

Kings and Prophets 13-03-29a

This is Friday, the 29th of March, 2013. We continue our study of Kings and Prophets. We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, gives us a chance to kind of clear the decks, focus our concentration, remember the purpose for which we are here and to ensure that we're susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

It'll be kind of a pointless exercise if he doesn't energize both the delivery and the reception of these things. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to refresh our souls at the oasis of your word, to be reminded of the great standing that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, the relationship we have with you, the gifts that we have received from you as your children, the opportunities and the potentials that we have because of all of these wonderful blessings. We thank you for this portion of your word, and we ask that as we look at it together that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, that each of us will find a personal meaning and application in it, that it will thoroughly equip us for every good work in the time that remains to us now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. I said last time that I wanted to take a look at some of the Proverbs because King Solomon in 1 Kings is said to have authored some 3,000 of them. However, we're not going to do that.

I changed my mind. I had two weeks to think about it, and I say, look at the Proverbs at your leisure. We've covered the structure of that book, the authorship, the composition, the nature of many of those things, and I'm afraid if I start looking at them in any detail, I'll never leave.

It'll be the slew of despond or something, so we're going to skip that and move on. I want to move through the reign of Solomon and get on into the days of the divided kingdom, but we need to spend a little bit more time looking at Solomon because if you look at the book of 1 Kings, we've got several chapters devoted to him. Well, it's important, so being in the study of Kings, we'll pick up this evening in the end of chapter 4 and moving into chapter 5. We saw these very interesting notations in verse 31 about the wisdom of Solomon and those individuals to whom he is compared.

Do you remember that? It's been a couple of weeks now. It's been about three weeks ago, probably, that we covered this, but do you remember Ethan the Ezraite, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda? Remember that? You've got your four, it's actually a five passage quintuplet group there. To understand that reference, where do you need to go? You got to go back to Chronicles to find who the sons and grandsons of Judah were, right? Because where do these names come from? Who is Ethan? Who is Heman? Well, you go back to the Begats, the tribe of Judah, find that out.

You discover that these men were sons of whom? How many sons did Judah have? Total of five sons. It was Ur and Onan and that whole deal, but you remember his sons were wicked and

God kept killing them off and each one would marry Tamar and then God would kill them because they were wicked. So, then, it's Levirate Law, the next guy stepped up and he married her and God killed him because he was wicked.

The third one didn't want to have any children with her and so God got upset. But then Tamar said, well, you won't let me have the youngest son, the third son because the first two died and so she dressed up like a prostitute and Judah ends up entering her tent and she gets pregnant and there's a big scene. So that's the second passage.

You have to go back to Genesis and find out about Tamar getting pregnant and she has twins. Twins are always highly significant in Scripture. Never see a case of twins in Scripture that is not significant.

Thomas, among the disciples, was Thomas Didymus, Thomas the twin. Well, these twins that Tamar has, fathered by Judah, Genesis goes into detail about how they're born. She's about to give birth to twins.

You remember what happens? One sticks his hand out. He's the firstborn. So they wrap what kind of thread around his hand? Scarlet thread.

Then, oh no, his brother pulls him back in and pushes himself out and so you have Perez who breaches through and who's the other one? Who's the one that had the scarlet thread? Zerah. And who are the sons of Zerah? Ethan, Heman, Chalcol. These are the wise men.

These are the ones who, they don't get the inheritance, they don't get the ruling firstborn blessing because Perez breaks through and gets that. They get the wisdom. And we saw that this is sort of a foreshadowing of the two comings of Christ.

The first coming looks like he's going to come and bring in the kingdom, have the ruling authority, but instead the scarlet thread and that's withdrawn. It is the second coming of Christ that is going to be when he comes in power. He's the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

He is the suffering servant in the first coming. Second coming is going to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Fascinating.

So then you have to go to the genealogies and so you go all the way over your fifth passage. You've got this passage. You've got the Chronicles passage explaining who these guys are, the sons of Zerah, grandsons of Judah.

Then you go back to Genesis, that's your third passage to find out about the birth and the scarlet thread. The fourth passage or passages, you remember where they are? What's the one I haven't mentioned yet? Actually there's two I haven't mentioned yet. Those are the first three.

Fourth, you go to Psalm, remember that, 88 and 89. Psalm 88 and 89. Don't forget this.

