

1 Kings Chapter 04 Commentary

1Ki 4:1 ¶ "So king Solomon was king over all Israel. 2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, 3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. 4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: 5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend: 6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute."

We notice, the first person mentioned, in those who served as princes to King Solomon, is a priest. This demonstrates to us that our first allegiance should be to God. Next were the scribes, who would keep records of all the actions of the King and his government. Benaiah was over the host of the armies of Israel. We have already noted, in chapter 2, that Solomon chose a godly man to be captain over the armies of Israel.

"and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:" There are many scenarios given by different commentators as to Abiathar being priest, seeing Solomon had banished him to his own house in chapter two, and Zadok was put in his place. They say that Abiathar, who did serve in the beginning of Solomons' reign, retained his former title and is thus mentioned, with Zadok now being the chief high priest. One says that Abiathar's son Ahimelech was sometimes called Abiathar, thus speaking of a different person. Some say there were two different Abiathars.

Some say that because the tabernacle was at Gibeon, and the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem, there was a need for two high priests: one to serve in each place, and that Solomon reassigned Abiathar to be high priest at the tabernacle.

Since we are given no definitive affirmation of any of these proposals, there is no sure answer to this question. However, I lean to the one that because Abiathar was high priest in the beginning of Solomon's reign, and thou Abiathar was thrust out of the high priest office, he still retains his former title, and is thus named, with Zadok being the primary instead of the secondary high priest, opposite of what had been previously where Abiathar was named as primary and Zadok was named the secondary.

It is interesting to note that the first choice of Solomon was a priest. Though we are not given the office he occupied: we believe that Solomon chose him to be his personal councilor who would keep him abreast of the law commandments. We point out that King Solomon also appointed two other priests to very high positions. **5 "And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:"** Wherefore, Azariah the priest was over all these officers, and Zabud the priest was principle officer and the king's friend. Thus, King Solomon has as his chief advisors the priesthood. This should be an asset to him, to help him serve God faithfully.

Thus, we see that King Solomon has set up a godly administration of men who are faithful to God. Of this group we know that there were seven who were godly men, to wit: Azariah the son of Zadok, Zadok and Abiathar, Azariah and Zabud the sons of Nathan, these five were priests. Ahiah was a priest of the lineage of Eli. Benaniah was also a man of God, and possibly of the lineage of the priesthood.

There is a lesson for the church here. The church should choose faithful men of God to be in positions of authority in the church. The appointment of ungodly men to positions of authority will lead to the demise of the church.

There is a lesson for the individual Christian. We should choose to have close relationships with godly people and disassociate ourselves from ungodly people.

7 "And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision. 8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: 9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan: 10 The son of Heshed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hephher: 11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: 12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: 13 The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: 14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim: 15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: 16 Baanah

the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth: 17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: 18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: 19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land."

King Solomon appointed twelve officers, throughout his kingdom, who were charged with providing the provisions for the king's table. We notice that each one of these men were charged to be over a different part of the kingdom that Solomon reigned over. We believe that there would be different crops and fruits of the land in different places. These officers would collect the food, in their month, during a time of harvest, except for crops that could be stored and kept until needed. We notice also that two of these men were son-in-law to the king.

20 ¶ "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand, which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. 21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. 22 And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, 23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. 24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. 25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

Apparently, God is truly blessing Israel under the reign of Solomon, because we are told that all of Judah and Israel are eating, drinking, and making merry. We are given the borders of what King Solomon rules over.

We are also given the daily provision for the dining tables of King Solomon. Thus, we can deduce that God was truly blessing Israel during this time, for it was needful to have God's blessings to provide this great feast every day.

What does this say to us as we live under the reign of our King Jesus? There is no end to the bountiful blessings that are available to God's children. If you are not eating from our King's table, the fault is your own. There is no end to the mercy of God, the blessings of God, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit of God, extended to his chosen people. As King Solomon had these twelve men to provide for his table each day: So, God has given us each other, the written Word of God, and the ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to preach the pure unadulterated Word of God, which feeds the Children of God.

We are told that Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and fig tree. This tells us that the Israelites no longer had to dwell in fenced cities. They were now free to live on their own lands, without fear of the enemy coming and taking their crops as spoils. This gives us the picture of the surety of our eternal salvation, under the reign of our King and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

26 "And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. 27 And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. 28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge."

We point out that again Solomon is breaking another commandment of God, found in: ***De 17:15-17; 15 "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."*** God told the kings of Israel to not multiply horses to themselves. Remember that King Solomon made a covenant with Pharaoh and married his daughter? Here the king of Israel is commanded to not cause the people to return to Egypt. Well, Solomon did not send people back to Egypt, however, the affinity with Egypt set Israelites up to traffic in Egypt and to mix and mingle with them. Likewise, it set up the Egyptians to traffic in Israel and mix and mingle with them.

The king of Israel is told to not multiply wives, which thing King Solomon will do in a very monstrous way. These wives will eventually do what God said they would, they shall turn Solomon to idolatry. This caused Solomon to fail to faithfully serve God, and thus he lost the blessing of long life.

We would point out again: God only has sinners to work with here on earth. Can we any say that we have been completely faithful to all of God's commandments, and we never did anything that God had told us not to do? I think not. I suspect we are all guilty, just as Solomon is guilty, yet God continues to use Solomon in a mighty way to bring glory and honor to the name of God and God's people. God does the same thing with us, and we are thankful that God is a pardoning God, who does not hold our failings against us forever. Just as we shall see happen in Solomon's life; that these disobediences will eventually cause him to be under judicial judgments, we can also expect that our sins will bring judicial judgements upon us in time.

29 ¶ "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore. 30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. 32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. 33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."

God gave Solomon exceeding wisdom and understanding above all other people who lived in his lifetime as promised, but this wisdom was limited to natural things, and how to run government. It would have been much better if Solomon had asked for spiritual wisdom to keep him from falling into Satan's snares. Solomon was famous everywhere he was heard of. He wrote three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs. Solomon spake of all the things of the earth, which all people came to hear. It is a shame that he did not preach of all the things of God and demonstrate, to all the world, that there was only one true God, and that God was the only one, who could provide eternal life in the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

However, Solomon is an example of the one who is wisest of all men, Jesus Christ. As all men sought to Solomon to hear this earthly wisdom, so should every child of God seek to gain spiritual wisdom from our King Jesus. For Jesus is wisdom personified as we see in **1Co 1:24 "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."** And to which is further added in **1Co 1:30-31; 30 "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."**

What lesson can we draw from these verses to apply to our lives? Fame and earthly wisdom are not what we need to be a true child of God. Certainly, we need a certain amount of earthly wisdom to get along in this world of sin. However, this world is not our home and to see and hope for our heavenly home we need spiritual wisdom and discernment. Being filled with worldly wisdom will not glorify our Father who art in heaven, nor bring fame and glory to the name of our God given King, Jesus Christ. It is our duty, as Christians, to proclaim the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, first by walks of uprightness before God, and second by proclamation as God gives us opportunity to witness to others.

What glory it would bring to the name of God and Christ: if all people came to hear of our witness of the finished work of Jesus Christ. To see the testimony of "Christ in us" lived out in our lives. To hear the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To desire to hear the King James bible, the Word of God, expounded upon, to the glory of God's name, and the edification of the people. To learn to sing hymns of praise and glory to the name of God. I do not remember reading about any preaching going on in the eternal heaven, but there is much about singing and praising God and Christ. Wherefore, we ought to practice, here and now, in preparation for the eternity to come. May the indwelling Holy Spirit power of Jesus Christ keep our focus on magnifying the name of God all the days of our lives, we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen!