

1 Kings 4

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[0:00] 1 Kings chapter 4, 1 Kings chapter 4, we'll be in 1 Kings chapter 4 as we gather. You know, this morning I shared with you guys, and I'm just reminded of that, my desire is just, I just want God just to put me somewhere and leave me somewhere.

And you know, I've never had a desire to leave, go anywhere else. I thought for a while there, I did, had an ambition, I thought God may be moving us out of state.

That's before I came here, it's actually right before I came here, and some of you know that. And he just said no, in the most clear of ways, he said no and just worked circumstances out, left us in this area and then called us to this church, and just my desire.

You know the reason behind that, I'm so thankful, is when God leaves us wherever we're at, then we have the opportunity to see fruit from the seeds we've sown so many years in advance.

And it's good, it makes you feel old, but it's good. You know, we're seeing that, Carrie and I were talking about how exciting it was.

[1:12] Seeing seeds that were sown years and years ago, and just seeing God produce fruit of that. I got, sorry I got distracted on that, because the young lady that walked in with the baby used to ride to church with us when she was about eight.

She was our neighbor, all right? So she would hang out with us and ride to church with us, and you know, it's good. You know, when Lauren was up here playing with us, before she had the baby, she's got something more important to hold on to now than a flute.

She would stand beside us up here and play flute with us. I was just always like amazed, like, yeah, she was just ride to church with us, you know? And it was just, it's just good to see that, and you only get that through longevity in an area.

So there's a lot to be said about that, a lot to be encouraged by that. So we stay the course. All right, 1 Kings chapter 4. I'm looking at it in its entirety, so we'll read through it, okay?

We'll get to some names, we'll get to some really difficult things to say. Hey, we'll read of Ben-Hur, not Judah Ben-Hur, but Ben-Hur. He's in here. I always wonder when I read this passage, is this where the writers of the script that was originally a play that became a movie, Judah Ben-Hur, that's where they got the name.

[2:28] Ben, B-E-N, means son of, okay, in Scripture. So I'll tell you this now so that you don't get carried away the way I do in reading, think, oh, that's Ben-Hur, the guy who rides chariots.

Wrong guy, okay? But you'll read of Ben-Hur and other names, right? But he's the son of Hur, which gives you a whole new perception of when you hear Judah Ben-Hur, right?

He's Judah, the son of Hur, H-U-R. But anyway, here we are, 1 Kings 4. Now King Solomon was king over all Israel, and these were his officials.

Azariah, the son of Zadok, was the priest. Elihuareth and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, were secretaries. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilad, was the recorder.

And Benaniah, the son of Jehadiah, was over the army. And Zadok and Abiathar were priests. And Azariah, the son of Nathan, was over the deputies. And Zabod, the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's friend.

[3:27] And Ahishar was over the household. And Adinaram, the son of Abda, was over the men subject to forced labor. Solomon had 12 deputies over all Israel who provided for the king and his household.

Each man had to provide for a month in the year. These are their names.

As far as the other side of Jachmin. Ben-Geber and Ramoth-Galid, the towns of Jer, the son of Manasseh, which in Galid were his.

The region of Argab, which is in Bashan. Sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars were his. Ahinadab, the son of Iddo in Mahanim. Ahimaz in Naphtali.

He also married Basemath, the daughter of Solomon. Ben-Ana, the son of Hushai in Asher and Beloth. Jehoshaphat, the son of Perua in Issachar. Shimei, the son of Allah in Benjamin. [4 : 46] Geber, the son of Uriah in the land of Hidgalid. The country of Sihon, king of the Amorites. And of Og, king of Bashan. And he was the only deputy who was in the land.

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. They were eating and drinking and rejoicing. Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistines to the border of Egypt.

They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. Solomon's provisions for one day was 30 cores of fine flour and 60 cores of meal, 10 fat oxen, 20 pasture-fed oxen, 100 sheep beside deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl.

For he had dominion over everything west of the river from Tifshah even to Gaza, over all the regions west of the river. And he had peace on all sides around about him.

So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba all the days of Solomon. Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen.

