Biblical Exposition & Sermons

1 Kings

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (III)

Paul C. Jong



“For thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.’”
(1 Kings 17:14)

The man of God who came from Judah overcame the king’s threat and the enticement of riches, but he accepted the lie of the old prophet, ate bread and water in Bethel, and died. If you have fellowship with a false gospel, you lose life.

Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice that God had established in order to keep his kingship, and the kings who followed also repeated his sin. Ahab built a temple of Baal and an altar in Samaria and made a wooden image of Asherah. In the same way, if we leave out the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and preach only the Cross, it is to change God’s law of salvation.

Even in a spiritual famine God fed Elijah and did not let the flour and the oil of the widow of Zarephath run out. Look to God, prepare a greater vessel of faith, and preach to the whole world the gospel of the water and the Spirit, unmixed with other teachings.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

<u>You must believe now.</u>

FREE BOOK / DONATION

From THE NEW LIFE MISSION

https://www.bjnewlife.org

E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org

The New Life Mission is looking for coworkers to collaborate in postal ministry or book distribution ministry to effectively spread the gospel. Those who are interested in this ministry are asked to first read Paul C. Jong's Christian book series, then visit **www.bjnewlife.org** and apply to become a coworker to become a qualified partner.

Dear Readers of This Book:

First of all, we are delighted that this book has reached you well, and we give great thanks to God.

Our 'The New Life Mission,' established in 1991, is carrying out a literature mission ministry that translates and distributes Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual sermon collections into multiple languages worldwide.

Pastor Paul C. Jong has been easily and clearly conveying Jesus' salvation work according to the Word of the Bible to this day, so that many people can receive true remission of sins and return to God through just this one book. And together with his fellow workers, he continues to make tireless efforts even now to spread the gospel of water and the Spirit throughout the world.

[Ministry Introduction]

- **Pastor Paul C. Jong's thematic books:** Over 85 volumes written (continuously being published)
- **Translation languages:** Approximately 110+ languages
- **Single-language books:** Approximately 1,700+
- **Bilingual books:** Approximately 370+
- **Daily website visitors:** Average over 20,000 (supporting 27 languages)
- **Daily e-book downloads:** Over 3,000 copies
- **Daily audiobook downloads:** Over 5,000 copies

[Ministry Channels]

- **Download Services**

Free: E-books and audiobook files provided on 'The New Life Mission' homepage / Official Wix blog

Paid: Amazon, Apple Books, Google Books, Kobo, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. (printed books, e-books, audiobooks)

- **Other Content:** YouTube & Blog (Sermons, Bible studies, testimonies, etc.) / SNS (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- **Offline:** Worldwide network of partner churches and co-workers

We ask that you recommend this book and 'The New Life Mission's website to many people around you so that lost souls can return to God. (For those who have purchased printed books from Amazon or purchased ePub e-books, audiobooks, etc. through paid sites, leaving warm reviews on the respective purchase platforms would greatly help our mission.)

- Recommend Pastor Paul C. Jong's books and website (www.bjnewlife.org) to acquaintances around you
- Participate in the ministry by writing book reviews on purchase platforms

Please join us in this beautiful literature ministry so that the gospel of truth may reach lost souls in these last days. We pray that God's blessings will be with you.

1 Kings
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit
(III)

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (III)

Copyright 2026 Hephzibah Publishing House
First Edition: 2026
Published: August 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise — without the prior written permission of the publisher and copyright owners.

Scripture quotations used in this book are from the '*New King James Version (NKJV)', 'American Standard Version (ASV)'*.

ISBN 978-89-282-6283-0
Illustration: Young-ae Kim
Reviewed: Elizabeth
Translator: Elizabeth
Printed in South Korea
Cover image licensed from 123RF

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Seoul, Korea

♠ Website: https://www.bjnewlife.org
https://www.nlmission.com
https://www.nlmbookcafe.com
♠ E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Preface

Dear readers,

Through this book, I wish to share with you the Words of 1 Kings chapters 13 through 17. These Words record the process that began with God's judgment on the false altar that Jeroboam had set up, and continued as the kings of northern Israel repeated the sin of Jeroboam, reaching at last the Baal worship of Ahab and Jezebel. In that dark age, God raised up Elijah, and even in the midst of drought and famine He supplied the Word of life and food. In all these events is contained an important truth: that we must not change the Word of God according to human thoughts, and that we must firmly keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts and preach it.

The Faith That Keeps the Word of God to the End

In 1 Kings chapter 13, the man of God who came from Judah proclaimed God's judgment against the altar of Bethel. When Jeroboam stretched out his hand to seize him, that hand withered, and the altar was split apart just as the Word the man of God had proclaimed. Neither the king's authority nor a religious system made by man could stop the Word of God. The Word God has proclaimed is surely fulfilled even after a long time passes, and it does not change according to human power and wealth.

The man of God refused Jeroboam's offer of a reward, saying that he would not go with him even if he were given

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

half of his royal palace. But on his way back, when the old prophet lied to him by putting forward the name of God and the words of an angel, he accepted that word. He had overcome the king's threat and the temptation of wealth, but he failed to discern a lie that sounded religious, and he broke the command of God that he himself had directly received. In the end he met a lion on the road and died. This shows that what matters is not only following the Word well at first, but keeping it just as it is to the end.

A person's position and long experience, special experiences, and the support of many people cannot become the standard of the truth. Nor does every word become the will of God just because the name of God is used. Every spiritual claim must be checked to see whether it agrees with the already written Word of God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, cannot be added to or taken away from according to human convenience and the currents of the times. Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and after shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He completed salvation by rising again from death.

Jeroboam experienced the altar being split apart and his own hand withering and then being restored, yet he did not cast away the golden calves he had made, the high places, and the false system of priests. He changed the order of sacrifice that God had established in order to protect his kingship, but that very thing became the cause that brought his dynasty to destruction. More important than having the problems of the flesh solved and experiencing amazing signs is believing exactly the Word of salvation that God has established.

In 1 Kings chapter 14, Jeroboam's wife concealed her appearance and went to the prophet Ahijah. She could deceive

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

human eyes, but God knew both who she was and the purpose for which she had come. God made known the judgment that would come upon the house of Jeroboam and the death of his son. Jeroboam had received his kingship from God, but he made that kingship his own, and to keep it he led the whole people of Israel into false faith.

In southern Judah as well, the outward form of the Jerusalem Temple and its sacrifices remained, but the hearts of the people inclined toward idols. As a result, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and carried away the treasures of the Temple and of the royal palace, and the gold shields Solomon had made also disappeared. Rehoboam could not recover the gold shields, and he made bronze shields of a similar shape to take their place. The outward form was maintained, but the value and the essence had changed.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit and the religious teachings made by man can also sound similar on the outside. Even if they all speak of Jesus, the Cross, and salvation, if the fact that Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John the Baptist is left out, they cannot deliver complete salvation. Just as the gold shields could not be replaced with bronze shields, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death, cannot be replaced by human good deeds and religious efforts.

In 1 Kings chapter 15, the kings of southern Judah and northern Israel appear in contrast with one another. Abijam did not follow God with a perfect heart like David's, but God remembered the promise He had given to David and left a lamp in Jerusalem. God's plan of salvation was not interrupted by the failures of human kings, and the line of David continued on toward Jesus Christ who was to come.

Asa removed the idols and deposed Maachah, the queen mother who had made an idol, and he acted rightly before God. But when he was threatened by Baasha of northern Israel, he sent the treasures of the Temple and of the royal palace to Ben-Hadad king of Syria and sought his help. Even though he had achieved the reform of casting away idols, before the problems of reality he could still rely on the power of the world rather than on God's treasures. A believer must not exchange the value of the gospel of the water and the Spirit for the world's methods in order to solve the problems before his eyes.

In northern Israel, Baasha killed Nadab and destroyed the whole house of Jeroboam. With this, the Word of God proclaimed concerning the house of Jeroboam was fulfilled. Yet although Baasha had become the instrument that judged the dynasty of Jeroboam, he followed, just as they were, the golden calves Jeroboam had made and his false system of sacrifice. Even if the names of kings and dynasties change, if the content of faith does not change, no true change has taken place.

The Gospel of Life Given in the Midst of Spiritual Famine

In 1 Kings chapter 16, the kings of northern Israel go on killing one another and seizing the kingship. The house of Baasha was destroyed by Zimri, and Zimri died only seven days after becoming king. Omri established a strong kingship and built Samaria, but before God he acted more wickedly than the kings before him. Political success and outward achievements could not prove right faith before God.

The golden calf worship that Jeroboam had begun

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

continued even as dynasties changed, and in the days of Ahab it grew still worse into the worship of Baal and Asherah. Ahab married Jezebel and set up a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. The wrong faith that at first began as a small modification meant to protect the kingship developed, as time passed, into idolatry that completely replaced God with something else.

Being joined with wrong faith blurs the center of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we acknowledge other words of salvation alongside it and add human deeds as a condition for washing away sin, the righteousness of God that Jesus has fulfilled cannot be fully revealed. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Word of life that cannot be changed according to human desires and purposes. Believers must keep this gospel exactly, without mixing it with other teachings.

In the days of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel ignored God's warning and rebuilt Jericho. He lost his firstborn son when he laid the foundation of the city, and he lost his youngest son when he set up its gates. Though long years had passed, the Word God had given through Joshua was fulfilled just as it was. In an age that takes the Word of God lightly, not only kings and leaders but also individuals and families come under its influence.

In 1 Kings chapter 17, Elijah proclaimed a drought to Ahab. In an era when people believed that Baal gave rain and abundance, God revealed who truly rules over nature, food, and life by causing the rain to cease. Famine came upon the land full of idolatry, but God led Elijah, who followed His Word, to the Brook Cherith and supplied him with food through ravens.

After the Brook Cherith dried up, God sent Elijah to a poor widow of Zarephath. The widow had only enough flour and oil left to make one meal, but she put the Word of God ahead of the circumstances before her eyes. When she served Elijah by

faith, the flour in the bin and the oil in the jar did not run out until the drought ended. The food of life that God gives is not cut off by human circumstances or by the famines of the world.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true food of life that souls dying in sin must eat. Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the fact that all his sins were passed on to Jesus with the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, and that Jesus bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and then rose again from death and thereby made him righteous. Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death are one complete salvation that cannot be divided from one another.

When the son of the widow of Zarephath died, Elijah pleaded with God for the child. God heard Elijah's plea and brought the dead child back to life. The widow saw, beyond the grace of being supplied with food, the power of God who rules over life and death. Baal and Asherah could not give abundance and life, but God gave unfailing food and brought even dead life back to life.

Today as well, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not preached, people suffer spiritual famine, carrying sin in their hearts even while believing in Jesus. But whoever believes the Word that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took all sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again from death, is washed from all sins and receives new life. This gospel is never exhausted no matter how many people it is shared with, and it is sufficient to bring every soul in the world to life.

Dear readers, the Words of 1 Kings chapters 13 through 17 show us that we must not follow the Word of God only in part or mix it with the words of man. We must examine whether we are changing God's order of salvation for our own benefit like

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam, whether we are replacing the lost gold shields with bronze shields like Rehoboam, and whether we are following the same wrong faith with only its name and outward form changed, like the kings of northern Israel.

Through this book, I hope that you will firmly keep in your hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and thereby taking all our sins upon Himself, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death. The deeper the spiritual famine grows, the more clearly the gospel of life must be preached. I hope that all who believe in this gospel will live lives of faith that follow the Word of God rather than the words of man, that do not compromise with other teachings, and that pass on the unfailing food of life to the next generation and to the whole world. ✉

CONTENTS

Preface ---------- 7

1 Kings Chapter 13

• **Biblical Exposition**

Overview of the Entire Content • From the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit ---------- 21

The Way of Obeying the Word of God to the End --------- 39

• **Sermons by Paul C. Jong**

What Happens If We Fellowship with Heretics? (1 Kings 13:1-32) ---------- 72

What Gospel Do You Believe in Now? (1 Kings 13:33-34) ---------- 97

The False Altar That God Tears Down (1 Kings 13:1-34) ---------- 120

1 Kings Chapter 14

• **Biblical Exposition**

Overview of the Entire Content • From the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit ---------- 133

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

The Judgment on Jeroboam's House
and the Corruption of Judah ---------- 150

• **Sermons by Paul C. Jong**

Do Not Fall into the Sin of Jeroboam
(1 Kings 14:1-20) ---------- 196

What End Awaits Those Who Believe like Jeroboam?
(1 Kings 14:1-20) ---------- 211

The Faith That Lost the Gold Shields
and Took Up Bronze Shields
(1 Kings 14:21-31)---------- 228

1 Kings Chapter 15

• **Biblical Exposition**

Overview of the Entire Content • From the Perspective of
the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit ---------- 239

The Lamp of David and the Sin Revealed
in the Age of the Kings---------- 258

• **Sermons by Paul C. Jong**

God's Curse on Those Who Have Become Heretics
(1 Kings 15:25-34)---------- 303

We Must Cast Away Idols with a Perfect Heart before God
(1 Kings 15:1-24) ---------- 328

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 16

• **Biblical Exposition**

Overview of the Entire Content • From the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit ---------- 339

The Successive Sins of the Dynasties of Israel and the Appearance of Ahab ---------- 357

• **Sermons by Paul C. Jong**

He Has Delivered Us from the Sin of Jeroboam and Made Us Follow the Gospel, Not Personal Greed (1 Kings 16:1-7) ---------- 402

Do Not Mix with the False Ones (1 Kings 16:29-33) ---------- 418

God's Curse That Comes upon Those Who Rebuild the City of Jericho (1 Kings 16:29-34) ---------- 440

Even If You Build Samaria, If You Set Up an Altar for Baal, It Is an Evil Kingdom before God (1 Kings 16:1-34) ---------- 451

1 Kings Chapter 17

• **Biblical Exposition**

Overview of the Entire Content • From the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit ---------- 465

God Who Revealed Unfailing Grace and Life ---------- 483

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

• **Sermons by Paul C. Jong**

God Turns Heretics Around and Brings Them Back
(1 Kings 17:17-18:46)---------- 507
Let Us Prepare a Greater Vessel of Faith
(1 Kings 17:8-16) ---------- 522
God Who Brings Dead Life Back to Life
(1 Kings 17:1-24) ---------- 533

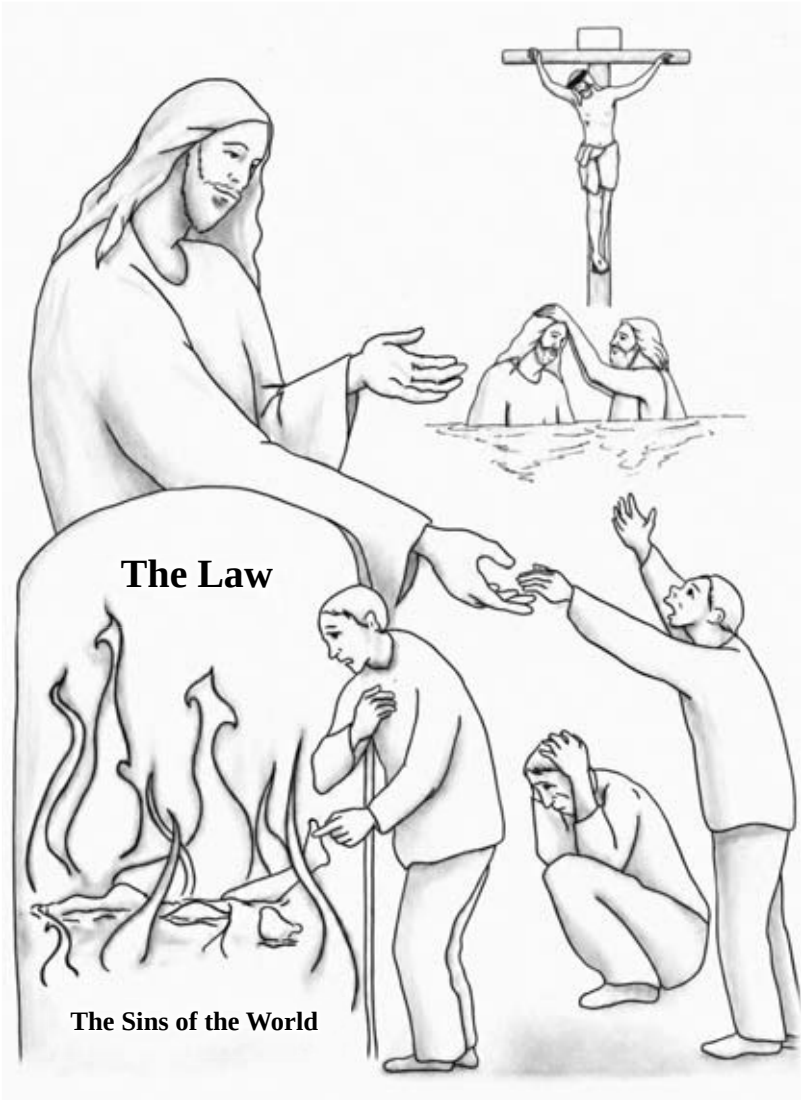
You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

CHAPTER

13

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 13

1) Summary of the Entire Content

1 Kings chapter 13 records the event in which the man of God who came from Judah proclaimed judgment against the altar of Bethel, and the altar was split apart as the sign of that prophecy. He refused Jeroboam's invitation according to the command of God, but on his way back he was deceived by the lie of the old prophet, disobeyed the command, and was killed by a lion. Even after seeing these events, Jeroboam did not abandon his evil way, and in the end this became the cause by which his house would be destroyed.

1. The Man of God Arrives at Bethel, Verse 1

An unnamed man of God from Judah received the Word of God and went to Bethel in northern Israel.

At that time Jeroboam was burning incense himself beside the altar of Bethel that he had made. Not only had he appointed ordinary people who were not Levites as priests, but the king himself was also carrying out the role of a priest.

The altar of Bethel was the center of the religious system Jeroboam had made to keep the people of northern Israel from going up to Jerusalem. He set up golden calves and changed the dates of the feasts and the qualifications of the priests as he pleased.

The man of God did not fear Jeroboam's kingship, and he arrived at Bethel to deliver the Word of God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

2. He Proclaims the Judgment concerning Josiah, Verse 2

The man of God prophesied toward the altar of Bethel that a man named Josiah would be born to the house of David.

Josiah was the one who would one day judge, on that very altar, the priests of the high places who burned incense on it, and who would burn men's bones on it. This was a word showing that the altar Jeroboam had made was not a holy place but an idolatrous altar that would be judged by God.

At the time this prophecy was proclaimed, it was long before Josiah was born. Yet about three hundred years later, Josiah king of Judah came to Bethel, tore down the high places, and burned men's bones on the altar, and this word was fulfilled exactly as spoken.

By revealing in advance even the name of the king who would be born, God showed clearly that the altar of Bethel and Jeroboam's religious system would certainly be judged.

3. He Presents the Splitting of the Altar as a Sign, Verse 3

The man of God presented a sign that would prove that the word he proclaimed had come from God. He said that the altar of Bethel would be split apart and the ashes on it would be poured out.

The splitting of the altar was an event showing that God had not accepted the sacrificial system Jeroboam had made. Jeroboam thought that if he offered sacrifices on the altar he had set up, God would receive them, but God judged that altar.

The pouring out of the ashes shows that the offerings presented there were not acknowledged as holy sacrifices but were cast away as unclean.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

4. Jeroboam's Hand Withers and the Altar Is Split Apart, Verses 4–5

When Jeroboam heard the man of God proclaiming judgment toward the altar, he stretched out his hand and commanded that he be arrested.

But the king's hand that was stretched out toward the man of God immediately withered, so that he could not pull it back again. At the same time, the altar was split apart and the ashes were poured out, just as the man of God had proclaimed.

Jeroboam tried to seize the man of God with royal power, but he could not even move his own hand as he wished. This shows that the Word of God is greater than the authority of a king.

The signs that happened at the same time to the king's hand and to the altar clearly proved that the word proclaimed through the man of God was true.

5. The Man of God Prays for Jeroboam, Verse 6

Jeroboam, whose hand had withered, asked the man of God to entreat God for him so that his hand might be restored.

When the man of God prayed for Jeroboam, the king's hand was restored as before. The man of God prayed for the king who had tried to seize and kill him.

Jeroboam experienced both judgment and grace. Through the withering of his hand he saw the power of God, and through the restoration of his hand he also experienced the mercy of God.

However, experiencing a sign and having a physical problem solved did not mean that his heart had turned to God. He wanted the restoration of his hand, but he did not abandon the golden calves and the sacrificial system he had made.

6. He Refuses the King's Meal and Reward, Verses 7–10

Jeroboam, whose hand had been restored, invited the man of God to come to his house, refresh himself, and eat. He also said he would give him a reward.

But the man of God answered that even if the king were to give him half his house, he would not go in with him, and that he would neither eat bread nor drink water in Bethel.

God had commanded him not to eat food or drink water in Bethel, and not to return by the way he had come. This carried the meaning that he was to have no relationship whatsoever with Jeroboam's false sacrificial system.

The man of God was not shaken by the king's power and wealth. He refused Jeroboam's invitation and returned to Judah by another way.

7. The Old Prophet Pursues the Man of God, Verses 11–14

In Bethel there lived an old prophet. His sons told their father all that the man of God had done in Bethel and the words he had spoken to Jeroboam.

The old prophet asked which way the man of God had gone, then had a donkey saddled and pursued him.

He found the man of God sitting under an oak and confirmed whether he was the man of God who came from Judah.

The text does not explain why the old prophet did not directly rebuke the golden-calf worship of Bethel, nor why he tried to deceive the man of God. But he played the dangerous role of causing the man of God to change the command he had received.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

8. The Man of God Refuses the First Invitation, Verses 15–17

The old prophet urged the man of God to return with him to his house and eat bread.

At first the man of God clearly refused the invitation. He explained again that God had commanded him not to eat bread or drink water in Bethel, and not to return by the way he had come.

He knew exactly the Word of God he had received. Just as he had refused Jeroboam's invitation, he also rightly refused the old prophet's first invitation.

The problem was not that he did not know God's command, but that afterward, when another man claimed to have received a new word from God, he trusted that word more than the word he had first received.

9. The Old Prophet Deceives Him with a Lie, Verses 18–19

The old prophet said that he too was a prophet like him, and claimed that an angel had delivered the word of God, telling him to bring the man of God back to his house and have him eat bread and drink water.

But that was a lie. God had not changed the command He had given to the man of God.

The man of God believed the office of the old prophet and his claim of a new revelation more than the clear word he himself had received directly. In the end he returned with him to Bethel, ate bread, and drank water.

He had refused Jeroboam's kingship and wealth, but he was deceived by the religious words of a man who called himself a fellow prophet. A lie that used the name of God worked more dangerously than an open threat.

10. Judgment Is Proclaimed for the Disobedience, Verses 20–22

While the two men were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had lied. He proclaimed toward the man of God that because he had disobeyed God's command and eaten bread and drunk water in the forbidden place, he would not enter the tomb of his fathers.

The fact that God spoke through the old prophet did not make his earlier lie legitimate. God used him, at the necessary moment, as an instrument to deliver the word of judgment.

The man of God had been deceived by another, but he himself knew the command he had received directly. God held accountable not only the old prophet who had lied but also the man of God who had abandoned His word.

The Word of God does not change according to a person's office, age, or authority. Whoever delivers a new word, we must discern whether it agrees with the Word of God already given.

11. The Man of God Is Killed by a Lion, Verses 23–25

After finishing the meal, the man of God set out on his way riding a donkey. But on the road he met a lion and was killed, and his corpse was thrown on the road.

The lion killed the man of God but did not eat his corpse, nor did it harm the donkey beside it. The donkey did not run away but stood by the corpse, and the lion also kept its place.

This scene, so different from the ordinary behavior of wild animals, was a sign showing that the death of the man of God was not an accident but a judgment according to the Word of God.

People passing by saw the corpse lying on the road and the lion and the donkey standing together beside it, and they

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

reported it in the city of Bethel.

12. The Old Prophet Buries the Man of God, Verses 26–30

When the old prophet heard the news, he acknowledged that the man of God had been killed by the lion because he had disobeyed the word of the LORD.

He rode his donkey to the place and brought back the corpse of the man of God. Even until then, the lion had not eaten the corpse and had not attacked the donkey.

The old prophet brought the corpse to his own city, mourned bitterly, and buried him in his own tomb. He mourned for the man of God, calling him his brother.

His act of deceiving the man of God was wrong, but after seeing his death he acknowledged the judgment of God and buried the corpse with respect.

13. The Old Prophet Desires to Be Buried with the Man of God, Verses 31–32

After the burial, the old prophet asked his sons to bury him, when he died, in the tomb where he had buried the man of God.

He believed that the word the man of God had proclaimed against the altar of Bethel and against the high places in the cities of Samaria would certainly be fulfilled.

When Josiah would one day tear down the altar of Bethel and take out the bones from the tombs and burn them on the altar, the tomb of the man of God would be protected. It seems that the old prophet wanted to escape that judgment by placing his own bones beside the bones of the man of God.

Only after the death of the man of God whom he had deceived did the old prophet publicly acknowledge the certainty of the word the man of God had delivered.

14. Jeroboam Continues to Follow His Evil Way, Verses 33–34

Jeroboam had experienced the sign of the altar splitting apart and of his own hand withering and being restored, and he would also have heard of the event in which the man of God was killed by a lion. Yet he did not depart from his evil way.

He continued to appoint ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi as priests of the high places. He made it so that anyone who wished could become a priest of the high places.

The qualifications for the priesthood that God had ordained collapsed completely, and anyone willing to follow the king's religious system could become a priest.

This thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, and in the end it became the cause by which his house was cut off and destroyed from the earth. He made the golden calves and the high places to protect his kingship, but that very thing brought down his dynasty.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 13

First, the Word of God is stronger than the authority of a king. Jeroboam tried to seize the man of God, but his hand withered, and the altar was split apart just as the word had been proclaimed.

Second, the prophecy of God is certainly fulfilled even after a long time. The prophecy concerning Josiah was proclaimed about three hundred years before he was born, but it was later fulfilled exactly as spoken.

Third, experiencing signs is different from following God with the heart. Jeroboam experienced his hand withering and being restored, but he did not abandon the worship of the golden calves.

Fourth, the Word of God does not change because of wealth

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

or power. The man of God did not accept Jeroboam's invitation even though the king offered him half his house.

Fifth, a religious lie is as dangerous as an open threat. The man of God did not yield to the king's threat, but he was deceived by a lie that used the name of a prophet and of an angel.

Sixth, we must not unconditionally accept what another person says just because he speaks in the name of God. We must confirm whether what we hear agrees with the Word of God already given.

Seventh, partial obedience is not enough. The man of God faithfully delivered the word in Bethel and refused the king's invitation, but on his way back he broke the command and was judged.

Eighth, a leader's wrongdoing affects the community and the next generation. Jeroboam maintained the high places and the false priesthood to protect his own kingship, and he led all of northern Israel into sin.

Ninth, a religion made by human desire cannot protect that person in the end. Jeroboam changed the sacrificial system to protect his dynasty, but that very thing caused his house to be destroyed.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 13 records the event in which the man of God who came from Judah judged the idolatrous altar of Bethel and restored Jeroboam's hand, yet was deceived by the old prophet's lie, disobeyed God's command, and was killed by a lion, and the account of how Jeroboam, even after seeing such signs, continued the worship of the golden calves and led his own dynasty to destruction.

2) Chapter 13 Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 13 records the event in which the man of God delivered the word judging the false altar of Bethel, and then believed the old prophet's lie, disobeyed God's command, and came to die. This chapter shows that a faith system made by man and God's Word of salvation cannot go together, and that we must not change the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to human thoughts or religious authority but must believe it to the end.

1. The Altar of Bethel Made by Man Receives Judgment, Verses 1–3

Jeroboam feared that his kingship would be endangered if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem, so he set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan. He changed the sacrifices, the feasts, and the priesthood that God had ordained to suit his own political purposes.

The man of God came from Judah to Bethel and proclaimed judgment toward that altar. He did not speak his own thoughts but cried out by the word of the LORD. This was a declaration that an altar made by man, and the sacrifices offered on it, could not be accepted before God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is likewise not a word that man can change to suit his own circumstances. The way for a sinner to be saved does not come from human religious zeal or good deeds, but lies in the salvation God has accomplished.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

2. The Word concerning Josiah and the Sign of the Altar, Verses 2–5

The man of God prophesied that a king named Josiah would one day be born to the house of David and judge the false altar of Bethel. As the sign that this word would surely be fulfilled, he said that the altar would be split apart and the ashes on it would be poured out.

The moment Jeroboam commanded that he be arrested, the king's hand withered so that he could not pull it back, and the altar was indeed split apart. The king's power could not stop the Word of God, and the altar man had set up could not stand whole before the judgment of God.

In the same way, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is higher than human authority. God's salvation was completed through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Therefore no human tradition or claim can change this order of salvation.

3. Jeroboam's Hand Was Restored, but His Heart Did Not Change, Verses 4–6

When his hand withered, Jeroboam asked the man of God to entreat the favor of God so that his hand might be restored. When the man of God entreated God, the king's hand was restored as before.

Jeroboam directly experienced the power of God, but he did not abandon the golden calves and the false altar he had made. He wanted the restoration of his hand, but he did not bow his heart to the Word of God.

Experiencing a miracle and having a real-life problem solved does not mean that one has been saved from sin. True salvation begins with knowing and believing through the Word how one's sins were passed on to Jesus and how the judgment

of those sins was carried out.

4. The Man of God Refuses the King's Hospitality, Verses 7–10

Jeroboam proposed that the man of God come to his house, eat food, and receive a reward. But the man of God refused the king's proposal, because God had commanded him not to eat bread or drink water in Bethel, and not to go back by the way he had come.

He judged that he could not change God's command even if the king gave him great wealth. The Word of God was not something that could be exchanged for material things or power.

The work of preaching the gospel must likewise never become a means of gaining human recognition or material profit. Those who believe in and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not reduce or change the content of the gospel according to worldly conditions, but must deliver as it is the salvation God has accomplished.

5. The Old Prophet Goes to Find the Man of God, Verses 11–17

The old prophet who lived in Bethel heard from his sons what the man of God had done, and went to find him. He met the man of God sitting under an oak and urged him to come to his house and eat food.

The man of God refused, explaining God's command, just as he had refused Jeroboam's proposal. Up to this point he clearly remembered the Word of God he had received directly.

But the old prophet, unlike the king, approached with the religious authority of a prophet. To the man of God, the words of a fellow prophet may have sounded more trustworthy than

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the command of a king. What matters here is not the office or the seniority of the one speaking, but whether his words agree with the recorded Word of God.

6. He Is Deceived by the Old Prophet's Lie, Verses 18–19

The old prophet said that he too was a prophet like the man of God, and claimed that an angel had commanded him to bring the man of God to his house and have him eat bread and drink water. But that was a lie.

The man of God accepted the new word delivered by the old prophet over the command he had received directly from God. In the end he returned to the old prophet's house, ate bread, and drank water.

A claim that differs from the Word of God must not be accepted, even if it sounds religious and puts forward the authority of an angel. However high a person's office, experience, or reputation may be, what he delivers must be discerned by the Word of Scripture. The Word of salvation that God has already established is not altered by any new human claim.

7. The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is the Way of Salvation God Has Established

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass on his sins, and the offering took upon itself the sinner's sins, shed its blood, and died. Through the sacrifice, God showed the order of salvation in which the passing on of sin and its judgment were carried out.

Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon His own body through the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and then rose

again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of everyone who believes that this salvation, accomplished by the water and the blood, is true.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make his own good deeds or religious zeal the ground of salvation. He believes that all his sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from John, and that Jesus bore the judgment of those sins entirely on the Cross.

If one adds human thoughts to this Word of salvation or leaves out any part of it, it produces the same result as Jeroboam changing God's system to suit his own purposes. The gospel of the water and the Spirit must be believed and preached exactly as God has ordained it.

8. God's Judgment Is Proclaimed at the Table, Verses 20–22

While the man of God was eating in the old prophet's house, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet. He proclaimed that because the man of God had disobeyed the command, returned, eaten bread, and drunk water, his corpse would not enter the tomb of his fathers.

The man of God at first overcame Jeroboam's threat and enticement, but he collapsed before a religious lie. The fact that he had obeyed well at first did not erase his later disobedience.

In keeping the Word of the gospel as well, not only the first faith but continual discernment is needed. Whoever has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be shaken by human words and religious trends, but must firmly keep in his heart the Word of salvation Jesus has accomplished.

9. The Man of God Is Killed by a Lion, Verses 23–28

After the man of God set out on his way, a lion met him and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

killed him. But the lion did not eat his corpse, nor did it harm the donkey. The extraordinary sight of the lion and the donkey standing together beside the corpse showed that this death was not an accident but a judgment fulfilled according to the Word of God.

This event reveals that the one entrusted with the Word of God bears the responsibility of keeping that Word to the end. If he accepts false words, his spiritual discernment weakens, and he can bring great harm not only to himself but also to those who learn the Word from him.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not compromise with another gospel and cloud his faith. He must believe as one the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and keep this perfect salvation at the center.

10. The Old Prophet Buries the Man of God, Verses 29–32

The old prophet brought back the corpse of the man of God, buried it in his own tomb, and mourned. He asked his sons to bury him, when he died, in the tomb where the man of God was buried.

He acknowledged that the word the man of God had delivered against the altar of Bethel and the high places of Samaria would certainly be fulfilled. Though he had deceived the man of God, he could not make the Word of God that the man of God had delivered into a lie.

A person’s wrongdoing cannot bring down the truthfulness of the Word. Even if the one who delivered the Word showed weakness, the Word God has spoken is fulfilled just as it is. Therefore the standard of faith must be not a person’s conduct or reputation but the unchanging Word of God.

11. Jeroboam Does Not Abandon His Evil Way to the End, Verses 33–34

Jeroboam saw the altar split apart, saw his own hand wither and then be restored, and even heard the news that the man of God had died, yet he did not turn from his evil way. He continued to appoint ordinary people as priests of the high places.

Appointing anyone who wished as priest, ignoring the qualifications and the order God had ordained, became the cause by which the house of Jeroboam was destroyed. He did not correct his rule through the Word of God, but made his false religious system even firmer in order to protect his own kingship.

Whoever serves souls must first believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the washing of all his sins, and be born again. Learning, office, or people's recognition does not make one a spiritual worker. Only the person who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and who is led by the Holy Spirit, can rightly preach the Word of the gospel.

12. We Must Discern Every Spiritual Claim by the Written Word

The words that brought down the man of God sounded very spiritual on the surface. The old prophet put forward his office as a prophet and the words of an angel. But his words were the exact opposite of the command God had given to the man of God.

Today as well, not everything spoken in the name of God is the will of God. Even if there are special experiences, human authority, long tradition, and the support of many people, if it differs from the Word of salvation recorded in Scripture, we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

must not follow it.

The Holy Spirit does not lead anyone down a path different from the written Word. The Holy Spirit makes those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit know more clearly the salvation Jesus has accomplished, and leads them to follow the Word of God rather than the words of men.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 13

First, a way of salvation made by man is like the altar of Bethel. Jeroboam said he was serving God, yet he changed the altar, the priesthood, and the feasts as he pleased. Even if one speaks of God, if he departs from the Word God has ordained, it cannot be true faith.

Second, the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be changed for human convenience. Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This is the perfect salvation God has accomplished.

Third, having a physical problem solved is different from being saved from sin. Jeroboam received the grace of having his withered hand restored, but to the end he did not abandon the false altar. What a person needs most is not a temporary solution to his problems but to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be saved from all his sins.

Fourth, no religious office or seniority can stand above the Word. The man of God repelled the king's enticement but fell before the old prophet's lie. Every spiritual claim must be discerned not by the position of the speaker but by whether it agrees with the Word of Scripture.

Fifth, whoever believes in and preaches the gospel must not compromise with false teachings. If one accepts another gospel,

his spiritual discernment is clouded and his life of serving the gospel also suffers great damage. We must keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly in our hearts and preach it as it is.

Sixth, the Word of God is certainly fulfilled regardless of human failure. The man of God died because of his disobedience, but the word he delivered against the altar of Bethel was fulfilled exactly in a later generation.

Seventh, a spiritual worker must be a person who has first been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Office and knowledge alone cannot rightly deliver the Word of life. Those whose sins have all been washed away by faith and who are led by the Holy Spirit must serve the salvation of God.

Eighth, false faith does not stop with the individual but destroys the family and the community. The false system Jeroboam made led all of northern Israel into idolatry and in the end destroyed his house. Therefore it is important to hand down the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the next generation whole and unaltered.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 13 warns against the false altar made by man and against religious lies, and shows that we must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—completed through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death—just as the Word says, and keep it to the end. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

1 Kings Chapter 13

The Way of Obeying the Word of God to the End

Introductory Words

1 Kings chapter 13 is the chapter in which the word of God's judgment is proclaimed against the altar of Bethel that Jeroboam made. To protect his own kingship, Jeroboam set up golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice that God had ordained. Outwardly there was the form of serving God, but in reality he had changed the order of the remission of sin that God had ordained, according to his own thoughts and desires.

At that time God sent a man of God from Judah. He came to Bethel by the word of the LORD and cried out toward the altar, and he proclaimed the sign that the altar would be split apart and the ashes would be poured out. God rebuked the very sacrificial system of Jeroboam. This shows how much God hates corrupted worship and a false law of sacrifice.

The law of sacrifice of the Old Testament points to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ would fulfill. The order in which hands were laid on the offering to pass on sin, and the offering shed its blood and died, foreshows that Jesus would take the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, and would receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore changing the law of sacrifice is not a mere change of religious form; it is the sin of damaging the shadow of God's salvation.

This chapter also shows, through the scene in which the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

man of God himself is deceived by the old prophet's lie and disobeys God's command, that even the one who delivers the truth must remain held by the Word to the end. He refused Jeroboam's reward and invitation, but he was deceived by the religious words, "I too am a prophet," and returned to Bethel and ate bread and drank water. Even words that carry the name of faith must not be accepted if they differ from the Word God has already given.

Today as well, believers must examine what spiritual food they are eating. A teaching that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, words that comfort people that they are saved even though sin remains in their hearts, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts are not the food that gives life to the soul. Believers must stand firmly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ completed through His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and must discern the altar of Jeroboam and the lie of the old prophet.

The Man of God Came to Bethel by the Word of the LORD

"And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense" (1 Kings 13:1).

1 Kings chapter 13 is the scene in which the word of God's judgment comes upon the sacrificial system that Jeroboam made as he pleased. Jeroboam had already made golden calves and placed them in Bethel and Dan, had made priests from ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and had even fixed the feasts as he pleased. Now he was standing by

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the altar of Bethel, burning incense.

Within the sacrificial system God had established, a king could not become a priest at his own will. The priests had to be raised up from among the sons of Levi whom God had ordained, and the sacrifices had to be offered in the way God had ordained. Yet Jeroboam changed the order of salvation that God had ordained in order to protect his own kingship. It looked as if he were offering to God, but in reality it was idolatry that he had made as he pleased.

At that time God sent a man of God from Judah. He was not a man who came by his own thoughts; he came *"by the word of the LORD" (1 Kings 13:1)*. This is important. Jeroboam made a law of sacrifice as he pleased, but the man of God came held by the Word of God. A faith made by human thoughts and the truth proclaimed by the Word of God here confronted each other face to face.

Today as well, there are those who change the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, according to human thoughts. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. Yet if anyone leaves the baptism of Jesus out of this truth and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, or tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and his own efforts, that is turning the order of salvation God has ordained into a human religion.

God's Rebuke Was Directed at the Corrupted Altar

"Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, 'O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold,

a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'" (1 Kings 13:2).

The man of God did not speak first to Jeroboam; he cried out toward the altar. He proclaimed the Word of God, calling, "O altar, altar!" This shows that not only the wrongdoing of the one man Jeroboam, but the sacrificial system he had set up, would itself be judged before God.

The altar Jeroboam made was not the altar God had ordained. Out of fear of losing his kingship, he set up the altar in Bethel and had sacrifices offered there as he pleased. Therefore God proclaimed judgment toward that altar. He said that one day a king named Josiah would come from the house of David, sacrifice the priests of the high places on that altar, and burn men's bones on it.

This prophecy shows how much God hates a corrupted sacrificial system. The sins a person commits out of weakness are different from the sin of deliberately changing the way of salvation God has ordained. Jeroboam tore down the sacrificial system God had established as the way of the remission of sin. That is why God said He would judge the altar itself.

The law of sacrifice of the Old Testament foreshows the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ would fulfill. The law of sacrifice, in which hands were laid on the sacrificial offering to pass on sin and its blood bore the judgment in the sinner's place, points to Jesus taking the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John and receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross. Therefore changing the law of sacrifice is not a mere change in the manner of worship; it is the sin of damaging the foreshadowing of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Sign That the Altar Would Split and the Ashes Be Poured Out Shows That the Word of God Is Certainly Fulfilled

"And he gave a sign the same day, saying, 'This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.'" (1 Kings 13:3).

The man of God spoke a sign that same day. *"Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out" (1 Kings 13:3)*. This was the sign showing that the Word of God is no empty word. However plausible the altar Jeroboam made might look, if God does not acknowledge it, it can only collapse.

That the altar would split apart means that God does not receive that sacrifice. That the ashes on it would be poured out means that the sacrifice offered on that altar can no longer stand before God. Jeroboam set up the golden calf and told the people that this was the god who had brought them up out of Egypt, but God said He would split that altar apart.

Today as well, a human religion can look stable on the outside. Even if the church is large, the people are many, and the form of worship looks splendid, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not there, it is not a sacrifice God receives. If the truth of salvation completed through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is not preached, the sin in people's hearts remains as it is. The altar of a religion that has left the truth God ordained can only be split apart in the end.

The Word of God is certainly fulfilled. Even if a system and a power made by man look strong for a while, when God says He will judge, that word is fulfilled when the time comes. Therefore we must not look at the number of people or the

outward form, but at whether that faith stands on the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Hand That Opposed the Word of God Withered

"So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, 'Arrest him!' Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself" (1 Kings 13:4).

Jeroboam heard the word the man of God cried out toward the altar, yet he did not repent. Instead he stretched out his hand from the altar and commanded, "Arrest him!" He did not kneel before the Word of God; he tried to seize the man of God who delivered the Word.

Then the hand he stretched out toward him withered. He could not pull it back again. This shows how God breaks the power that opposes the Word. Jeroboam was a king, and he was standing beside his own altar. In men's eyes he was the one who held power. But before the Word of God his hand had no strength at all.

Here the hand symbolizes human strength and power. Those who oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained may also look strong in their organization, their doctrines, and their authority. But the hand that opposes the truth of God withers in the end. A power that God does not acknowledge cannot save souls.

Today, when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, some people oppose the truth rather than receive it.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

When we speak the truth that our sins were passed on to Jesus through His baptism, the truth that those sins were judged on the Cross, and the truth that salvation was completed by His resurrection from death, they reject it, saying it does not fit the doctrines they hold. But opposing the Word of God brings the same result as Jeroboam's withered hand.

The Altar Was Split Apart and the Ashes Were Poured Out according to the Word

"The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD" (1 Kings 13:5).

Just as the man of God had said, the altar was split apart and the ashes were poured out. This was a clear sign that God did not receive Jeroboam's sacrifice. In men's eyes the sacrifice was proceeding, but before God that altar had been judged.

This scene makes us discern between true worship and false worship. True worship must be offered according to the way God has ordained. Jeroboam imitated the form of serving God, but he did not follow the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Therefore the altar he set up was split apart before God.

Today as well, the faith God receives is the faith built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Not everyone who speaks of Jesus has true faith. Not everyone who speaks of the Cross has the faith of the remission of sin. We must believe the truth that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, the truth that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the truth that He completed the salvation by rising again from death.

If one leaves this way of salvation that God has ordained, even what looks like a sacrifice can collapse before God. Therefore we must look not at the outward form of a faith but at whether the gospel of the water and the Spirit is at its center.

God Healed Jeroboam's Hand, but That Did Not Mean He Acknowledged His Sacrificial System

"Then the king answered and said to the man of God, 'Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.' So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before" (1 Kings 13:6).

When his hand withered, Jeroboam pleaded with the man of God. *"Entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me" (1 Kings 13:6)*. Until just a moment before, he had been trying to seize the man of God, but when his own hand withered, he asked for prayer.

When the man of God entreated the favor of the LORD, the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. God showed mercy and healed his hand. But this did not mean that He acknowledged Jeroboam's sacrificial system. God healed his hand, but He judged the altar and the law of sacrifice he had set up.

Here we must distinguish between the problems of the flesh and the problems of the soul. Jeroboam sought the healing of his hand, but he did not seek for his heart to return to God. He wanted the restoration of his flesh, but he showed no heart to return to the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

Today as well, many people ask God only for the solution of the problems of their flesh. They want their sickness healed,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

their affairs to go well, and their material needs supplied. But what is more important is that the sins of the heart be washed away. To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and for the conscience to be saved from sin is the greatest grace. To believe this truth—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death—is the true restoration.

The King's Invitation and Reward Were a Test of Spiritual Fellowship

"Then the king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.'" (1 Kings 13:7).

When his hand was restored, Jeroboam told the man of God to come home with him and refresh himself, and said he would give him a reward. Seen from the outside, it could look like an expression of gratitude. But to the man of God this was a test of spiritual fellowship.

Jeroboam had not yet repented. He had not returned to the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Even after experiencing the altar splitting apart and his hand withering, his heart was still set on his own kingship and his own religious system. To receive rest and a reward from such a man could become an act of fellowship with him.

If the man of God had entered Jeroboam's house and eaten and drunk, people could have seen him as a man in fellowship with Jeroboam's sacrificial system. God had him deliver the Word only and receive no hospitality there at all. This was a clear command not to mix with corrupted faith.

Today as well, believers must not carelessly mix with a faith that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we eat spiritual food in a place that does not know the baptism of Jesus, a place that speaks only of the blood of the Cross while leaving the sin of the heart as it is, a place that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and human effort, our hearts become clouded. Believers must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be set apart from what is not the truth.

The Man of God Said He Would Not Go In Even for Half the King's House

"But the man of God said to the king, 'If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place" (1 Kings 13:8).

The man of God answered firmly. He said that even if the king gave him half his house, he would not go in with him, and that he would neither eat bread nor drink water in that place. He was not shaken by the reward. Even before the king's power and hospitality, he held on to the command of God.

This word shows the attitude a servant of God must have. The one who delivers the Word of God must not be moved by material things, hospitality, or human recognition. Even if a king offers half his house, if it is something God has forbidden, he must not do it. Eating and drinking in Jeroboam's house was not a mere meal; it could become fellowship with a corrupted sacrificial system.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also need this firmness. We must not cloud the gospel of the water and the Spirit for worldly gain or human recognition. We

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

must not yield the truth of salvation accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection from death. This truth is the way of salvation God has ordained, and it cannot be exchanged for human favor or reward.

The man of God counted the Word of God more precious than half the king's house. Believers too must count the gospel of the water and the Spirit more precious than material things, than relationships, and than religious recognition.

The Command Not to Eat Bread or Drink Water Is a Warning Not to Receive the Food of Corrupted Faith

"For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'" (1 Kings 13:9).

The reason the man of God spoke that way was the command of the LORD. God had said to him, *"You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came" (1 Kings 13:9).* This was no mere travel regulation. It carried the meaning that he was to have no spiritual fellowship whatsoever with Jeroboam's corrupted faith.

Bread and water are the basic food that sustains a person's life. Spiritually, a person lives by eating the food of the Word. But the food given in a place that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot give life. What came from Jeroboam's altar was not the law of sacrifice God had ordained, but a religion made by human desire. God kept the man of God from eating the food of that place.

Today as well, believers must examine what word they are listening to. Words that do not preach the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, words that leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the Cross, words that comfort people that they are saved even though sin remains in their hearts, and words that make material blessing and worldly success the center of faith are not the food that gives life to the soul. Such words can lead people down the way of Jeroboam.

The food of life that God has ordained is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we eat the Word—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death—does the soul live. However sweet a food that has departed from this truth may look, we must beware of it.

The Man of God Returned by Another Way

"So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel" (1 Kings 13:10).

The man of God went another way and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel. He did just as God had commanded. He delivered the Word, refused the king's invitation, neither ate nor drank in that place, and did not go back by the way he had come.

This scene shows how a believer must be set apart from corrupted faith. The man of God proclaimed the Word of God at Jeroboam's altar, but he did not remain there. He received no hospitality of that place, and he did not walk that road again. The mission God had given him was to deliver the Word and depart.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also deliver the truth to this world and to wrong faith. But

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

we must not mix with them, eat their food, and follow their way. The one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit must deliver the truth, yet not compromise with what is not the truth.

1 Kings 13:1–10 shows how the Word of God and human religion collide. Jeroboam made an altar and burned incense for the sake of his own kingship, but God judged that altar. Jeroboam tried to seize the man of God, but his hand withered. God in His mercy healed his hand, but He did not acknowledge the false sacrificial system he had set up. And He commanded the man of God neither to eat nor to drink in that place, but to return by another way.

Therefore we must not eat the food that comes from Jeroboam's altar. We must believe only the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, and remain in that truth. The salvation that Jesus Christ completed by taking all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rising again from death is our true life. The person who stands on this truth is the one who walks the right way of faith before God.

The Old Prophet of Bethel Was Living in the Midst of Corrupted Faith

"Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king" (1 Kings 13:11).

In Bethel there lived an old prophet. His sons told him all that the man of God had done in Bethel. They told him everything: the word the man of God had cried out toward

Jeroboam's altar, the altar splitting apart and the ashes pouring out, Jeroboam's hand withering and being restored, and even the words with which he had refused the king's invitation.

What matters here is the fact that the old prophet was living in Bethel. Bethel was originally the place where Jacob met God, but in the days of Jeroboam it had become the center of the golden calves and the high places. It was the place where the sacrificial system God had ordained was corrupted, where ordinary people were appointed as priests, and where the king burned incense at an altar he had made as he pleased. In the very midst of that, the old prophet was living.

He had the name of a prophet, but he did not step forward to rebuke Jeroboam's sin. God had to send a man of God separately from Judah. This is a very fearful thing. Even if a person has the name of a prophet, if he remains in the midst of corrupted faith and does not clearly deliver the Word of God, he is not a person standing in the way of life.

It is the same today. The title of pastor, theological knowledge, religious career, and long-standing forms of faith do not make a person a true servant of God. What matters is whether he believes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He must believe and preach the truth that Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Spiritual food that does not deliver this truth cannot give life to anyone.

The Old Prophet Followed the Way the Man of God Had Gone

"And their father said to them, 'Which way did he go?' For

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. Then he said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?' And he said, 'I am.'" (1 Kings 13:12–14).

The old prophet asked his sons which way the man of God had gone. Then he had a donkey saddled and went after the man of God. He found the man of God sitting under an oak and asked, *"Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" (1 Kings 13:14)* The man of God answered, "I am."

In this scene the man of God had already left Bethel. He had not entered Jeroboam's house, and he had neither eaten bread nor drunk water there. He was trying not to have fellowship with the corrupted sacrificial system, just as God had commanded. But he had not yet finished his journey completely. He was sitting under an oak. At that moment the old prophet came to him.

On the way of faith, even after overcoming the first great temptation, another temptation can come. The man of God had refused the king's invitation and reward. He was firm enough to say that he would not go in even if the king gave him half his house. But this time it was not the king who came; it was a man with the name "prophet." This was the more cunning test.

Believers too can discern the open temptations of the world. But a false exhortation that approaches in the name of faith can be hard to discern. It comes with words like "I too am a prophet," "I too believe in God," "I too know the Bible"; yet if those words differ from the Word God has already given, they must not be accepted. Words that have left the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not the food of life, however religious a name they carry.

At First the Man of God Held On to the Command of the LORD

"Then he said to him, 'Come home with me and eat bread.' And he said, 'I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place" (1 Kings 13:15–16).

The old prophet told the man of God to come home with him and eat bread. At first the man of God refused clearly. He said, *"I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place" (1 Kings 13:16).*

This answer is the same as the answer he had given to Jeroboam. He knew the command God had given him. He clearly remembered the command not to eat or drink in Bethel. Up to this point he was right. He was still confessing the Word of God with his mouth.

But knowing the Word with one's mouth and keeping that Word to the end are different. The man of God knew the command, but soon he would be shaken by the old prophet's words. This is a very solemn warning to us. Confessing the Word of God once does not mean the test is over. We must remain in that Word to the end.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must know and confess the truth that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. But we must go further and refuse to eat any food that departs from this truth. A teaching that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a teaching that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts, and a teaching that says one is saved even though

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

sin remains in the heart are not the food of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God's Command Was Not to Eat the Bread and Water of Bethel

"For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'" (1 Kings 13:17).

The man of God spoke the command of the LORD again. He had received the word not to eat bread or drink water there, and not to return by the way he had come. This was not simply a command about food and roads on a journey. God had forbidden spiritual fellowship with Jeroboam's corrupted sacrificial system.

Bread and water make us think spiritually of food and of the Word. Just as the body is affected by what a person eats, so the soul lives or dies according to what word it hears and believes. God kept the man of God from eating the food of Bethel, because Bethel was the place where Jeroboam had changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

Jeroboam's sin was the sin of corrupting the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He set up golden calves, changed the place of worship, made priests from ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and even fixed the feasts as he pleased. Therefore eating and drinking in that place could become fellowship with their faith.

Today as well, believers must examine what food of the Word they are eating. The food of a place that does not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot give life to the soul. A sermon that does not know the truth that Jesus took our

sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John cannot explain how sin was passed on to Jesus. Words that speak only of the Cross and comfort a person in whose heart sin remains cannot give the true remission of sin. Believers must beware of such food.

"He said to him, 'I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' (He was lying to him.)" (1 Kings 13:18).

The old prophet said to the man of God, *"I too am a prophet as you are."* And he claimed that an angel had spoken to him by the word of the LORD, telling him to bring the man of God back to his house and have him eat bread and drink water. But the Scripture says plainly, *"He was lying to him" (1 Kings 13:18).*

This is a very fearful scene. The old prophet did not speak entirely like a man of the world. He spoke of God, spoke of an angel, and spoke of the word of the LORD. And he said that he himself was a prophet. But his words were the exact opposite of the word the man of God had already received. Therefore, however religious the expressions in which it was wrapped, it was a lie.

Words that overturn the Word God has already given must not be accepted. It does not matter whether the one who speaks them carries the name of a prophet, claims to have heard the words of an angel, or holds long-standing religious authority. If God has said, *"Eat no bread and drink no water" (1 Kings 13:22),* and someone says, "God has now told you to eat," that is a word that goes against the Word of God.

The same thing happens today. People can speak of Jesus, speak of the Bible, and speak of the Holy Spirit, and yet say things different from the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

They say that one need only believe in the blood of the Cross, leaving out the baptism of Jesus. They say that one is saved by believing in Jesus even though sin remains in the heart. They say that sins are washed away if one keeps offering prayers of repentance. But the Word of salvation God has ordained is clear. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Words that depart from this gospel of the water and the Spirit are words clothed in falsehood.

The Man of God Was Deceived by the Lie and Returned to Bethel

"So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water" (1 Kings 13:19).

The man of God listened to the old prophet's words and went back with him. And in his house he ate bread and drank water. He had refused Jeroboam's invitation, but he was deceived by the old prophet's lie. He abandoned the word God had given him directly, and followed the word of a man he heard afterward.

This is the most fearful lesson of this passage. Even one called a man of God can be deceived if he does not hold on to the Word of God to the end. Especially, he can be deceived by a lie that approaches in the name of faith. When the old prophet said, "I too am a prophet," the man of God should have discerned those words by the word he had received. Even if someone says that what God has forbidden is now permitted, it was something he could never accept.

The bread and water he ate were not a mere matter of food.

They were a matter of fellowship with corrupted faith. Returning to Bethel, where Jeroboam's sin was, and eating the food of that place was accepting the spiritual fellowship God had forbidden. And so he comes to receive the judgment of God that follows.

Believers must fear this word. Even those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can become spiritually clouded if they hold fellowship with words that are not the truth. A sermon that does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a teaching that denies or omits the baptism of Jesus, a doctrine that explains the remission of sin by the blood of the Cross alone, and the claim that prayers of repentance wash away sin are not true food for the soul. If one keeps eating such food, the heart drifts away from the truth of God.

1 Kings 13:11–19 Shows the Danger of False Spiritual Fellowship

This passage is the scene in which the man of God is deceived by the old prophet's lie, returns to Bethel, and eats bread and drinks water. At first he clearly knew the command of the LORD. But he was deceived by the words "I too am a prophet" and by the lie "an angel spoke to me." In the end he ate the food of Bethel, which God had forbidden.

This word is a solemn warning to believers today as well. False faith does not always come in a worldly form. Sometimes it comes in the name of a prophet, comes like the words of an angel, and comes in religious language that speaks of God. But if its content differs from the Word God has already given, it must not be accepted.

The Word of salvation God has given us is the gospel of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Whoever believes this truth has no sin in his conscience. For the Lord has already blotted out sin completely through His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

Therefore we must not eat any food that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not accept the food that comes from Jeroboam's altar—the doctrine of salvation altered by human thought and the religious teachings men have made as they pleased. The man of God refused half the king's house, but he was deceived by a lie that came in the name of a prophet. The lesson this gives us is clear: we must look not at a person's name, office, or religious language, but at whether his words agree with the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

True faith is remaining to the end in the Word God has given. It is holding on to the end to the gospel of the water and the Spirit we first believed, and refusing to eat any food that differs from that truth. When we are in this faith, we can be kept from the sin of Jeroboam and from the deception of the false prophet.

God's Rebuke Came at the Table

"Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the

LORD your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the LORD said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water,' your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers." (1 Kings 13:20–22).

The man of God listened to the old prophet's words, returned to Bethel, and ate bread and drank water. Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back. It is a truly fearful scene. The one who deceived the man of God was the old prophet, but the word of God's judgment came upon the man of God.

The man of God had clearly known the command of the LORD at first. God had told him not to eat bread or drink water in Bethel, and not to return by the way he had come. This was not a mere prohibition of food. It was God's command not to hold spiritual fellowship with the sacrificial system Jeroboam had corrupted.

But he was deceived by the old prophet's lie, *"I too am a prophet as you are" (1 Kings 13:18)*. The problem lies in the fact that he listened to the words of a man and disobeyed the Word God had already given. The most dangerous thing in faith is to exchange the Word God has clearly given for the words of men.

Today as well, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must hear this warning. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Word of salvation God has ordained. If anyone says that we need only believe in the blood of the Cross, leaving out the baptism of Jesus, or says that we can wash away our sins with prayers of repentance and our own efforts, that is a food different from the Word God has ordained. If we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

eat such food, the soul cannot live.

The Result of Disobeying the Word Appeared as Death on the Road

"So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse" (1 Kings 13:23–24).

After eating bread and drinking water, the man of God set out on his way again. But a lion met him on the road and killed him. His corpse was thrown on the road, the donkey stood by it, and the lion also stood by the corpse.

This death was no accident. God had already said, *"Your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers" (1 Kings 13:22),* and that word was fulfilled exactly. The man of God was the one who had cried out God's judgment toward Jeroboam's altar. Yet even he could not escape judgment when he disobeyed the Word of God.

This shows that even one called a man of God is not safe if he leaves the Word. The experience of being used by God, the mission of having delivered His Word, and past obedience do not cover present disobedience. The Word of God must be kept to the end.

It is the same for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Knowing and preaching this truth does not mean that we may hold fellowship with teachings that have left the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The way of Jeroboam is the way of changing the law of sacrifice God ordained. In

today's terms, it is the way of changing into human doctrine the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Eating the food of that way and following the words of that way brings the result of spiritual death.

The Lion and the Donkey Standing By Was a Sign from God

"And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, 'It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him.'" (1 Kings 13:25–26).

People passing by saw the corpse thrown on the road and the lion standing beside it. This sight was different from an ordinary attack by a wild beast. The lion had killed the man but did not eat the corpse. It did not tear the donkey either. The lion and the donkey stood together beside the corpse. This was a sign God showed.

When the old prophet heard the news, he said, *"It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD" (1 Kings 13:26)*. He knew why the man of God had died. He died not because the lion was hungry, but because he had disobeyed the word of the LORD.

Here we must see how clear the judgment of God is. The lion was an instrument of judgment moving under God's command. That the lion did not tear the donkey, did not eat the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

corpse, and stood beside it reveals that this death was an event bound to the Word of God.

In the world of faith today as well, we must not look only at outward phenomena. Even if a person does great works, gathers many people, and holds religious authority, if he has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit, his way is not the way of life. If one disobeys the Word of salvation God has ordained, what looks like religious success in men's eyes can be the way of judgment before God.

The Old Prophet Buried the Dead Man of God

"And he spoke to his sons, saying, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled it. Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, 'Alas, my brother!'" (1 Kings 13:27–30).

The old prophet had his sons saddle a donkey and went to the place where the corpse of the man of God lay. He saw that the lion had not eaten the corpse and had not torn the donkey. And he laid the corpse on the donkey, brought it back to his own city, and buried it. He mourned over him, saying, *"Alas, my brother!" (1 Kings 13:30).*

The old prophet's weeping shows the tragedy. He had deceived the man of God, and as a result the man of God died. Now he calls him his brother and buries him. But no funeral and no tears could undo the result of the man of God's

disobedience to the Word.

This scene shows how fearful a result false spiritual fellowship brings. The old prophet had the name of a prophet, but he caused the man of God to depart from the Word. The bread and water eaten in his house were not mere hospitality; they were the fellowship God had forbidden. In the end that fellowship brought death to the man of God.

Believers must discern before this word. We must not accept every word that approaches in the name of faith. More important than the words "I too am a prophet," "I too believe in God," or "I too know the Bible" is whether the person believes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One who does not know the truth that sin was passed on to Jesus through His baptism cannot fully preach the way of the remission of sin.

The Old Prophet Knew That the Word of the Man of God Would Surely Be Fulfilled

"So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, 'When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.'" (1 Kings 13:31–32).

After burying the man of God, the old prophet said to his sons, *"When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones" (1 Kings 13:31)*. He knew that the word the man of God had cried out against the altar of Bethel and against the high places in the cities of Samaria would surely be fulfilled.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

He had deceived the man of God, yet he acknowledged that the word the man of God had delivered was true. The altar of Bethel and the high places would certainly be judged. The golden calves, the high places, and the false sacrificial system that Jeroboam had set up to protect his own kingship could not stand before God.

What matters here is that though the man of God died, the Word of God he delivered did not die. Even though the one who delivered the Word was judged for his disobedience, the word of the LORD that he delivered is certainly fulfilled. Man is weak and can fail, but the Word of God does not change.

It is the same today. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not change according to a person's condition. The truth that Jesus Christ took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death never changes. Whoever believes this truth receives the remission of sin, and whoever rejects this truth remains in sin.

1 Kings 13:20–32 Is a Warning That Fellowship with Food That Is Not the Truth Brings Death

This passage is the event in which the man of God, deceived by the old prophet's lie, ate bread and water in Bethel and was killed by a lion for the sin of disobeying the Word of God. He refused the king's palace and reward, but he was deceived by a lie that approached in the name of a prophet. This event gives believers a very solemn lesson.