This is good stuff. You can't get this at your local Five and Dime now. This is the reason it's mentioned.

Flip back there again. just remind yourself, go to Psalm 88, and look at the inscription, the superscription, a contemplation, mashal, masculine actually, of who? Ethan the Ezraite. And you say, well, see, he's a son of some guy named Ezra or whatever.

Look at the consonants. How do names in Hebrew work? It's the consonants, right? What are the consonants there? Z, R, and height. That's Zerah.

This is Ethan the Zerahite. He's a son of Zerah. And so he writes this song.

And you look at it, I will sing you the mercies of the Lord with my mouth, I'll make known your faithfulness to all generations. That's 89. You go back to 88.

What is this? This is a contemplation or a mashal of Heman the Ezraite. Heman the Zerahite. And this one, O Lord, God of my salvation, I've cried aloud day and night.

Let my prayer come before you and climb your ear. I'm in the pit. I'm like a man with no strength.

I'm adrift among the dead, the slain in the grave. You've got the two pictures again. One is in the depths and in need and crying out for salvation.

This is the first advent. This is what Jesus comes to fix. What's 89? This is the conquering king.

This is God of salvation. This is overcoming and triumph and praise and glory. It's a beautiful picture.

So that's your fourth passage. Fifth passage, just as a little reminder, flip over to the New Testament. And you go to the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Luke, where in chapter 3 is one set.

This is the genealogy of Mary, starting where it says, As was supposed the Son of Joseph, the Son of Joseph, the Son of Joseph, the Son of Joseph, the Son of Joseph, the Son of Joseph, and it goes all the way back. But the other genealogy in Matthew is the one we looked at, because this gives a very unique set of begats. And when you look in verse 3, Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar.

And Zerah is mentioned there. He's the only man's name mentioned in this entire first half of Matthew chapter 1. He's the only guy mentioned that is not an actual lineal ancestor of the Lord Jesus. Why is Zerah mentioned? Because Zerah has these sons.

These sons are mentioned in the days of Solomon for their wisdom. Their songs are quoted in 88 and 89. They're preserved, and David adds to them, adds some verses, and fleshes out this family heritage song from Heman, and family heritage song from Ethan.

And they foreshadow and prefigure the Lord Jesus himself, and that's why Zerach, I think, is included in Matthew chapter 1. So that was a great study. I really enjoyed finding the links between all of those passages, because the Bible is about the Lord Jesus Christ. The reign of Solomon that we are now looking at, if you return to 1 Kings 4 and 5, the reign of Solomon is a prefigurement, a foreshadowing, an adumbration, a preview of the millennial kingdom.

David, man of war, man of blood, accomplishes the victory, clears out the enemies. This is what the Lord Jesus did as the son of David on the cross. He led captivity captive in his death, burial, resurrection, which is being celebrated this weekend.

He accomplished the victory, and that is going to clear the way. He's going to return at the end of the tribulation to once again be the man of blood that David was. The blood will run as high as horses' bridles, and Armageddon will be a massive defeat for those that have encamped, and gathered, and encircled Israel.

The Lord Jesus, as his father David did, is going to slaughter them. It takes seven months to get them all buried and cleared out, and mark the nuclear waste places, and so on. Then you're going to have the millennial kingdom, which is pictured by Solomon.

So that's what we're looking at. As you get into the prosperity of Solomon at the end of chapter 4, his provisions for one day in verse 22 of chapter 4 of 1 Kings, 30 cores of fine flour. An easy way to remember what a core is, this K-O-R, this is roughly a 55-gallon drum.

That's what a core is. Technically it's like 59 gallons. You can translate it either into liquid measure or bushel measure.

That's going to be important here in a minute when we look at something else. So if you imagine that the daily ration for Solomon, this is at the palace. This is where he lives.

His staff, his servants, his cabinet, and all the rest of it. Thirty 55-gallon drums, if you want to picture it, of fine flour. Sixty 55-gallon drums of meal.

This would be like ground barley and so on. Ten slaughtered oxen. This is 20 sides of beef.

You've seen sides of beef hanging maybe in a butcher shop or something. Well, 20 sides of beef is what we're talking about here. Twenty oxen from the pasture, so they've got the fatted ones and then they've got the oxen.

There's the fat meat and the lean meat. So this is basically 40 oxen or 80 sides of beef total. A hundred sheep, deer, gazelles, roebucks, fatted fowl.

