

Psalm 89, Ecclesiastes 10-12, Ephesians 1-3 (#68)

Psalm 89— This is a song, likely a lament, which struggles with God’s discipline and His unsearchable ways. In verses 38 & 39, Did God break His promise to David and renounce His covenant?

Ecclesiastes 10— Solomon gives a variety of proverbs contrasting wisdom and foolishness. First, an example of folly is the person who thinks there is no harm with a little foolishness, but in reality it can undermine a wise and honorable life that is needed to navigate life’s journey with success. Another evil that happens is when a fool is put into a position of authority and his immaturity causes him to go against common sense protocol, to not follow normal precautions, and to not prepare by proper training and skill development (vv. 1-10). Secondly, a fool is seen by the words he speaks because they cause him to self-destruct. The words of a fool are crazy nonsense which ends in endless chatter and wicked madness. Thirdly, a fool shows himself in the way he leads. Instead of being a noble leader encouraging a sound work ethic, the foolish leader encourages laziness and a party atmosphere, putting an unhealthy emphasis on wine and money (vv. 11-20). #13 p. 983. *On the basis of this chapter, what makes for a wise and noble leader?*

Ecclesiastes 11— The author encourages the reader to take advantage of opportunities and make measured risks in life in order to advance oneself, realizing that to do nothing will mean that nothing will be accomplished. It is wise to diversify one’s investments, but to wait for perfect conditions to work and act will mean no success. Since God’s ways are unfathomable like the formation of the child in the mother’s womb, a wise person will work hard and then leave the rest in God’s hands (vv. 1-6). Each person should appreciate and rejoice in each new day but recognize that dark days will come. Young people need to enjoy life when they are young, not fixating on sorrow and pain since the days of youth are fleeting. The young must have a continual awareness that God will judge them for everything they do (vv. 7-10). *Verse 1 says, “Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow back to you (NLT).” Whenever we accomplish something for the Lord it involves risk and faith. Is there anything right now that the Lord has prompted you to do, but the fear of failure is keeping you from taking action?*

Ecclesiastes 12— The writer says that each one of us must honor and delight in our Creator before we reach the years of old age when possible enjoyment of Him may be greatly diminished. Verses 3 to 5 give us a description of progressive deterioration that happens in old age. The years of our lives go quickly, death eventually comes for

everyone, and our spirit returns to God who gave it. All of life is a breath and is futile (vv. 6-9). The teacher gave a final conclusion to all that was said previously. “The reader is urged (1) to have a right relationship with God (fear God); (2) to maintain that relationship by following the law (keep his commandments); and (3) to anticipate a final and future judgment (God will bring every deed into account).” #7 p. 962. *Explain the meaning of the descriptions and images of old age given in verses 3-5.*

Ephesians— The apostle Paul wrote this book when he was under house arrest in Rome about 61 A.D. This book was a circular letter to be sent first to the church at Ephesus, and then to be read to all the churches in the province. This marvelous letter begins with the incredible blessings we have received because of our relationship with Christ, and the awesome future the Father has planned for us all because we have by faith trusted in Christ. “In God’s eternal plan, God’s great masterpiece the church has now been manifested, in which Christ is united with all the redeemed whether Jew or Gentile, transforming relationships in this life and leading to a glorious future.” #11 p. 297. Chapters 1 to 3 describe all our blessings we have received and then chapters 4 to 6 gives us practical ways we can live in unity in our relationship with God and other believers. In chapters 5 and 6 Paul speaks of the various attitudes and responses in relationship to marriage, family, and work. The book closes with the believer’s armor that must be put on daily for the spiritual battles we face.