God's command not to eat bread or drink water in Bethel was not simply a command about food. It meant that he was not to hold spiritual fellowship with the sacrificial system

Jeroboam had corrupted. Bread and water point spiritually to the food of the Word. If we eat food that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, the soul does not gain life but goes down the way of death.

Today as well, the sin of Jeroboam continues. There are teachings that speak of Jesus and yet do not speak of the baptism of Jesus, explaining the remission of sin by the blood of the Cross alone. There are doctrines that say one is saved even though sin remains in the heart. There are religious foods that try to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts. These are not the food of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

The food of life God has given us is clear. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sin of the conscience disappears and we become righteous before God.

Therefore we must not hold fellowship with food that is not the truth. We must count the Word of God more precious than any human office, name, or religious authority. Just as the man of God was judged when he disobeyed the Word of God, so we too suffer great spiritual harm if we eat food that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit and follow that way. True faith is remaining to the end in the Word God has given, and discerning and refusing every false food that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even after God's Rebuke, Jeroboam Did Not Turn from His Evil Way

"After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places" (1 Kings 13:33).

1 Kings chapter 13 shows how stubborn Jeroboam's sin was. God sent a man of God from Judah to rebuke the altar of Bethel. When the man of God cried out by the word of the LORD, the altar was split apart and the ashes were poured out. When Jeroboam stretched out his hand to seize the man of God, his hand withered, and when the man of God prayed, it was restored.

Having seen signs of this magnitude, Jeroboam should have feared and turned back. He saw that God did not receive the altar he had set up, and he also saw that the hand of his own power had no strength before God. Yet the Scripture says that "after this event" Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way.

Jeroboam's sin was not simply the sin of privately serving an idol. He changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He set up golden calves to replace God, changed the place of worship God had ordained to Bethel and Dan, and appointed ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi as priests of the high places. He even fixed the feasts as he pleased. This was the sin of changing the order of salvation God had ordained, according to human thought.

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament foreshows the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ would fulfill. The way in which a sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering to pass on his sins, and the offering shed its blood and received the judgment, shows that Jesus would take all our sins

upon Himself by receiving baptism from John and would receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore Jeroboam's changing of the law of sacrifice was not merely changing a form of worship; it was the act of damaging the order God had established to save sinners.

Making Anyone Who Wishes a Priest Is a Work That Kills Souls

Jeroboam again made priests of the high places from ordinary people. Whoever wished, he made that person a priest of the high places. God never said that priests could be appointed at random. In the Old Testament, priests had to be raised up from the sons of Levi, and within the order God had ordained, for the priest was the office that handled the matter of the people's sins before God.

But Jeroboam tore down this order. He made it so that anyone who volunteered could become a priest of the high places. This was abandoning the standard God had established and entrusting the work of God according to man's will and the king's need. As a result, the people lost the true law of sacrifice and fell into a false faith of sacrificing before idols.

The same thing can happen today. If a person who neither knows nor believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit stands as if he were a worker of God and leads souls, that is the same stream as the sin of Jeroboam. A person's academic background, religious office, or denominational recognition does not make a worker of God. First, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

sinners by rising again from death—and so receive the remission of sin.

A person in whose heart sin remains cannot speak of the remission of another person's sins. One whose own conscience has not been saved from sin cannot lead another soul to God. A worker of God must be a person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and a person with a heart to serve and preach this truth.

Jeroboam's Sin Became the Sin That Destroyed His House

"And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth" (1 Kings 13:34).

The Scripture says that this thing that Jeroboam did became sin to his house. And it says that his house was cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth. God did not take Jeroboam's sin lightly, because his sin was not a sin that ruined himself alone; it was the sin of making the people of Israel depart from the way of the remission of sin that God had ordained.

Jeroboam tried to protect his own kingship. He feared that if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem, they would return to Rehoboam. So, to hold on to the people, he made golden calves, and he set up altars in Bethel and Dan so that the people would not go up to Jerusalem. But the very way he took to protect his kingdom became the way that destroyed his house.

When a person leaves the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained and makes a faith out of his own

thoughts, it becomes the way of destruction in the end. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved even though sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts cannot save a person's conscience from sin. It is the work of changing the way of salvation God has ordained into human doctrine.

The salvation God has given is clear. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has no sin in his conscience, for the Lord has already taken our sins upon Himself and finished the judgment.

1 Kings 13:33–34 Asks What Faith We Must Hold On to Today

This word does not merely show the end of the one man Jeroboam. It also asks us today: "What faith are you holding on to now?" Jeroboam seemed to speak of God, yet he changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He seemed to offer sacrifices, yet he offered them before golden calves. He seemed to appoint priests, yet he abandoned the standard God had ordained and appointed ordinary people. Outwardly it looked like religion, but inwardly it had departed from the way of salvation God had ordained.

Today as well, even if a person outwardly speaks of Jesus and speaks of the Cross, if he does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he cannot escape the way of Jeroboam. If one does not know the truth that our sins were passed on to

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus through the baptism He received from John, he cannot fully know why the blood shed on the Cross became the judgment of sin. The baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection from death are the one inseparable saving work of God.

Therefore we must turn back from the evil way of Jeroboam. We must return from a faith made by human thoughts, from a religion kept for one's own benefit, and from doctrines from which the gospel of the water and the Spirit is missing. We must believe the Word of salvation God has ordained just as it is.

Jeroboam saw the signs of God and yet did not turn back. This destroyed his house. But we must hear this word and turn back. We must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. We must believe the salvation Jesus completed by taking all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death. Only this faith saves a person from sin and brings him out of the sin of Jeroboam back to God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

What Happens If We Fellowship with Heretics?

< 1 Kings 13:1-32 >

"And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, 'O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'' And he gave a sign the same day, saying, 'This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.' So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, 'Arrest him!' Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. Then the king answered and said to the man of God, 'Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.' So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before. Then the king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

yourself, and I will give you a reward.' But the man of God said to the king, 'If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'' So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel. Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them, 'Which way did he go?' For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. Then he said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?' And he said, 'I am.' Then he said to him, 'Come home with me and eat bread.' And he said, 'I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'' He said to him, 'I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'' (He was lying to him.) So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed

the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the LORD said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water,' your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'' So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, 'It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him.' And he spoke to his sons, saying, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled it. Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, 'Alas, my brother!' So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, 'When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.'"

Today's Scripture passage is about what happens if we fellowship with heretics. King Jeroboam did many evil things before God in order to keep his kingship by himself. One of them was that he exchanged God for golden calves; another was that he ignored God's command and changed the date of the Day of Atonement; and besides these, he destroyed the office of the Levitical priests whom God had specially established, so that anyone, even a common person, could become a priest if he volunteered. So today's passage tells us how the wrath of God comes down on those who remain in that line of faith and on their families. We must also consider with what resolve we ourselves ought to carry on our life of faith.

King Jeroboam was a man who made himself a priest, appointed anyone as priest, and, to keep his kingship, switched God for material things. When he became king, thinking, "What a windfall this is!" the eyes of his heart were turned upside down, and to protect his kingship he became a man who exchanged both God and God's law of sacrifice for others, and trampled even on the command of God. He cast away all his heart toward God and set his heart only on the fact that he had become king. He disregarded every one of the spiritual blessings God had given. This King Jeroboam offered sacrifices to God, yet he personally carried out the office of the high priest, without the high priest whom God had established.

In the old days there was a high priest, so that not even a king could enter the sanctuary; but now Jeroboam himself became the high priest and personally offered the sacrifice with the sacrificial offering.

The Servant of God Rebukes King Jeroboam

At that time a servant of God who came up from the land of Judah saw Jeroboam personally offering the burnt offering and rebuked that evil. A king named Josiah will come forth, who will offer up the bones of the priests on this very altar on which you are now sacrificing. He will kill the priests of Israel, lay their bones on this altar of burnt offering, and burn them as an offering before God. Such a thing will happen in days to come. So he prophesied.

Then Jeroboam grew angry at the prophet, pointed with his hand, and said, “Arrest that man!”—and at that moment his hand became stiff. So he asked the man of God to entreat God’s mercy for him, and by God’s favor his hand was restored. When the man of God prayed and King Jeroboam’s hand was restored, the king could not disregard the servant of God who had come up from Judah in the south, and he invited him to stop by his house and receive his hospitality. Jeroboam spoke as if doing him a favor: I will give you many gifts, so stop by my house, eat something good, and then go on your way.

But the man of God answered: Even if you gave me half your possessions, I would not go to your house, and I would never take the wealth you give, nor your food, nor even water to drink. For God has said, “In that place, no matter who gives you anything, do not eat it; if you eat, you shall die.” And so the servant of God went on his way.

Now in the region of Bethel in northern Israel there lived a very old prophet, and when he heard this news through his sons, he admired the prophet who had come up from Judah and went after him. He caught up with him and invited him to stop by his house, drink some water, eat some food, and then continue his

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

journey. But the man of God said no and declared God's command again: God had told him not to drink water or eat food in that place, but to go, deliver the Word only, and come straight back. Then this old prophet told a lie. He deceived him, saying: I too am a prophet, and an angel appeared to me with the word of God and told me to bring you to my house and show you hospitality. The prophet from the south was taken in by those words and ate bread and drank water.

In the old days, southern and northern Israel were one nation. Before King Jeroboam committed such things before God, they were one people. Just as our country is one people though divided into south and north, they too were one people, served one king together, and served the same LORD God. Perhaps that is why the prophet from the south was completely deceived by the lie and went to that house and ate bread and drank water. And while he was eating and drinking, God came upon that old prophet and, through his mouth, rebuked the prophet who had come up from the south: I commanded you not to eat bread or drink water here—how is it that you are eating? You shall not be buried with your forefathers the prophets in their tomb, but you shall surely be killed on the road. Thus He spoke.

It came to pass exactly as God had said. As the prophet who had come up from the south was riding his donkey on his way, a lion appeared on the road and killed him. The lion killed him but did not eat him, did not kill the donkey he had ridden, and, having killed only the man of God, stayed there guarding him. The prophet's corpse lay there, the donkey stood quietly beside it, and the lion, without eating the man it had killed, stood by and kept watch. The people of the town saw this and told the old prophet. The northern prophet took the corpse, buried it, and asked that when he himself died, he be buried beside him.

Since everything this man of God had spoken would surely be fulfilled, he asked that his own bones be laid beside the bones of that prophet. This is the content of what we have read today.

The Will of God Revealed Here

Today's passage is the Word in which God, after setting Jeroboam up as king, looked upon the evils he committed before Him and warned His people never again to mix with their faith. He was saying that southern and northern Israel had no need to fellowship with each other even spiritually. The reason was that the sin of King Jeroboam and his people was so great. Therefore God intended to judge without fail such men as Jeroboam and the people under them. Because of Jeroboam, the anger of God seethed. God said that He would judge King Jeroboam, cut off his children from this land, and also judge without fail the priests under him.

A descendant of David named Josiah would be born. His father was a king but was assassinated, and so Josiah became king of southern Israel at a young age; and he was a man upright before God. He went up even to the northern region, seized the priests of the high places there, killed them all, and burned their bones on the altar of Bethel, defiling that altar. This happened exactly as the man of God had spoken, and it reveals how much God hated Jeroboam and the sins he had committed.

If they were ordinary sins that people commit, God would remit them. If they were sins committed out of human weakness, He would remit them. But the sin Jeroboam committed was the sin of defying God to His face, ignoring and despising the Word of God. It was a sin that trampled on the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

authority and majesty of God, and so it came to judgment. He made two golden calves, set them up on the altar, and told the people that the god who had led them out was this golden calf, telling them to worship there and serve the idol. When King Jeroboam taught all the people that way, the people followed just as they were taught.

The people of Israel were truly evil at the root. In fact, they had a strong desire to live that way. Serving only the LORD God without faith was very hard for them, and each had a desire to live for the flesh. They had felt pressed down by the law of God and wanted to get out from under it, so they thought this had turned out well, and they served the idols. When Jeroboam did such things, the people of northern Israel ought to have refused his command, but instead they followed along without any qualms.

That is why God hates Jeroboam and his followers. Not merely hates them—He abhors them even more than the Devil. For he exchanged God, the very Origin, for golden calves, and disregarded even the law of sacrifice God had ordained. The only tribe that could offer sacrifices to God was the sons of Levi, yet Jeroboam abolished the priesthood and did the work of building a wall completely between himself and God. He blocked off with his own hands the channel through which he could receive the remission of sin before God. That is why God hates him.

As Jeroboam led the people into the way of serving idols, the people of Israel could never again receive from God the grace of salvation, the blessing of eternal life, and the blessing of peace. For their own king had provoked the wrath of God and committed an irreversible sin. That is why God so hates Jeroboam and those who believe and follow what Jeroboam did. This portion is the Word God had recorded in order to give us

today a tremendous lesson.

So God sent a servant of God, a prophet living in the nation of Judah, to King Jeroboam of northern Israel, telling him to deliver the Word and return, but in that place neither to eat bread nor to drink water—to do only what He had commanded and come straight back. No matter who takes hold of you and offers you whatever hospitality, never eat. In that place take neither bread nor water. If you disobey this command, you will be killed. Through why God did so with His servant, we must come to know the heart and will of God.

God makes known that because of the sin the king of northern Israel was committing, He would judge those people and priests. He had determined to put King Jeroboam, who defied God, and his people into the depths of hell. The servant of God died on the road because he ate bread and water in the house of the northern Israelite prophet—that is, because he disobeyed the command God had given. Among the sins people commit, there are sins for which one can receive the remission of sin, and sins for which one cannot. The sin Jeroboam committed before God was the sin of fellowshipping spiritually with the evil Satan. God judges in this way those who fellowship with the evil one. The prophet of Judah was killed, too, because he went to northern Israel and ate the bread and water God had forbidden. God hates this thing so much.

Do Not Move the Landmark of Salvation

Why did God do so to that prophet? It means He hated what that prophet did. To put it in today's terms, God hates anyone who moves the landmark of salvation He has drawn with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A landmark is a stone driven

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

into the ground to mark the boundary of the land. If you go to a mountain, stakes are driven in saying this is state-owned land: inside this line is private land, and outside the stake is the nation's land—boundaries are set like this. Such marker stones are driven in one by one all over the country. Those who serve in public office come, survey the land, and drive in the stakes. Yet some people pull them out, move them over there, drive them in again, and use everything inside as if it were their own land. Whenever they feel like it, they pull them out and move them again.

This word that tells us not to move the stone marking the boundary means: do not corrupt the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has established, the gospel of salvation. To those today who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He is saying: do not move the truth of salvation God has fixed, the Word of that gospel. There are several things God hates: lying, deceiving, and moving the landmark—these He hates intensely. Above all, He hates it when people disregard the law of salvation He has established, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and say that one is saved just by believing in Jesus.

If anyone disregards the law of sacrifice of salvation God has established, that is, the Word of truth He has established as the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he is cursed by God. If anyone abolishes what God has ordained—the law of sacrifice, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sacrificial offering, the priests He has established—God hates it intensely. When the people are personally lacking and weak, God bears with them. But when they violate what God Himself has established, He does not tolerate it.

Therefore, through this affair of Jeroboam, we must cast away the folly of moving the way of salvation. However

similar to the gospel of the water and the Spirit what today's Christian denominations preach may look, if it is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not believe it, nor may we fellowship in faith with them. Some say that one is saved by believing only in the blood of the Cross and is also saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but the former is wrong. There is a gospel of the blood of the Cross that looks similar to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But there is a great difference between the faith that believes in the gospel that speaks only of the blood of the Cross and the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Some people, since others would stumble greatly if they were told that there is no one else in this world who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do say for the time being that such people also exist. But in the end, we ourselves must now believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit and preach it to people.

I have to speak to you according to the measure of your faith. If I tell someone who does not yet have faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that in this world there are only those who preach the blood of the Cross and that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit we now preach is true, he will suppose that there must be others elsewhere who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since there are people on this earth who preach something vaguely similar to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can acknowledge that they, too, have a gospel; but strictly speaking, what they preach is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is only a half, believing in the blood of the Cross alone.

Therefore we must not mix with those who believe in such a gospel, nor go to those who preach that way and receive and eat their teachings in the name of spiritual fellowship. For if we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

do, both spirit and body die. Nor should we listen to their teachings or believe them, or pick and choose, taking what seems good and discarding what seems bad. For God says so to me and to you. What today's passage tells us is that we must keep far away from the teachings of the heretics whom God hates.

God Hates a Mixed Faith Most of All

Before God we must not say that this gospel is right and that gospel is also right. The faith that says what today's false prophets say is right, and what the true prophets say is right, and what mixes the two is all right as well—this is the faith God hates most. God hates a mixed faith most of all.

What is the faith of the people inside Christianity today like? It is just like the faith of King Jeroboam. Israel was originally one nation, and when King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam was set up as king. The rightful king of Israel was Rehoboam. But because Solomon had committed so many sins before God, God, in order to chastise the nation and bring it to repentance, tore away ten tribes and gave them to Jeroboam to establish northern Israel.

Then Jeroboam, having been allowed to establish another nation, ought to have been thankful. And Rehoboam knew the wrong his father Solomon had done before God in taking foreign women and serving idols; if he had confessed and repented before God and led the people rightly, the nation could have been united again. God would have accomplished it all. But he failed to do so, and King Jeroboam of northern Israel, to keep his kingship, threw away God, threw away God's command, and threw away even the date of sacrifice

God had ordained. He corrupted the priesthood God had established unchangeably forever through the sons of Levi—making himself a priest and a high priest, appointing anyone as priest, changing the date of the sacrifice from the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month—corrupting everything. The lesson He gives is that if you go to one who has corrupted things like this, fellowship with him spiritually, believe his words, follow and serve them, you die spiritually.

Here the servant of God was killed, and that was to give a spiritual lesson to the people of northern Israel, and to us today. He was deceived by a lie in that place and drank water and ate bread, and that became sin, and he was killed. Today we travel quickly by car, but in those days, how far people had to walk, riding a donkey! There were many deserts, and the road was hard and thirsty—would God kill him just for eating a little? Is He speaking here merely of food? Bread and water spiritually point to the Word of God. If you and I go to some other place that does not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and eat the food they give, both spirit and body will surely die.

Jeroboam had become the chief of heretics, so to follow his faith or fellowship with him was like calling down God's curse on oneself. No one became the head of heresy as decisively as Jeroboam. He was the one most greatly used by the Devil, the very man who utterly ruined not only the north but even southern Israel. When the people of Judah saw Jeroboam, as king, so preposterously opposing the righteousness of God, they too should have realized it was wrong and turned away; instead they accepted that teaching, and many in the south also followed that faith. That is why, as we read the Scriptures, we so often come across the statement that they sacrificed at the high places. This is something we must not imitate. The high

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

places had become places of sacrifice to idols; it was a terribly wrong thing.

The People of Israel Who Fell into Jeroboam's Sin

Jeroboam was a very evil man before God. He was a man who committed a sin so great that however much God cursed him, even endlessly, it would not be enough—a man who committed a sin that cannot be forgiven. Do not we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also have human weaknesses? As for personal weaknesses or weaknesses of the flesh, as we live on, we can admit before God that we have done wrong, turn back, and hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But if we, too, replace God with material things, we are cursed. Just as Jeroboam exchanged God for golden calves, if we count material things more precious than God, we are cursed.

Neither must we do the work of leading people into the wrong way. We must listen to the priests God has established, believe just as they deliver it, follow, and so receive all the grace of God. If anyone alters the law of salvation God has ordained, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he ends up becoming like Jeroboam before God. Among the crowds that claim to follow Jesus today, there are many who, like Jeroboam, have fallen into heresy and follow what has been altered little by little while still calling on the name of the LORD. There are many within Christianity who have corrupted the gospel of the water and the Spirit little by little. Such people are called heretics.

Last time I spoke to you about collective heresy, and Jeroboam is precisely the head of collective heresy. Whoever

falls into that teaching is judged. Whether a servant of God or a layman, anyone receives judgment and the curse. That is why we must avoid the teaching of collective heresy.

Why Jesus Received Baptism from John the Baptist

Dear fellow believers, even as you say you believe in Jesus, there is something you must know. God, to save us from sin, sent His Son to this earth and ordained the law of salvation by which He would have Him receive baptism from John the Baptist and so bear the sins of the world. In the Old Testament Scriptures, the law of passing sins onto the sacrificial offering by laying hands on it is recorded countless times, and it was actually performed countless times. God the Father sent His Son to us and, just as in the Old Testament a man laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sins onto it, He passed our sins onto His Son, had Him die on the Cross in our place, and raised Him from that death; thus He promised to save us from all sin and death, and He fulfilled it.

God promised to send the Savior who would save humankind from sin. The prophet Isaiah said, *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)*, which means God is with us. And the Gospel of John says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. Having promised countless times like this, when the time had fully come, He sent Jesus Christ.

The Lord came to this earth and, at the age of thirty, received baptism from John the Baptist and so took our sins

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

upon Himself. And He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, paid the wages of sin, died, rose again, and saved us.

Thus God saved us from the sin and judgment of this world with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Yet people have corrupted this gospel of truth, saying that He saved us by the blood of the Cross alone. To say that He saved us by the blood of the Cross alone is exactly the same as changing the Day of Atonement, the day of sacrifice on the tenth day of the seventh month.

Likewise, when a person with sin in his heart—a sinner who, without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, has not yet received the remission of sin before God—leads worship, to call that right and to obey and follow it is exactly the same as Jeroboam appointing anyone as priest. It is the same sin as Jeroboam, in his arrogance, entering the sanctuary to carry out the office of the high priest before God and offering the sacrifice. There are many such people on this earth, and we must never fellowship with them or imitate their faith.

After Jeroboam became king, he committed, to maintain his kingship, a sin that cannot be washed away before God. This man Jeroboam has so very much in common with today's Christian clergy. They are collective heresy, and the church members under them are those who claim to believe in Jesus without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A person who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has not received the remission of sin is not qualified to preach on the words, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Even if he speaks them, he cannot know and deliver them rightly. The Apostle Paul was a servant of God, a man who had received the remission of sin. He ought to have followed only the will of the Lord, but there

were times when his flesh was weak and could not follow, times when he was lacking and the thoughts of the flesh arose. That is why he lamented so. It was one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who lamented—not one without the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Yet a minister who does not even know the gospel of the water and the Spirit says: O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Dear fellow believers, with what mind does he serve the law of God? What a person who has not received the remission of sin serves with his heart is, in the end, no different from the golden calf—namely, money. With their mouths they call on the LORD, call on Jesus, and cry, "Lord, Lord," but in the end what they seek is money. They seek money from their church members, and their ministry is aimed at gathering much money, building a great church building, becoming a great pastor—it all comes down to receiving a large salary. So they are exactly the same as Jeroboam.

Dear fellow believers, whoever does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who has not received the remission of sin. How can such a person carry on a ministry, and how can he do holy work? How can a sinner do holy work? A sinner can never do holy work. A sinner cannot even preach the gospel to another person. For in a sinner's heart the Holy Spirit cannot dwell, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be in him. So even if he wants to pass it on, he cannot. Even if he reads a booklet aloud word for word, he cannot deliver it. One must know the meaning contained in the words and writing, and must first submit to and believe that meaning; it is not something that just happens.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Today those who call themselves ministers and evangelicals hold what they call city-sanctification revivals and city-sanctification rallies in each city, saying they will turn the city to Christ. The pastors gather, draw in all their church members, and then gather everyone who attends church and hold a rally. But what can sinners accomplish by gathering? Does the city become holy? It only becomes religionized, a religious crowd. One who truly believes and one who merely belongs to the religion of Christianity are different. Religion is something man builds up, whereas the true life of faith is knowing what God has already done, believing that He has saved us, and following Him. It is acknowledging what God did first and following after Him. But what man does is, apart from God, to make everything by himself—making his own god, his own priests, his own law of sacrifice. Such a faith is different from the faith God gives.

Leaders Who Do Not Know That They Are like Jeroboam

The Christian leaders of the whole world today have probably never once thought that they are like Jeroboam. But think again within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They must look back at whether they are like Jeroboam serving the golden calf as God, like him moving the day of sacrifice from the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month, and like him appointing anyone to the priesthood that only the sons of Levi could hold.

Among church members, only those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be called God’s people, brothers and sisters. Those who hold office in the church—

leaders, guides, ministers—must also be believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to hold that office. If one who is not, himself a sinner with his congregation also sinners, preaches that they need only believe in the blood of the Cross, teaching that He saved us by the blood of the Cross alone, he is exactly the same as Jeroboam. He is doing exactly what Jeroboam did in appointing anyone as priest.

The Emptiness of a Gospel That Puts Forward Suffering Alone

These days a certain comedy show features the so-called leader of the "Chubby Church." I only heard it in passing, so I cannot repeat it exactly, but it goes something like this. He unfolds a story as if preaching a sermon, and then gives it a twist at the end. Citing some chapter and verse of 1 or 2 Kings as though quoting Scripture, he rambles on strangely and then brings up the story of a stick of rice cake. The stick of rice cake, he says, came to this earth, was despised by people, was sliced at a forty-five-degree angle, went into boiling water, and suffered terrible afflictions, covered with red pepper powder and red pepper paste. But what has it done for us? It rose again as tteokbokki and gave us tteokbokki—what a thankful thing that is! And so he wraps it up nicely.

This is a parody of believing in Jesus. Jesus came to this earth, and to save us He bore our sins and died in our place, shedding His blood on the Cross; and He died and rose again and gave us salvation—this account is being parodied in that way. In the end, the logic is that He suffered and by that suffering gave us salvation.

Novels are like this too. They quietly lay out the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

introduction, build the dialogue and the reasons, and then at some point give a twist, leading the story so that a person who lived a hard life meets a good person and becomes happy.

What people say is always the same: Jesus came to this earth, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and saved us in the blood of the Cross. Jesus left the throne of heaven, came for us, endured contempt even to being nailed to the Cross—struck on the cheek, stripped of His garments, enduring every scorn—and shed His precious blood on the Cross, died, rose again, and gave us true salvation. With that twist, they say Jesus is our Savior.

But does one really receive the remission of sin by that? Are sins really washed away? If all they say is that the Lord came, suffered, died on the Cross in our place, rose again, and gave us true salvation, then the question is whether, by believing in that Jesus—believing in the blood of the Cross alone—sin has really disappeared. People keep putting forward only the words sacrifice and salvation, leading everything with the logic of reward for good and punishment for evil: happiness comes after suffering, doing good brings blessing, doing evil brings punishment. But that is not so.

That comedy draws laughter by parodying Christianity and religion, and it is in fact a mockery of Christianity; but because it overlaps with the appearance of today's Christianity, every word of it seems to fit.

Anchovies can be used for such a parable too. An anchovy was playing in the sea, was caught by a fisherman and killed, and, sprinkled with salt, went into boiling oil and was stir-fried to become a side dish on our table—the anchovy sacrificed itself and became our side dish, one could say. The logic that Jesus came to this earth, was nailed to the Cross, and shed His blood to save us from sin is always like this. So it is with the

tteokbokki story, so with the anchovy story—every such logic is the same.

Jesus is the Son of God the Father, yet He left the throne of heaven and, obeying the Father's will, came to this earth. He came and suffered many afflictions and sacrifices, endured abhorrence, and at the last was stripped of His garments, nailed to the Cross with a crown of thorns on His head, poured out all His blood, and died. But on the third day after His death He rose again and became our Savior. He suffered, they say, to save us from sin.

What the Lord Wants from Us

Yet people keep emphasizing only that suffering, only that sacrifice. The Lord is not asking us to recognize that He was sacrificed. What does He want us to know? He says: I have saved you with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so know what I have done; know that, regardless of anything you did, I saved you like this because I pitied you. So He tells us to know what He has done and simply come out of sin, to become His children and enjoy the glory and riches He gives.

What God wants from us is not that we recognize His sacrifice. It is not that we appreciate that He came to this earth and was sacrificed, but that we come out from being shut up in sin, bound, cursed, perishing, and crushed by the Devil, and truly live enjoying every blessing. As you know well, what our Lord wants from us is by no means that we appreciate that He came to this earth, lived thirty-three years, and suffered.

If we fail to appreciate Him, will He be hurt? Does He want to be recognized by us? No—when He looks at us, we are

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

simply so pitiful to Him. We who were bound for hell and under the curse were so pitiful that He wanted to make us happy. He did not come to receive love from us; He came to give love. God came to love us and to give us blessing, not to receive recognition.

God made us, and when we went wrong, He Himself solves all our problems; He came to make us prosper and to give us blessing and love. We have only to know and believe this, receive salvation, and give thanks before God. When we are made well, God is satisfied. He did not come to this earth and suffer sacrifice in order to be appreciated by us. Yet today's Christianity has been so greatly corrupted. It has been corrupted so very much.

Break with Heretics and Preach the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Within this corrupted Christianity, if a person who has not himself received the remission of sin and does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit calls those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit heretics, slanders them as wrong, and blocks those who want to believe from believing, such a person becomes one who belongs to Jeroboam and becomes a heretic forever. We who have received the remission of sin must not hold fellowship of faith with those who have become such heretics. With them there can be no such thing as fellowship of faith.

The evangelicals seem to believe similarly to us, but they are strictly different. Just as the Apostle John testified that He saved us not with the water only, but with the water and the blood and the Spirit, so it is with us. We have been saved,

without fail, by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. God came to this earth as a man, received baptism and so took our sins upon Himself, bore those sins of the world to the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again, and so saved us wholly from sin. That is why He is our Savior. That is how we believe; but they say that our sins were not washed by the water but washed only in the blood of the Cross. Therefore, however similar it looks, it is never the same.

If we hold fellowship of faith with such people, we are killed. If we spread such a faith to others, we become those who belong to Jeroboam and receive the corresponding judgment. God judges. Therefore, through today's passage, knowing that whoever eats bread and drinks water in that place is killed—that is, whoever fellowships spiritually with heretics is killed—we must keep far from them and break with them clearly. We must preach only the Word of God and draw a clear line with those who believe that way.

This is the lesson He gives us. That is why I have from the beginning spoken in clear distinction from the Christians of the whole world. There was a time when, out of concern that you might not receive the remission of sin, I said that there is a gospel there too; but after one receives the remission of sin, I have said plainly that it is not so.

Dear fellow believers, do you know what pleases God? David was a man who committed many sins. But David acknowledged that the LORD alone is God. He regarded carved wooden idols and images of Asherah as no better than dung and despised all other religions. So God made David's kingdom prosper and made other nations subject to him, bringing him tribute, and he became strong and rich.

Solomon was not like that: he took many foreign women, did many wicked things, and served many idols. It even seems

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that, when his wives nagged him, he reluctantly went so far as to bow before the idols. Yet even Solomon, unlike Jeroboam, did not put on priestly garments and go in to offer the sacrifice himself, nor change the date of the Day of Atonement from the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month, nor set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan and serve them as God.

But Jeroboam alone committed such things. Before God there are things one may do and things one must absolutely never do. Changing the priesthood established through the sons of Levi and appointing anyone; changing the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month; abolishing the ordinance of gathering at one temple to offer sacrifice for one week from the tenth day of the seventh month and setting up temples anywhere and everywhere at will; making golden calves and setting them up in Bethel and Dan—such things must never be done. This is trampling on God. It is not sinning before men; it is defying God and striking God away. We would not commit such sins, but neither must we fellowship with those who do. To fellowship with them is to commit the same sin.

Dear fellow believers, we could say that it is enough for us to believe among ourselves and go to heaven by ourselves, but think for a moment of the whole world. The Christians of the whole world are now fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. Who is there to tell them this? It is precisely we. But we cannot just bluntly tell someone that he has fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. Only one who knows can tell it. Could we ourselves never fall into this? Jeroboam, too, was an Israelite and a man who believed in the LORD God, and yet he ended up like this. Whoever has come to this must turn back, saying, “I have done wrong.”