[5 : 54] Those deputies provided for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table. Each in his month they left nothing lacking. They also brought barley and straw for the horses and swift steeds in the place where it should be each according to his charge.

Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezraite, Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahal. And his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.

He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that grows on the wall.

He spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. And men came from all the peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

[6 : 55] 1 Kings chapter 4. I want you to see this evening, Wisdom on the Throne. Wisdom on the Throne. If you remember, when we were together Wednesday night, I told you we were really breaking a one-part message into two parts.

And what we were looking at was the end of the third chapter with reference to his wise judgment between the two ladies who came to him with the children. The one son had died, and he had to make a decision whose son was the living one.

And it started with this same declaration that there was a wise king on the throne, and they came to him, and the men were moved by his wisdom. The third chapter ends very much the same way that the fourth chapter ends, and it seems to be this bookends of what it looks like when wisdom governs the land.

We need to understand that with Solomon in particular, it seems from the beginning of his reign until the construction of the temple, and even the dedication of the temple, Solomon walked in seemingly faithfulness.

We say seemingly because there was definitely some things there that are unfaithful, but he walked in seemingly faithfulness and dedication to the Lord. But it is after the dedication of the temple that we begin to see the downward slope and the fall of Solomon, and eventually leads to the division of the nation.

[8 : 15] But what we have in this fourth chapter really encompasses more than just those first several years. It took seven years to construct the temple. We don't know exactly, well, we can do the math, but we don't know right now for our sakes how many years after the beginning of his reign that he does that.

He starts that construction. But we know that it's really early in his service as king because his father made all the provisions. He takes 13 years to construct his own house and his own residence.

After the construction of the temple, it is usually there that we begin to see his downfall. This fourth chapter really shows us what it looks like during the whole reign of King Solomon because he has adult daughters, two of which are married to some of his officials in the land.

And very clearly, when he begins his reign, he is somewhere between 18, 19 years old, and he doesn't have any children yet, so they're not adults. So we're looking at encompassing throughout his reign.

Okay? So this shows us what it looks like when wisdom is on the throne. Now we say that because we see the truth of what Scripture teaches us, we want to find the application in it, and we really have to look at broad scope.

[9 : 28] There are things in Scripture when we look at the historical writings in particular. If we confine ourselves to that one place, then we kind of get lost in what's going on in the grand story.

Right? Solomon is but a part of the story of God's interaction with his people, and we know these things. We've read through them, which is why it's kind of important to have the great overview of Scripture in your mind, and then to come back and then study the smaller portions of it there.

I walk you through these things because, honestly, these passages are ones I wrestle with the longest is to say, well, how are you going to preach that? Right? I mean, how do you want to, what gem are you going to find in that portion of Scripture other than the fact that Solomon had a bunch of people with weird names, and he ruled over a lot of people, and he built some big horse barns. So, I mean, what else are you going to do? What application is there? So, when we take it in context like that, we want to see what it looks like when wisdom is on the throne. Some good things and some bad things.

Okay? First of all, we see that there is delegated responsibility. This is good. Anytime you see a great leader in Scripture, they delegate responsibility. They do. It is never about the individual.

[10 : 42] It's never about that sole purpose. As a matter of fact, it was Moses who thought he could take on all things. You remember that? When he led God's people out, and they had crossed the Red Sea, and they were in the wilderness, and he had these people stand in line all day long.

And it was Moses' father-in-law who looked at him and said, you're going to wear yourself out. This can't happen. He says, you need to delegate responsibility. And that's actually, if you go through church leadership training, one of the church leadership trainings that they take you through is when you begin to look at, like, Exodus 18, when Moses' father-in-law looked at Moses and said, hey, you can't do it all.

Right? Delegate some responsibility. We begin to see here how wisdom on the throne, now all of a sudden, Solomon is in place. It says, now Solomon was king over all of Israel.

And then it lists his officials. We notice in this listing of officials that some things have changed.

Azariah, you just need to know, is not the son, but the grandson of Zadok. Okay? So if you really get into study of scripture and study of people, that's his grandson.

It's not uncommon for grandsons to be referred to as sons. But evidently, Zadok has passed away. He's no longer a priest. He was the priest that was there when Solomon began his reign. But Abiathar is the one who is exiled and demoted from being priest.