Ephesians 1— After a short greeting, the Apostle Paul gives us two extended sentences in the Greek language. The first sentence is found in verses 3 to 14, and the second sentence is from verses 15 to 23. We as Christians have been blessed with a multitude of blessings by the Father which came to us through our relationship with Christ. God chose us and adopted us that we should be holy and blameless sons and daughters. The first mystery that Paul revealed in this book is that God will gather together all of His people, both which are in heaven and on earth, in the dispensation of the fullness of the times at the end of the age (vv. 3-14). In an extended prayer for the believers, Paul prays that they will realize and appropriate all the richness and power that is theirs in Christ. The passage ends with the exaltation of Christ over all creation and created beings to become the head over all things for the benefit of the Church, which is His body that fills everything with Himself. *1. Verses 3 to 14 say that the great spiritual blessing to become God’s children was a joint participation of the Trinity. What part did each member of the Trinity play for us to become His children? See verses 4-5, 11, verse 7, and verse 13. 2. What are the four prayer requests that Paul makes for the believers? See verses 13 to 21.*

Ephesians 2— Paul now speaks of our past slavery to sin, self, and the Devil that was our life’s narrative thus leaving us hopeless and spiritually dead (vv. 1-3). The words “But God” shows us the initiative God took, motivated by His mercy and love, to transform evil vile sinners, to raise them from the dead and give them new life, and

enthroned them in heavenly realms with Christ. All this was an incredible free gift of God's grace, apart from any human effort, for the purpose of doing good works which are motivated by God's Spirit living in us and are done for His glory (4-10). Now Paul changes from addressing personal reconciliation to that of corporate reconciliation. He paints a bleak portrait of the Gentiles past which was without Christ, without hope, and excluded from the covenants and citizenship of Israel. The words "But now in Christ Jesus" shows the reconciliation that the cross and the blood of Christ achieved to unite two previously hostile enemies to become one new body, thus granting peace, equality, and access through the Spirit to the Father. Now it is clear that race, culture, social status, education, past religion, or gender are no longer relevant. Everyone who is born of the Spirit is a member of the God's new building, a holy temple of God, with the foundation made up of the apostles and the prophets, and Christ being the cornerstone.

1. *Who are the three enemies of the Christian? See verses 1 to 3.* 2. *Express in bullet points the means and goal of salvation in verses 8 to 10.*

Ephesians 3— Paul continues to speak about this body, the church, which God revealed to him. This revelation was a mystery that was not previously known to past generations. "This is so God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens (v. 10/HCSB)." The apostle addresses his prayer to the Father of not only the Jews but also the Gentiles whether they are in heaven or on earth. First, he asks that our inner man will be strengthened with power through the Spirit. Secondly, he prays that they will have the comprehension and knowledge of the love of Christ in all its fullness (14-19). Paul finishes with the fact that God's ability to work in us and for us far exceeds our scope of comprehension. He then ends with a beautiful doxology (vv. 20-21). *What are the two mysteries found in chapters 1 and 3, and what did Paul mean by the word mystery? See 1:9,10 and 3:3, 6.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESVc. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 90, Ephesians 4-6, I Kings 1-3 (#69)

Psalm 90 — Moses contrasts God eternal nature and man's mortality, asking God to relent and renew his favor toward Israel. *Look for "You", "We", and "Our" in this psalm. Do any of these words stand out to you? If so, why?*

Ephesians 4— Paul has just written three chapters describing all the blessings we have received as children of God without giving a single command. Now in chapters 4 to 6, believers are given practical ways we should respond and "walk worthy of the calling we have received." Godly living with fellow believers will require patience, humility, and love as we strive for unity in the body. This unity of the Church has as its foundation the Biblical teachings of the first three chapters (vv. 1-6). To promote the unity and growth of the body, Jesus distributed gifts to all believers at His resurrection but gave the specific gifts for some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers in order to equip, build up, and prepare the saints for works of service and to reach their full maturity in Christ (vv. 7-16). The life of the non-believing Gentiles is one of futility and rebellion, as well as being marked by sensuality and impurity. As believers, we are commanded to take off the old self and its practices and put on the new self that God planted in us the moment we believed so that Holy Spirit can produce in us the very likeness of Christ (vv. 17-24). The righteous character of Christ will be evidenced in: our truthful speaking, our handling of anger, our industry at work, our wholesome talk, our words and attitudes with others, and our forgiving spirit (vv. 25-32). *Taking into consideration this chapter, give a summary of what a mature Christian looks like.*

Ephesians 5— Paul gives general instructions on how we can be imitators of God and walk in love as we saw in the life of Christ. He gives us guidelines for sexual propriety, speech, and godly living. Since we are children of light, we need to be godly in our associations and conduct, living a life of goodness, righteousness, and truth. We need to have as our goal the desire to please the Lord in everything, exposing the fruitless works of darkness, and wisely investing our time in discerning and doing the will of God. The keys to a Spirit-filled life are a community of believers that are filled with praise and thanksgiving, mutually submitting themselves to each other in love (vv. 1-21). From 5:22 to 6:9, the apostle spells out the duties and responses in our relationships in life: in marriage, between children and parents, and between slaves and masters (employees and employers). In the relationship of marriage, Paul says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord (v. 22)." To the husbands he says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (v. 25)." Then to sum up he says, "Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband (v.33)." In this passage the relationship between the husband and the wife is mirrored in the relationship between Christ and the church. "All concerned experience personal worth, value, security, and significance when these reciprocal relationships are exercised under the lordship of Christ." #12 p. 717. *Explain the biblical meaning and purpose of wives submitting to their husbands, and husbands loving your wives as Christ loved the church.*

Ephesians 6— Now Paul speaks of the relationship between children and parents and brings to mind the importance of this because it is the 5th Commandment with a promise for children who keep it. Fathers also must be careful not to stir up anger in their children by the way they discipline them (vv. 1-4). Next, the apostle speaks of the relationship of slaves (employees) and masters (employers). Slaves should serve their masters as he would serve Christ, realizing that someday the Lord will pay them back. Masters are to treat their slaves in the same manner that Christ would treat masters since one day they will be judged by Christ Himself for their stewardship (vv. 5-9). Finally, Paul reminds believers that they are engaged in a fierce spiritual conflict against Satan and his spiritual forces of evil. Unless we find our strength in the Lord's mighty power, daily put on the believer's armor, and stand firm in the victory Christ has already won, we will not win in the battle. In addition to the spiritual armor that protects us, we must use the offensive weapons of God's Word and prayer in order to have victory in the battle (vv. 10-24). *1. What is spiritual warfare? 2. What are some steps we need to take to gain victory in our battle over our enemy?*

I Kings— The book of I Kings is really one whole unit with II Kings, but was divided into two books in the second century B.C. to make them more manageable. This book was written from 971 B.C. to 846 B.C. and begins with the end of King David's life. Half of the book is about the rise, splendor, and downfall of King Solomon. Because Solomon allowed his wives to turn him away from full devotion to Yahweh, Israel divides into two kingdoms with Jeroboam ruling the 10 Northern tribes and Rehoboam ruling in the Southern kingdom with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. God sends his prophets to proclaim the ways of the Lord and to confront idolatry with the ministry of Elijah forming a large part of the book. The first part of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah are given in I Kings ending with Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahaziah of Israel. The book seems to have been written during the Babylonian captivity so that the Jews in exile could clearly understand what led to Israel's downfall and to encourage them to be consistent in their obedience to Yahweh so that He once again could bless them and bring them back into the land of Canaan.

I Kings 1— In the last days of King David's life, Adonijah knew that another king would soon take David's place on the throne and decided to promote himself to be that king since he felt entitled as the oldest living son. With the support of Joab and Abiathar the high priest, he prepared a small army and held a banquet to celebrate his kingship. Upon hearing of the news, Nathan the prophet prepares a plan with Bathsheba to warn King David of the self-appointment of Adonijah to kingship. With the help of Zadok the priest and Benaiah the captain of the king's bodyguard, and in keeping with his previous promise to Bathsheba, David has Solomon ride on the his mule to Gihon where he is anointed king by Nathan and Zadok. As the people celebrate the coronation and make thunderous noise, Adonijah finds out that Solomon has been anointed as king and is also sitting on the royal throne. Great fear immediately floods all the attendants of the party, and Adonijah runs to the Lord's tabernacle and takes holds of the horns of the bronze altar, asking Solomon to promise that he wouldn't be slain. Solomon declares that if Adonijah shows himself to be a man of character he will not die. *Why was Solomon chosen to be king over Adonijah who was next in line to the throne since he was the oldest living son? How might this be applied in choosing leaders in the church?*

I Kings 2— This chapter opens with David’s final advice to Solomon before his death. He encourages his son to be courageous like a man, be sure to walk in the Lord’s ways, and keep His commands wholeheartedly. David directs Solomon on how to deal with the men who had acted in willful and ungodly ways as well as one who had greatly blessed him (vv 1-12). Adonijah makes a request to Solomon through Bathsheba to give him Abishag as his wife. When Solomon heard the request he saw it as another ploy by Adonijah to overthrow the kingdom and had him executed by Benaiah for treason (pp. 13-25). Abiathar was banished from being the High Priest because of his support of Adonijah thus fulfilling the prophecy against Eli’s family (I Samuel 2:27-36). Joab is executed for his backing of Adonijah and for murdering two men in a time of peace to avenge blood shed in war. Shimei was put under house arrest by Solomon for cursing David, but then later he was executed when he failed to fulfill his promise to stay in Jerusalem. So Solomon’s kingdom was established (vv. 26-46). *Do you think Solomon overreacted to Adonijah’s request to give Abishag to be his wife? Was Bathsheba naïve in asking Solomon?*

I Kings 3— It is significant that at the beginning of his reign Solomon marries a daughter of Pharaoh. He establishes his place in international politics and strives for peace among the nations by marrying the daughters of the kings of the surrounding nations but also plants the seeds of destruction of his spiritual life and the future unity of Israel. While sacrificing 1000 burnt offerings in Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and gives him the opportunity of asking for anything he wishes. Solomon asked God for a discerning heart to judge the people of Israel in wisdom and justice. Because of his unselfish request, God not only gives him wisdom but also promises Solomon riches and honor with a conditional promise of a long life if he walked in God’s ways (vv. 1-15). As a proof that God had indeed given him great wisdom, the writer of the book gives an episode in the life of Solomon when he was asked to identify the real mother when two women claimed the same child as their own (vv. 16-28). *God said to Solomon, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you (v. 5b ESV).” If God were to appear to you and ask you the same question, how would you answer Him? Thoughtfully put the answer in writing.*

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Psalm 91, I Kings 4-9 (#70)

Psalm 91 — Commonly known as the “Soldier’s Psalm”, it recounts the blessing of God’s protection toward those who trust in Him. #14 *Are the promises in this psalm conditional?*

I Kings 4— This chapter reveals the administrative genius of Solomon who through the appointment of eleven high officials was able to organize his whole kingdom. He also appointed 12 district governors who provided food for Solomon and his household throughout the year (vv. 1-19). For Judah and Israel this was a time of material prosperity as never before and a growing and expanding central government to take care of the increasing needs of Solomon’s house. The surrounding countries paid tribute to Solomon. Verses 22-28 list the daily provisions which were needed to take care of Solomon’s household. His wisdom was greater than any person of his time which included a vast knowledge in botany, zoology, and the compiling of 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. People from every nation sent ambassadors to listen to Solomon’s wisdom. *Verse 29 says, “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand of the seashore.” How does God give us wisdom today? James 1:5, Psalm 119:97-99, Proverbs 1:7, I Corinthians 1:30.*

I Kings 5— Now is the time for Solomon to build the temple that David had wanted to build. The three main materials for the temple are large, costly cut stones, cedar and cypress wood, and gold. Solomon and Hiram, the King of Tyre, make an agreement for Hiram to supply all the cedar and cypress timber from Lebanon that would be needed for the temple and his own palace. In return Solomon would send Hiram annually 100,000 bushels of wheat and 110,000 gallons of olive oil. King Solomon would draft over 180,000 laborers from throughout Israel to work on the temple project. *Were the 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stonecutters Israelites? See I Kings 9:20-23, II Chronicles 2:17-18.*

I Kings 6— In the fourth year of his reign and 480 years after the Israelites came out of Egypt, Solomon begins to build the long awaited temple using only the best materials and skilled craftsman befitting the awesome God of the universe. The temple that is built for Yahweh is to be 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high using finished stones, and cedar and Cyprus wood overlaid with gold. “The temple’s construction used finished stones cut at the quarry so that no hammer, chisel, or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built (v. 7, HCSB).” The word of the Lord came to Solomon while building the temple, saying that if he would keep His commands Yahweh would fulfill His promise to Solomon that he made to David (vv. 11-12). The rest of the chapter

describes in detail the building of the temple including the walls, floors, the inner sanctuary, the two cherubim, the pillars, the olive wood doors, the inner courtyard, and much more. The entire temple was completely finished in seven years. *In verse 12, God promises that if Solomon would walk in His statutes, observe His ordinances, and keep His commands, He would fulfill to him the same promise He made to David. What was the promise that the Lord made to David that He would make with Solomon also? Did God fulfill that promise to Solomon? Why or why not? See II Samuel 7:11-16, Luke 3:31, and Zechariah 12:10-12.*

I Kings 7— Solomon takes 13 years to build his palace complex which includes an entrance hall (reception center) or Hall of Pillars, the Hall of Judgment, the House of the Forest of Lebanon, the king's house, and the house of his wife, Pharaoh's daughter (vv. 1-12). Solomon brings in Hiram (or Hiram) from Tyre, a highly skilled bronze craftsman, to do all the bronze work in the temple area. The rest of the chapter describes the making of the various furnishings in the temple and temple area which include: the bronze pillars, the reservoir (water tank) which has a 11,000 gallon capacity, the ten bronze water carts and basins, various utensils for animal sacrifices, and the gold furnishings inside the temple such as altar of incense, the tables of the bread of the Presence, and the golden lampstands. *Why did Solomon take 13 years to build His palace complex but only 7 years to build the temple?*

I Kings 8— When the temple was finished, Solomon gathered all of the elders, tribal leaders, ancestral leaders, and the men of Israel before him in Jerusalem in order to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Zion into the Most Holy Place in the new temple. After the priest placed the ark in the Most Holy Place, the glory of the Lord filled the temple so much so that they could no longer minister inside the temple (vv. 1-11). First, Solomon addresses the entire congregation and tells them that what is happening this day is a fulfillment of God's promise to David that one day his son would build the temple which David had wanted to build (vv. 12-21). Then Solomon spreads out his hands toward heaven and prays to Yahweh. Solomon begins by speaking of the uniqueness of God: His character, His faithfulness in keeping His promises, and His transcendence. Solomon then speaks of different occasions when the people of Israel might sin. In such cases he petitions the Lord to give justice but also show mercy, forgiveness, and restoration when they truly repent and seek His face. He asked that all the people of the earth will know that Yahweh is God. Finally, he challenged the people by saying, "Let your heart be completely devoted to the Lord our God to walk in His statutes and to keep His commands (v. 61, HCSB)." The 14 days of the temple inauguration celebration happened during the Feast of Booths during which 142,000 cattle and sheep were sacrificed in the Lord's presence. *What two signs showed Yahweh's acceptance of the temple Solomon*

had built? See verses 10-11, II Chronicles 7:10. Where did God show these two signs previously in the history of Israel? Leviticus 9:23-24.

I Kings 9— After the dedication of the temple and his prayer, The Lord appears a second time to Solomon saying his prayer has been heard, and He has consecrated the temple with His presence. God gave the promise that his royal throne would be established if he walks before the Lord in obedience and integrity, but if he turns away from God and follows other gods, Israel would be cut off and the temple he had built will be destroyed (vv. 1-9). In his first twenty years as king, Solomon has great success negotiating in trade ventures with King Hiram of Tyre which included a fleet of ships to Ophir to acquire 16 tons of gold. He formed an international network of commerce that made him famous and powerful. Solomon’s extensive building programs included the temple, palace complex, the storage cities, chariot cities, the cavalry cities, and anyplace else he desired to build. “David was a mighty general who feared no enemy, but Solomon was a shrewd diplomat and politician who missed no opportunity to increase his wealth and power.” #8 p. 565. *After reading chapter 9, what advantages, abilities, good qualities, and negative characteristics did Solomon have?*

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Psalms 92-93, I Kings 10-15 (#71)

Psalm 92 — God's love and faithfulness are celebrated with this song. *List the ways that God's love and faithfulness are manifested (hint: look for the use of God's proper name Yahweh, translated as LORD in most English Bibles).*

Psalm 93 — The psalmist teaches that God is in control, mightier than nature, and trustworthy forever. *List the attributes of God described in this psalm.*

I Kings 10— The story of the queen of Sheba was representative of the many kings, queens, and ambassadors who came to visit Solomon to test his wisdom and see if all the rumors about him were true. After verifying the greatness of his wisdom and seeing the temple, palace complex, the amazing dining hall, the presentation of his staff, and the burnt offerings, her breath was taken away. Because of her visit the name of Yahweh was praised for all He had done through Solomon. After exchanging the riches of their countries including gold, spices, and other things out of their royal bounty, the queen of Sheba returned the 1200 mile journey to southern Arabia with her entourage (vv. 1-13). The rest of the chapter tells of the luxurious splendor of his throne, the vast quantity of gold, ivory, and exotic animals, including chariots and horses which were bought and sold at a profit. This chapter shows how Solomon's heart was captured by material accumulation that never seemed to end and was never satisfied (vv. 14-29). *For the Israelites in the Old Testament, with exceptions, material riches and a lack of great suffering seem to be a visible evidence of God's blessing on a life as, in the life of Solomon. What are the New Testament teachings on the subject of material riches and suffering in the life of a Christian? See Matthew 6:19-21, Mark 13:13, II Timothy 3:12.*

I Kings 11— Step by step over the years Solomon had disobeyed the clear teachings of Moses, and even though the Lord Himself appeared to him twice, his willful sins led him into apostasy by worshiping and sacrificing to the gods of his wives. So the Lord pronounces judgment on Solomon saying he will tear most of the kingdom away from his son, and only leave him one tribe besides Judah (vv. 1-13). "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (Proverbs 16:7 ESV)." How ironic that this proverb of Solomon is now a prophecy against him! Now that Solomon's ways do not please the Lord, God raises up enemies against him. First from the south the Lord stirs up Hadad from Edom to oppose Solomon. From the north Rezon, who ruled over Syria (Aram), became an enemy of Solomon. From inside Israel, his own servant Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, was prophesied by Ahijah to take over ten tribes of Israel because of Solomon's sin, and so he fled to Egypt when Solomon tried to kill him. So Solomon reigns in Jerusalem for forty years, and his son Rehoboam becomes king in his place (vv 14-40). *Compare Deuteronomy 17:14-18 with chapters 10 and 11. What three clear commands did Solomon disobey, and why do you think he disobeyed them? What lesson are we taught by Solomon's disobedience?*

I Kings 12— This chapter is a turning point in the life of Israel since Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, has the opportunity to keep his country unified with a correct response to the northern tribes concerns, but instead he divided Israel because the turn of events came from the Lord due to the sin of Solomon. Jeroboam and the northern 10 tribes wanted to lighten the oppressive forced labor and excessive taxes that Solomon had imposed upon them, but in a moment of imprudence Rehoboam decided to follow the advice of the young men he grew up with instead of the elders who served with his father. Israel then separates from Judah, and Jeroboam becomes king of Israel. Rehoboam mobilizes an army of 180,000 choice warriors to go to battle against Israel, but the prophet Shemaiah convinces him to go back home and not fight against his fellow Israelites (vv. 1-24). Because of the fear of his people returning to Rehoboam if they worship in Jerusalem, Jeroboam sets up a rival pagan worship centers in Bethel and Dan. Like our ancient enemy of old, Jeroboam tries to imitate the pattern of worship which the Lord instituted through Moses but with a rival non-Levitical priesthood, with similar festivals and sacrifices, and with golden calves which were to be visible symbols of the invisible God. He says to the people pointing to the golden calves, “Israel, here is our God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.” *Rehoboam made a bad decision that cost him more than half of the kingdom. What are important points to consider when we are about to make a critical decision in life?*

I Kings 13— The man of God comes from Judah to Bethel to prophesy against the altar built by Jeroboam and predicts that a future king of Judah by the name of Josiah will bring God’s judgment on the priests and the altar. King Jeroboam cries out for the arrest of the man of God and his stretched out arm withers. Immediately, in fulfillment of the prediction of the man of God, the altar rips apart and ashes are poured out from the altar (vv. 1-6). The man of God is commanded by the Lord not to eat bread, drink water, or return to Judah the same way he came. Even though he rejects the offer of Jeroboam to go back and eat with him, he is deceived by an old prophet of God who was living in Bethel and goes back and eats with him. Because of his act of disobedience, the man of God is killed by a lion on his way back to Judah. The old prophet of God who deceived him brings his body back to Bethel and buries him. Jeroboam did not repent of his sins, therefore God was determined to annihilate him and his descendents (vv. 7-34). *Why did the Lord kill the man of God who was deceived by the old prophet of God, and what lessons can we learn from this incident? See also Galatians 1:8.*

I Kings 14— This chapter speaks of the end of the lives of both Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Jeroboam started as a popular leader and ended as a disobedient and complete failure, while Rehoboam started as a proud and belligerent king but ended with some humility (II Chronicles 12:6-7, 12). Upon the sickness of his son Abijah, Jeroboam has his wife disguise herself and go to the prophet Ahijah in Shiloh to find out what will happen to their son. Ahijah not only predicts the death of his son Abijah, but also the total annihilation of his descendents because of his leading Israel into idolatry and turning his back on the Lord (vv. 1-20). Rehoboam leads Judah into great sin by following all the detestable practices of the other nations. Because of this, King Shishak of Egypt comes into Jerusalem and seizes the treasures of the Lord's temple and the royal palace including the gold shields Solomon had made. What lessons can we learn from the lives of Jeroboam and Rehoboam in this chapter?

I Kings 15— Abijam (or Abijah) becomes the king after Rehoboam and reigns for three years but walks in the evil ways of his father. Abijam wins a significant victory over Jeroboam where 500,000 Israelites die although Judah is out numbered 2 to 1, because they trusted in the Lord and He delivered Israel into their hands (See II Chronicles 13:1-22). Asa then becomes king in Judah and reigns 41 years and was completely devoted to the Lord. During his life he rids the land of idolatry, has great victory over Egypt, and leads a great spiritual revival (II Chronicles 14-15). In the 36th year of his reign he sought the help of Ben-hadad of Aram to defeat Baasha of Israel and ended his last five years not seeking the Lord and thus become diseased in his feet (II Chronicles 16). Nadab becomes king to replace his father Jeroboam and rules two years. Nadab does evil just like his father and is killed by Baasha who also strikes down the entire house of Jeroboam. Tragically verse 23b says, *“But in his old age he was diseased in his feet (ESV).”* After 36 years of faithful service as king, Asa spends his last five years going his own way and not inquiring of the Lord even in his sickness (See II Chronicles 16:1-13). *What precautions must we take so that we don't cool down spiritually or turn away from the Lord in our latter years? Think about this deeply.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESVc. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.