He had dominion over all the region on the side of the river from Tifsa even to Gaza. To try to get an idea that many modern critics and naysayers and disbelievers, skeptics have said the wealth of Solomon is just mythical. It's imaginary.

There's no way this could have been true. In reality, it could have been true. Subsequent

studies, where did this wealth come from? Here's the big question.

How could he afford all of this? Well, there are a number of dissections of this that said it's just impossible, there's no way. But then in more recent times, people have made discoveries. As recently as 2008, there have been discoveries that explain where this vast wealth came from.

I don't have time to do an exhaustive study of this. I just want to give you a hint, just an idea of how this worked. Because as you move into Chapter 5, Solomon's going to build the temple and he makes an arrangement with Hiram, king of Tyre.

So we'll just look at this as an example. And you can read this. I don't have time to go through all the details.

But he makes a swap. He makes a covenant with Hiram and he says, look, you send down these logs of cedar and of several different kinds of wood, the primary ones being cypress and cedar. There's also some others.

But primarily cypress and cedar. The cedars of Lebanon were notoriously famous in the ancient world. It's still on the flag of Lebanon, the cedar.

So he says, look, in verse 6 of Chapter 5, command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon. My servants will be with your servants. I will pay your wages for your servants according to whatever you say.

So what does Hiram say? Solomon gets a message back. I've considered the message in verse 8. And I will do what you desire concerning the cedar and cypress logs. My servants will bring these down from Lebanon to the sea.

I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you indicate to me and we'll have them broken apart there. Then you can take them away. There is going to be Joppa.

Joppa is modern Tel Aviv. Well, if you look at this on a map and figure this all out, the mountain slopes where all of these cedar trees grew were about 15 miles from the coast and the harbor where they could be put into the water. So Hiram's servants cut these trees, rolled the logs downhill, used teams of oxen to drag them anywhere from 5 to 15 miles depending on where they were cut to the sea.

They were tied together into vast rafts, log rafts, and they were floated out to sea and down to Joppa, Tel Aviv. This is about 90 miles that these things were brought down. Now, from Joppa or Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, you know how far that is? 35 miles.

It's another 35 miles over land to get there. So, yeah, it is an upward, you know, Mount Zion. They don't call it a mount because it's a valley.

It's up. The reason why they say go up, go up to Jerusalem, it's, you know, from sea level up, it's a climb. Solomon constructed highways expressly for the transfer of not only the logs but

many, many other materials that would go into the making of the temple and not the least the personnel, the workmen that would work on these.

But he made a trade. He said in verse 10, Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs according to all his desire and Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 cores of wheat as food. And it says 20 cores of pressed oil.

Now, this is 20,000 pressed cores. And I think you have a text note somewhere that in your New King James, pressed oil. Solomon gave this annually.

And you think, well, this is just astronomically impossible. You think 20,000 cores, 50,000 pounds, 55-gallon drums. However, they were doing excavation in the town of Ekron, which is Tel, I'm trying to remember the name of it now, Tel Sifra or something like that.

But it's the ancient Philistine town of Ekron. What happened to Ekron in David's day? What did David do to the Philistines? Conquered them, slew them, took all their towns, right? It's all in Solomon's kingdom. Well, as they have excavated Ekron, you know what they have found there? Let's just talk about the olive oil.

Olive oil was called liquid gold in the ancient world. In the town of Ekron alone, alone, they have found over 100 olive presses. And the secular archaeologists and scholars that have studied this have figured out the olive groves and the production, the annual production from these 100 olive presses in Ekron would have been anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 tons of olive oil.

Ekron all by itself, just that one town with its presses would have provided three quarters of what Solomon sent up to Hiram. And you think about the Mount of Olives, you think about all of the other towns, they have found olive presses all over Palestine. But Ekron alone, the annual production from Ekron, the seasonal production would have been three quarters of what Solomon sent to Tyre.

So it's trivial for him to have the oil as well as the wheat that would have been sent up there in exchange for all of these vast amounts of lumber. Now let's talk about the wealth of Solomon for a moment. David bequeathed to Solomon the wealth that he had accumulated during his years, his decades of warfare and conquest of the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Edomites, all of the other kingdoms that he conquered and subdued and he amassed this great wealth and this is what is going to eventually finance not only the temple but a lot of other things.

I calculated the gallons of olive oil in Ekron, this would have been 857,143 gallons because I went and looked it up, olive oil is about seven pounds per gallon and so you divide that into the tons that they produced, anywhere up to 3,000 tons of olive oil in a season just in Ekron, so that works out to 857,000 gallons. So that alone, just the production of the land bought the logs and the labor of the men. But if you look at, flip over just for a moment to 1 Kings chapter 11 and oh no, don't go to 11 yet, never mind, I don't want to talk about that yet.

We'll get there though, we'll be there. But the amount of money that Solomon inherited from

his father David is given in 1 Chronicles chapter 22, so turn over there, you'll see in your New King James 1 Chronicles 22, it says, David prepares to build the temple and in verse 14, David says, I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord 100,000 talents of gold and a million talents of silver and bronze and iron beyond measure for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also and you may add to them.

David had already laid in some timber and stone for the foundations and the framing of the temple and the finish work out of the cedar and the cypress and the rest of it is what Solomon arranged with Hiram. Hiram came to power in about 970 B.C., depending on whose calendar you look at, but by one reckoning, Hiram comes to power and Solomon begins to build the temple in 960 and so Hiram overlaps with David, they were great friends, David dies, Hiram hears about it, says David's got a wise son in Solomon, makes a covenant with him, the construction of Solomon's temple begins in 960 and finishes seven years later in 953 and so even secular archeology and secular reckoning has found Hiram, King of Tyre in 970 and it comports with the biblical record, dovetails very nicely. But when you look at this and you say, okay, 100,000 talents, well, 100,000 talents is, and I did all these calculations on the back of a piece of paper and I'm no math guy, but I'm pretty sure my math is right.

100,000 talents of gold, this translates to 110 million troy ounces of gold. If you go to Kitco.com and check right now, gold is running roughly, let's just say for the sake of argument, \$1,700 an ounce, so this many talents or this many troy ounces, 110 million troy ounces, works out to what Solomon started with in the treasury, \$187 billion by today's money in gold. \$187 billion is what David amassed over the course of his conquests and remember at that time, they didn't have modern mining and refining techniques, this is gold that was hand dug, hand refined and collected.

The silver that he mentions here in verse 14, a million talents of silver, when you do the math, this is another \$30 billion in silver and the bronze and the iron, David says I can't even count it, I've got so much of it. And by the way, iron, the end of the bronze age and beginning of the iron age, this is what the Philistines, remember in the days of Saul, they had a monopoly on the forging of iron and the sharpening, they had all of the blacksmiths and the forgers and the smelters and whatnot and they wouldn't let Israel have any iron, well David took care of that. When he conquered the Philistines, he got the entire iron industry and he's got iron that he can't even count.

So, if you turn back now to 1st Kings, but we are going to go forward a little bit to 1st Kings chapter 10, I took it a little too far forward last time, but 1st Kings chapter 10, look at verse 14, the weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly, this is the taxes, this is income taxes, he's already got \$187 billion of gold from David. He's got \$30 billion in silver from his father David, that's what he inherits sort of in the national treasury. The annual taxes, if you think he might run through those billions of dollars at some point, here's the annual taxes, the weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was 666 talents of gold.

If you do the math, this is a billion dollars a year in gold that's coming in. This is not only income tax, these are tariffs, these are costs of doing business for the caravans and the ships that pull in from all over the world, bringing the apes and the peacocks and the exotic spices and products from all of these far off places. So, has he got the money? He's got the money to do it.

Does he need it? Yes, he does. And they say, well, but how could this possibly be believable in the ancient world? Could you actually have this much gold and could you gild the temple the way that the account in chapter 5 and following says that you can? Well, actually, yes, you can. And one of the measures, you look at King Tut and his tomb and his solid gold sarcophagus and the gilded pillars and the accounts in Egypt of what he did in his building programs where there are 53 foot high columns that were gilded top to bottom and 30 foot high columns that were gilded top to bottom.

Nobody disbelieves the accounts in Egypt. Well, in Israel, it was a nexus. You couldn't get between Egypt and all of the other regions by land without passing through Israel.

And so, you know, you've got these taxes. If you want to come through, it's kind of like the turnpike. And there was exchange that was done.

They only had to take it as far as Israel. They could sell it there and go home. Israel would then resell.