[11 : 56] But he's listed in here as well. So what we have is the listing, the author of 1 Kings is listing for us all those who ever had an official capacity during the reign of either David, the latter part of David's reign, or the beginning of Solomon's reign.

Okay? But he has the right people in place. He has also, whereas his father had one recorder or secretary, Solomon has two. The reason being is the expanse of the empire has grown.

David really pushed outward for the first time in the history of the nation. And Solomon reigns over all that David had acquired through military victory. But then he has subject to him people outside of that.

And for the first time in the history of God's people, and the only time in the history of God's people, you in the adult Sunday school class asked this morning, I was asking Brother Mike how the class went.

You guys were looking at Genesis 12, the Abrahamic covenant, if I'm not mistaken. You were making your way through the Abrahamic covenant. He said, next week, we're in Genesis 15. That's awesome.

[13 : 04] Because in Genesis 15, God makes a promise as to the expanse of the land that will be given to the descendants of Abraham. The only time they get close to occupying it is here.

It's when Solomon reigns. Right? Because David wins a majority of it militaristically, and then Solomon takes those, the heifer, H-E-P-H-E-R, region, is subject to him during his reign.

He doesn't ever rule over it, but they're subject to him. And the region, for the first time, from the river, that's the Euphrates River. So whoever says, from the other side of the river to this area, that's the Euphrates River.

So from the first time, even from Egypt, he has an alliance with Egypt. We're not here to really say he shouldn't have. I mean, well, we are here to say he shouldn't have in a minute. But he has this alliance with Egypt, and he goes from the south to the north, the northern region.

He gets really close to where God says, this is my land. So, I say all that because what we're looking at is this looks like what the hope of Scripture is.

[14:07] Right? This looks like what Genesis is pointed to. If we're in the moment, if we didn't think, if we didn't know that there are a lot of other books that follow 1 Kings, we would say, hey, the promise that God made in Genesis 15 is fulfilled.

Look at this region, and Solomon is reigning over this region. This is the one we're looking for. But that's not the end of the story, right? Wisdom's on the throne. He's there.

He's reigning. He's got this God-given wisdom, and it truly is a supernatural God-given wisdom. He's reigning over the most land a nation of Israel has ever had, and then he begins to delegate it. We read of these deputies, these 12 deputies where he had the names. We lose the names. There's so many of them. There's five of them that are referred to as the son of. Most people believe that in translation of scripture, those names got lost, but we knew who their daddy was, right?

So we don't know who his son, what his name was, but we know he was the son of her. So that's Ben-Hur. We don't know what his name was, but we know this, so that's that. So we have these people recorded because what he did is he realigned the kingdom.

[15:13] Now, pay attention to this. It says, no longer by tribal allotments. You know, when you open up the back pages of your Bible and you have those cool maps there with all the colors and you see there's the tribal allotment, the 12 tribes.

You have Ephraim, Manasse, and the half tribe of Gad over here, and then you have all these other ones, and then you look at Judah, and in the midst of Judah, there's this one little circle, like the donut hole of a circle, and there's Simeon, right?

And you're like, wow, Simeon really didn't get much. Well, again, go back to the book of Genesis, and you see that it says that Simeon will be absorbed in Judah. That's what takes place, right?

I mean, when Israel's dying, he's blessing his children. He says, my son Simeon, you're kind of a wild ox of a guy. You're going to be absorbed into Judah. And when they go into the land, they're the hole of the donut of Judah, and then over the years, we kind of lose where Simeon is.

Wow. Well, do you know Scripture's right? They are absorbed into Judah. That's exactly what happens. But anyway, so Solomon takes it beyond just the tribal allotment because there was such a small region that was allotted to him, and he redistributes the land or redivides the land to cover the whole expanse.

[16:27] That's why he gives all these weird cities that are hard to name, and he puts leaders or deputies over these 12. And this really is a sign of prosperity. It's really, it's just a, it's a time of grandeur in the nation.

But, the seeds are being planted here because this redistribution and redivision is also what's going to lead to the division of the nation.

Because one region you don't see included in this is the area of Judah. There's no deputy over Judah because that's the king's residence.

they can take care of themselves. And when Solomon dies, these dividing lines that he is establishing here will be the very dividing lines that there's Judah to the south and all of Israel to the north, right?

You have Israel and Judah, Israel and Judah. Because while it is great that it's got to this point just because wisdom's on the throne and can delegate responsibility, it really becomes too much.

[17:33] Because notice what he does here. He makes it so as to not exhaust one region. Each region has to provide for the king and those coming to his household every month.

I love what one Bible commentator says. Just the sheer number of wives and concubines that Solomon has, that's a lot to feed. Right? But then when you figure in his children and then you figure in when the queen of Sheba came, she came with a great entourage which probably exceeded into the hundreds.

I mean, read again the listing of what was provided for him every day. Right? Solomon's provisions for one day were 30 cores of fine flour. You say, well, what's 30 cores?

That's a lot. Right? That's a lot. A lot of fine flour. 60 cores of meal. I mean, just think of the meat alone. 10 fat oxen.

That means 10 stable raised oxen and then 20 pasture raised oxen. That's 30 ox a day. Right? And it's not just that but then you have 100 sheep and then you have deers and roebucks and fowls and all this other thing.

[18:43] I mean, that's a feast every single day. And they're also providing for his horses. Later on, the barley and all these things that come from his horses.

So, what he did is he distributed it and he delegated responsibility that every month a different region would come. Now, initially, that's great because we're going to see in the next thing in just a minute and initially, that's great.

But do you remember what happened when he dies? His son's on the throne and they come and say, hey, the burden is heavy. Right? We can't keep doing this.

So, please lighten our load. And it's when the son refuses to lighten the load then we have rebellion. Wisdom says, hey, I know how people can provide for me.

Someone once said, and I can't remember who or I'd give credit where credit was due, that David was the shepherd who served his people. Solomon was the king who called his people to serve him. And he was wise enough to figure out how to get it done.

[19:48] Wisdom, delegated responsibility, but we look and see what they're bringing him, not what he's giving back to them. Okay? Again, these are fulfillments of God's promises.

We go all the way back into the book of 1 Samuel when the people wanted a king and Samuel got upset and said, you really don't want a king? And they said, oh, we want a king that will be just like every other nation? Well, God speaks to Samuel and Samuel goes and speaks to the people and says, this is what's going to happen when you have a king.

Right? You're going to be taxed. You're going to be levied. You're going to have to provide for his household. You're going to, your sons and your daughters are going to be called to be in either his army or his maids and his servants.

That's what we want. Well, Solomon reaches the pinnacle of what the people wanted. That's what they wanted and they had the wisest of wise on the throne and they get what they want.

He makes good judgments, but he also levies a pretty heavy tax. Levees, they, they, archaeologists have declared that in those regions, they found jars that were buried that dated to this time five big clay pots full of 60 pounds of silver each and they had the word fifth written on them.

[21:13] It means it was 20%. It was what was set aside for the taxes of that day. 20% tax rate.

That's pretty burdensome, right? Because they were putting it aside, putting it aside.

But just in case we think it's all bad, the second thing we notice is not only the delegated responsibility, number two, he delivered peace and prosperity. Wisdom on the throne brought peace and prosperity.

He's a king of peace. He knows how to maintain the peace. He is, he's ensuring the peace and, and we don't want to paint it in such a bad way, right? We don't want to just say everything he did was bad because, I mean, when we look at it, politically, the things he does is awesome.

He does it the right way and he really brings the people into an era of peace. It's, it's so declared to be an era of peace that verse 20 says, now right after it speaks of how he broke up and redivided the land and, and before it declares the tax that he puts upon them and all this other stuff, verse 20 declares Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sanded as on the seashore in abundance.

God's, again, God's promise to Abraham is being fulfilled, right? He has multiplied the descendants of Abraham like the sand of the seashore.

[22:27] This man who counted himself as good as dead, it tells us in the New Testament, right? But said that he believed, he chose rather to believe the promises of God rather than account for the deadness of his own body and the deadness of his wife's womb.

He believed the promises of God. Here we're seeing it come about, right? God is bringing, he's faithful to this. But then we read this next phrase, and they were eating and drinking and rejoicing. That's always a declaration of peace and prosperity. They were eating and drinking and rejoicing. Oh, complete side note, every time I read in scripture where someone's eating, drinking, and rejoicing, what follows is never good.

In the days of Noah, they were eating, drinking, and rejoicing, and giving, and being taken away in marriage, and then it started raining, right? When you open up the book of Revelation, it says they'll be eating and drinking and rejoicing, and then, you know, stuff happens.

Everywhere we read in scripture, they're eating and drinking and rejoicing, and what follows isn't really a great thing, but it shows us the peace and the prosperity that's there, and again, the expanse of the land and the kingdom that is growing, and then we read this kind of weird phrase in verse 25, so Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree.

[23 : 46] You say, what does it mean to live under my own vine and my own fig tree? Well, it kind of precludes the prophecy of the book of Jeremiah where Jeremiah declares that in the latter days it's when the plows will be beat, or the swords will be beaten to plows, and you know, have all this, the statue of the United Nations used to use as the swords being beaten to the plows, and we can all have a part in the land, and there's peace in the land, and that's what Jeremiah is speaking about, is living under your own fig tree, right?

And living under your own sustenance, and you're providing for yourself, and everything's good, nobody's bothering you, you do you, right? You have all this, you have no fear from the outside, you have no fear from anyone else, there's no tyranny, you're not like Gideon and threshing your wheat in a wine vat hiding from anybody, you have the freedom to live in prosperity, and you have the freedom just to drink and eat of your own abundance, right?

That's exactly the picture here, is that for the first time in the history of the nation, there's no fear, there's no shame, God is prospering them, and he has the king on the throne that's ensuring this prosperity, but, we don't mean to be a bearer of bad news, but, the truth that we find in scripture, and the truth that we find in history, is that times of ease do not produce a vibrant faith, times of ease, and comfort, and prosperity, normally, I'm not saying we can't have it, normally, are a seed bed for a shallow faith, one of the, the prophetic words that we have before the nation of Israel goes into the promised land, Moses declares to them there, at the end of the book of Deuteronomy, Joshua repeats it later at the end of the book of Joshua, that there will come a day where they will go into the land, that they will live in houses they did not build, they will eat from gardens they did not plant, and they will drink from wells that they did not dig, and then they will forget God.

Because it's easy to keep him in mind when you need the manna every morning and you need rocks to spit out water. But when the house is there and the garden is there and the well is there, we got it all taken away.

[26 : 20] Many, many years ago, Francis Chan wrote a book, Francis Chan said in this book, I'll never forget it, he said, we say in America that we live in faith and we live in dependence and we want to repeat the Lord's Prayer, Lord give us this day our daily bread, he said, and we say that the whole time when we walk into a refrigerator that's overflowing with food.

He said, really, where's the dependence? Or some of you like me, our refrigerator's not really overflowing with food. Well, according to the standard of the multitude of the nations around us, it's overflowing with food.

And we say, but where is that? This is, this is the reality that we see is this ease and this comfort that is really on the nation. This is the beginning of the rebellion that will follow.

You know how we get to the, this king was good and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord and this king was bad and he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. You know how we get to that? It's because before that they were eating and drinking and rejoicing.

And it was an easy time. They were living under their own fig tree, they were living under their own banner, everything, there was no time of dependence. Now, that's not saying we can't, keep in mind, God always has his people, right?

[27 : 31] I'm not, I'm not trying to paint a gloomy picture that everybody was wicked in his time, but really, I think that, with all honesty, there's people who are seeking the Lord here. I mean, Solomon builds the temple and the Shekinah glory of God falls on it.

I mean, again, God really puts his stamp of approval upon it in a massive way, right? The presence of God comes and rests upon that place. But, these, quote unquote, good old days are the very days that led to when the Shekinah departed from the temple.

And, and we see that. We, it's a great day in our nation to be a part of a church. And, and I know I've met people over the years who say, well, but I wish we could go back to what we were in the heyday of church in the United States.

And I'm not going to put a date on it because I don't want anybody to think I'm wrong, but I mean, when the churches were filled to capacity on Sunday nights and, you know, there was, there was just a wonderful thing. You're right.

And, and, and I wasn't there for some of that. I was there, you know, on the tail end of some of that maybe. Later on, not as a pastor, but as a kid growing up. but I've read some of it how, you know, the, the churches became places of society.

[28 : 52] They became places of social halls and they became the gathering place of the community and everybody had nowhere else to go so they went to the church. I'm just going to be honest with you, I don't want to go back to those days because I want to declare a gospel to people who are being forced to make a choice rather than just say, well, that's the only thing open so I'm going to go.

I know it seems hard, but I mean, that's just the truth is that days of eating and drinking and rejoicing and ease and no discomfort and everybody doing what was right and the faith got easier and the easier faith led to a shallower walk in the nation here which leads us to our last thing is this delegated responsibility delivered peace and prosperity and it's wonderful that God is so faithful to his people and we rejoice in that but the faithfulness of God to his people seems to almost be ignored because the last thing is a diminished dependence for security.

A diminished dependence. Again, these fall hand in hand and while we know that Solomon is doing right here but there's still the kind of the small things he does wrong that become the big things later on.

And we begin to see that. He built these huge horse barns. There's some difference. It says 40,000 stalls. When you open up 2 Chronicles it says 4,000 stalls.

And so we say, well, numerically speaking, 4,000 is probably more accurate when you look at the fact that he had 12,000 horsemen. So when you begin to put two to three horses per chariot and this amount of horsemen and there, so numerically 4,000 maybe.

[30 : 41] So if it's 40,000 or 4,000, it really doesn't matter. That's a lot of horse stalls. Right? And they found the ruins of these in that same area. But he gets to strategically locate these horse stalls all around the land.

But what that is is that is displaying military might. The chariot was the tank or the fighter jet of today. Right? He was displaying the might, the military might.

And the very wise thing to do is we're going to strategically locate them because see, Israel always has been. The land that God gave his people has always been strategically located in the region of the world in which it sits.

And if you look at it, the King's Highway, which is the most traveled trade route of that time and even in the time of Christ, runs through there. Right? All the trade roads, all roads lead to Rome. Sure, that was the old saying back then. But all the trade routes led through Israel. Right? So this is where everybody was kind of going back and forth through. And Solomon put his horses and all these chariots in different locations to make sure that he could protect his interest.

[31 : 47] He maintained peace by these horse stalls and these horsemen. And this was a good way, humanly speaking, to ensure that the people got to eat, drink, and rejoice because we don't have to find any battles.

And everybody knows that we are capable of protecting ourselves and everybody knows that here. And, you know, the nation had, when they came into the promised land, there were some people that they couldn't push out because those people had chariots and they just couldn't push them out. And remember, we looked at that, it wasn't that they couldn't, it's that they wouldn't. When we read the book of Judges, they just refused to do it because, well, their chariots are scarier than what we have. You know, we're out here with swords and bows and arrows and they're out here.

We're running horses. God says, don't look at their chariots. Don't look at their iron wheels and their chariots. I'm going before you. Well, there came a time in the nation where they transitioned to trusting in God to overcome the chariot, to trusting in the chariot to overcome the enemy.

And that diminished dependence because now, with 40,000, we'll stay true to our text, with 40,000 stalls of horses and 12,000 horsemen, we got this.

[32 : 55] And it's just that little seed that's implanted, right? God had very clearly said, and I know we've said this, but it bears repeating because the commands of God are unchanging.

God had declared in the book of Deuteronomy. I mean, Moses, writing the book of Deuteronomy, shortly before his death, gives a standard.

He makes this statement that when you appoint a king over you, this is how he should behave. The people of God coming out of Egypt, you remember the word, right?

They operated as a theophany. That is, God was their king. Theo being God, theophany, God is their king. No, I said it wrong.

Theocracy. Theophany is an appearance of God in the Old Testament. You should have caught me on that, right? Because an epiphany is like an appearance. So theocracy. I knew that sounded wrong. God was their king.

[33 : 52] Not a democracy, not anything like that. A theocracy. God was to be their king. That was the covenant he entered into. One of the only conditional covenants that we find is the covenant of Mount Sinai with God and his people where he says, I will be your God and you will be my people if you follow me and you obey me and he gives the Ten Commandments, right?

So there's a theocracy there. God is king. Even in the midst of that, establishing this theocracy, Moses knew that there would be a time where they wanted to live as a monarchy.

They wanted a king. So God says, okay, when that time comes, this is the standard for the king. So he is going to be under king, under the great king.

So God is still king, but here's a king you can put your hands on. So the great king, God, theocracy, dictates to the monarchy how he should behave.

And that's what's going on in Deuteronomy 17 and 18. He says, when you have a king over your land, he should do this, this, this, and this, and he shouldn't do this, this, this, and this. One of the things he should do is memorize the book of Deuteronomy and he should recite it and he should copy it.

[34 : 54] So the reason the king should do that is so that what God had declared should never be forgotten, right? He should copy the book of Deuteronomy and write it out by hand.

God very clearly says in there, the king should not multiply horses and that he should not lead the people to return to Egypt to get horses.

And Solomon does both of those. Solomon multiplied horses and then Solomon got his best horses from Egypt. That's why he married his first wife.

Because she was a princess of Egypt and it made a great alliance and that's where all the good horses came from. So, in doing that, the reason, God wasn't about handcuffing his people.

the rules and standards of God are not there to make it harder on us. They are there to determine that we would live in a greater dependence on him.

[36 : 01] It fosters a dependence. God says, I want to be such a leader of my people that I want you to be able to trust me for everything. Right? We make that application really quick.

We go into the New Testament and we see all these standards and we see all these callings and we see who God is and we see how he's... It's not that God's trying to be mean to us. Right? What God is saying is, I want you to live in such a manner that you're so dependent upon me that you're living open-handedly and utterly in dependence that you don't have to multiply horses or go and get the best of this because you believe that I've got it under control.

Because when we begin to diminish that dependence, our security is found in who we are and our security is found in what we can do and our security is found in what we can stockpile.

The enemy that attacks the nation of Israel when Solomon dies is not external. It's internal. They divide.

They begin fighting one another. We go through years of internal fighting and bickering and then the enemy gets an opportunity. Then God uses the external enemies to come in and to chastise his people for disobedience.

[37 : 19] Why? Because even here they began to diminish their dependence on God and rather looked at their dependence on the wisdom on the throne.

Man's wisdom, the wisest of the wise, only gets us so far. It really does. And we see this in the life of Solomon.

I'm not saying, and I know when I prepare these preachers I'm like, man, they think I'm just going to throw Solomon under the bus. I'm not doing that. But I ask myself, why does the author of 1 Kings go to such an extent to show us how wise Solomon, I mean, it's taken chapters to declare the wisdom of Solomon to us.

Why? So that when we come to the time when it all falls apart we realize that the wisdom of man can't hold it together. We need something greater than wisdom.

We need the giver of wisdom. Right? We need the one who enriches his people, who calls his people and provides for his people. We don't need greater wisdom.

[38 : 37] We need greater dependency. Sure, we ought to be wise. We ought to study to show ourselves to prove all those things. I mean, Solomon wrote all kinds of Proverbs, 3,000 Proverbs of which 600 of them are contained in the book of Proverbs.

So evidently about 2,400 of them were Proverbs that, yeah, they were just about other things. He wrote all these songs. He could write about trees and bugs and creeping things and he understood nature.

But it didn't really foster a devotion and dependence upon the Lord God. And we see this even beginning here in 1 Kings chapter 4. Alright, let's pray and we'll be dismissed.

Lord, thank you so much. Thank you for this night. Thank you for every opportunity we have to get together with your people. Thank you for the encouragement it is to us. Lord, also thank you for the challenge of Scripture.

I pray, Lord, as we take the truth of Scripture that we would apply it to our lives. Lord, we want to walk in wisdom, but we also want to walk in gentleness and faithfulness.

[39 : 46] So Lord, help us to be faithful to you in the wisdom that you give us. Lord, help us to depend upon you for every leading and guiding. As we leave here tonight, may we be used by you for your glory and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.