Jeroboam, too, when God, the living God, rebuked him and said that a man named Josiah would burn the bones of the priests, ought to have realized, “Ah, this is the curse coming upon me,” quickly submitted, said, “I have done wrong,” and washed his hands of it all. If he had confessed his wrong before God, before the priests, and before the prophet, torn down all the high places, told the people, “Let us go and offer the sacrifice on the tenth day of the seventh month,” and let those who would cross over to the other nation cross over, then he himself would have lived, his children would have lived, and the people of Israel would all have lived. God is the One who remits all sins when a person repents and returns. But he failed to do so.

Dear fellow believers, we must turn back in our hearts. We must never drink such water or eat such bread. This is how I teach you. Whether one eats in secret or eats openly is each person’s choice, but what is certain is that whoever does so is killed, his heart is defiled, and he is cursed. Faith is something one chooses clearly for oneself in complete freedom. To us this is a lesson, but to the heretics within Christianity it becomes death and, in the end, a curse. If there are such people around us, we must teach them through this Word and turn them back. That is what we must do. Goodbye. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

What Gospel Do You Believe in Now?

< 1 Kings 13:33-34 >

"After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth."

A gentle rain is falling. Yesterday there was news that it has become possible to insert computer chips deep inside the human body. Until now, chips were implanted in animals or objects to keep track of numbers, but now they can put a chip deep into a person's organs so that it cannot be removed at will. Hearing this news, I thought that the age spoken of in Revelation chapter 13 is coming ever faster. An age is coming when there will be no need even to report a missing person, for a satellite will track him down at once.

These days I am preaching about heretics, and my heart is tense. The time has now come to preach clearly about heresy. We must preach until it is clearly engraved in our hearts what kind of people the heretics are. Only when the hearts of people all over the world also recognize what kind of people the heretics are will the gospel of the water and the Spirit be spread all the more—so I believe.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Sin Jeroboam Committed and the Destruction It Brought

The Word we have read today is 1 Kings 13:33–34. This Word says that even after this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again made priests of the high places from ordinary people—whoever wished, he made him a priest of the high places—and this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so that his house was cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth. And 1 Kings 12:33 records that Jeroboam ordained a feast for the children of Israel in the month he had devised in his own heart, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, and went up to the altar he had built in Bethel and burned incense.

All of it speaks about Jeroboam. Jeroboam changed the date of the Day of Atonement and the priests as he pleased, changed even the place of the temple, and went further: he made himself high priest and personally went up to the altar and burned incense. Jeroboam himself became the high priest and administered the sacrifice offered to God.

At that time a servant of God appeared and rebuked his conduct. Even though you are the king, if you offer the sacrifice directly like this, the day will come when the bones of the priests of northern Israel will be burned on the altar of burnt offering. Yet he did not turn from his evil way, but made ordinary people priests of the high places and had them offer the sacrifices. That became a great sin before God.

The high places appear in the Scriptures; in Israel they built many high places. It was mostly at the high places that sacrifices for idols were offered. Jeroboam set up temples in only two places, the region of Dan and the region of Bethel, and then built high places in every possible spot throughout

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

northern Israel where the ten tribes lived. Setting up temples in only two places was already a great sin before God, yet not content with that, he built a high place in every village and made the people serve idols.

So Jeroboam's sin was more than enough to provoke the wrath of God, and because of that sin his house and his nation were more than deserving of ruin. Not content with offering sacrifices himself, he again made ordinary people priests of the high places and had them serve idols. Whoever volunteered, he made him a priest of the high places, making the people of Israel serve idols and heaping up the wrath of God.

Dear fellow believers, this became great wrath before God, and the nation of Israel was destroyed. Because of this sin they lost their nation, and the people were killed by foreigners. It was because of the sin Jeroboam committed and because the people of Israel followed that sin. The fall of Israel did not come about because of anyone else's sin; it was solely because of the sin Jeroboam committed before God. Yet sins like these do not cease even within Christianity today; they keep on being committed by false men. Wrong faith is being handed down continually within Christianity even now.

The Error That Even One Who Does Not Know the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Can Become a Worker

Those called clergy in the Christian denominations appoint pastors at their own will, just like Jeroboam. Seminaries train evangelists and pastors, and anyone who just enters a seminary can from then on work under the title of evangelist. Among those who go to seminary, there are some whose life in society

has not gone well. Many volunteer to go to seminary on their own, thinking, when things go badly in society, "Perhaps God is calling me." A person who volunteers to become a pastor or an evangelist within a Christian denomination without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and without receiving the remission of sin is committing the very same sin that Jeroboam committed.

God's Workers Are Raised Up by God's Servants

Originally, before God, offices like evangelist and pastor are given for serving the work of God. These offices are established by God Himself. We can see this, for example, in how Jesus, living thirty-three years on this earth, called and trained His disciples. Jesus' disciple Matthew was a man who worked at the tax office, and Peter and Andrew and John were fishermen who worked on the sea. They were fishermen born and raised in Galilee, and as Jesus was passing through the region of Galilee, He saw them and called them, saying, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus Himself called His disciples. When they followed, He made them His disciples, taught them, and Himself raised them up as God's workers and worked through them.

The Apostle Paul also told Timothy to teach what he knew to the men under him, so that they would be able to teach others also. In this way, God's workers are raised up either by God Himself, or by God's servants calling and appointing those qualified to become workers. That qualification is not obtained through some institution or system; it is obtained only by being a person whose heart is united with God's gospel of the water and the Spirit. In a word, God's workers are called

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and raised up by God's servants.

Therefore no one becomes a worker of God just because he himself wants to; God Himself, through His servants, raises up those who are to become workers and uses them in that work. In this way God picks out those who are to become His servants, trains them, and establishes them firmly as workers. This is God's way of raising up His servants.

But Jeroboam, at his own will, appointed anyone who wanted to become a priest. If he built a high place in a village and said, "Whoever wants to be the priest here, raise your hand," someone among the people of Israel would raise his hand. One could not be too old or too young; but when someone in that village who wanted to be a priest raised his hand, Jeroboam would pick the one he liked and say, "You are the priest here." The priests appointed that way bowed to idols, burned incense, held festivals, and did evil, saying, "This idol is the god who led you out."

Today as well, the one who can become a servant of God is, first, a person who acknowledges and believes the truth before the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has been washed of all his sins, and a person who unites his heart with the work of God. Among such people, the one who is fitting in God's sight, whose faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is firm, and who has set his heart before the Lord, is raised up as a worker through the servants of God who have gone before.

Originally, God's workers were raised up as Elijah raised up Elisha in the Old Testament. Elijah ran a school of the prophets in the Old Testament era—just as we have a mission school within our Mission today. He had disciples, and among them Elisha followed Elijah devotedly. Elisha clung to him, calling him "my master," and used to bring water for his master to wash his hands. One day Elisha asked Elijah that a double

portion of his power might rest on him, and at last he took up Elijah's mantle and received double the power Elijah had received. So he became the servant of God who led the people, succeeding him in Israel's line.

In this way God raises up His servants Himself. The servants of God today who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also know that God raises up servants Himself through His servants. The qualification for becoming a servant of God is believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The servants God has first acknowledged call and raise up, from among those who have become God's people, the ones fit to become workers. It is so in the Old Testament and in the New. The Apostle Paul raised up many as God's workers, among them Timothy his son in the faith, and Timothy in turn raised up workers of Jesus Christ. Thus a servant of God is raised up through God's servants, by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In Jeroboam's day, however, any commoner who volunteered could become a priest. Today too, some people think, when their business in society goes badly, "Is God blocking my way? Should I go to seminary?" Anyone who scraped through his credits at seminary, graduated, and was ordained in that denomination was unconditionally acknowledged as a servant of God and taught the people a gospel that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit—not even half a gospel. This is the great evil of today's Christianity and a great sin before God.

Why Has Today's Christianity Become So Desolate?

It is because Christianity has become the possession of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

interest groups. Dear fellow believers, before God one does not become a minister by graduating from seminary. Only a person who has truly believed the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit before God and received the remission of sin can become a servant of God and has that qualification. God asks them: Have you ever washed your sins as white as snow with the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Have you truly been washed clean of your sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and have you nailed your old man to the Cross with Christ, so that if the Lord goes left you will go left with Him, and if He goes right you will go right with Him? When one answers yes and desires to live with the Lord, he becomes a worker of God.

God's worker, that is, God's servant, is not someone a man appoints at his own will. A servant of God who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit appoints a worker by looking at that person's faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A servant of God is not appointed by a sinner. Someone may ask: in the church of God, those who have gone before raise up workers, both men and women—is that not also man appointing? But within the church of God, it is God Himself who raises them up through His servants who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Our church, too, appointed many workers in its early days. In those days workers were so desperately lacking that if a person had eyes, a nose, and a mouth, with arms and legs intact, and simply professed to believe, we appointed them all. The leader would even kneel and plead: please come in, and even if you cannot take the whole mission school training, take at least three months. And so, among those appointed that way in the early days, there were many who failed. But now it is different. Those who are raised up as workers before God's church must

be raised up personally by the servants of God who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But look at Jeroboam. At his own will he appointed anyone who volunteered as priest of the high places. We must not forget that this became a great sin before God and against the people of Israel, and the occasion of their destruction.

Today as well, those who commit the same sin as Jeroboam keep arising within Christianity in countless numbers. Even if people did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they became servants of God just by graduating from that denomination's seminary. Not everyone who receives a seminary education becomes a worker of God, yet even now, whoever graduates from the seminary a denomination has founded receives ordination and becomes a pastor of that denomination. So when he introduces himself, he says, "I am a pastor of such-and-such church of such-and-such denomination."

If you ask a man receiving ordination, "Do you truly know the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which the Lord saved us from sin? Have you been washed of your sins in your heart by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?"—he must be able to answer yes in truth. But many ministers appointed today carry on their ministry with sin in their hearts. Is there any course in the seminaries of this world that teaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do the professors know the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Did they teach it to the students and then raise them up as servants of God? In today's seminaries there is no professor who teaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so the students do not even know this truth, and faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the standard for becoming a pastor. Rather, the trend is to appoint as clergy those who believe only that denomination's teaching,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

not the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The one who can truly become a servant of God is the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has set his heart on living to preach that gospel. And when, in the eyes of the servants of God who have gone before, he has the gift for that office, has also received from God the ability to minister, and is a vessel fit to serve the gospel, then he is raised up as a servant of God. But today the standard for appointing servants has nothing to do with whether one knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit; solely because he has studied theology, solely because he unites with that denomination's teaching, he receives the clerical office. That is why they become heretics within Christianity.

All humankind receives the remission of sin only through the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That sins disappear by believing the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this is the truth. But if a seminary cannot preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and cannot raise up as workers those who consent to that gospel, that seminary becomes an institution that mass-produces heretics. Therefore the seminaries have gone terribly wrong.

1 Kings 12:32 says that he installed the priests in Bethel. The priests of the high places of each region were installed in Bethel. Jeroboam gathered people to the region of Bethel and appointed priests day after day. He would summon all who wanted to become priests to assemble on such-and-such a day, and then appoint them: you are the priest of this region, you of that region. Then each went to his region and played the priest of its high place.

Today's Christianity, too, lets anyone go to seminary who volunteers. If a person studies at seminary, finishes graduate school, and lives in step with that denomination's will, he

receives ordination even without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is the reality. Do the senior pastors who ordain them deliver to them the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Did the seminary deliver to them, by faith, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that washes away the sins of the heart? They appointed them as clergy without ever delivering it, and so in the end that denomination becomes a den of heresy. They go around the regions, gather the local people into the church buildings their denomination has built, and preach not the true gospel of the water and the Spirit but a half gospel, the blood of the Cross alone; and so those people have all become church members serving an idol.

The Way of Heresy That Stresses Only the Gift of Healing without the Washing of Sin

Those who have studied theology today set their course of ministry on how to make the flesh prosper, how to receive the gift of divine healing, how to succeed in the ministry. They put up front the words, “I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

Saying that there is the gift of healing within Christianity, they draw in even those who do not believe in Jesus. They advertise: on such-and-such a date, at such-and-such a stadium, such-and-such a pastor is holding a rally; if you come, the diseases of your flesh will be healed and works of divine healing will take place; those with cancer, the lame, the sick of every kind will be healed if they believe while that pastor prays; at the last rally, too, many diseases were healed.

So people gather and listen to the message, and when he says, “Whoever will believe in Jesus, come forward,” they

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

come forward. Then he has them pray the prayer of accepting Christ: "Jesus, I am a sinner. Because of my sins I can only go to hell. But I believe that You died for me on the Cross and shed Your blood to wash away my sins. Today I receive You as my Savior. I have prayed in Jesus' name." If a person repeats this, he is acknowledged as one who has accepted Jesus.

The ministers of the Pentecostal line do it this way. God has said, they claim, "I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers," and, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; and by His stripes we are healed"—so our Lord has taken away all our diseases. Then they tell people to lay their hands on whatever part of the body is ailing and pray, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, every disease, depart! Be healed!"

Then all those with aching heads, aching hands, aching chests, and aching stomachs lay their hands on themselves, and as the prayer goes on their emotions grow hot and they cry, "Amen!" When he says, "Whoever has been healed in this hour, come out and testify," people testify: an arm that would not lift now lifts; a burning stomach has calmed; one who could not walk can now run; one whose eyes were dim has been healed. They say the Lord has truly healed their diseases.

Believers and unbelievers alike, countless people see this and believe cheaply—"So if I believe in Jesus, my diseases are healed, I become rich, and I go to heaven"—and are taken in. But when they go home, their stomachs burn again; they have been spiritually deceived.

Today's heretics, like Jeroboam, hang out the gift of healing at their own will, draw people in, and pray over them. How desperate is the heart of a sick person! One who was not healed by medicine or surgery hears that a pastor of great

power will pray for him, and by the expectation of his heart he may seem to get somewhat better for a while. But it recurs, and later the disease may grow worse and he may even die. Countless people right now are being deceived by these charismatics and are being killed both spiritually and physically. The heretical clergy who do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit are deceiving people, holding up the gift of healing and trading on the name of Jesus.

But the Lord speaks to them. They will protest: did we not prophesy in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and do many wonders? Did we not heal many diseases? But the Lord says to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" You who, without believing the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and without being washed of your sins, borrowed My name and, under the label of the gift of healing, took people's money and enjoyed their respect—your flesh may have been comfortable on this earth, but now it is over; you will fall into hell, and so will all those who listened to your words.

Dear fellow believers, how many people today are being deceived by these gift-mongers! Today's passage tells precisely this story. Even after this event, it says, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way but made ordinary people priests of the high places, and this became sin, so that his own house was destroyed and his people were all destroyed with him.

Sins like these are being committed everywhere in Christianity all over the world, by those who follow the sin of Jeroboam and by those they have appointed. The work of deception is thriving even today.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Pseudo Gospel That Preaches Only the Blood of the Cross

The mark of the deceivers is that they preach only the blood of the Cross, not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They have set up a framework that one receives the washing of sin by the blood of the Cross, and they preach only that. Since there is nothing besides the blood of the Cross, they believe they have been washed of their sins by it. But sin still remains in their hearts. And yet they hypnotize themselves: I am one of the chosen people washed of sin; I am one of God's people. This is exactly the appearance of those deceived by false men.

These are the pseudo-believers within Christianity. For one who is not of God's people to act as if he were God's people is pseudo, and for one who is not a servant of God to believe and behave as if he were a servant of God is pseudo. What is similar to a servant of God yet different—that is pseudo, and that is heresy within Christianity. Such clergy are not one or two on this earth, and such denominations are not one or two either. Collective heresy exists within the Christian denominations.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit That Washed Away the Sins of My Heart

People say that one receives blessing by treating a servant of God well, and so the elderly people treated me so very well, as if I were a servant of God. But at that time there was sin in my heart. After finishing the sermon, I could not face the church members; I would go alone before God and pray: Lord, there is sin in my heart; I am not upright, and yet I spoke to

them. Even if what I say is right, I myself was not right before God. At that time I was ashamed because of my sin, and I was still a sinner.

At such times the Lord spoke to me through the words of the Psalms: “Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” And He asked me: Did I appoint you as an evangelist? Did I appoint you as a pastor? Did you not become a minister by yourself? I did not appoint you as My servant. You are standing as a servant of God on your own, so you are spiritually a thief.

So I tried to give up the ministry. How wrong a thing it was, I thought, that with sin in my own heart I should tell the church members to receive the remission of sin! At that time I said before God: I cannot carry on this work; in conscience I cannot carry it on. I was a man thoroughly versed in the theology of the Calvinist line; if asked to discuss that field, I had much to say, and even in seminary I studied hard, believing I had to be that precise. But the sin of my heart was never solved. So I agonized before God because of my sin. At that time I believed only in the blood of the Cross and did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. All the theologians of the whole world, too, could deliver nothing more than the blood of the Cross.

I agonized and prayed before God. And in the midst of that, God made me realize the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I thought like this: in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed the sins onto it; then it must be so in the New Testament era as well. The Old and New Testaments certainly form pairs; if in the Old Testament sins were passed on by the laying on of hands, there must also be in the New Testament a Word in which man’s sins were passed on by the laying on of hands. So

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

I searched the Word of God.

By the grace of God, as I read Matthew 3:13–17, the passage where Jesus receives baptism from John the Baptist—something that had always weighed on my heart—one day the light of the truth entered my heart and I understood it at once. It was the words, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).*

Then I knew who John the Baptist was. John the Baptist was not just another prophet; he was the servant of God who, as the last, passed the sins of humankind on to Jesus Christ. Since Jesus called him Elijah, I looked up Elijah in the Old Testament, and I also examined the birth of John the Baptist. He was one raised up as the representative of humankind. He was the greatest among those born of women, yet He said that in the kingdom of heaven there is no one lesser than he.

The greatest among those born of women, John the Baptist, was greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, greater than the prophet Isaiah, greater than the prophet Daniel. As the representative of humankind, he was the spiritual high priest who would pass the sins on to Jesus Christ, and the last prophet. When John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus, his office was completed. I realized that when John the Baptist baptized Jesus, all my sins were passed on to Jesus, and that Jesus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, took over all my sins and the sins of the whole world and so fulfilled all the righteousness of God.

Then the realization came to my heart: Ah, this was the gospel of the water and the Spirit! That is why He spoke of all righteousness. What does "all righteousness" mean? In Chinese characters it means what is right; in Greek it means that He accomplished what is right in the most fitting, fair, and proper way. How did He accomplish it? By receiving baptism from

John the Baptist. Thus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus accomplished all that is right, fairly and squarely.

Just as it is written, "For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness," Jesus received the baptism John the Baptist gave and fulfilled all the righteousness of God. As in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial lamb and passed the people's sins onto it, John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head and baptized Him, passing all the sins of this world onto Jesus once and for all. Jesus Christ took all the sins of this world upon Himself by that baptism. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sins of the world.

God taught me the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made me realize it. I searched out this truth in the Old and New Testaments, and looked it up in English, in Chinese characters, and even in the original languages. We must read the Scriptures precisely and translate and interpret them just as the original text stands.

After I met the Lord, I sought to serve the Lord's work together with you. I had never done any other work in the world; I had only studied. But after I came to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, my mouth could not stay still. Whomever I met, I had to speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; I could not help speaking this truth. I would speak until that person received the remission of sin. Whether it was a young woman, a married woman, or a grandmother, wherever we sat down and talked, that person had to hear the Word of Scripture. People would be displeased at first, but later, when they came to realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sin, they would say there was nothing in the world so thankful. In that I found my reward.

I majored in theology, so I know this well: there is no theologian who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Search the literature as you will, there is no such theologian. Appointing anyone as priest, letting anyone go to seminary—that is today's picture. If a church member's life in society goes badly, the pastors tell him to go to seminary; if he works a little zealously in the church, again they tell him to go to seminary. So they have him study theology, calling them "Evangelist So-and-so," men and women alike; when he finishes theology and receives ordination, he becomes "Pastor," and when he plants a church, people follow him.

Today people are called evangelists and pastors without even knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And those who learn under such people all become heretics. This is exactly where the churches of the world and the church of God differ. It is because theologians and pastors have appointed anyone as priest that they become heretics. Even a person who does not know the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has not believed it in his heart and received the remission of sin as white as snow—anyone at all—goes to seminary and studies, comes out a pastor, and under that pastor people hear only the blood of the Cross and consider that they have been washed of their sins. Though there is sin in their hearts, they believe and follow the denomination's teaching that they have no sin, and so they become heretics. They have nothing to do with Jesus.

The Faith That Tries to Wash Sins with Prayers of Repentance, and the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Even when a person with a great problem in his heart tries to pray before God, if there is sin in his heart, the prayer "God,

help me" does not come out. So the first thing heretics do is the prayer of repentance. When they pray, they say one must offer many prayers of repentance. One person for two days, another for five minutes—when they come before God, they first offer many prayers of repentance.

One who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not multiply prayers of repentance; rather, he honestly confesses his wrongs before God, confirms that Jesus Christ received baptism and so took on all those sins and washed them away by shedding His blood on the Cross, confirms by faith that he has been saved from sin, and so comes before God. But one who does not know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit must offer many prayers of repentance every time he comes to pray; since there is sin in his heart, he cannot help it. "Lord, I did this wrong and that wrong; please forgive me"—so he tries to wash away his sins with prayers of repentance.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit meditate on that gospel always. In their hearts there is no sin. All our sins, filthy as mire, the Lord took upon Himself by receiving baptism, and He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, washing them as white as snow. Therefore we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can come boldly before God and pray. Though our deeds are lacking, we can pray, "Father God, help me." For it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Therefore whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is God's child, God's people, God's worker, and one who receives God's help.

But those who do not know and do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are heretics. Whoever preaches only the blood of the Cross and says that one is saved by believing in Jesus even with sin in his heart is a heretic. Such a person is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

committing the very sin today's passage speaks of, and he receives the judgment of God. As it is said, "This thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth," they are cut off on this earth, and in the end they cannot enter heaven and are cursed. There are many who believe in Jesus and yet are cursed in this world.

Even among those who say they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there are many who did not fully grasp this truth but entered roughly knowing it at first and have carried on their life of faith that way. As time passes, each must truly examine his own heart: Do I truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? We must truly believe and hold fast the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then can we walk with God, avoid becoming heretics in Christ, and escape being cursed by the Lord. If a person does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he is cursed.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? —Yes— God has caused us to be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And so God has raised us up as His workers. We have become those who can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and who can tell who is a heretic before God. I preach this sermon not to condemn others, but to discern rightly and to deliver them out of the company of heresy—please understand this.

Discern the Real from the Counterfeit

It seems the time is drawing near for people to escape from the way of becoming heretics. People are fallen into the sin of becoming heretics, and they too must be saved from the sins of

the world. They too must come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, come out of collective heresy, believe that gospel, be washed of their sins, and receive true salvation; yet how many today have failed to do so! That is why we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. We must speak to the Christians of the whole world about heresy, and know and tell them why they became heretics.

I will preach the Word of God, write it down, have it translated, and publish it all. I will publish it not only in English but also in the languages of other nations. My hope is that people will read those writings and realize, "I really was fallen into heresy," and receive in their hearts the salvation that has come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and return before God. That is why I am preaching now.

But it is not something accomplished by speaking once or twice. How many heretics there are around us! Among those who say they believe in Jesus, there are many such people. Is there sin in the hearts of you who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or is there none? —There is none— Is there sin, or is there none, in the hearts of those who believe only in the blood of Jesus and say they have received the remission of sin? There is sin. They themselves say they have sin, and they actually do. They are now living a religious life, fallen into collective heresy.

Dear fellow believers, you must distinguish well between those fallen into collective heresy and those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You must distinguish well between the real gospel and the pseudo gospel. Preaching only the blood of the Cross is a pseudo gospel. Preaching and believing only in the blood of the Cross is a gospel that looks real but is counterfeit—a counterfeit faith.

On this earth there are real journalists and pseudo

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

journalists. If someone flashes a fake ID card and quickly puts it away, we must say, “Let me see it; let us verify it,” and verify it according to the law. If you check, you will find no end of counterfeits and pseudos. What looks real but is fake—that is pseudo. So with those who believe in Jesus today: whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a true Christian, but whoever looks real yet believes only in the blood of the Cross and has sin in his heart is a counterfeit Christian. A faith that looks real but is fake is pseudo, and so those who believe in Jesus and are still sinners are pseudo heretics.

At a glance they look real, because great crowds believe in Christianity collectively. But true Christians are those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When someone teaches me something, I check in the Scriptures whether it is true. I do not fall for a few phrases the theologians have laid out; I search the original text and examine the source. I say, search whether it is scripturally right, and if it is right, I accept it. I do not say that only what is mine is right and all the rest is unconditionally wrong. We accept fully what belongs to others as well. Only, because the gospel they preach is entirely counterfeit, we cannot receive it into our hearts. So it is no wrong to call a counterfeit Christian a counterfeit.

Those who believe only in the blood of the Cross say that they are the real ones. Then, if you ask them to explain how they have no sin, they say they washed their sins with the blood of the Cross. Is that all? Yes, they say. How did Jesus wash away sin?—by shedding His blood, they say. Then what about the sins committed afterward?—one becomes a sinner again, they say, so one must offer prayers of repentance. But the wages of sin is death: where there is sin, blood must surely be shed, and if that were so, Jesus would have to shed His blood

again. That is not how the Lord removed our sins. The Lord came to this earth, received baptism and so took on our sins once and for all, and, bearing those sins, shed His blood on the Cross and removed our sins. Therefore, not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is heresy, and collective heresy.

I Preach This Gospel to Deliver the Heretics

If you say these things to someone face to face, his feelings are hurt, his pride is wounded, and a quarrel breaks out. Because it is such a shocking message, we preach it, write it down, and make it into books to give to people. Each person can read it for himself, and if it does not suit his heart he can simply close the book, so there is no need for people to quarrel with reddened faces. That is why we do literature ministry. Whether a person is in this country or overseas, that is how we deliver it.

I also travel much to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and there are many who, hearing this gospel, become enemies. Whoever does not receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit into his heart becomes an enemy of God. So I carry on the literature ministry together with you. I ask you to do the same.

They are heretics. Have you understood? Because it is such a tremendous matter, I say it again and again. Whoever believes in and preaches only the blood of the Cross is a heretic. Whoever believes in and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true one before God.

We must deliver the heretics out of the mouth of falsehood. We must live for this work. In the last days we must proclaim

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

who is a heretic and who is true, so that people return into the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now that we have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit fully, we must now concretely set their lives and their wrong teachings beside the true truth, and teach and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then will they be saved from sin. God has entrusted this work to me and to you. We give true thanks before our God. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The False Altar That God Tears Down

< 1 Kings 13:1-34 >

"And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, 'O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'' And he gave a sign the same day, saying, 'This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.' So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, 'Arrest him!' Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. Then the king answered and said to the man of God, 'Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.' So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before. Then the king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

yourself, and I will give you a reward.' But the man of God said to the king, 'If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'' So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel. Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them, 'Which way did he go?' For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. Then he said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?' And he said, 'I am.' Then he said to him, 'Come home with me and eat bread.' And he said, 'I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'' He said to him, 'I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'' (He was lying to him.) So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed

the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the LORD said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water,' your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'' So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, 'It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him.' And he spoke to his sons, saying, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' So they saddled it. Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, 'Alas, my brother!' So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, 'When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.' After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth."

1 Kings chapter 13 shows how God rebuked the altar of Bethel that Jeroboam had set up. In 1 Kings chapter 12, Jeroboam made golden calves to protect his own kingship and placed them in Bethel and Dan. And he told the people that there was no need to go up to Jerusalem. He regarded the temple and the sacrificial system God had ordained as obstacles to keeping his own kingdom.

But the sacrificial system God had ordained was not something a man could change to suit his own circumstances. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was God's order of salvation, showing how a sinner receives the remission of sin before God. The law of sacrifice, in which a sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering to pass on his sins and the offering shed its blood and was killed, foreshowed that Jesus Christ would take the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, and would receive the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

Therefore Jeroboam's changing of the law of sacrifice was not a mere adjustment of the form of worship. It was changing at his own will the order of salvation God had ordained to save sinners. 1 Kings chapter 13 is the very scene in which the Word of God comes upon this false altar.

The King Who Stood at the False Altar

"And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense" (1 Kings 13:1).

Jeroboam was standing by the altar of Bethel, burning incense. For a king to burn incense beside the altar was a truly fearful thing before God. God never told a king to do the work of a priest at his own will. The priests had to be raised up in the way God had ordained, and the sacrifices had to be offered within the place, the feasts, and the order God had ordained.

But Jeroboam changed every order God had ordained. He replaced God with golden calves, changed the place of worship to Bethel and Dan, made ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi priests, and even fixed the feasts as he pleased. And now he himself was standing by the altar, burning incense.

This was a religion for protecting his own kingship. Jeroboam did not fear God; he feared that if the people went up to Jerusalem, his kingship would be shaken. So he made a faith that did not send people to God but held them fast inside his own kingdom.

The same thing can happen today. People can speak the name of Jesus and yet not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Rather than leading people to God, they can bind them under their own organization, their own doctrines, and their own honor. To change the way of salvation God has ordained into a religious form that people find easy to accept, instead of delivering it as it is, is the same sin as the altar of Jeroboam.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Word of God Cried Out toward the Altar

God sent a man of God from Judah. He was not a man who came by his own thoughts. He came to Bethel *"by the word of the LORD" (1 Kings 13:1)*. The Word of God came upon the false altar man had made.

The man of God cried out toward the altar: "O altar, altar!" He did not rebuke Jeroboam as an individual only; he proclaimed God's judgment against the false sacrificial system itself that Jeroboam had set up. He prophesied that a king named Josiah would come from the house of David, sacrifice the priests of the high places on that altar, and burn men's bones on it.

This word is very solemn. God did not receive the altar Jeroboam had set up. Even though it was a king who set up the altar, and however many people sacrificed there, an altar that has departed from the law of sacrifice God ordained is a false altar before God. A great number of people does not make something the truth, and long continuance does not mean that God acknowledges it.

It is the same today. Even if the church building is large, many people gather, and religious zeal looks fervent, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not at the center, it is not the faith God receives. If the truth is not proclaimed that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death, the conscience of man cannot be saved from sin.

The Splitting of the Altar Shows the Judgment of False Faith

The man of God spoke a sign: *"Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out" (1 Kings 13:3).* Just as that word said, the altar was split apart and the ashes were poured out. This was a clear sign that God had not received Jeroboam's sacrifice.

Jeroboam's altar was outwardly an altar of sacrifice. There was the burning of incense, and there were religious acts. But God split that altar apart. This shows that a sacrifice offered in a place that is not the way God has ordained cannot stand before God.

The mark of false faith is that it looks similar to true faith. Jeroboam did not create an entirely foreign religion. He seemed to speak of God, and he made his feast similar to the feast of Judah. But its inside was different from the law of sacrifice God had ordained. So the Scripture says, *"This thing became a sin" (1 Kings 12:30).*

Today too there is a faith that speaks of the Cross and speaks of Jesus, yet leaves out the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If one does not speak of the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, he cannot explain how sin was passed on to Jesus. When the truth that sin was passed on to Jesus is missing, the Cross cannot fully reveal its original meaning as the judgment of sin. That is why such a faith cannot actually remove the sin of the heart.

The way of salvation God has ordained is clear. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. The altar of any faith that has departed from this gospel of the water and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Spirit, however splendid it looks, can only be split apart before God.

The Withered Hand Shows the Powerlessness of the Authority That Opposed the Word

Jeroboam heard the words of the man of God and did not repent. Instead he stretched out his hand and said, “Arrest him!” He did not try to take hold of the Word of God; he tried to seize the man who delivered the Word of God. Then his hand withered, so that he could not pull it back again.

This withered hand shows the powerlessness of human authority that opposes the Word of God. Jeroboam was a king. He was a man of power standing over the ten tribes of northern Israel. But before the Word of God his hand had no strength at all. When God makes it wither, even the hand of a king cannot move.

Today as well, there are those who oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Holding fast their own doctrines, traditions, and organizations, they do not accept the righteousness of God accomplished through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death. In men’s eyes their authority may look great. But the hand that opposes the Word of God withers in the end. It has no power to save souls.

When his hand withered, Jeroboam asked the man of God to pray for him. When the man of God entreated the favor of the LORD, his hand was restored. But Jeroboam did not truly turn back through that event. He wanted the hand of his flesh to be restored, but he did not try to correct the way of his heart.

This is also the image of many religious people today.

People want their diseases healed, their affairs to prosper, and their material difficulties solved. But they may have no interest in having the sins of their hearts washed away by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. More important than solving the problems of the flesh is that the sin of the conscience disappear. To believe the truth that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death—this is the true restoration.

The Sin That Does Not Turn Back Brings Destruction

The end of 1 Kings chapter 13 shows Jeroboam's stubbornness. "After this event" he did not turn from his evil way. The altar had split apart, the ashes had poured out, and he had seen his own hand wither and be restored, yet he continued to make priests of the high places from ordinary people. Whoever wished, he made him a priest of the high places.

Not turning back even after God showed fearful signs—this was Jeroboam's sin. He did not return to the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He did not give up the religious system he had made to keep his own kingdom. In the end this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, and his house was cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth.

Here we must look at the faith of today. If a person hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained and yet does not turn from his own doctrines, that is the same stubbornness as Jeroboam's. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, a faith that claims to be saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

efforts of sanctification are not the way of the remission of sin that God has ordained.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has no sin in his conscience. This is not because his deeds are perfect. It is because when Jesus received baptism from John, all our sins were passed on to Him, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and accomplished the perfect salvation by rising again from death. The one who believes this is the righteous before God.

The True Altar Is Built on the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The altar God receives is not the altar of the golden calves that man has made. Nor is it the altar of a religion built on human fear and calculation. The altar God receives is the faith built on the Word of salvation that God has ordained.

The law of sacrifice of the Old Testament was directed toward the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Laying hands on the sacrificial offering to pass on sin and having its blood bear the judgment showed in advance that Jesus would take our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John and would be judged on the Cross. Therefore the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the completion of the true sacrifice.

Believers must depart from the altar of Jeroboam. We must turn away from a religion made to hold people fast, from a half teaching that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, and from a religion that makes material blessing and worldly success the center of faith. We must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

1 Kings chapter 13 asks us: Before which altar are we standing? Are we standing on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, or before the altar of Bethel made by human thoughts and fears? We must not build our faith on the false altar that God splits apart.

Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Only the faith that believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true faith God receives. Standing on this truth, we must discern the false altars of this age and boldly preach the way of salvation that God has ordained. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

CHAPTER

14

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 14

1) Summary of the Entire Content

1 Kings chapter 14 records how, on the occasion of the sickness of Jeroboam's son Abijah, the judgment to come upon Jeroboam's house and upon northern Israel was proclaimed, and how Judah in the days of Rehoboam fell into idolatry and suffered the invasion of Egypt. Northern Israel and Judah were ruled by different kings, but both nations came to face judgment because they departed from the Word of God.

1. Jeroboam's Son Abijah Becomes Sick, Verses 1–4

When Jeroboam's son Abijah became sick, Jeroboam sent his wife to the prophet Ahijah in Shiloh. Ahijah was the man who in the past had told Jeroboam that he would become king of northern Israel.

But Jeroboam had his wife disguise herself so as to hide the fact that she was the queen. He wanted to learn through Ahijah what would become of his son, but he had no intention of abandoning the golden calves and the false sacrificial system he had set up and returning to God.

Jeroboam's wife went to Ahijah's house with loaves, cakes, and honey. At that time Ahijah was old and his eyes had grown dim. Jeroboam thought that if his wife disguised herself she could deceive Ahijah, but he could not deceive the eyes of God.

2. God Tells Ahijah in Advance of the Disguised Queen's Visit, Verses 5–6

Before Jeroboam's wife arrived, God told Ahijah that she

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

would come and why she was visiting. Ahijah could not see with the eyes of his flesh, but he knew her identity because God had told him.

Ahijah heard the queen's footsteps and revealed that she was the wife of Jeroboam. The disguise could cover people's eyes, but before the Word of God it had no effect at all.

Jeroboam would have hoped for good news, but Ahijah had to deliver the solemn word of judgment he had received from God. God does not look only at a person's station or outward appearance; He knows everything a person has purposed in his heart and done.

3. Judgment Is Proclaimed on the House of Jeroboam, Verses 7–11

God had exalted Jeroboam from among the people and made him king of northern Israel. It was also God who had torn most of the kingdom from the house of David and given it to Jeroboam.

But Jeroboam did not rely on God who had given him the kingship. Fearing that the people would return to Jerusalem, he made golden calves and set up priests and feasts that God had not ordained. God rebuked Jeroboam for making idols and casting God behind his back.

Ahijah proclaimed that every male belonging to Jeroboam would be cut off and that his house would be swept away clean. The word was also given that those belonging to that house would not be properly buried. This shows that Jeroboam's dynasty would be utterly destroyed.

The fact that God had made Jeroboam king did not unconditionally guarantee his dynasty. The kingship had been entrusted by God, and so the king had to rule the people according to the Word of God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

4. Abijah's Death Is Foretold, Verses 12–13

Ahijah said that when Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah and entered the city, her son Abijah would die. Yet he said that among those belonging to the house of Jeroboam, Abijah alone would be properly buried and all Israel would mourn for him.

The reason was that in Abijah alone, among the house of Jeroboam, something good toward God was found. Abijah belonged to Jeroboam's house, but he did not share the same heart as the evil his father had done.

Abijah's death did not end as a mere personal illness. His death was a sign that God's judgment on the house of Jeroboam had begun. At the same time, his proper burial shows that God examines each person's heart and knows even the good intent of one person within an evil family.

5. The Future of Jeroboam and Northern Israel Is Foretold, Verses 14–16

God said that He would one day raise up a king who would cut off the house of Jeroboam. This word was fulfilled later when Baasha killed Jeroboam's son Nadab and destroyed the whole house of Jeroboam.

The judgment would not end with the house of Jeroboam but would extend to all of northern Israel. Israel would become unstable like a reed shaken in the water, and would be uprooted from the land God had given to their fathers and scattered beyond the River.

Here the River generally refers to the Euphrates. This shows in advance that the people of northern Israel would later be carried far away by Assyria.

The reason Jeroboam's sin was especially heavy is that he not only sinned personally but also led the people of Israel into idolatry. A leader's wrong choice does not stop with one

person; it can affect the whole community for a long time.

6. Ahijah's Word Is Fulfilled Exactly, Verses 17–20

When Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah and came to the threshold of the house, Abijah died. The Word of God given through Ahijah was fulfilled precisely.

All Israel buried Abijah and mourned for him. Through the death of his son, Jeroboam came to see that the judgment of God had begun.

Jeroboam ruled northern Israel for twenty-two years in all. After he died his son Nadab succeeded to the throne, but the dynasty of Jeroboam did not last long. A kingship built apart from God, however strong it looked outwardly, could have no firm foundation.

7. Judah in the Days of Rehoboam Falls into Idolatry, Verses 21–24

The scene shifts from northern Israel to Judah. Rehoboam the son of Solomon became king at forty-one and ruled Judah in Jerusalem for seventeen years. Jerusalem was the city God had chosen to put His name there.

Judah had the temple and the priesthood, yet they did evil before God. The people set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah on the high hills and under the green trees. The practices of sexually corrupt pagan religion had also spread in the land.

The people of Judah imitated the abominations of the nations God had driven out of the land of Canaan. The mere fact that Jerusalem, chosen by God, and the temple were in Judah did not guarantee their safety.

Northern Israel served the golden calves, and Judah, while possessing the temple, accepted idols. The two nations differed

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

in form, but they were the same in that they had departed from the Word of God.

8. Shishak King of Egypt Takes the Treasures of Jerusalem, Verses 25–26

In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. Shishak took away all the treasures stored in the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and he also took the gold shields Solomon had made.

The wealth and glory accumulated in Solomon's day were largely lost in the days of Rehoboam. The treasures of the temple and the palace could not protect a Judah that had left God.

When Judah left God and fell into idolatry, the nation's glory and wealth were lost through the invasion of a foreign enemy. This shows that the prosperity of the kingdom Solomon had achieved could not be maintained forever by human strength.

9. The Gold Shields Are Replaced with Bronze Shields, Verses 27–28

Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace the gold shields that had been taken. When the king entered the temple, the guards carried the bronze shields and then kept them again in the guardroom.

Outwardly the former royal ceremony continued, but the change from gold shields to bronze shields shows that the glory of the kingdom of Judah had declined. Rehoboam could not recover the lost gold shields, and he filled their place with bronze shields that were only similar in appearance.

This scene shows that even if the outward form of faith remains, that does not mean the relationship with God is whole.

The entering of the temple and the royal ceremony continued, but the heart of Judah was inclined toward idols.

10. The War between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and Rehoboam's Death, Verses 29–31

There was constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Israel, which had been one in Solomon's day, was divided into two kingdoms, and the two nations were continually in conflict.

Both kings were absorbed in protecting their own kingship, but neither fully obeyed God. Jeroboam set up the golden calves and made northern Israel sin, and Judah in Rehoboam's day imitated the abominations of the nations of Canaan.

After Rehoboam died and was buried in the City of David, his son Abijam succeeded to the throne. The bloodline of David's dynasty continued, but the spiritual state of Judah had drifted far from the days when David followed God with all his heart.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 14

First, God knows both the heart and the deeds of a person, beyond outward appearance. Jeroboam's wife disguised herself, but God told Ahijah her identity and the purpose of her visit.

Second, a position given by God does not grant the right to disobey the Word of God. Jeroboam received the kingship from God, but to keep that kingship he made golden calves and a false sacrificial system.

Third, a leader's sin affects the whole community. Jeroboam not only sinned himself but also made the people of Israel sin, and in the end he provided the cause of the judgment by which the nation would be uprooted from the land and scattered.

Fourth, God examines even the good intent of one person in

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

an evil environment. Abijah belonged to the house of Jeroboam, but because there was in him something good toward God, he alone in that house was properly buried.

Fifth, having a temple and religious forms does not guarantee safety. Judah had the temple in Jerusalem, but because they served idols and imitated the practices of the pagan nations, they suffered the invasion of Egypt.

Sixth, when people leave God, outward glory declines. The event in which Solomon's gold shields were taken by Shishak and replaced with bronze shields shows that the glory of the kingdom of Judah had weakened into a state where only the outward shape remained.

Seventh, the Word of God is certainly fulfilled. Just as the words concerning Abijah's death and the destruction of Jeroboam's dynasty were fulfilled exactly, the word God has proclaimed cannot be stopped by human schemes or power.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 14 records how Jeroboam and Rehoboam, by departing from the Word of God and walking the way of idolatry, brought the judgment of a dynasty and the decline of a nation respectively.

2) Chapter 14 Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 14 records how Jeroboam, on the occasion of his son's sickness, tried to find out the will of God yet did not abandon the false faith he had made, and how judgment was in the end proclaimed on his house and on northern Israel. Then Judah also falls into idolatry, suffers the invasion of Egypt, and is robbed of the treasures of the temple and the palace. Seen in the dimension of the gospel of the water and

the Spirit, this chapter shows that we must not change the Word of salvation God has ordained to suit human greed, but must believe the perfect salvation Jesus has accomplished just as it is.

1. Jeroboam, Who Tried to Hide Himself with a Disguise, Verses 1–4

When Jeroboam's son Abijah became sick, Jeroboam sent his wife to the prophet Ahijah. But he had his wife disguise herself to hide the fact that she was the queen.

Jeroboam wanted to know what would become of his son, but he was unwilling to acknowledge before God what he himself had done. He had set up golden calves and changed the sacrifices, the priests, and the feasts God had ordained, yet without correcting that problem he only tried to get an answer about his son's illness.

People too can try to cover their sins with outward appearances such as good deeds or religious life. But God is not One who sees only the outside of a person; He knows even the sins in the heart. The problem of sin is not solved by decorating or hiding oneself, but by believing the salvation God has accomplished.

2. Ahijah, Whose Eyes of Flesh Were Dim yet Who Knew Everything, Verses 5–6

Ahijah was old and could not see with the eyes of his flesh, but God told him in advance that Jeroboam's wife would come and for what purpose. Though the queen came in dressed as another person, Ahijah at once revealed her identity.

This shows that people can be deceived, but God cannot be deceived. A person may think he is believing in God rightly, but God knows exactly what his heart is believing.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

No one can make himself look righteous by outward religious life alone while holding sin in his heart. The way to become a person without sin before God does not lie in hiding oneself, but in knowing and believing how Jesus took on and washed away all sins.

3. God Made Jeroboam King, but Jeroboam Cast God Away, Verses 7–9

God exalted Jeroboam from among the people and made him king of northern Israel. It was also God who divided the nation out of Solomon's hand and gave it to Jeroboam.

But Jeroboam did not rely on God who had given him the kingship; he made golden calves to protect his own kingship. He feared that if the people followed the temple in Jerusalem and the sacrificial system God had ordained, their hearts would return to Rehoboam.

Jeroboam's sin did not end with making one idol. He replaced God with golden calves, and changed by his own thinking the way of sacrifice, the priests, and the feasts God had ordained. As a result the people thought they were serving God while in fact they came to stand against God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit likewise cannot be changed according to a person's circumstances or purposes. If one replaces the way of the remission of sin that God has ordained with something else, then even if he outwardly seems to believe in Jesus, the sins of his heart remain as they are.

4. Jeroboam's Sin Was Changing the Way of Salvation God Established

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of an unblemished offering and passed his sins onto it. The offering that received the sins shed its blood

and died, bearing the judgment of sin in his place. The passing of sin through the laying on of hands and the blood of the sacrificial offering were the order of atonement God had ordained.

In the New Testament, Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing the sins of the world He had taken on, Jesus was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and then rose again from death.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the beginning of the salvation by which He bore all sins, and the blood of the Cross shows that the judgment of those sins was carried out. By rising again from death Jesus gave new life to those who believe, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation of the water and the blood is true.

If from this salvation one leaves out the baptism Jesus received from John and stresses only the blood of the Cross, one cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel in which the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death are believed as one.

5. The Judgment to Come upon the House of Jeroboam, Verses 10–11

God said He would sweep away the house of Jeroboam clean. For though Jeroboam had received the kingship from God, he cast God away and even led the people into false faith.

Jeroboam's sin did not remain a personal wrong. Using a leader's power, he made the whole people of northern Israel sacrifice at false altars. He did not go down the wrong path alone; he led countless people down the same path.

Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in an

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

altered form also brings great harm to one's own soul and to the souls of others. If one claims to believe in Jesus yet leaves out the fact that He took on all sins through the baptism He received from John, the hearer cannot know when and how all the sins of his heart were passed on to Jesus.

The Word of salvation God has established must be delivered accurately. The one who preaches the gospel must not put forward his own thoughts or interests, but must deliver the salvation Jesus has accomplished just as the Word says.

6. The Good Intent toward God Found in Abijah, Verses 12–18

Ahijah said that when Jeroboam's wife entered the city, her son Abijah would die. Yet he said that among those belonging to the house of Jeroboam, Abijah alone would be properly buried and all Israel would mourn for him.

It was because in Abijah there was something good toward God. He was Jeroboam's son, but he was not entirely the same as his father's evil heart. God did not look only at which family he belonged to; He examined his heart.

A person's salvation likewise is not decided by family, affiliation, or the faith of one's parents. Each person must believe with his own heart the Word of salvation God has accomplished. When a sinner believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart, all his sins are washed away and he obtains the righteousness of God.

When Jeroboam's wife came to the threshold of the house, Abijah died, and the word proclaimed through Ahijah was fulfilled exactly. This shows that the Word of God does not change according to human wishes or circumstances.

7. The Effect of Jeroboam's Sin on All of Northern Israel, Verses 14–16

God said that He would one day raise up a king and cut off the house of Jeroboam. He also said that He would uproot northern Israel from the good land and scatter them beyond the River.

Jeroboam's wrong faith changed the spiritual direction not only of his own house but of the whole nation. The later kings of northern Israel also followed the way of Jeroboam and served the golden calves. In the end northern Israel was destroyed by Assyria and the people were scattered to distant places.

When a word of salvation altered by one man is handed down through generations, countless people come to hold a wrong faith. Therefore those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must hand down this gospel accurately to the next generation.

We must deliver without omission the fact that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. This is the Word of life that saves souls from sin.

8. The Limit of a Faith That Seeks Only to Solve the Problems of the Flesh

Jeroboam sought out Ahijah because of his son's sickness, but he paid no attention to his own soul or to the spiritual state of his people. He wanted his son's life to be prolonged, but he did not abandon the golden calves and the false altars he had made.

Today as well, people can set the purpose of believing in God only on health, wealth, their children's success, and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

solving of practical problems. But the most important purpose for which God sent Jesus to this earth is to save sinners from all their sins and make them God's people.

Jesus is not One who came merely to give the blessings of the flesh on this earth. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, saving us from sin and judgment.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make God a means for gaining blessings in the world. He counts the remission of sin and the eternal life Jesus has given as the greatest blessing, and lives giving thanks to God.

9. Judah's Idolatry and an Outward Temple Faith, Verses 21–24

In Judah there was the temple in Jerusalem, and the priesthood God had ordained also remained. But Judah in the days of Rehoboam set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, and imitated the abominations of the nations of Canaan.

Judah had the temple, but their hearts had drifted from God. This shows that having outward religious forms does not mean the faith of the heart is right.

Even if a person attends worship and engages in many religious activities, the sins of his heart cannot be washed away unless he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The faith God delights in is not zeal manufactured by man but the faith that believes from the heart the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that his sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from John, and that Jesus bore those

sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. By this faith he receives the washing of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit in his heart.

10. The Treasures of the Temple and the Gold Shields Are Taken, Verses 25–26

In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He took the treasures of the temple and the treasures of the king's house, and even carried away the gold shields Solomon had made.

The glory of Solomon's day was very great, but when the people who enjoyed that glory left God, the treasures and the gold shields could not protect them. Outward wealth, splendid buildings, and large gatherings of people can never be the standard of true faith.

The most precious treasure for God's people is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even if one gains the material things and honor of the world, if he loses this gospel it is like losing everything spiritual. Conversely, even if one has little in the world, if he has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been saved from all his sins, he has gained the most precious life.

11. Rehoboam, Who Replaced the Gold Shields with Bronze, Verses 27–28

Rehoboam could not remake the gold shields Shishak had carried off, and he filled their place with bronze shields. Since the guards carried the bronze shields when the king entered the temple, the outward look of the royal ceremony was kept much as before.

But gold and bronze were not the same. However similar the outward form, there was a great difference in value and in

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

essence. Rehoboam did not recover the lost glory; he filled its place with a similar shape.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit and man-made religious teaching can also sound similar on the surface. Both may speak of Jesus, the Cross, and salvation; but if the fact that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John is missing, it cannot be the whole gospel.

Just as the place of the gold shields could not be filled by bronze shields, so the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be replaced by a faith that stresses only the blood of the Cross or by human good deeds. The salvation God has accomplished is revealed whole through the testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

12. The Continuing War between Jeroboam and Rehoboam, Verses 29–31

There was unceasing war between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Though they were the same people of Israel, the result of departing from the Word of God was that the nation was divided and they fought each other.

Northern Israel followed the golden calves and the false sacrifices Jeroboam had made, and Judah, while possessing the temple in Jerusalem, fell into idolatry. When people depart from the Word God has ordained, human greed and interests become the center, and as a result strife and confusion continue.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes those who believe into one people of God. The standard of salvation is not human authority or religious affiliation but faith in the salvation Jesus has accomplished. The person whose sins have all been washed away is led by the Holy Spirit, puts the gospel before his own desires, and lives delivering the Word of life to other souls.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 14

First, God sees the faith of the heart beyond a person's outward appearance. Jeroboam's wife disguised herself, but God knew both her identity and the purpose of her visit. No one can hide the sins of the heart with outward religious life.

Second, Jeroboam's greatest sin was changing the way of salvation God had ordained to suit his own purposes. He replaced God with golden calves and changed the sacrifices, the priests, and the feasts, leading the whole people down a false path.

Third, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the perfect Word of salvation God has ordained. Jesus took all the sins of humankind upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Fourth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a Word of which one may choose to believe only a part. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death are one complete salvation that accomplishes the passing on of sin, its judgment, and new life.

Fifth, putting material things and worldly success before God produces the same result as serving the golden calves. The greatest blessing God gives is to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the washing of all sins, and obtain eternal life.

Sixth, outward religious form cannot take the place of true faith. Judah had the temple yet fell into idolatry, and in the end they were robbed of the treasures of the temple and the palace.

Seventh, an altered gospel is like the bronze shields. It may look similar on the outside, but it can never have the same power of life as the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Eighth, the wrong faith of one leader affects many people and the next generation. Therefore the one who preaches the gospel must put the Word of Scripture before his own interests or human tradition, and must deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately.

Ninth, the person whose sins have all been washed away by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is led by the Holy Spirit. He gives thanks to Jesus who has fully accomplished his salvation, and lives keeping this gospel and delivering it to other souls.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 14 shows, through Jeroboam who changed the way of salvation God had ordained to suit his own greed and through Judah where only the outward form remained, that we must believe and keep without change the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death. ✉

1 Kings Chapter 14

The Judgment on Jeroboam's House and the Corruption of Judah

Introductory Words

1 Kings chapter 14 is the chapter in which Jeroboam's sin begins to be revealed as judgment on his house and on all Israel. When Jeroboam's son Abijah became sick, Jeroboam did not come before God in repentance. He disguised his wife and sent her to the prophet Ahijah, wanting only to know what would become of the child. But God already knew of that disguise, and He spoke the judgment that would come upon the house of Jeroboam.

Jeroboam's sin was no mere personal weakness. He did not use the kingship God had given him to serve the righteousness of God; to protect his own kingship he made golden calves. He also changed the place of sacrifice, the feasts, and the priesthood that God had ordained, leading the whole people of Israel into wrong faith. So the Scripture says that he sinned and made Israel sin.

God said He would sweep away the house of Jeroboam, and the death of his son Abijah became the beginning of that judgment. Yet even in the midst of it, God saw that in Abijah there was something good toward the LORD, and He said that this child alone would be buried. The judgment of God is fearful, but God is also the One who sees the very center of a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

person exactly.

The latter part of this chapter shows that Judah, too, was not safe. Judah in the days of Rehoboam set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, doing evil before God. Northern Israel collapsed through Jeroboam's golden calves and corrupted law of sacrifice, and Judah, while possessing the temple, inclined its heart toward idols. Having the outward temple did not mean the heart was right before God.

Today as well, a faith that corrupts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained is the same as the way of Jeroboam. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. If one takes away from or changes this order of salvation, a person is left holding sin in his heart while wearing only a religious disguise. 1 Kings chapter 14 warns us to throw away disguised faith and stand honestly before the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

Jeroboam's Sin Began to Be Revealed as Sickness and Judgment in His House

"At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick" (1 Kings 14:1).

1 Kings chapter 14 begins with the words "at that time." These words connect it with what came before. Jeroboam had made golden calves and placed them in Bethel and Dan, and had changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained as he pleased. He had made priests of the high places from ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and had fixed the feasts as he pleased. God had already sent a man of God from

Judah to rebuke the altar of Bethel, and had even shown the sign of the altar splitting apart and the ashes pouring out. Yet Jeroboam did not turn back.

At such a time his son Abijah became sick. This does not speak merely of the illness of one prince. Jeroboam's sin was now beginning to appear as the shadow of judgment in his own house. Jeroboam had become king, but he did not use the kingship God had given him to serve the righteousness of God. To protect his own kingship he replaced God with golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. The result of that sin was beginning to come upon his house.

What God hates most is not only the sins into which people fall out of weakness. It is the sin of changing, by one's own thinking, the way God has ordained to save sinners, and of dragging many people into false faith. Jeroboam committed precisely that sin.

Today as well, a faith that corrupts the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same as the way of Jeroboam. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. This is the way of salvation God has ordained. If anyone leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, or tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and his own efforts, that is changing the order of salvation God has ordained by human thinking.

Jeroboam Did Not Turn to God but Disguised His Wife

"And Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people" (1 Kings 14:2).

When his son became sick, Jeroboam did not fall down before God in repentance. He told his wife to disguise herself. He told her to go to the prophet Ahijah in Shiloh, so that people would not know she was the wife of Jeroboam. Ahijah was the prophet who had once told Jeroboam that he would become king of Israel.

Jeroboam remembered Ahijah. He knew the prophet who had delivered the word by which God gave him the kingship. But he had no intention of returning to the God who had given that word. He did not ask in repentance before God why his son had fallen sick, or why such a thing had come upon his house. He only wanted to know what would become of the child.

Here Jeroboam's heart is exposed. He did not fear the Word of God; he only wanted to know the outcome of his problem. He did not seek to receive God's rebuke; he sought information to solve his family's trouble. And even that he could not seek honestly—he sent his wife in disguise.

Wrong faith can never stand honestly before God. It hides its sins, changes its outward appearance, and covers itself with forms. But before God no disguise works. It is the same for anyone who has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He can have the appearance of believing in Jesus, but if sin remains in his heart, he cannot hide that state before God. True faith is not a disguise; it is having the problem of one's sins solved before the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jeroboam Sent a Gift to the Prophet, yet He Did Not Repent

"Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child.'" (1 Kings 14:3).

Jeroboam told his wife to take ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey. Seen from the outside, it looks like paying respect to the prophet. But in that gift there was no heart of repentance. He did not intend to confess his sin; he wanted to know what would become of the child.

If Jeroboam had truly feared God, he would have thrown away the golden calves and torn down the high places of Bethel and Dan. He would have dismissed the priests raised up from ordinary people and returned to the law of sacrifice God had ordained. But without any such turning back, he sent a gift to the prophet.

A person can offer gifts to God. He can also equip himself with religious forms. But what pleases God is not objects; it is the faith that returns to the truth God has ordained. What Jeroboam needed was not loaves and cakes and honey, but a heart that acknowledged his sin before God and returned to the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

It is the same today. However much devotion a person shows, however many religious acts he performs, and however much he seems to offer to God, he cannot receive the remission of sin unless he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The faith God receives is the faith that believes this truth: Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Ahijah's Eyes of Flesh Were Dim, but the Word of God Was Bright

"And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age" (1 Kings 14:4).

Jeroboam's wife did as her husband said; she disguised herself and went to Shiloh. When she came to Ahijah's house, Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were dim with age. By human thinking, the disguise seemed likely to work. They may have thought that since the prophet's eyes were dim, he would not recognize the wife of Jeroboam.

But a servant of God is not one who sees only with the eyes of the flesh. Ahijah's eyes were dim, but when God spoke to him he could know everything. People can deceive outward appearances, but they cannot deceive God. God already knew why Jeroboam's wife was coming and in what disguise.

This word gives us an important lesson. Before God, the truth matters more than the outward form. However plausible the religious clothing a person wears, what God sees is the heart and its faith. If one does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and only decorates himself outwardly with the appearance of believing in Jesus, that cannot be hidden before God.

True faith is not hiding before God. It is opening the heart before the truth that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, believing that the judgment of those sins was finished on the Cross, and receiving the salvation He completed by rising again from death. In this faith a person no longer hides, but stands boldly before God.

God Said in Advance That Jeroboam's Disguised Wife Would Come

"Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, 'Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman.'" (1 Kings 14:5).

The LORD spoke to Ahijah in advance. He said that Jeroboam's wife would come to ask about her sick son, and that when she came in she would pretend to be another woman. And God also told him what answer to give.

This scene shows that God knows all hidden things. Jeroboam disguised his wife to deceive people, but God already knew everything. Ahijah's eyes of flesh were dim, but the Word of God was not dim. When God reveals it, His servant can see the spiritual reality hidden behind a person's disguise.

What Jeroboam's wife wanted to ask about was the future of the child. But the answer God intended to give was the word of judgment on the house of Jeroboam. People want to know only the outcome of their problems, but God speaks of the root of the problem, which is sin. The suffering that came upon Jeroboam's house was no accident. It was the result of the sin of replacing God with golden calves, corrupting the law of sacrifice, and leading many people into wrong faith.

Today as well, God knows every religious disguise. God knows the reality of the one who stands as if he were a worker of God without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, of the one who says he is saved while sin remains in his heart, and of the one who preaches only the Cross while leaving out the baptism of Jesus. What matters before God is not the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

outward appearance but whether one believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

1 Kings 14:1–5 Shows That Disguised Faith Cannot Escape God's Judgment

This passage is the scene in which Jeroboam's son Abijah becomes sick and Jeroboam disguises his wife and sends her to the prophet Ahijah. Jeroboam remembered the prophet God had raised up, but he did not return to God. He wanted only to know what would become of the child, and he tried to hide his sin.

But God already knew everything. He knew that Jeroboam's wife was coming in disguise, knew that he was asking because of his son's sickness, and knew the judgment that would come upon that house. People think they can deceive a prophet whose eyes of flesh are dim, but the eyes with which God sees never grow dim.

This word questions us today as well. Are we standing honestly before God? Or are we covering ourselves with a religious disguise? If we do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained and have only the form of believing in Jesus, that is the same as coming in disguised like the wife of Jeroboam.

What God wants is not a disguise. It is returning to the way of salvation God has ordained. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has no need to hide before God, for the Lord has already taken on our sins and finished their judgment.

The sickness that came upon Jeroboam's house was God's warning. But Jeroboam did not repent; he tried to solve the problem with a disguise. We must not follow this path. We must turn from a faith made by human thinking, from a faith that has changed the order of salvation God ordained, and from a faith decorated only in its outward appearance. Standing on the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only way of true faith before God.

Even a Disguised Person Is Exposed before the Word of God

"And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news" (1 Kings 14:6).

Jeroboam's wife came into the prophet Ahijah's house pretending to be another person. But God had already told Ahijah who she was. Ahijah's eyes of flesh were dim and could not see, but the Word of God was bright. Hearing her footsteps, he said at once, *"Come in, wife of Jeroboam" (1 Kings 14:6)*.

Here we see that no disguise works before God. Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise, but God knew all that was within. A person can change his outward appearance, hide his identity, and cover himself with religious forms. But God looks at the center of a person.

Ahijah said, *"For I have been sent to you with bad news" (1 Kings 14:6)*. The word Jeroboam's wife was going to hear was not a word of comfort. Nor was it the good news that the child would recover. It was the word of God's judgment that would come upon Jeroboam and his house.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Today as well, a person can put on a religious disguise before God. He can say he believes in Jesus, attend worship, and hold an office. But if sin remains in his heart as it is and he does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, his reality is exposed before God. True faith is not a disguise; it is receiving the remission of sin before the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

God Exalted Jeroboam and Made Him Ruler of Israel

"Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel" (1 Kings 14:7).

Through Ahijah, God first reminded Jeroboam of His grace. He said, *"I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel" (1 Kings 14:7)*. Jeroboam was not a man who had become king by his own strength. God, judging Solomon's idolatry, had torn the kingdom and given it to him.

Therefore Jeroboam should have feared before God. He should have known that his becoming king had come about within the grace and providence of God, and he should have ruled the people according to the Word God had ordained. The kingship was not given him to fill his own greed; it was given him to serve God's people within the will of God.

But Jeroboam made the position God had given him into a tool for keeping his own kingdom. He feared that if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem they would leave him. So he made golden calves, set up altars in Bethel and Dan, and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

Today as well, if one uses the grace received from God for

his own benefit, he can drift into the way of Jeroboam. The person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not called to build his own kingdom. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. The one who has received this grace must serve not his own greed but the righteousness of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jeroboam Did Not Follow God as David Did

"And tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes" (1 Kings 14:8).

God compared Jeroboam with David. David kept God's commandments and followed God with all his heart, and he did what was right in God's eyes. Of course, David too was a weak man, and there were times when he sinned. But when he was rebuked before God he turned back, and the center of his heart was set on God.

Jeroboam was different from David. Though God had given him the kingdom, he did not rely on God. He looked more at his fear of losing his kingship than at the promise God had spoken. So he did not follow the way God had ordained, but made a religious system out of his own thinking.

What God looks at is not a person's position or outward form. More important than whether one became king, did great works, or made many people follow him is whether his heart follows God. David, though lacking, set his heart on God;

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam, even in the position received from God, held on to his own desires.

It is the same with faith today. The person who believes and follows the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, just as it is, is the one who is right before God. Leaving out the baptism of Jesus and speaking only of the Cross, or saying that one is saved while sin remains in the heart, is not following the Word of salvation God has ordained. The believer must set his heart before the Word like David and stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

Jeroboam Cast God behind His Back

"But you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back—" (1 Kings 14:9).

God said that Jeroboam had done more evil than all who were before him. He had made for himself other gods and molded images, provoking God to anger. And he had cast God behind his back.

The golden calves Jeroboam made were not mere idol figures. He pointed to it and said that it was the god who had brought Israel up out of Egypt. He attributed to golden calves the work of salvation God had done. He replaced God with golden calves. This is the sin God hates most.

Jeroboam also changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. The priests had to be raised up from among the sons of Levi whom God had ordained, but he made ordinary people priests. The order of atonement and sacrifice had to be carried

out according to the law God had ordained, but he changed the place, the feasts, and the priesthood to protect his own kingship. This was what it meant to cast God behind his back.

Today as well, there is a faith that casts God behind its back. It is not believing as it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given, but changing it into human doctrine. To leave out the truth that Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, and to speak of the remission of sin by the blood of the Cross alone, is not to deliver whole the order of salvation God has ordained. Trying to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is also a path that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The salvation God has given us is clear. Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us completely by rising again from death. To cast away this truth and hold on to something else is the golden calf of today.

The House of Jeroboam Came to Be Judged as One Sweeps Away Refuse

"Therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone" (1 Kings 14:10).

God said He would bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. He said He would cut off from Jeroboam every male, bond and free, in Israel, and would sweep away his house clean, as one sweeps away refuse.

This word is very fearful. Why was God so angry? Because

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam's sin was not a sin that ended in personal weakness. He changed the way of the remission of sin that God had ordained, and led the people of Israel into that false way. He did not sin alone; he made the people sin as well.

God does not take a person's sin lightly. But He rebukes even more fearfully the sin of corrupting the truth of salvation He has ordained and dragging many souls into false faith. That the house of Jeroboam would be swept away shows how great this sin is before God.

Corrupting the gospel of the water and the Spirit today is likewise a fearful thing. If one does not deliver the truth that Jesus took on sin through His baptism, but tells people that their sins disappear if they only believe in the blood of the Cross, while sin remains in their hearts, that is not a work that saves souls. It is changing the Word of salvation God ordained by human thinking.

The Death of Those Belonging to Jeroboam Was Proclaimed as a Judgment of Curse

"The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!'" *(1 Kings 14:11).*

God said that whoever belonged to Jeroboam and died in the city, the dogs would eat, and whoever died in the field, the birds of the air would eat. This means a judgment of curse in which not even the dignity of burial is granted. It is a word showing how thoroughly God would judge the house of Jeroboam.

God spoke this way because those belonging to Jeroboam were within the stream of his sin. Jeroboam did not serve the

golden calves alone; he dragged the people of Israel down that road. His house and his people were inside the system of false faith he had made. Therefore God judged that sin.

This word applies spiritually to us today as well. To whom one belongs is important. The person who belongs to the gospel of the water and the Spirit belongs to the way of salvation God has ordained. But the person who belongs to the faith of Jeroboam—the faith that has corrupted the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God ordained—stands spiritually on the way of death.

Believers must depart from the faith that belongs to Jeroboam. We must depart from the faith that replaces God with golden calves, the faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and holds only to the Cross, and the faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart. True faith is belonging to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Abijah's Death Was the Beginning of the Judgment on Jeroboam's House

"Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die" (1 Kings 14:12).

God told Jeroboam's wife to return home. And He said that when her feet entered the city, the child would die. The future of the child that Jeroboam had wanted to know was proclaimed in this way.

The death of this child was not merely the death of one child from illness. It was the beginning of the judgment that would come upon the house of Jeroboam. God had already said He would cut off the house of Jeroboam, and that word begins to unfold in reality with the death of Abijah.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam wanted only to know what would become of the child. But God spoke of the deeper problem of sin. The sickness and death that came upon Jeroboam's house were connected with his sin. The sin of changing the law of sacrifice God had ordained and making the people sin returned as judgment upon his house.

Today as well, people want to know only the outcome of their problems. They ask whether the sickness will be healed, whether the matter will be solved, whether their circumstances will improve. But the deeper problem God sees is sin. What matters most is whether the sins of the heart have been washed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Unless the problem of sin is solved through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, the soul cannot live before God, however temporarily the problems of the flesh are solved.

Abijah Was One Who Held Good Intent toward God within Jeroboam's House

"And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam" (1 Kings 14:13).

God said that Abijah would die, but at the same time that this child alone would come to the grave. Among those belonging to Jeroboam, only this child would be buried. The reason was that in him, within the house of Jeroboam, something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel.

This word shows that even in the midst of God's judgment there are God's mercy and discernment. Abijah was a child

belonging to the house of Jeroboam, but God saw his heart. Even within Jeroboam's house he held good intent toward God, and God counted that heart precious.

God does not look only at a person's outward circumstances. More than which house one belongs to or what position one holds, He looks at whether the heart is directed toward God. The house of Jeroboam was a house to be judged, yet even within it God distinguished the child who held good intent toward Him.

Today as well, God looks at the heart of a person. He counts precious the heart that hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and desires to return to God. Even one who was in a wrong faith receives grace when he hears the truth God has ordained and turns back. God delights in the heart that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death.

God Said He Would Raise Up a King Who Would Cut Off the House of Jeroboam

"'Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now!" (1 Kings 14:14).

God said He would raise up a king over Israel who would cut off the house of Jeroboam. And He said, *"What? Even now!" (1 Kings 14:14)* The judgment was not some vague affair of the distant future; it was something already about to begin.

The word God has given is certainly fulfilled. Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained in order to keep

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

his kingship, but that path became not the way of keeping his house but the way of its being cut off. When one tries to keep by human thinking what God has established, he loses it instead.

This word shows that no system of faith that stands against God can stand forever. Jeroboam's golden calves, high places, and false priesthood could hold people for a while, but before God they could only be judged.

Today as well, no doctrine that corrupts the gospel of the water and the Spirit can stand forever. Human tradition, denominational power, and religious authority may seem to last long, but whatever stands against the truth God has ordained is in the end under judgment. What gives life is not a human institution but the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jeroboam's Sin Made All Israel like a Reed Shaken in the Water

"For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger" (1 Kings 14:15).

God said He would strike Israel so that they would be like a reed shaken in the water. He also said He would uproot them from this good land and scatter them beyond the River. This shows that Jeroboam's sin did not stay within his own house but became a disaster for all Israel.

Jeroboam tried to make his kingdom secure. But because he changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, Israel instead became like a shaken reed. A faith that has left God cannot

make anyone secure. What looks outwardly like a means of protecting the kingdom is, before God, a sin that shakes the nation to its roots.

The reason Israel would be uprooted from the good land was that they had provoked God to anger with the wooden images of Asherah. Idolatry is not merely the matter of bowing before a figure. It is casting away the truth of salvation God has given and relying on something else. Just as Jeroboam replaced God with golden calves, so whenever a person relies on material things, his own doctrines, and religious institutions more than on God, that becomes idolatry.

Today as well, wrong Christian faith makes people like shaken reeds. They are told they are saved while sin remains in their hearts, so their conscience wavers. They are told that sins are washed away by prayers of repentance, so they go back and forth daily between sinner and righteous. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit keeps a person's heart from shaking, for it makes him believe that sin was completely solved through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

Jeroboam Sinned Himself and Made Israel Sin

"And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin.'" (1 Kings 14:16).

1 Kings 14:16 sums up Jeroboam's sin in one sentence: he sinned, and he made Israel sin. This is why Jeroboam's sin is so fearful. He was not alone in departing from God; he made the whole people depart from the way God had ordained.

He set up golden calves and made the people serve them,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

made ordinary people priests, and fixed the feasts as he pleased. As a result, the people of Israel, while claiming to serve God, came to follow a faith that had left the law of sacrifice God had ordained. This was collective sin.

Today as well, when a leader does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and preaches a wrong doctrine of salvation, not only does he go wrong, but those who hear him also remain in sin. If one explains salvation by the blood of the Cross alone, leaving out the baptism of Jesus, people cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. They come to imagine they are saved while sin remains in their hearts. This is not a work that saves souls; like Jeroboam, it is a work that makes others sin as well.

We must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Delivering this truth is the work that saves souls. Corrupting this truth is standing on the way of Jeroboam, sinning oneself and making others sin.

1 Kings 14:6–16 Warns Us Not to Belong to the Sin of Jeroboam

This passage is the word of judgment upon the house of Jeroboam and upon all Israel. God had exalted Jeroboam from among the people and made him ruler of Israel, but he did not follow God as David had. Instead he made other gods and molded images, and cast God behind his back. As a result his house would be swept away as one sweeps refuse, and Israel would be uprooted from the good land and scattered.

The center of this word is clear. The sin of changing the law of salvation God has ordained, and of leading many people into that false way, is a very great sin before God. Jeroboam sinned himself and made Israel sin. Therefore God said He would give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam.

Believers today must not fall into the sin of Jeroboam. We must depart from a faith that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that serves material things and success like God. The way of salvation God has ordained does not change.

Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the person who has received the remission of sin before God. Whoever holds this truth is the person who has escaped the sin of Jeroboam and returned to God.

Therefore we must not disguise ourselves before the Word God has given. We must not make a faith out of our own thoughts. We must abandon the way of Jeroboam, who sinned himself and made others sin, and stand on the way of believing and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is the solemn lesson 1 Kings 14:6–16 gives us.

The Word of God Was Fulfilled Exactly at the Appointed Time

"Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

died" (1 Kings 14:17).

Jeroboam's wife heard the word of God's judgment from the prophet Ahijah and returned to Tirzah. God had already said, *"When your feet enter the city, the child shall die" (1 Kings 14:12).* And that word was fulfilled exactly. When Jeroboam's wife came to the threshold of the house, the child died.

This scene shows how precisely the Word of God is fulfilled. Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise, but he could not deceive God. Ahijah's eyes of flesh were dim, but the word God had given was not dim. The judgment God had spoken was fulfilled without deviating by so much as a hair.

The death of Jeroboam's son was not merely a family sorrow. Jeroboam's sin had come upon his house as actual judgment. Jeroboam did not use the kingship God had given him to serve the righteousness of God. Instead, to keep his own kingship, he made golden calves, changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, and set up ordinary people as priests. The sin of changing the order of salvation God had ordained to suit his own greed appeared as death in his house.

Today as well, when a person changes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, the result is by no means light. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. If one takes away from or changes this order of salvation—speaking only of the blood of the Cross and not of the baptism of Jesus—the conscience of man cannot be saved from sin.

The Child's Death Was the Beginning of the Judgment on Jeroboam's Family

Jeroboam's son Abijah fell sick, and God said that the child would die. But in the earlier word God had said that in that child there was good intent toward the LORD. So He said that among those belonging to the house of Jeroboam, that child alone would come to the grave and be buried.

Therefore this death was not a meaningless death. On the one hand it was the beginning of the judgment that came upon Jeroboam's family; on the other hand it was God's discernment, not leaving that child in the deeper wickedness of Jeroboam's house. Even while judging the whole house of Jeroboam, God distinguished the child who held good intent toward Him.

Here we can see that God looks at the center of a person. The house of Jeroboam was under the sin of the golden calves and the corrupted law of sacrifice. Yet even within that house, God saw a heart directed toward the LORD. The judgment of God is not indiscriminate. God judges sin, yet He knows the one whose heart is toward Him.

For the believer, what matters is not the age or the environment he belongs to, but the heart that believes the truth God has ordained. God looks preciously on the heart that hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and turns to Him. Even a person who was inside a wrong faith can receive the remission of sin if he believes the truth of the salvation completed through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Mourning of All Israel Could Not Stop the Fulfillment of God's Word

"And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet" (1 Kings 14:18).

When the child died, all Israel buried him and mourned for him. The people's grief would have been sincere. The death of the prince was the sorrow of a family and a matter for the whole nation to mourn. But that grief could not turn back the judgment of God. The Scripture says it happened *"according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet" (1 Kings 14:18)*.

The heart of this verse is not the grief but the fulfillment of the Word of God. People buried and mourned, but the word God had spoken was fulfilled just as it was. Before the Word of God, human emotion and forms cannot stop judgment. Grief without repentance, and mourning that does not return to the truth, cannot solve the problem of sin.

What Jeroboam had to do was not merely to grieve. He had to throw away the golden calves and return to the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He had to abandon the false altars of Bethel and Dan and turn from the sin of setting up ordinary people as priests. But to the end he did not depart from his evil way.

It is the same today. A person's aching heart over sin, religious tears, and repeated prayers of repentance do not make sin disappear. One must return to the way of salvation God has ordained. One must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

1 Kings 14:17–18 Shows That No One Can Escape the Word of God

These two verses are short but very weighty. When Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah and came to the threshold of the house, the child died. All Israel buried him and mourned for him. And the Scripture testifies that all this happened according to the word the LORD had spoken through the prophet Ahijah.

Jeroboam used the kingship he had received from God for his own desires. He changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, set up golden calves in place of God, and plunged even the people of Israel into sin. That sin returned in the end upon his own house as death and judgment.

This word warns us today as well. If one changes the Word of salvation God has ordained, he cannot escape the result. A faith that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and its own efforts cannot set anyone right before God.

The Word of God is certainly fulfilled. Therefore we must turn back from the way of Jeroboam. We must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained just as it is. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Whoever believes this truth is the one who has received the remission of sin before God.

The death fulfilled at the threshold of Jeroboam's house shows the solemnity of God's Word. Before that Word we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

must not disguise ourselves or cover ourselves with forms; we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe the salvation God has accomplished.

More Important than Jeroboam's Remaining Acts Is His End before God

"Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (1 Kings 14:19).

1 Kings 14:19 sums up the remaining acts of Jeroboam briefly. It says that how he made war and how he reigned are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Jeroboam too had political achievements, records of war, and deeds of governing as king. In man's history books such things can be recorded in detail.

But the Scripture does not praise Jeroboam's achievements at length. Rather, it hands his remaining acts over to the book of the chronicles, and treats as more important his sin and his judgment before God. This shows that Scripture counts a person's faith and the problem of sin before God weightier than his outward achievements.

Jeroboam became king, fought, and governed. But he did not use the kingship God had given him to serve the righteousness of God. To keep his own kingship he made golden calves, set up altars in Bethel and Dan, and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He made priests from ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and fixed the feasts as he pleased. So his reign was outwardly the reign of a king, but before God it was a reign that led Israel into sin.

Today as well, however many a person's activities and

achievements may look, if he has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they are not right fruit before God. Even if the church grows large, the ministry is abundant, and he has influence over people, if he does not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death—it is not a work that leads souls to the remission of sin.

Jeroboam's wars and reign could be recorded, but the core of what God saw was the fact that he had created the sin of Jeroboam. Therefore we must fear, more than what remains in man's history, with what faith we stand before God.

Even Twenty-Two Years of Kingship Could Not Cover the Sin of Leaving God

"The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 14:20).

Jeroboam reigned as king for twenty-two years. But those twenty-two years of kingship did not become a blessed end before God. He rested with his fathers, and his son Nadab reigned in his place. Outwardly it looks as if the dynasty is passing on to the next generation. But as God had already said, judgment had been proclaimed on the house of Jeroboam.

Nadab's succession to the throne was not a simple transfer of kingship. It was the stream in which Jeroboam's sin and God's judgment continued into the next generation. The sin by which Jeroboam corrupted the law of sacrifice God had ordained did not end with him alone. His son too would follow

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that way, and his house would in the end be cut off according to the Word of God.

This is why Jeroboam's sin is fearful. He sinned himself and made Israel sin. Trying to keep his own kingship, he led the whole people into wrong sacrifice and idolatry. So his twenty-two-year reign was not a matter of length but of direction. More important than how long he ruled is whether he followed the way God had ordained.

It is the same with faith today. Having believed in Jesus for a long time does not itself guarantee right faith. Even if one has ministered long, lived long in the church, and had many religious experiences, if he does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sin in his heart has not disappeared. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, or that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and its own efforts, is not the way of salvation God has ordained.

The way God has ordained is clear. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, sin disappears from the conscience and we stand as the righteous before God.

1 Kings 14:19–20 Makes Us See the Stream of God's Judgment Rather than One King's Record

1 Kings 14:19–20 looks like a short summary. Jeroboam's remaining acts were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel; he was king for twenty-two years; and after he died his son Nadab became king in his place. But within this

short word lies a weighty spiritual lesson.

In man's history, how Jeroboam fought and how he governed can be recorded. But what remains before God is the evaluation of his sin. He changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, made the people serve golden calves as God, and led them into sin. As a result his house was placed under the judgment of God.

Therefore we must think about how our lives will remain before God rather than how they will look before men. Even if one has done many things in men's eyes, if he has corrupted or left the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is not the way that saves souls. Believing and preaching the Word of salvation God has ordained, just as it is, is the most important thing.

Jeroboam's twenty-two years ended, and his son Nadab succeeded to the throne. But the stream of sin also continued. This is a warning that wrong faith affects the next generation and the community. When one person leaves the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God ordained and sets up human doctrine, many souls under his influence can remain in sin.

We must turn back from the way of Jeroboam. We must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by Jesus Christ—who took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. Only this truth saves a person from sin and brings him out of the sin of Jeroboam back to God.

Rehoboam Reigned in Jerusalem, Where God Put His Name

"And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess" (1 Kings 14:21).

From 1 Kings 14:21 the eye moves from the story of Jeroboam in northern Israel to the story of Rehoboam in Judah. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, and he became king of Judah. He came to the throne at forty-one and reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem.

The Scripture calls Jerusalem *"the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there" (1 Kings 14:21)*. This shows what a great spiritual privilege Rehoboam stood in. He did not reign in just any city; he reigned in the city God had chosen to put His name there. There was the temple, and there was the sacrificial system God had ordained.

But living in the city where God put His name does not automatically mean serving God rightly. Even with the temple in Jerusalem, if the heart leaves God, people can go down the road of idolatry. The days of Rehoboam show precisely that fact.

The Scripture also records that Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonitess. It makes us think of how Solomon's loving of foreign women, and the turning of his heart after the idols they brought in, was still affecting the next generation. Solomon's corruption did not end as a personal matter. It left the shadow of idols over his house, over the nation, and even over the days of the next king.

Today as well, the name of a church, an office, a tradition, and the forms of worship cannot save anyone. One must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has

ordained. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Unless one stands on this truth, the heart can turn toward idols even in a place bearing the holiest of names.

Judah Did Evil in the Sight of the LORD

"Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done" (1 Kings 14:22).

The Scripture does not speak of Rehoboam alone; it says, *"Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD" (1 Kings 14:22)*. The way of the king became the way of the people, and the whole people did evil before God. Moreover, it says their sins exceeded all that their fathers had done. This means the sin had accumulated and deepened.

Judah had the temple in Jerusalem. It was not a nation that had set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan like northern Israel. Outwardly, Judah was the nation with legitimacy. But having the temple does not mean God is automatically pleased. What God looks at is not the outward form but whether they are within the way God has ordained.

Jeroboam openly changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Yet Judah also failed to stand in the way that pleases God. They did evil in the sight of the LORD and provoked His wrath. This shows that the sin of northern Israel and the sin of Judah appeared in different forms, but both were ways that had left God.

It is the same today. Some serve material things and the world openly as God, and some speak the name of Jesus while

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

holding to human doctrines without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The outward shapes differ, but whoever leaves the way of salvation God has ordained is on an evil way before God.

The way of salvation God has ordained is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism Jesus received, sin was passed on to Him; on the Cross that sin was judged; and by His rising from death the new life was completed. A faith that departs from this truth cannot be right faith before God, however rich its religious forms.

The High Places, the Idols, and the Wooden Images of Asherah Show That Judah's Heart Had Left God

"For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree" (1 Kings 14:23).

The people of Judah built high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah on every high hill and under every green tree. Though the temple of Jerusalem, where God put His name, was there, they built high places. Though the way of worship God had ordained was there, they followed human desire and pagan customs and served idols.

The high hills and the green trees were the worship sites of pagan religion. Judah should have served God in the land God had given, but instead they imitated the religious ways of the pagan nations God had driven out. This was evidence that their hearts were not with God.

Idolatry is not only bowing before a figure. Casting away the truth God has ordained and relying on something else is

idolatry. Jeroboam replaced God with golden calves. Judah set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah. Today, material things, success, religious authority, and human doctrines can take the place of God.

Above all, corrupting the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a spiritually fearful idolatry. God completed the way of salvation through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death; if a person leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, he is not delivering whole the order of God's salvation. A faith that says the sins remaining in the heart can be handled by prayers of repentance is also changing the way of the remission of sin God ordained into a human religious method.

We must not build high places that have left the way God ordained. Our hearts must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe these truths just as they are: that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and that He justified us by rising again from death.

Judah Imitated the Abominations of the Pagans

"And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:24).

In the land of Judah there were also perverted persons. The Scripture says that the people did according to all the abominations of the nations the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. God had told Israel not to follow the abominable customs of Canaan. But Judah accepted again the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

sins of the nations God had driven out.

This was living in the land God had given while following what God hates. Judah had the name of God's people, but the direction of their life and worship grew like the abominable customs of the pagans. This was what was evil in the sight of God.

Faith is not maintained by a name alone. Even with the name of God's people, when the heart leaves the truth God has ordained, one comes to follow the ways of the world. Judah possessed Jerusalem, yet imitated the abominations of the pagans. This warns against the faith of today that calls on the name of Jesus while following the desires of the world and the doctrines of men.

A faith that does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit ends up following human thinking and worldly religiosity. If one speaks only of the blood of the Cross and cannot solve the sin of the heart, he remains a sinner. And a heart that remains sinful cannot come boldly to God, and ends up clinging to religious forms or worldly blessings.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually delivers a person from sin. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. When we believe this truth, we leave the place of sinners and stand as the righteous before God.

1 Kings 14:21–24 Shows That One Cannot Serve God by the Name of Jerusalem Alone

This passage shows that although Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, Judah did evil in the sight of the

LORD. Jerusalem was the city God had chosen to put His name there. But living in that city did not automatically mean Judah served God rightly. They set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, and imitated the abominations of the pagan nations God had driven out.

This word gives an important warning to the faith of today as well. The name of a church, the form of worship, the length of one's faith, and one's office cannot make a person stand rightly before God. What matters is whether one believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. If one changes or takes away the way of salvation God has given, it becomes the same stream as Jeroboam's golden calves and Judah's high places.

We must throw away the high places built by human thinking. We must throw away the heart that serves material things and success as God. And we must turn back from the wrong doctrine that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross. We must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Faith in this truth is the true faith God delights in. Just as the name of Jerusalem could not make Judah righteous, so today the name of Christianity cannot make anyone righteous. Only by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can we stand before God.

Judah, Having Left God, Suffered the Invasion of Shishak King of Egypt

"It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem" (1 Kings 14:25).

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up to attack Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city God had chosen to put His name there. The house of the LORD was there. But living in the city God had chosen did not mean Judah was automatically protected by God.

In the preceding word, Judah had done evil in the sight of the LORD. They had set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah on the high hills and under the green trees, and had imitated the abominations of the pagan nations God had driven out. Therefore Shishak's invasion was not merely a change in international affairs. It was a chastening that came upon a Judah that had left God.

The most dangerous thing for God's people is not the enemy outside but the heart leaving God. Jeroboam in northern Israel changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained and set up golden calves. Judah, though it had the temple in Jerusalem, let its heart flow toward the high places and idols. Northern Israel and Judah differed in form, but they were in the same stream of sin in that they had left the way God ordained.

Today as well, the name of a church, the form of worship, and the tradition of faith cannot make anyone stand before God. One must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. If one leaves this truth, then even in a place with the holiest of names he stands, spiritually, where the invasion of Egypt comes.

The Treasures of the House of the LORD and of the King's House Were Taken

"And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made" (1 Kings 14:26).

Shishak attacked Jerusalem and took away all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house. He also took away all the gold shields Solomon had made. This is the scene of Judah's glory collapsing. The wealth and splendor of Solomon's day, the treasures of the temple and of the palace, passed into the hands of the king of Egypt.

The gold and glory Solomon enjoyed had been given by God. But Solomon did not use those blessings to the end in serving the righteousness of God. He loved foreign women, received idols, and left God. The stream of that sin appeared as Judah's shame in the days of Rehoboam. If the glory God gives is not used for God, it is in the end taken away by the world.

The taking of the treasures of the house of the LORD was not only a material loss. It shows a state in which the spiritual glory of God's presence had departed. The temple was there, but its treasures were not kept. The name of Jerusalem was there, but the faith toward God had crumbled.

It is the same with faith today. Even if a person speaks the name of Jesus and speaks of the Cross, if he loses the gospel of the water and the Spirit he has lost the spiritual treasure. If he does not know the truth that our sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received, he cannot fully know why the blood shed on the Cross became the judgment of sin. A faith that has lost the gospel of the water and the Spirit may keep the name of Christianity outwardly, but it loses the true power that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

washes the sins of the heart.

After Losing the Gold Shields, He Substituted Bronze Shields

"Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house" (1 Kings 14:27).

When Shishak carried off all of Solomon's gold shields, Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place. In the place where the gold shields had been, he put bronze shields. Outwardly there were still shields. There were shields entrusted to the hands of the captains of the guard who kept the door of the king's house. But the essence of those shields had changed. The gold shields had become bronze.

This scene is spiritually very weighty. After losing the glory God has given, a person may try to replace it with a similar shape rather than truly recover it. Having lost the gold shields, Judah should have repented of its sin before God and turned back. They should have thrown away the high places, the idols, and the wooden images of Asherah, and returned to the way God had ordained. But Rehoboam substituted bronze shields for gold.

This is like a faith that has lost its true glory and maintains only the outward form. A faith that has lost the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also outwardly keep the shape of worship, preaching, offices, and doctrine. But if the truth is missing—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death—then it is the same as having lost the gold shields and

holding bronze ones.

Today many people speak only of the blood of the Cross and yet speak of assurance of salvation. But if sin remains in the heart, that is not the true gold shield of the remission of sin God has given. Trying to wash away sins with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is like substituting bronze shields for gold. Only by returning to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained is the true spiritual glory restored.

The Procession of Bronze Shields Shows a Faith in Which Only the Form Remains

"And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom" (1 Kings 14:28).

Whenever Rehoboam entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried the bronze shields and then brought them back into the guardroom. Outwardly, the procession of the king entering the temple continued. There were guards bearing shields, and there was the form of entering the house of the LORD. But what they held in their hands was no longer the gold shields. They were bronze.

This word shows a faith in which the form remains but the glory has departed. The house of the LORD was still there, and the king entered it. But the heart of Judah had already inclined toward the high places, the idols, and the wooden images of Asherah. The form of entering the temple did not mean that God delighted in that faith.

Today as well, the forms of worship can remain. There can be hymns and prayers and sermons and church life. But if the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

gospel of the water and the Spirit is not there, it becomes a form that has lost the power of life. However zealously a person says he believes in Jesus, if he does not believe the truth that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, the sins of his heart are not solved.

The faith God delights in is not a procession of bronze shields. It is the faith built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the faith that believes the truth that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Only with this faith can we come boldly before God.

1 Kings 14:25–28 Warns Us Not to Replace Lost Glory with a Man-Made Form

This passage is the event in which Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and carried off the treasures of the house of the LORD, the treasures of the king's house, and Solomon's gold shields. Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place. Whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried those bronze shields and brought them back again.

This short event clearly shows the spiritual state of Judah. The golden glory God had given was gone, and only the bronze shape made by human hands remained. The form of entering the temple remained, but repentance that turns back before God and true faith are nowhere to be seen.

We must look at the faith of today in this word. A Christianity that has lost the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like Judah, which lost the gold shields and held bronze ones. If one leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, no one can know how sin was passed on to

Jesus. If one says he is saved while sin remains in his heart, that is not the true remission of sin but a stay in religious form.

The way of salvation God has ordained cannot be replaced by any man-made form. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Only this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true glory God has given.

Therefore we must not be content with bronze shields. We must turn back from a faith in which only the outward shape remains, from religious forms from which the gospel of the water and the Spirit is missing, and from an assurance of salvation made by human doctrine. We must hold the gold shield of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given. When we are in this faith, we do not lose our spiritual treasure to the world, and we keep the true glory of righteousness before God.

More Important than Rehoboam's Remaining Acts Is with What Faith He Lived

"Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" (1 Kings 14:29).

1 Kings 14:29 says that the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. Rehoboam too would have done many things as king. There would have been political judgments, wars, and deeds of governing the nation. Such contents can be recorded in man's history books.

But the Scripture does not evaluate Rehoboam's political

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

achievements at length. What the Scripture regards as more important is what way he walked before God. He reigned in Jerusalem, which God had chosen to put His name there. The house of the LORD was there, and the sacrificial system God had ordained was there. Yet in his days Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD and set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah.

This shows that a good position and outward privileges given by God do not guarantee true faith. Rehoboam was in Jerusalem, but the heart of Judah did not turn wholly to God. The form of the temple was there, but the high places and idols existed together with it. They lived in the city bearing the name of the LORD, yet the people living in it imitated the abominations of the pagans that God hates.

It is the same today. The name of a church, the length of one's faith, offices, and records of ministry cannot make a person righteous before God. What God looks at is whether he believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death. Without faith in this truth, however many acts a person's record contains, the problem of sin cannot be solved before God.

The War between Rehoboam and Jeroboam Was the Fruit of Division Left by Sin

"And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" (1 Kings 14:30).

The Scripture says there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. Judah and northern Israel were

originally one people. They were a people who should have served the same God, and who should have looked toward the same way of the remission of sin within the law of sacrifice God had ordained. But after Solomon's corruption the nation was torn, and in the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam that division showed itself as continual war.

This war was not merely a political conflict. At its root lay the sin of leaving God. Solomon received foreign women and idols, and did not use to the end the wisdom and wealth God had given him in serving the righteousness of God. As a result God tore the kingdom. Jeroboam gained the kingship, but to keep it he set up golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Rehoboam was in Jerusalem, but Judah set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, doing evil before God.

Therefore the constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam was the fruit left by sin. When people leave the way God has ordained, peace disappears between them as well. A people who should serve one God come to fight each other. Sin not only divides God and man, but also leaves division and strife within the community.

Wrong Christian faith today is the same. Those who have left the gospel of the water and the Spirit say they believe in Jesus, yet because the sin of their hearts is not solved, they constantly waver between sinner and righteous. If one leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, he cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. So sin remains in the heart, and he tries to solve it with prayers of repentance and his own efforts. Such faith cannot give true peace to the soul, and in the end it keeps people in religious strife and anxiety.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives true peace

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to the heart. For when Jesus received baptism from John, all our sins were passed on to Him; on the Cross the judgment of those sins was finished; and by His rising from death the way of justification was completed. Whoever believes this truth stands in the assurance that he has no sin before God.

Rehoboam's Death, Though He Was Buried in the City of David, Could Not Cut Off the Stream of Idolatry

"So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijam his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 14:31).

Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. He was a descendant of David and was buried in the City of David. But the fact that he was buried in the City of David could not cover the sins of his day. In his days Judah did evil in the sight of God, setting up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah. They also suffered the shame of losing the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the palace to Shishak king of Egypt.

The Scripture again records that his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. This recalls the stream of the foreign women and idolatry of Solomon's day. Solomon loved foreign women, and the idols they served entered Israel. In Rehoboam's day the shadow of that idolatry had not disappeared. Sin does not end in one generation; it affects the next.

Rehoboam died, and his son Abijam became king in his place. The kingship continued, but what matters is the direction

of faith. Being buried in the City of David and inheriting the dynasty of David does not automatically mean having the faith of David. What God wants is not bloodline or outward form, but a heart toward God and obedience to His Word.

It is the same today. Inheriting the name of Christianity, inheriting church tradition, and inheriting religious forms does not mean true faith is inherited. The faith that believes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be handed down. The truth that Jesus took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again from death must be delivered to the next generation just as it is.

1 Kings 14:29–31 Makes Us See the Stream of Sin Rather than the Record of Kings

1 Kings 14:29–31 closes the life of Rehoboam briefly. His remaining acts were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah; there was always war with Jeroboam; he was buried in the City of David; and his son Abijam became king in his place. But within this short conclusion lies a weighty spiritual lesson.

The days of Rehoboam were the days that followed Solomon's corruption. Solomon left God and received idols, and as a result the nation was torn. Jeroboam set up golden calves in northern Israel and corrupted the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Rehoboam possessed Jerusalem in Judah, but Judah set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, doing evil before God. In the end, north and south were constantly at war.

This is the result of a faith that has left the way God

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

ordained. When a person leaves God and makes a faith out of his own thoughts and desires, what remains at the end is division, shame, and judgment. Jeroboam's golden calves, the high places and idols of Rehoboam's day, the temple treasures and gold shields taken by Shishak, and the unceasing war between north and south are all the fruits of the sin of leaving God.

Believers today must examine their own faith before this word. We must look more at with what faith we will stand before God than at what we will leave in man's history. A faith that has left the gospel of the water and the Spirit may continue long outwardly, but before God it is not the way of life.

The way of salvation God has ordained is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. Whoever believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not go the way of Rehoboam, outwardly belonging to the City of David while the heart has left God. Neither must we, like Jeroboam, change the order of salvation God has ordained by human thinking. We must remain in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only this truth saves a person from sin and brings him out of the stream of division and idolatry back to God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Do Not Fall into the Sin of Jeroboam

< 1 Kings 14:1-20 >

"At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child.' And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, 'Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman.' And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!'' Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 'Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin.' Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The period

that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place."

We are considering together the portions in which the Scriptures keep testifying about Jeroboam. Jeroboam was not of the royal line; he was a man of the tribe of Ephraim, descended from Joseph's second son. Whatever the tribe, all were the same people of Israel, but Jeroboam was the man who, before God, changed the law of God—the law of sacrifice of the temple—and switched the god he served. No one in the Scriptures committed a sin as great as Jeroboam's. If we compare it with the sin of Judas, who betrayed Jesus in the New Testament, Jeroboam's sin is far greater than that of Judas. Judas's sin came out of personal weakness, but Jeroboam's was the sin of changing the law of God and challenging God.

Jeroboam, Who Committed the Greatest Sin in the Scriptures

That is why the Old Testament Scriptures hold on to this to the very end. Whenever the writers of Scripture introduce a king, they record that he remained in the sin of Jeroboam, or that he shared in the sin of Jeroboam. Jeroboam was originally a man made king by God. Because Solomon had sinned greatly before God, God, in order to chasten Solomon, entrusted part of the nation to Jeroboam for a time. But Jeroboam, in order not to lose the position God had entrusted to him, used human means and methods. In the end he was stripped of everything and cursed, and he dragged himself and all ten tribes of Israel under the curse. He went so far as to make ordinary people

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

priests; Jeroboam may well be called the chief of heretics, second only to Lucifer who defied God.

After Solomon died, the nation was divided through these two kings, his son Rehoboam and Jeroboam; and through Jeroboam heresy arose, and people arose who followed that heresy. When God judges at the last, He will set Lucifer and Jeroboam side by side and deal with them for the same sin. Just as He will judge Lucifer, who defied God in his pride, so He will charge Jeroboam with the same sin of plunging countless people into hell.

What Happens When Man Interprets the Scriptures by His Own Thoughts

In history we see people who left their names on the wrong side. Among the twelve disciples of Jesus and the church fathers who learned under them, there were those who lived for God and for the gospel, but there were also those who corrupted the Word of Scripture. In the age of the church fathers, a man named Origen rendered the Scriptures differently, corrupting very important parts. Jeroboam likewise was a man who left his name on the wrong side before God.

Among those who have studied the Scriptures there is also a man like Calvin. He is very famous, but he was greatly used on the wrong side. His mind was brilliant, but he interpreted the Scriptures by his own thinking and fitted them into his own logic. The book he wrote handles the whole Bible by human logic. Through that book, countless people on this earth failed to meet God rightly, and though they claimed to believe in God, they could not help believing wrongly. He himself probably did not know it, but its influence was so great that today a great

many people, clergy and church members alike, who claim to believe in God have gone wrong under his influence. They cannot believe the Word of God just as it is; if it makes sense to their heads they accept it, and if it does not, they interpret it away at will. That is why people believe in Jesus and yet do not receive the Holy Spirit, and believe in Jesus and yet do not obtain the remission of sin.

The man God rebuked again and again in the Scriptures is Jeroboam. Even after Jeroboam died, the phrase "he remained in the sin of Jeroboam" keeps following his descendants. In the Word we read today as well, God said He would sweep away Jeroboam and his descendants completely, and that whoever belonged to Jeroboam would be eaten by dogs if he died in the city and by the birds of the air if he died in the field. Since God so hated this man, we must know well why God so hated Jeroboam, so that we do not fall into that same wrong. Jeroboam, too, was an Israelite who believed in God, yet he was a man who did fatal harm to God and His gospel.

The Sick Son and the Word That Came to the Prophet Ahijah

In verse 1 of chapter 14 it says, *"At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick" (1 Kings 14:1).* Jeroboam had a son named Abijah, and he fell sick. Since God had cursed him, things could not go well. He had become king, but he was under the curse, and so his son fell sick. Jeroboam asked his wife to arise and disguise herself so that no one would know she was the wife of Jeroboam, and to go to the prophet Ahijah. He told her to ask why this child had fallen sick and how he could be healed, but on no account to let her identity be

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

discovered. So his wife disguised herself and set out.

Now the prophet Ahijah was old at that time, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see. The eyes of his flesh were closed, but God told him everything. God said that the wife of Jeroboam would come in disguise, and that when she came, he was to tell her what God would do to Jeroboam, his family, and those who followed him. So the woman came in disguised, but Ahijah already knew everything. He said, *"Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person?" (1 Kings 14:6)* and then delivered the Word of God.

"And tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!'' Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die" (1 Kings 14:8–12).

The son died just as the servant of God had said. When the mother returned and came to the threshold of the house, the child breathed his last. Yet God said that this child alone would come to the grave and be properly buried. The reason, He said, was that the child had held good intent toward God. God looks at a person's deeds, but He looks still more preciously at the

person's heart. Though that child was a son belonging to Jeroboam, his heart was directed toward God and stood on God's side, and so God showed him this grace.

The Endless Fighting Brought by the Sin of Changing the Law of Sacrifice

Because of this sin of Jeroboam—changing God's law of sacrifice and casting God away—all ten tribes of Israel in fact came to be killed, cursed, and plundered. And there was always war between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. 1 Kings 15:6 says, *"There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life" (1 Kings 15:6)*, and verse 7 says, *"There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam" (1 Kings 15:7)*. Though they were the same people, one race, because of the changing of a single law of sacrifice they fought for hundreds of years, generation after generation of their descendants. It was like one nation divided into south and north, confronting and fighting each other.

God rebukes the sin of Jeroboam again and again. 1 Kings 15:34 says, *"He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 15:34)*. Jeroboam did not sin alone; he led all his people to sin. They claimed to be offering worship before God, but since they served a golden calf they had set up, that worship itself became an act of defying God. They did not do it according to the law of sacrifice; they set up anyone at all—no high priest, no Levite, no descendant of Aaron—to play the priest, and so their very sacrifice became a sin against God.

Today as well, people who claim to believe in Jesus gather

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and say, “God, forgive my sins, wash them away”; they divide sin daily into original sin and personal sins and say the personal sins must be repented of every day, and they make the confession of faith that Jesus did not bear the sins not yet committed. If they believe like that and live like that, they are offering worship that instead commits sin before God. To offer worship truly before God, one must believe and give thanks that God has removed all his sins. Only when it is offered like that does God receive it. Jeroboam’s wrong lay not in a personal lack but in changing the law itself.

The Sin of Changing the Law Is Cursed for Generations

This is a mistake that must never be made. Personal shortcomings can be remitted before God without limit and healed without limit by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But what happens if we change the law by which God removed our sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit? That is precisely the way of becoming a man like Jeroboam. It is an enormous sin: sinning before God oneself, and making others believe it and so sin as well. That is why God rebukes it again and again. From 1 Kings to the end of 2 Kings, He keeps saying: he remained in the sin of Jeroboam, he walked in the way of Jeroboam.

Therefore we who have received the remission of sin must never commit this sin, whatever happens. Yet today the sin most easily committed is precisely this one. If a person does not know, he commits it without fail, and very easily at that. People fall for the words: “It is enough just to believe in God—must we really believe exactly according to the law even how

He removed our sins?" But in believing in God, whatever else one may not know, in the matter of receiving the remission of sin one must believe according to the law. The law of sacrifice God ordained in order to remit our sins—passing sins on by the laying on of hands, cutting the throat of the sacrificial offering and receiving its blood, entering the sanctuary and sprinkling the blood seven times, putting it on the horns of the altar of incense and pouring out the rest at the base of the altar of burnt offering—this law of remitting sin through the laying on of hands and the blood of the sacrificial offering must be kept without fail.

People commit this sin so easily, and yet they say it does not matter because they believe in God, and they even think they will be blessed. But whoever commits this sin receives not blessing but the curse. Every other sin may be remitted, but the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is not remitted. To oppose this Word by which God determined to save us with the water and the blood, and to change the law oneself and preach it—that is the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It is blaspheming the law God has established to accomplish salvation, and so such a person receives not blessing but the curse. Therefore this sin must never be committed.

Some say of me that I pick out and say only what others do not say, but this is not my personality; it is what the Word of God says. What one believes to be right must be pressed forward no matter what anyone says. As Galileo, even as he came out of recanting before the pope his statement that the earth revolves, still said, "And yet it moves," so what is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. Just as the earth's revolving is an unshakable truth, so receiving the remission of sin by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross is a truth that can never be changed.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Do Not Belong to Jeroboam; Belong to Rehoboam

There are many people fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. Everyone on this earth today who claims to believe in Jesus and yet has not been born again is fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. And even among those who say they are born again, those who say this law of sacrifice is right and that law of sacrifice is also right—"What does it matter on what day the sacrifice is offered, so long as it is offered?"—are people who belong to Jeroboam. Such people pursue wealth and much money and try to draw in great numbers, because they serve the golden calf. But the person who belongs to Rehoboam has nothing to do with numbers or forces, because his work is serving God.

You and I must keep this in mind. Neither as individuals nor as a body must we belong to Jeroboam. The sacrifice must be offered according to the law of God. For us to receive the remission of sin from God, we must believe in the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross together, at once. Our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and so took over all our sins, and was nailed to the Cross and received all the judgment for those sins, and so He saved us. Whoever believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received and the blood of the Cross just as they are is a person saved spiritually.

We are those who have believed with the heart unto righteousness and confessed with the mouth unto salvation. We have become the righteous. Only, in the flesh we are still lacking. We have both of these. Then what is our work before God? It is to gather our hearts and preach the gospel the Lord desires. What remains for us is to gather our body, heart, and faith into one and serve God. Spiritually we are clearly without sin, and in the flesh we are clearly lacking. Unless one clearly

distinguishes this spirit and flesh, no one can enjoy the whole salvation.

Has Jesus Christ taken on all your sins and mine, or has He not? —He has— Has He removed all your sins? —He has removed them— Do you believe in your heart the fact that your sins were passed on to Jesus Christ? —Yes— Then in your heart there is truly no sin. Do you believe before God the fact that not someone else but you yourself have no sin? —Yes— This is precisely salvation, the salvation obtained by believing with the heart.

The Apostle Paul called this the righteousness obtained by believing with the heart. It is the righteousness of God obtained by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By believing with the heart we have become righteous, and not one speck of our own deeds is included in it. But though we have become righteous, we are people with flesh, and whether born again or not, the flesh is lacking. God knows both our hearts and our deeds. Therefore, with this lacking flesh, we must serve God with faith and with the heart. There is no other god; we must serve only the LORD God who saved us, and that service is preaching the gospel to the whole world. When we serve the gospel with all our body, thoughts, and heart, we are serving God.

The tribe that belonged to Rehoboam was the one tribe of Judah. It was the royal tribe, and through that tribe David was born, and Jesus Christ was born. The tribe of Judah always stood on the side of offering the sacrifice according to the law of God. We must not fall into the sin of Jeroboam; we must hold on to the old sacrifice offered according to the law of God, and we must beware of those who say, “Let us recognize both.” Such people invariably show off numbers and strength. “See how many we are; see what we are”—so they boast, because

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

they serve the golden calf.

Beware of Those Who Say This Is Right and That Is Right Too

The person who has received the remission of sin is righteous and has no sin. That has come about through faith. And yet a person must also acknowledge that though he has become righteous, his flesh is still lacking. Those who belong to Jeroboam say they have become righteous and are perfect even in the flesh. That is hypocrisy. On the last day, God will certainly distinguish those who belong to Jeroboam from those who belong to Rehoboam. He acknowledges those who belong to Rehoboam not because their conduct is better, but because they offered sacrifices by faith according to the sacrificial law God established and thereby received salvation.

Therefore, however lacking our flesh may be, we must be those who carry on their life of faith belonging to King Rehoboam. The person who has received the remission of sin must fear and serve God with body and heart. Since God has saved us, we must offer this body to righteous work and to serving the Lord, and offer our faith, our heart, and our material things. To the person who serves the Lord well like this, God gives blessing. This is not my word but the Word of God.

Whether the church prospers or not, we must believe and go on as God desires. We must not swell our numbers and grow our forces by human means and methods. If God is pleased with us, He will make many turn and come in; and if not, then even if our numbers are few, we must keep the faith to the end and live.

Around us there are many who say this is right and that is right too. As you evangelize you will meet such people. They say that they too believe in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, and then they say that one receives the remission of sin by believing only in the blood of Jesus, and also that one receives the remission of sin by believing in the baptism and the blood—this is right, and that is right too. Such a person belongs to Jeroboam. In such a situation, do not quarrel; greet them wisely and withdraw. If you are swept along, thinking, "Here is someone who believes like us," you will be brought down instead. People are easily pushed by the tide. Many people, when others go to the big church building, the big structure, the place where crowds gather, think that must be right and follow. But the person who truly seeks God goes, even if the numbers are few, to the place where God has spoken. Such a person is an upright person.

Some people we know insist that there must be only one church in one region. That is a wrong interpretation of Scripture. They acknowledge many different things as salvation: believing in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross is salvation, believing only in the blood of the Cross is salvation, even just calling on the name of Jesus is salvation. Another line says that believing only in the blood of the Cross is salvation, and that believing in the baptism of Jesus together with the blood of the Cross is actually wrong. Still another line says that believing only in the blood is salvation and believing in the baptism and the blood is also salvation, acknowledging both—so that by their own mouths they admit there are a good number of unsaved people in their church. But the answer is one; it cannot be two. Among all these, the only right one is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which believes together in the baptism Jesus received, the blood of the Cross, and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

resurrection. If anyone says this is right and that is right too, or that believing only in the blood of the Cross is enough, you may be certain that it belongs to Jeroboam. Such people invariably count numbers as important and pour their hearts into building great church buildings.

Worship Similar on the Outside yet Completely Different Within

If you belong to Jeroboam, you will sooner or later be dyed with that color. Even the priests or the people of that kingdom, who at first refused, saying they would not worship before a bull, in the end are all dyed. Seen from the outside, Jeroboam's worship also looks similar to the tabernacle of God. Inside the sanctuary there is a veil; the high priest enters within it once a year; there are the laver, the table of showbread, and the altar of burnt offering; and the laying on of hands and the offering of the sacrifice look the same. So ordinary people consider that they are doing exactly the same thing.

But if you draw back the veil and look inside, it is completely different. Inside the tabernacle of God there is the Ark of the LORD God, covered over by the two cherubim, and within it are the stone tablets, the pot of manna, and the rod that budded. But inside Jeroboam's sanctuary, in that place there is a golden calf. That is the decisive difference. Jeroboam exchanged God for a golden calf, changed the law of sacrifice God had established, and made ordinary people, not even sons of Levi, priests. So the king or anyone else could come in at any time and sprinkle blood. God cannot acknowledge this. However similar it looks on the outside, if you look deep inside, it is completely different.

Even in holding an evangelistic rally, if one does not accurately deliver that our sins were passed on to Jesus when He received baptism and that He received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross, it is not a gospel evangelistic rally. But those who stress only the blood of the Cross tell in detail how much Jesus hurt on the Cross—how, when the nails were driven in and the blood drained from His arteries, His whole body trembled—even borrowing the words of a heart specialist. After hearing such stories, the audience is swept up in emotion and comes to believe that Jesus has taken away all their sins. I once attended such a rally for a week together with a fellow pastor and the students of the mission school, and up to Thursday they preached the blood of the Cross, and only on the last day did they barely speak of anything else. That is not the gospel. Those who belong to Jeroboam are all alike in this.

What I am doing now is giving you a preventive injection. I am giving you this injection so that even if someone like Jeroboam comes and entices you, you will not be taken in, and so that even if you have been deceived, you will come back quickly. Have you all received the injection? —Yes— If you have all received it, that is enough. I too hold on to this Word, and I thank God for giving me and you this faith so that we can belong to King Rehoboam. I close the message. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

What End Awaits Those Who Believe like Jeroboam?

< 1 Kings 14:1-20 >

"At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child.' And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, 'Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman.' And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!'' Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 'Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin.' Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The period

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place."

God tells us what the curse from heaven is that came upon Jeroboam and his descendants. Let us look together at the words of chapter 14, verses 7 to 14.

"Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!'' Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 'Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now!" (1 Kings 14:7–14).

The Wrath That Came Down on Jeroboam and Those Who Belonged to Him

This word was spoken to Jeroboam's wife, saying that God would put Jeroboam's child to death and would put to death whoever belonged to Jeroboam. This was the wrath of God toward Jeroboam and those who belonged to him. Why was God so angry with Jeroboam? Because he exchanged God for golden calves and provoked the wrath of God. Even today God warns that He will bring wrath upon those who serve a golden calf as God, but they hear that warning and still refuse to turn back. Yet if they do not turn from that sin, God is the One who actually fulfills the words of curse He spoke to Jeroboam.

By putting Jeroboam's son Abijah to death, God said that from this point on He would put to death, generation after generation, those who belonged to him. We must not take this word lightly. This is not a word that applies to Jeroboam as an individual only. That God is angry with Jeroboam and with those who belong to him is a word spoken even now, we must realize, to those who spiritually hold the same faith as Jeroboam. God says to Jeroboam, his children, and Israel: now My anger seethes. That anger was directed at those who serve the golden calf as God—the nation and the individuals belonging to Jeroboam. And so the people of Israel later lost their nation under the wrath of God and lived scattered over the earth for nearly two thousand years. We must focus here and listen closely to why God was so angry as to wipe Israel away. We must not fall into the sin of Jeroboam. Claiming to believe in Christianity today while serving a golden calf as lord rather than the Lord—this is the sin of Jeroboam.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Sin of Exchanging God for a Golden Calf and Changing the Law of Sacrifice at Will

Jeroboam was the man who, after becoming king, replaced the LORD God with material things in order to protect his own kingship. He switched the LORD God for two golden calves, and switched the priests God had established as well. That is why God said He would put to death whoever belonged to Jeroboam, spiritually or physically. He said that whoever belonged to Jeroboam would be eaten by dogs if he died in the city and by the birds of the air if he died in the field. Why did God curse so severely? Because the sin Jeroboam committed was not a sin that ended in his own day, but a transgression belonging to the sins that are cursed forever.

As I said last time, Jeroboam switched the priests God had appointed, and God Himself, for golden calves, replacing God with material things. We must know how great a sin it is to have exchanged for a golden calf the LORD God who made the whole universe and who gives us the remission of sin. He exchanged for a golden calf the law of sacrifice of salvation by which the whole nation could receive the remission of sin, and the God of true truth, and he tried to overturn all of God's plans at his own will. In place of the priests God had established he brought in commoners and set them up as priests serving the golden calf, dishonoring God. Thus he switched God for material things, tore down the law God had established, and made himself the leader of a religion serving the golden calf. He fell into that sin himself and made all the people who belonged to him fall into it too.

Therefore the sin of Jeroboam is a very great sin among the sins committed against God. It is a sin deserving God's curse forever. Thought of spiritually, this word means the following.

God made us, and, to save those on whom He would have mercy, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth and gave us the truth of the water and the Spirit. Yet today those who believe in a golden calf as God corrupt and preach this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and while believing a corrupted gospel themselves, they pass it on to others and cause them to be cursed. We must know how great a sin it is before God to do what Jeroboam did.

God Who Saved Us with the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Dear fellow believers, God is the God of you and me who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To remove our sins, God gave this earth the gospel of the water and the Spirit once and for all. So He took on our sins, red like crimson, and washed them white as snow once and for all. The Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and so took on all our sins, and went to the Cross and received the judgment for all those sins once and for all. Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, bore the sins of the world, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, and so He saved us from the sins of the world. After His resurrection He testified to people for forty days, ascended, promised to come again, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God; He is the One who will come again.

Yet on this earth there are false men who corrupt the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve Jesus Christ—who removed all our sins—switched into a golden calf. They have deceived not only themselves but countless people, and they

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

will surely be punished. Those who now believe in Jesus and yet preach that sins disappear if one believes only in the blood of the Cross will be removed before the wrath of God. Those false men who, like Jeroboam, become leaders and corrupt the law of salvation God has ordained and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who switch even God, and who despise and oppose the people who have received the remission of sin—God Himself dries up their seed. This is the curse of God.

The Scriptures speak of how great Jeroboam's sin is until the history of the Old Testament ends, and on into the New Testament era. Among those who believe in God, it keeps being said that this man belonged to the sin of Jeroboam. If you switch God for a golden calf, you perish. Even if one who follows Jesus at times believes wrongly, God is still our God; but if we switch God for a golden calf according to our own moods, we perish forever. Who is our God besides the God who saved us from the sins of this world? Jesus Christ is the God and the Savior of you and me. But if anyone switches that Jesus Christ for a golden calf, both his spirit and his body perish.

Jeroboam made two golden calves and told the people of Israel that these were the god who had led them out. Our hearts may waver for a moment, sunk in the flesh, but we can never serve a golden calf as God before God. Jesus Christ is still our Savior and God, the One who made the universe and all things. The law God established—whereby the high priest transferred all the sins of Israel onto the sacrificial offering on the tenth day of the seventh month to wash them away—is the very gospel through which Jesus took on and removed our sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the New Testament era; therefore, it can never change. If we amend the law of salvation God has established, that is precisely falling into the sin of Jeroboam.

The Corrupted Gospel That Brought Down the Early Church

Early Christianity flourished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Apostle Peter said, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism."* Is this one verse the only word that speaks of the baptism Jesus received? No. The other apostles also preached the baptism countless times. Throughout the epistles of Paul and of Peter there are words testifying to the baptism Jesus received. The words, *"through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5),* all speak of the baptism as well. But the gospel that so flourished in the days of the early church gradually lost its light after the Roman emperor granted freedom of religion in A.D. 313, and after Rome made Christianity the state religion. After that even the Crusades arose.

Think of it. How is it that in the very places where the early church stood, Christians ended up turning to another religion? It was because people failed to keep and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One who truly believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit can prevail over the faith of any other religion; that they were defeated instead is evidence that by that time those who believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit had already disappeared. One person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit never loses, even in a fight of faith with those who do not believe it. However many they are, and however they challenge him with everything they have, he does not lose.

But after the Edict of Milan, the spiritual power of Christians faded away. There was a reason. They mixed the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with a gospel that was not that truth. And so, right up to the two thousands,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Christians of the whole world came to assert a corrupted gospel of the Cross—a gospel that does not acknowledge the baptism Jesus received and holds only to the blood. As a result the people of later generations were spiritually put to death. Believing the wrong gospel, the sins of their hearts were not washed. However much one believes only in the blood of the Cross, sin is not washed away. This is spiritual death. It is written that it is appointed for men to be born once and die once, and after this comes judgment; such a person dies both in the flesh and in the spirit—dying twice.

God determined to save humankind with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, yet there are those who corrupt that truth and believe a half gospel of their own making. With the framework of their own thoughts they manufacture a remission of sin, manufacture God's blessing, manufacture becoming God's children, and so invent a false faith. Such sin is a truly fearful sin.

Highlighting Only the Suffering of the Cross Is a Corrupted Gospel

Jesus came to this earth, was dragged to Pilate's court, suffered terrible pain, and was nailed to the Cross and died for us. Yet today people preach only that the Lord, to give us true salvation, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and endured contempt, and so saved us. This is the corrupted gospel of Christianity. In the old days the cross was an instrument of execution, but today it has become a symbol of love that people wear around their necks. But did the Lord really remove our sins by nothing more than shedding blood on the Cross? To preach only that, leaving out the baptism, is precisely the

religion that has corrupted the gospel.

Because the Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist and so took on our sins, He could bear the sins of the world and be nailed to the Cross, and could die and rise again. In that way He became the Savior who washed away all our sins, the Deliverer who saved you and me from all sin. But since they corrupted the gospel like that, those who believe in Jesus preaching like Jeroboam end up cursed like Jeroboam and his son and his descendants. The evidence that they are cursed is that they believe in Jesus and yet have sin in their hearts. Believing only in the blood of the Cross, the sins of their hearts are not washed away. This is how fearful the sin of Jeroboam is. It must not be imitated, and it must not be propagated. Whoever preaches such a gospel today receives spiritual curse instead. It has turned Christianity into a worldly religion; it does not save souls but kills them. Dear fellow believers, do you agree? —Yes—

Do Not Commit the Sin That Is Not Remitted

People must not commit the sin Jeroboam committed. Matthew chapter 12 says there is a sin that is not remitted. That is precisely the sin Jeroboam commits. People, not knowing, dress well and speak politely, and make up a beautiful story: the Lord came to this earth, shed His blood, rose from death, and saved us; He is the good God of love and our Savior. But we must know that this story, so beautiful and splendid-looking, is plunging those who believe in Jesus into hell. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that you and I believe today is the truth; and if anyone switches this gospel for a golden calf, or goes to those who have not yet received the remission of sin and listens

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to their words, or unites with them, or fellowships with those who believe a gospel that is only similar to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he falls into the sin of Jeroboam and ends up cursed by God.

If this were the personal sin of one man, it would still be bearable. If a person who believes in God and has been saved commits this or that sin out of weakness, God may be angry, but it ends there. When God was angry with David and took his child, there was an end to it. But the sin of Jeroboam is not like that. When a person corrupts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the curse comes upon him, and the curse comes also upon those who accept that corrupted gospel. Here, then, we gain a very important lesson. We may be lacking and do wrong before God, but this transgression alone we must never commit. The sin that is not remitted must not be committed. The Christians who now corrupt and refuse to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are cursed in this world and cursed in the world to come.

The Church That Exchanged God for Money for the Sake of Its Own Bread

Do you know why there are so many denominations in Christianity today, and why the denominations fight so? They fight over their own bread. They keep creating denominations because, if one becomes president of the general assembly, his bread grows bigger. Believe this way or that way, the gospel is one, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the Lord we believe as Savior is one. It is written, *"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."* Yet there are so many Christian denominations in this world because of bread. That there are so many pastors is

the same. When they make a pastoral visit, an envelope is laid on the table and a prayer of blessing is requested; when one becomes president of the general assembly, many powers follow and the hospitality grows lavish. So they covet that position. This is exactly the same as the sin of Jeroboam, who made two golden calves and called them the house of God, saying, "This is the god who brought you out." To make his own living he switches God. He set up as a golden calf the God who came by water and the Spirit, the God who blessed us.

Look at our country's ssireum wrestling tournaments: what is the final prize the winner of the championship receives? A bull made of gold. It is the symbol of strength, and in the old days it was actually made of gold. People count strength and material things as supreme like that, and switch God for money. Many ministers, when they could simply know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have exchanged God for money. The Lord said in John chapter 3 that unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God nor see God. Without being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit no one can ever enter the kingdom of God, and without believing this gospel no one can receive the washing of the sins of his heart. Yet today Christianity has become heresy collectively and fallen into the sin of Jeroboam, and as Jeroboam did, they are making not only themselves but their descendants and their people the same.

What the Lord Wants Us to Know

God sweeps away all who have fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. They are cursed and put to death. What a wrong thing this is! The Lord did not come to this earth to show us

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

His suffering as an example. He came to truly wash and take on our sins, to make us God's people, to give us true happiness, and to have us live well with God forever hereafter. The Lord does not want us to recognize how great a sacrifice He made, how much contempt and piercing He endured. Rather, He wants us to know that He came to this earth, received baptism and so took on our sins, bore the sins of you and me, went and received the judgment on the Cross, and so truly made us God's children. He wants us to know that He has enabled us to enjoy eternal happiness and blessing in the world to come and to live with God.

Yet the Christian believers of today who have fallen into the sin of Jeroboam keep highlighting only that Jesus suffered on the Cross. Jesus suffered on the Cross because He had come to this earth and received baptism and so taken on our sins. That is why He could be nailed to the Cross, and why He could rise from death and save us from sin and judgment. In this way the Lord has made you and me truly without sin. People regard Jesus as if He were the founder of some religion who underwent great suffering, thinking only of how much He must have hurt, how much contempt He must have borne, and saying that He endured that suffering and gave us salvation. But if one preaches only that, it is a worldly religion.

Dear fellow believers, every religion is something man has made. They say the Jade Emperor came down to this earth, made the universe and all things, and gave man the way to receive blessing—and that way, they say, is asceticism. If you cleanse your mind, train yourself, and attain the way, you will finally reach the place where the Jade Emperor is. If you rise at dawn, bathe and purify yourself, chant incantations, and polish body and mind, you will become a holy person and go to the heavenly kingdom. In the end, man makes a god and then, by

his own polishing, goes to heaven—this is precisely the deceiving of people. It is falling straight into the trick of the Devil, who told Adam and Eve that if they ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, they would become like God.

We are not saved by living kindly and holily in this world. It does not come by practicing asceticism and attaining enlightenment; we must realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God gave us the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; He received baptism and so took on our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us—that is, the Lord has already taken on our sins and received the judgment for us; and we are saved by knowing and believing this. God wants us to know and believe it, to give thanks before God, and to praise God who has given us true happiness. God desires not so much to receive some service from us as to live happily together, through endless ages, with those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Realize the Enormous Difference and Keep the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Brother Pilsu used to sit in this place. When Brother Pilsu came here, he had already settled that he would go to the army before long. Brother Yunho was also a brother due to go to the army. Just as Brother Pilsu lived here on the premise that he would go to the army, so the Lord has promised that within the endless ages He will let us truly enjoy divine authority, and to fulfill that promise He gave you and me salvation. He came to this earth, received baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us.