And so, stuff from the north and the northeast would come to Israel and the caravans could save a trip. They didn't have to go all the way across the desert. The Israelites would be, and that's even the case today when you look at Lebanon as the bankers of the Middle East, that banking industry was a little bit further south in Solomon's day.

And he had the wisdom to parlay his geographical position into much more. So, to cut a long story short, is it believable? Yes. Was it real? Yes.

Could he afford to build this massive temple with its polished stones and its gilding and its cypress and cedar lumber furnishings and accoutrements? Yes. All of these things have been calculated. Where else might he have gotten his wealth? In 2008, they were doing excavations over in the Middle East and they discovered copper mines.

October 28, 2008, news flash all over the world. In a discovery straight out of an Indiana Jones movie, archaeologists believe they have uncovered one of the lost mines of King Solomon. The vast copper mine lies in an arid valley in modern day Jordan and was created in the 10th century B.C. The great thing about carbon dating is it relies on carbon.

Charcoal is an ideal. You know, they'll find embers from a fire. Well, back a certain number of years, it's pretty accurate.

In things measured in thousands of years, carbon dating is pretty accurate. Well, copper is smelted and they've got these vast slag heaps and smelting furnace leavings in the area of this

mine. And so they went down to the very bottom and they said, what's the oldest? When did they first start building these big fires and smelting this copper out of the ore? And measured that charcoal and guess how old it was? 3,000 years.

2,000 years takes you back to the time of Christ. Another 1,000 takes you back to the time of Solomon. And the precise dating, give or take, is around 950 B.C. is when this mine really started going gangbusters.

Well, the copper that came out of this thing was enormously valuable. And this was another one of the industries. The wealth came out of the ground.

God gave Solomon wealth right out of his own land. This all belonged to him. He had the vast crops and olive orchards and vineyards.

He had the gold and the silver and the copper. Just Google King Solomon's mines if you want to find some of this. It's incredible.

They made a NOVA special about this. And it's an indication, belatedly, they say, well, this is one case where archaeology seems to confirm what the Bible says. Well, we could have saved you the trouble.

So he was enormously wealthy. Now, here's the point. Here's the point.

You say, okay, well, isn't that great? Solomon was really rich and he really lived and it was all possible. He built the temple. What did God tell Solomon when he built the temple? What did he tell him when he gave him his great wisdom? You remember those? God appears to Solomon twice.

And he tells Solomon that if you will walk in the ways of your father David, if you will keep my commands, if you will be faithful, I will extend your reign. I will bless you. In chapter 3, verse 13, I've given you what you have not asked, riches and honor, so there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.

If you walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days. And lengthen your days is a promise that goes even beyond his own generation. This would have extended to his sons and his grandsons, to the third and fourth generation and beyond.

But what happens? Well, Solomon builds the temple and it's a not often recognized fact that, by the way, you can look at 1 Kings 7, he casts two pillars of bronze, each one 18 cubits high in a line of 12 cubits, measure the circumference of each, the two capitals of cast bronze. You know where that bronze comes from? Where the copper came from? Those mines that they found out in the deserts of Jordan. And it goes into great detail.

I wish we had time to look at all of these things. Chapter 8, the Ark is brought there. Solomon

gives his prayer of dedication and it's a wonderful prayer.

Again, it's something we could look at if you go to Chronicles and look at the dedication of the temple. In chapter 7, Solomon offers 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep and the king and all of the people dedicate themselves to God. God says in verse 14, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.

If you're at 2 Chronicles chapter 7 verse 14, circle that phrase. Turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. If you look at the first verse in that chapter, what I started to say a minute ago, one of the lesser known, everybody remembers Elijah on Mount Carmel.

Remember the priests of Baal work all day, cut themselves, wear themselves out, can't get Baal to hear. Elijah builds the altar, douses it with water, puts a moat around it, fills it with water, calls out to God, fire comes down from heaven and takes out the sacrifice, the altar and all of the dirt around the altar. Well, look at chapter 7 verse 1 of 2 Chronicles.

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices and the glory of the Lord came and filled the temple. This is the first time that fire came down and consumed the sacrifice was at the temple. And when it happens in Elijah's day, it is a harking back and a reminder to this day.

And there is a lesson to be learned by comparing those two appearances of God. The priest could not enter the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. By the way, all the way through Kings, when you see Solomon builds the temple, the word temple is the same word, house.

