving "everything".

Like Jeroboam and his wife, they thought they could lie and deceive God but God knows everything – even our secrets that no one else does (that's scary, isn't it?)

So, Peter tells Ananias in v3 – "how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Unfortunately, Sapphira, Ananias' wife, even though she was given the opportunity to tell the truth about the price she sold the land for, she too lied.

Both Ananias and Sapphira (like Jeroboam) suffered grave (literally) consequences for their lies and deception. Nothing can be hidden from God.

Ananias and Sapphira loved themselves more than God, Jesus and the Church.

There is another similarity between Jeroboam and the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

The way Jeroboam began his reign (in false worship) was the beginning of the end for his dynasty and the Northern Kingdom; as all kings were compared to his terrible standard, until the eventual exile of Israel. In the Ananias and Sapphira story – the Christian Church has just begun – and it must start in the way it means to go on – and it has a great start in Acts 4 with people sharing everything they have – but then Ananias and Sapphira begin to corrupt the church – and God will not stand for it – so he stamps it out – and as we read in v11 of Acts 5 – He does this as a matter of discipline by fear – "great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events"

Jeroboam, Ananias and Sapphira are all in the Bible so we learn from them and don't make the same mistakes and wrong choices they made and so we don't fall into the same false worship and lies and deception.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **1 Kings 14:1-20**?

Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

God is a jealous God!



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

- a. Jesus always does the will of the Father and is always obedient.
- b. The prophet says Jeroboam's dynasty and the in fact the Northern Kingdom will come to an end in comparison to Jesus' (Son of David) and His everlasting Kingdom!

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. Sometimes people ignore God and His Word and God's servants (ministers/priests) until they need something and then realize their idols can't help them! There's nothing wrong with asking for God's help but that should not be the only time we come to God!
- b. When we lie, we sometimes bring others into our web of lies and deception (as Jeroboam did with his wife!)
- c. We cannot hide ANYTHING from God – He knows EVERYTHING!
- d. Sometimes we neglect to pray (as Jeroboam did)
- e. When God says something will happen; it happens!
- f. Don't make the same mistakes and wrong choices as Jeroboam (false worship, lies and deception) and Ananias and Sapphira (lies, deception, greed and worship of themselves).
- g. There will ALWAYS be consequences when we don't put God first.
- h. Jeroboam was given grace when God raised him up and give him a kingdom of 10 tribes on the condition he walked in obedience. Jeroboam rejected that grace. We must not reject the grace of our Lord Jesus!

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

1 Kings 14:8

Finish in prayer: Praise God that He is holy, holy, holy and loves us with an everlasting love. Ask God to help us love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Ask God to help us to put Him and His Son first in our lives.

Study 4 – True and Proper Worship**1 Kings 14:21-31**
(Sermon on 14-Aug-22)

Before we begin, remind yourself what just happened in the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 1 Kings 14:1-20.

Read 1 Kings 14:21-24

1. What do we learn about King Rehoboam's family in verse 21?
2. Why is Jerusalem important to God?
3. What's significant about Rehoboam's mother being an Ammonite? (cf. 1 Kings 11:1)
4. What sad indictment do we read in verse 22? Who is at fault? Rehoboam or Judah?
5. What else did Judah do wrong in verses 23 and 24? Why is that a problem?

Read 1 Kings 14:25-28 and parallel story in 2 Chronicles 12:1-12

6. What judgment besets Judah? Who does God use to deliver this judgment?
7. What does Shishak plunder from Jerusalem?

8. What's symbolic in the gold shields being replaced by bronze ones?
9. **Ponder:** What does God want? Gold or bronze shields or something else?
10. What do we learn from **2 Chronicles 12:6-7, 12**? What does that say about God and about Judah?

Read 1 Kings 14:29-31

11. How is Rehoboam's reign summarized?
12. What are we told about the relationship between the Northern and Southern Kingdom?
13. Why do you think the writer mentions Rehoboam's mother being an Ammonite again in verse 31?
14. **Ponder:** Compare how Jeroboam and Rehoboam started and finished their reigns? What do you find?

Read Romans 12:1-3

15. What does the Apostle Paul teach here?
16. How does Romans 12:1-3 relate to 1 Kings 14:21-31?

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **1 Kings 14:21-31**?



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and ***Scripture is all about Him*** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Finish in prayer: Thank God for His mercy in our Lord Jesus and ask Him to help us respond to this mercy, in thankfulness, by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to Him.

Study 5 – A Lamp in Jerusalem**1 Kings 15:1-24**
*(Sermon on 21-Aug-22)***Before we begin, remind yourself of the promise from 1 Kings 11:35-36****Read 1 Kings 15:1-8**

1. Who becomes King of Judah?
2. What's the condition of Abijah's heart?
3. What two "fathers" does Abijah have and which one did he choose to model?
4. What does the Lord give in verse 4? Does this sound familiar? (cf. 1 Kings 11:35-37)
5. What assessment is given of King David?
6. What are we told about the relationship between the Northern and Southern kingdoms?
7. **Ponder:** Why is there still a kingdom in Judah?

Read 1 Kings 15:11-15

8. Who became King after Abijah?

9. How is Asa described in verse 11? What reforms did he introduce in verses 12 to 15?

Read 1 Kings 15:16-22

10. What conflict ensues? And who is Baasha? (1 Kings 15:27)

11. What does Baasha do?

12. How does Asa counter this? What deal does he make? With whom?

13. What's the negative in verse 19?

14. What's the positive in verses 11 to 15?

15. **Ponder:** Asa slowed the decline of the Kingdom of Judah? Is this teaching us anything about the decline in our churches and Christianity in Australia; especially given the recent census data on Christian faith and worship?

Read Romans 1:18-27


16. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 15:1-24?

Read Revelation 3:7-13

17. What is the assessment of the Church of Philadelphia?

18. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 15:1-24?

What's the **BIG IDEA** of 1 Kings 15:1-24?

 If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Finish in prayer: Thank God for His covenant promises in sending Jesus – the Son of David – who holds the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18)

Appendix 1



Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
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Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

1 and 2 Kings (Donald J. Wiseman – Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

1 Kings – The Wisdom and the Folly (Dale Ralph Davis)

Halley's Bible Handbook – New Revised Edition (Henry H. Halley)

Notes/Prayer Points