It's house all the way through. Great start. You couldn't ask for a better start.

You couldn't ask for more blessing, more prosperity, more gifts, more presence of God than this. And Solomon is going to further it away. The glory, the heights, the grandeur, the unimaginable splendor of this kingdom is fumbled away in Solomon's own lifetime.

Just turn over to chapter 11 of 1 Kings. King Solomon loved many foreign women as well as the daughter of Pharaoh. Remember that? Before he had the first appearance from God, before he had the second appearance from God, which we don't really have time to look at.

He's given a first and a second chance. But the daughter of Pharaoh, she was the footdoor. Daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Sidonians.

Where is Sidon? Tyre and Sidon are up, that's Hiram. Hey, wouldn't it be great to marry some women from up there? And Hittites, from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, you shall not intermarry with them nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.

Solomon clung to these in love, clung to them in love. You look at everything God gave him, was it not enough? 700 wives and princesses, 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart. It was so when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods.

His heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. Solomon went after Ashereth, the goddess of the Sidonians. By the way, Hiram was a believer.

If you go back and look at Hiram's message to Solomon, Hiram believed in the God of Israel. That's why David loved him. That's why he loved Solomon.

He was a believer in God. Hiram, the king of Tyre. Not so the Sidonians.

The Sidonians worshipped Ashereth, Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. Where did the Ammonites come from? Where did Moab and Ammon come from? What's their origin? The daughters of Lot, incest, right after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, did not fully follow the Lord as did his father David.

It doesn't say he didn't follow the Lord. It says he did not fully follow. This is the challenge I suggest for us before the break.

It is one thing to follow. It is another to fully follow the Lord. Is there a love in our hearts that has insinuated its way in, like the wives from Egypt, from Sidon, from Ammon, from Moab, from Edom, from the Hittites, that is turning away our heart? Because it doesn't matter how much Solomon was given.

It is all going to deteriorate. It is going to dissipate. It is going to disappear at the end of one generation.

He holds on to this stuff for 40 years. And it is only for the sake of his father David that he doesn't lose it in his own lifetime. It isn't Solomon that keeps it.

David keeps it for Solomon. David being dead is still a blessing to his son Solomon. God says, look at verse 13, that is a blessing to your son Solomon.

Well, start in verse 11. The Lord said to Solomon, because you have done this and have not kept my covenant and my statutes. Started small, just had a wife from Egypt.

How harm can that be? Wife after wife after wife. Before he is done, within 40 years he has got a thousand of them. Because you have done this, have not kept my covenant and statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David. I will tear it out of the hand of your sons. However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom.

I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem

which I have chosen. The one tribe he gets to keep is the lefties, the Benjamites. Judah and Benjamin are down south and Judah and Benjamin basically amalgamate into one tribe eventually.

Well, this is an interesting principle. We say, well, if God had just given me more help, if I had had more blessing, if I had had more support, if I had had more this, more that, if God had made it more clear, nobody had it better than Solomon. It is his own choice and it stands as an eternal warning to us from those to whom much is given, much is expected, much is required.

All that is required of us is that we be faithful. How hard would it be? Can you imagine being King Solomon, having the greatest wealth that had ever been assembled? Anything he wants, anything he wants, he can have. The opportunity to build the dwelling place for God's name, not God himself, by the way, the name of God, the trailing hem of his garment, his train fills the temple, just the edge of his robe fills the temple.

It isn't a house for God, it's the place of his name. It's a place where people can come and worship God. But he has the privilege of building this and he fritters it away.

It is a warning. You and I have been given great spiritual riches, but we can lose them, we can trade them away if we allow things into our heart, if we get captivated and led astray by covetousness, which is idolatry, distractions. They are sweet distractions, they are comely, they are persuasive, they are alluring, they are seductive.

These women weren't off-putting, they were beautiful. Solomon had his pick and his harem was unrivaled before or since. Beautiful, beautiful women, but they took the place of the things of God.

But God says, I will not do it in your days. And you think, well, if Solomon is the one that messed up, why isn't it Solomon that suffers the consequences? Well, we're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see a very interesting principle that is repeated three or four times in Kings having to do with God's delay of judgment.

What is it that can delay or diminish or even cancel God's judgment? We'll see that when we come back.