Of course, I am not dismissing the suffering the Lord

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

endured when He came to this earth. But while we shed tears of thanks when we think of having been saved from all our sins, we must not think only of the suffering of the Cross. The purpose for which Jesus Christ came to this earth and suffered was to receive baptism and so take on the sins of you and me, to make us complete, lacking nothing for entering the kingdom of heaven, and to give us such blessing. The salvation the Lord has given us and the future He has promised are certainly fulfilled. It is written that if this life were all and there were no resurrection, no one would be more pitiable than those who believe in Jesus; but the Lord has promised to raise us again and let us enjoy the authority of the endless world.

Therefore, we must know this and know that as well, but above all we must know that the Lord has truly blessed us, and we must know that corrupting the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same as the sin of Jeroboam, and must not fall into that sin. I preach this word not only to those in this place, but to our fellow workers and brothers and sisters throughout the whole world, and to all the clergy, church members, and office-bearers who have not yet come into the gospel of the water and the Spirit but are fallen in the sin of Jeroboam.

People now do not know how wrong the Christianity of the whole world has gone. They think it differs only a little, but in fact the difference is enormous. Between the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the one who believes only in the blood of the Cross, the difference in reward and curse before God is beyond comparison. We receive the eternal reward and blessing; they receive the eternal curse and suffering. People invoke the names of the Reformers and say, like Martin Luther, let us return to the Word. But if one believes only in the blood of the Cross, what use is returning to the Reformation, and what use is cleansing one’s life ever so

thoroughly? The leaders of Christianity have tried everything—great awakening movements, all kinds of revival movements, fasting prayer, monastic life—but fallen in the sin of Jeroboam and not knowing what is wrong, they could not get out of it.

To come out of the sin of Jeroboam, one must know, learn, and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then can one come out, see God, and have the sins of heart and conscience washed away. The person who calls Jesus "Lord, Lord" and yet has sin in his heart is a person fallen in the sin of Jeroboam. The church today keeps telling people only to give much money. As soon as one starts attending, they stress tithes, thanksgiving offerings, and all kinds of gifts, and put forward service alone. If one does not give much offering, he is disliked and even ostracized. A true leader must fight the battles that ought to be fought, as David did. Solomon's fault was that he did not fight when he should have fought. A leader who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit ought to labor in the flesh, serve the gospel, and become the compost of gospel preaching. But they do no work and, with a few sermons, receive great material reward and enjoy only hospitality—so Christianity has fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. The church members too seek only the blessing of prospering, growing rich, and being healthy in this world rather than believing in Jesus and going to heaven; this is precisely the sin of replacing God with a golden calf.

Much time has passed, so I will sum up and close. If we were to speak of those fallen into the sin of Jeroboam, there would be no end. Even a person who has received the remission of sin, if he is careless, falls into the sin of Jeroboam. We cannot listen to just anyone's sermon, and we cannot receive fellowship from a person who has not received the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

remission of sin. Nor can a priest be appointed at random. God removed sins cleanly on the tenth day of the seventh month, and our Lord came to this earth, received baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us—this can never be corrupted. We believe this plainly. Believing it, we know there will be shortcomings in the flesh. Nevertheless, since the Lord has removed all our sins, we have no sin. Therefore we praise the Lord. We give thanks before the Lord who has given us such a great blessing. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? —Yes— I give thanks. I close the message. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Faith That Lost the Gold Shields and Took Up Bronze Shields

< 1 Kings 14:21-31 >

"And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom. Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijam his son reigned in his place."

1 Kings chapter 14 does not speak only of the judgment of Jeroboam in northern Israel. The latter part of this chapter shows together the sin and the shame of Rehoboam in Judah. Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained and set up golden calves, leading Israel into sin. But Judah was not safe either. Rehoboam reigned in Jerusalem, the city God had chosen to put His name there, yet Judah set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, and imitated the abominations of the pagans.

This is the fearful flow of 1 Kings chapter 14. In the north there were the golden calves and a corrupted law of sacrifice; in the south there was the name of the temple of Jerusalem, but idols and high places stood together with it. The forms differed, but both had departed from the way God had ordained.

The faith of today must also examine itself before this word. Outwardly one can call on the name of Jesus, bear the name of a church, and keep the forms of worship. But if one loses the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it becomes a faith that has lost its glory. The truth must be at the center: Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed the

salvation by rising again from death.

If one loses this truth, one's faith becomes a faith whose gold shields have been taken away and replaced with bronze shields.

The Name of Jerusalem Alone Cannot Serve God

Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem. The Scripture calls Jerusalem *"the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there" (1 Kings 14:21)*. This was the great privilege Judah possessed. Northern Israel offered wrong sacrifices before the golden calves of Bethel and Dan, but Judah had the city where God had put His name.

But the Scripture immediately says that Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD. Their evil exceeded all that their fathers had done, provoking the wrath of God. They set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah on the high hills and under every green tree. They imitated the abominations of the pagan nations that God had driven out before the children of Israel.

This shows that the name of Jerusalem could not automatically protect anyone. Even living where the temple stands, if the heart is not directed toward God, one can fall into idolatry. Even with the law of sacrifice God ordained close at hand, if a person follows his own desires, he ends up building high places.

It is the same today. The name of Christianity, the name of a church, an old tradition, offices and forms of ministry do not make anyone stand rightly before God. What matters is whether one believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

one does not believe the truth that sin was passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received, then however much he speaks of the blood of the Cross, the sins of his heart do not disappear. True faith must be built not on names and places but on the Word of salvation God has ordained.

Solomon's Corruption Remained as the Shame of the Next Generation

Rehoboam was the son of Solomon. Solomon was a king who received wisdom and riches from God. He was the king who built the temple, a king who enjoyed great glory in the history of Israel. But in his later years he loved foreign women and received their idols. He failed to use to the end, in serving the righteousness of God, the wisdom and wealth he had received from God.

The fruit of that corruption appeared in the days of Rehoboam. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonitess. It is no accident that the Scripture records this fact repeatedly. It shows that the foreign influence Solomon had received, and the stream of idolatry, were still casting their shadow over the next generation.

Sin may not end in one generation. Especially when one uses the position and the blessing God has given for his own desires, the results can remain upon his children, his community, and the age that follows. Solomon's corruption led to the division of the nation; Jeroboam's sin led all northern Israel into sin; and Judah in the days of Rehoboam was also defiled with idols and high places.

Believers must look at this stream with fear. The grace and blessing received from God were not given us to build our own

palaces. They were given us to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to preach the righteousness of God, and to bring souls to life. If one uses material things, position, and opportunities of ministry for his own glory, it can in the end flow into the same path as Solomon's corruption.

The Plundering of the Temple Treasures Is the Sign of a Faith That Lost Its Glory

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He took all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and carried off all the gold shields Solomon had made. This was Judah's shame. Jerusalem, the city where God had put His name, was invaded by the king of Egypt, and the treasures of the temple and the palace passed into his hands.

If God had been with them, the treasures of Jerusalem would not have been taken like this. But Judah had set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah. They had imitated the abominations of the pagans God had driven out. So Shishak's invasion was not merely a military defeat; it was the event in which a faith that had left God lost its glory.

The temple treasures do not mean only outward gold and silver. Seen spiritually, they make us think of the glory of the truth and grace God has given. If the church today loses the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is the same as having the temple treasures plundered. Even if buildings, organization, and activities remain outwardly, if the truth that actually washes people's sins is lost, the spiritual treasure is gone.

If one loses the baptism Jesus received, he cannot know why the blood of the Cross became the judgment of sin. If one

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

loses the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person is left soothing himself with religious comfort while sin remains in his heart. This is the same as a faith that has lost the temple treasures and holds only to the name of the temple.

The Faith That Substitutes Bronze Shields for Gold Shields

When Shishak carried off all of Solomon's gold shields, Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place. Whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried those bronze shields and then brought them back again. Outwardly the royal procession was still there. There were shields. There was the form of entering the house of the LORD. But those shields were not gold shields; they were bronze.

This scene gives a truly deep spiritual lesson. When a person loses the glory God has given, he must first turn back before God. Judah should have thrown away the high places and the idols and returned to the way God had ordained. But Rehoboam did not recover the gold shields; he substituted bronze shields. He did not restore the real thing; he replaced it with a similar shape.

Wrong faith today is the same. Though it has lost the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people try to substitute religious forms for it. They try to substitute zeal in worship, denominational tradition, offices, theological knowledge, prayers of repentance, and emotional experiences for the assurance of salvation. But these are not the gold shields. They cannot take the place of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The true gold shield God has given is the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus Christ. The Lord

took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John. He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. He justified us by rising again from death. Whoever believes this truth has the sins of his heart disappear and can stand boldly before God.

But if one leaves out this truth and speaks only of the Cross, that is a faith that substitutes bronze shields for gold. It looks like a shield on the outside, but it is not the original glory God gave. Believers must not be content with the form of bronze shields, but must recover the true glory of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A Faith Always at War Is a Faith That Has Lost Its Peace

1 Kings chapter 14 says there was always war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Judah and northern Israel were originally one people. But through Solomon's corruption, Jeroboam's sin, Rehoboam's folly, and Judah's idolatry, they were divided and fought each other.

This war is not merely a political conflict. It is the fruit left by the sin of departing from the way God has ordained. When people leave God, peace disappears between them. And when one loses the gospel of the water and the Spirit, peace disappears within the soul as well. While sin remains in the heart, a person cannot stand boldly before God, and he keeps wavering between sinner and righteous.

The faith that does not know the baptism Jesus received fights daily with its own sins yet never arrives at the assurance of the remission of sin. If one holds only to the Cross and repeats prayers of repentance, the heart is always shaken by

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

newly committed sins. So there is always war within the soul. This is the suffering of a faith that does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

But whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the assurance that he has no sin before God. Not because his own deeds are perfect, but because Jesus took on all sins by His baptism, finished their judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death. Whoever believes this truth obtains reconciliation with God and enjoys true peace in his heart.

We Must Not Lose the Glory of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 14 shows us two pictures together. Jeroboam of northern Israel changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained and set up golden calves. In the days of Rehoboam of Judah, the name of the temple of Jerusalem remained, but high places and idols were set up, and the temple treasures and the gold shields were taken by the king of Egypt. The north corrupted the law of sacrifice openly; the south, holding the holy name, let its heart flow to idols.

These two pictures are a direct warning to the faith of today. Some faiths openly change the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained; others seem to speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit but in fact lose its glory to human forms, traditions, and desires. Neither is the way God delights in.

Believers must not become a faith that loses the gold shields and takes up bronze shields. We must not lose the gospel of the water and the Spirit and substitute religious forms for it. We must hold on to the truth of the salvation completed

through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Only this truth is the true glory God has given.

We must believe the Word of salvation God has ordained exactly as it is. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The faith that stands on this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true treasure of the temple, the gold shield we must keep.

Therefore we must depart from the golden calves of Jeroboam. We must also depart from the bronze-shield faith of Rehoboam. Holding fast the glory of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given, we must live lives that bring ourselves and other souls to life by this truth. This is the warning 1 Kings chapter 14 gives us today, and at the same time it is the gracious call of God to return to Him. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

CHAPTER

15

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 15

1) Summary of the Entire Content

1 Kings chapter 15 records in order the reigns of Abijam and Asa of southern Judah and of Nadab and Baasha of northern Israel. Abijam, Nadab, and Baasha followed the sins of the kings before them, but Asa removed the idols and did what was right before God. Yet Asa, too, failed to remove the high places, and to resolve the war with northern Israel he used the treasures of the temple as a means of diplomacy.

1. Abijam Becomes King of Judah, Verses 1–3

In the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's rule over northern Israel, Abijam became king of southern Judah. Abijam reigned in Jerusalem for three years, and his mother was Maachah.

Abijam followed the exact sins that his father Rehoboam had committed. His heart was not like the heart of David, and he was not perfect before God.

When the books of Kings evaluate a king, they take as their standard not the size of the nation or its military strength but the king's heart toward God and his obedience. Abijam inherited the throne of the dynasty of David, but he did not inherit the faith with which David had followed God with all his heart.

2. God Preserves the Dynasty for David's Sake, Verses 4–5

Even though Abijam was not perfect before God, God did not immediately depose him from the throne. This was because God left a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake and let David's

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

descendants continue on the throne.

Here the lamp means the continuation of the lineage and rule of the dynasty of David. Abijam was able to inherit the throne not because his faith or merits were outstanding, but because of the promise God had given to David.

David committed a great sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, but apart from that matter he is evaluated as a king who followed God's commands and did what was right before God. This does not mean that David was without any fault; it means that he did not cast God away through idolatry but kept the center of his faith toward God.

3. Abijam's Death and Asa's Succession, Verses 6–8

The war that had continued between Rehoboam and Jeroboam went on in the days of Abijam as well. After the nation was divided into southern Judah and northern Israel, the two kingdoms, though one people, stood against each other.

Abijam finished his short reign, died, and was buried in the City of David. His son Asa succeeded him and became king of Judah.

The king changed, but the conflict between southern Judah and northern Israel was not resolved. The consequences of the idolatry and the division of the kingdom that began in Solomon's last years continued into the next generation.

4. Asa Does What Is Right before God, Verses 9–15

In the twentieth year of Jeroboam's rule over northern Israel, Asa became king of Judah. Asa ruled Judah in Jerusalem for forty-one years.

Asa did what was right before God, as his father David had done. He removed the corrupt practices of the pagan religion that had spread through Judah and did away with the idols his

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

fathers had made.

When Maachah made an abominable idol of Asherah, he deposed her from the position of queen mother. Asa cut down that idol and burned it by the Brook Kidron.

Even when it was his close family, if they practiced idolatry, Asa dealt with it by the king's authority. He put obedience toward God and the spiritual order of the nation before family relationships.

Asa brought into the temple the silver and gold and utensils that his father and he himself had dedicated. In the days of Rehoboam the treasures of the temple had been taken by Shishak king of Egypt, but in the days of Asa the temple began to be filled again with dedicated things.

5. Even with Asa's Reforms the High Places Remained, Verse 14

Asa removed many idols and did what was right before God, but he did not do away with the high places completely. The high places had originally been used at times as places where sacrifice was offered to God, but as time passed they became places mixed with idolatry.

Asa's reforms were clear and strong, but they did not completely remove every element of wrong faith in Judah. Nevertheless, Asa's heart is evaluated as having been perfect before God all his life.

This does not mean that all of Asa's actions were complete; it means that his heart did not follow idols but was directed toward God. The books of Kings do not hide his shortcomings, and yet they acknowledge the center of his heart toward God.

6. Baasha Builds Ramah and Presses Judah, Verses 16–17

Between Asa and Baasha king of northern Israel there was

war all their days. Baasha built Ramah in order to press southern Judah.

Ramah lay on an important route north of Jerusalem. If Baasha seized Ramah, he could control the movement of the people of northern Israel going down to southern Judah and the people of Judah moving north.

Baasha intended to fortify Ramah, block the passage of Judah, and press Asa politically and economically. Rather than resolving this crisis directly by military means, Asa chose a diplomatic method.

7. Asa Makes a Treaty with Ben-Hadad King of Syria, Verses 18–21

Asa took the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of the temple and of the king's house and sent them to Ben-Hadad king of Syria in Damascus. He asked Ben-Hadad to break the treaty he had made with Baasha king of northern Israel and to take Judah's side.

Ben-Hadad accepted Asa's request and attacked several cities of northern Israel. Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, all Chinneroth, and all the land of Naphtali came under attack.

When his northern border was attacked, Baasha stopped the work of building Ramah and returned to Tirzah. Asa's diplomatic plan succeeded in resolving the immediate military crisis.

But Asa sent the treasures that had been dedicated for the temple to the king of Syria and used them as the price of a political treaty. 1 Kings chapter 15 adds no direct evaluation of this act, but it records the fact that the treasures of the temple passed once again into the hands of a foreign king.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

8. Asa Builds Geba and Mizpah with the Materials of Ramah, Verse 22

When Baasha stopped building Ramah, Asa commanded all the people of Judah to carry away the stones and timber left at Ramah. He let no one be exempted from this work.

Asa used those materials to build Geba and Mizpah in the region of Benjamin. The materials Baasha had prepared to press Judah were instead used to strengthen Judah's defenses.

With this, Baasha's plan to control Judah's passage through Ramah failed, and Asa was able to put in order Judah's northern line of defense.

9. Asa's Death and Jehoshaphat's Succession, Verses 23–24

Asa built several cities with great might. He ruled Judah for forty-one years, removing idols and setting the nation's order of faith aright.

But when Asa grew old, he was diseased in his feet. The Scriptures do not hide the fact that bodily disease and the frailty of old age came even to a king who had lived rightly before God.

After Asa died he was buried in the City of David, and his son Jehoshaphat succeeded to the throne. The lamp of the dynasty of David continued according to the promise of God.

10. Jeroboam's Son Nadab Becomes King of Northern Israel, Verses 25–26

In the second year of Asa's rule over Judah, Jeroboam's son Nadab became king of northern Israel. Nadab ruled Israel for two years.

Nadab followed the way of his father Jeroboam just as it was. He did not cast away the golden calves and the false sacrificial system Jeroboam had made, and he made the people

of northern Israel continue to walk in that sin.

Jeroboam had made a wrong system in order to keep his own kingship, and Nadab inherited it and kept it as it was. If a wrong faith is not set right in the next generation, it goes beyond an individual's sin and becomes the way of the whole dynasty and nation.

11. Baasha Kills Nadab and Becomes King, Verses 27–28

Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against Nadab. At that time Nadab and the army of northern Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

Baasha killed Nadab in the midst of the war and became king of northern Israel. Nadab's reign ended after only two years, and the dynasty Jeroboam had established collapsed with its second king.

Nadab inherited not only his father's throne but also his father's sin. His failure to keep the kingship was the process by which God's judgment pronounced on the house of Jeroboam was fulfilled.

12. The House of Jeroboam Is Completely Destroyed, Verses 29–30

After Baasha became king, he struck the whole house of Jeroboam and did not leave anyone that breathed. With this, the Word of God proclaimed through Ahijah the Shilonite was fulfilled just as it had been spoken.

The reason the house of Jeroboam was destroyed was that Jeroboam not only sinned himself but also made the people of northern Israel sin. He replaced God with golden calves and changed the sacrificial system God had ordained, and so provoked the wrath of God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The system Jeroboam made to establish his own house firmly when he became king in the end became the cause that destroyed his own house. A kingship that departed from the Word of God and tried to preserve itself by human methods could not last long.

13. Baasha Also Follows the Way of Jeroboam, Verses 31–34

Baasha became the instrument that judged the house of Jeroboam, but he himself did not cast away the sin of Jeroboam. He kept the golden calves and the false sacrificial system of Jeroboam just as they were.

Baasha saw with his own eyes why the dynasty of Jeroboam was destroyed, but he learned no lesson from that destruction. He changed only the dynasty; he did not change the spiritual direction of northern Israel.

Baasha ruled northern Israel from Tirzah for twenty-four years. The name of the king changed from Jeroboam to Nadab and to Baasha, but the way of Jeroboam, which made the people sin, continued.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 15

First, God evaluates a king not by his outward achievements but by his heart toward God. Abijam inherited the throne, but his heart was not perfect before God; Asa was evaluated as a king who did what was right before God.

Second, the dynasty of David was preserved not because of the merits of his descendants but because of the promise God had given to David. Despite Abijam’s shortcomings, God left a lamp in Jerusalem for David’s sake.

Third, obedience toward God can demand the resolve to deal even with the idol of a close family member. Asa removed

the idol Maachah had made and deposed her from the position of queen mother.

Fourth, even a person with a right heart can have problems left that he has not yet removed. Asa did away with many idols but could not completely remove the high places. Nevertheless his heart was directed toward God all his life.

Fifth, even when a realistic method can solve the immediate problem, we must examine what was given away in the process. Asa escaped Baasha's pressure with the help of the king of Syria, but he used the treasures of the temple and the king's house as the price.

Sixth, following the wrongs of the parents' generation just as they are can become the way of inheriting the judgment as well. Nadab inherited Jeroboam's sin together with his throne, and in the end he did not escape the judgment pronounced on the house of Jeroboam.

Seventh, judging another person's sin does not automatically make one a righteous person. Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he himself also did evil, following the way of Jeroboam.

Eighth, the Word of God is fulfilled without fail. The complete destruction of the house of Jeroboam was the event in which the Word of God proclaimed through Ahijah was fulfilled in history just as it had been spoken.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 15 contrasts the reforms of Asa, who followed the way of David, with the evil of Nadab and Baasha, who followed the way of Jeroboam, and shows that God examines a person's heart and obedience and fulfills His Word without fail.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

2) Chapter 15 Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 15 contrasts Abijam, who was not perfect before God; Asa, who removed the idols and kept his heart toward God; and Nadab and Baasha, who inherited the wrong faith of Jeroboam. Seen at the level of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this chapter shows that salvation is founded not on human merits but on God's promise and the righteousness Jesus accomplished, and that the person who has been saved must cast away the idols of his heart and keep the truth of the gospel.

1. Abijam's Heart That Was Not Perfect, Verses 1–3

Abijam inherited the throne of the dynasty of David, but he followed the sins his father Rehoboam had committed. His heart was not directed perfectly toward God as David's was.

The mere fact that Abijam belonged to the dynasty of David did not make his faith perfect. In the same way, the faith of one's parents or ancestors and one's religious affiliation cannot take the place of an individual's salvation. Each person must believe with his own heart the Word of salvation God has accomplished.

No one can become complete before God by the deeds of the flesh. Because there is sin in every person's heart, whoever tries to become righteous by his own good deeds and loyalty only keeps discovering his own shortcomings. The way for a sinner to become righteous before God lies in believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

2. The Lamp Left for David's Sake, Verses 4–5

Even though Abijam's heart was not perfect, God

remembered the promise He had given to David and left a lamp in Jerusalem. He let David's descendants continue on the throne.

This shows that the dynasty of David was maintained not by the complete deeds of his descendants but was preserved by the promise of God. The salvation God promised is likewise founded not on human merits but on the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus bore on His own body all the sins of mankind. Then, carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again from death. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not rely on his own deeds but believes in the salvation Jesus completed, and so receives the remission of sin.

Just as the lamp given to David continued among his descendants, the light of the salvation Jesus completed shines through the gospel of the water and the Spirit on the people who are in sin.

3. David's Heart and the Heart That Believes in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

David committed a great sin in the matter of Uriah, but he did not make an idol his god or change the way of salvation God had ordained into something else. His heart was still directed toward God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit may also reveal many shortcomings in the flesh. But he does not think that his salvation has become incomplete again because of his shortcomings. He believes the fact that Jesus has already borne all his sins and been judged for them.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Spirit believes the fact that through the baptism Jesus received from John his sins were passed on to Jesus, and that Jesus carried those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore he does not boast of his own flesh but relies on the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

A perfect heart toward God does not mean that one's deeds are flawless; it is the heart that believes in Jesus, who accomplished one's salvation perfectly, and does not follow any other way of salvation.

4. Asa Removes the Idols, Verses 9–13

Asa did what was right before God, as his father David had done. He removed the corrupt practices of the pagan religion that had spread through Judah and did away with the idols his fathers had made.

When Maachah made an abominable idol of Asherah, Asa deposed her from the position of queen mother, cut down that idol, and burned it by the Brook Kidron. He did not leave the idol alone just because it had been made by his close family.

In the heart of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as well, whatever has risen higher than God can become an idol. If wealth, honor, people's recognition, or one's own fleshly desires come before the gospel, they must be laid down from the heart.

Just as Asa cut down the idol and burned it, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit casts away his own merits and religious pride. And he puts only the salvation Jesus accomplished at the center of his faith.

5. The High Places Remained, but Asa's Heart Was Directed toward God, Verses 14–15

Asa removed many idols, but he could not do away with the high places completely. His reforms had areas that fell short. Nevertheless the Scriptures evaluate Asa's heart as having been perfect before God all his life.

This does not mean that God said all of Asa's actions were complete; it means that his heart was not directed toward idols but toward God.

The person who has been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who is perfect in the flesh either. But in his heart there is the faith that all his sins were passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins was finished on the Cross.

The person who has been saved does not take his shortcomings lightly, but neither does he think that he has become a sinner again because of those shortcomings. He believes in Jesus, who made him perfect within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

6. The Sacrifice of the Old Testament and the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

In the sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins onto it. The offering that took over the sins bore those sins and shed its blood and died. The laying on of hands and the blood were one sacrifice that accomplished the passing on of sin and its judgment.

Jesus received baptism from John in order to complete this will of salvation. As the representative of mankind, John the Baptist baptized Jesus, and through that baptism, Jesus took

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

upon Himself the sins of all the people in the world.

Jesus carried the sins He had taken on with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of the person who believes in this salvation completed by the water and the blood that all his sins have been washed away.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that believes as one the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death. The person who believes in this gospel comes to be assured, on the basis of the Word of God, of the fact that there is no sin in his heart.

7. The Unceasing War between Asa and Baasha, Verses 16–17

Between Asa and Baasha king of northern Israel there was war all their days. Baasha built Ramah and tried to keep people from going in and out to Asa king of Judah.

Seen spiritually, even after we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is a continuing fight between the thoughts of the flesh and faith. The flesh tries to rely on visible strength, material things, and human help, but faith makes us rely on God and His Word.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who is born again, but the flesh itself has not been changed into something complete. Therefore the person who believes in the gospel must not simply follow his own thoughts but must discern them by the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit leads the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to keep and preach the gospel and to serve the will of God. This spiritual fight is not a fight to obtain

salvation again, but a fight to keep by faith the salvation already received and to serve the gospel.

8. Asa Sends the Treasures of the Temple to Ben-Hadad, Verses 18–22

To resolve Baasha's pressure, Asa sent the silver and gold that remained in the temple and the king's house to Ben-Hadad king of Syria. In return Ben-Hadad attacked several cities of northern Israel, and Baasha stopped building Ramah.

Asa's method was effective in resolving the immediate crisis. But the treasures dedicated to God were used as the price of a political treaty. Asa relied first on the visible strength of a foreign king rather than on God.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also put the world's strength and human methods before the gospel when he meets difficulty. Even if that method brings realistic success, it does not necessarily mean he has acted by faith.

The gospel must not be exchanged for the world's recognition or material help. If we reduce or alter the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to gather many people and gain outward strength, it is like handing over to the world the spiritual treasure God has given us.

9. Asa's Disease of the Feet and the End of His Life, Verses 23–24

Asa ruled Judah for a long time and built several cities, but when he grew old he became diseased in his feet. Even a king who had lived rightly before God could not avoid the disease and death of the flesh.

The fact that we have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that all bodily disease

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and worldly hardship disappear. Salvation is not the flesh living forever on this earth; it is having all the sins of the heart washed away, becoming a child of God, and obtaining eternal life.

Jesus gave eternal life to those who believe, through the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Therefore, even though the flesh grows weak and meets death, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has eternal life to live with God.

10. Nadab Inherits the Sin of Jeroboam, Verses 25–26

Jeroboam's son Nadab inherited not only his father's throne but also his father's wrong faith. He did not cast away the golden calves and the false sacrificial system Jeroboam had made.

A wrong faith, if not set right, is passed down to the next generation. People easily regard as truth what they have long been taught in the community they belong to, but the standard of faith must be not tradition or the claims of the majority but the Word of God recorded in the Scriptures.

A child is not automatically saved because his parents believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The child, too, must himself hear and believe with the heart the fact that Jesus bore all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Conversely, even if the previous generation held a wrong faith, if the next generation comes to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the Scriptures, they can be saved from all sins. What matters is not whose descendant one is but what one believes.

11. The Word concerning the House of Jeroboam Is Fulfilled, Verses 27–30

Baasha killed Nadab at Gibbethon and became king of northern Israel. After he became king, he destroyed the whole house of Jeroboam. With this, the Word proclaimed to the house of Jeroboam through Ahijah was fulfilled just as it had been spoken.

The reason the house of Jeroboam was destroyed was that Jeroboam not only sinned himself but also led the people of northern Israel into a false faith. It was the result of changing the sacrifice and the priesthood God had ordained and making the people serve golden calves as God.

When a leader preaches a wrong gospel, sin remains also in the hearts of the many people who hear and follow his words. Therefore the person who serves souls must first believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be born again, and must preach accurately the Word of salvation recorded in the Scriptures.

The salvation God accomplished does not consist in stressing only the emotion over the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. We must preach the fact that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave eternal life by rising again from death.

12. Baasha Also Follows the Way of Jeroboam, Verses 31–34

Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he kept the golden calves and the sacrificial system Jeroboam had made just as they were. He saw the judgment of Jeroboam with his own eyes, but he did not realize what the cause of that judgment was.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Baasha changed only the master of the dynasty; he did not change the wrong faith of northern Israel. This shows that criticizing and judging another person's wrong does not automatically make one's own faith right.

True change does not lie in changing the name of a person or an organization. One must know and believe through the Word how the sins in one's heart were passed on to Jesus and how they were judged.

When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to know the fact that Jesus has already washed away all our sins, and the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts. The Holy Spirit leads the believer not by human tradition but by the Word of God.

13. The Gospel Must Be Passed On Accurately to the Next Generation

In 1 Kings chapter 15, the heart of David was passed on to Asa, and the wrong faith of Jeroboam was passed on to Nadab and Baasha. Both right faith and wrong faith influence other people.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must pass on accurately the Word of salvation he has received. He must not leave out any of these: the fact that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, the fact that He received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and the fact that He rose again from death.

When we preach the gospel, we must not attack people or force them into submission; we must calmly show through the Word of the Scriptures what sin is and how Jesus removed that sin. When the person who hears the Word believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, he is saved from all sins and becomes a child of God.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 15

First, salvation is founded not on complete human deeds but on God's promise and the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished. Just as the lamp was preserved for David's sake despite Abijam's shortcomings, the believer's salvation rests on what Jesus has completed.

Second, a perfect heart toward God does not mean having no shortcomings in the flesh. It is the heart that believes in Jesus, who bore all one's sins, and does not follow any other way of salvation.

Third, the gospel of the water and the Spirit was completed by the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death. The person who believes in this salvation with the heart receives the washing of all sins and becomes righteous.

Fourth, the person who has been saved must remove the idols in his heart. Just as Asa did away even with the idol made by his close family, we must not let wealth, honor, and people's recognition come before the gospel.

Fifth, the weakness of the flesh remains even in the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But he does not become a sinner again by looking at his own shortcomings; he believes in the salvation Jesus completed and follows the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Sixth, we must not exchange the value of the gospel for the world's strength in order to solve the problems of reality. As with Asa's sending the treasures of the temple to Ben-Hadad, if we reduce or alter the gospel for immediate success, we lose the spiritual treasure.

Seventh, a wrong faith can be passed on to the next generation. Nadab and Baasha saw the destruction of the dynasty of Jeroboam and still did not cast away the way of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam. Therefore every faith must be confirmed by the Word of the Scriptures.

Eighth, the faith of the person who leads souls is very important. When one person preaches an altered gospel, many people come under its influence; but when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached accurately, many people can receive the remission of sin and become the people of God.

Ninth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be passed on just as it is to the next generation and to the whole world. Keeping and preaching the Word of salvation—that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death—is the work entrusted to the people of God.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 15 contrasts Asa, who followed the heart of David and removed the idols, with Nadab and Baasha, who inherited the wrong faith of Jeroboam, and shows that we must believe, keep, and accurately preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death. ✉

1 Kings Chapter 15

The Lamp of David and the Sin Revealed in the Age of the Kings

Introductory Words

1 Kings chapter 15 shows how the next generation of the divided kingdom was evaluated before God. Abijam king of Judah belonged to the lineage of David and reigned as king in Jerusalem, but his heart was not like the heart of David. He followed the sins of his father and was not perfect before God. This shows that the lineage and outward form of faith cannot make a person righteous.

But God left a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake. This was not because of Abijam's righteousness, but because of the covenant and mercy God had given to David. The human kings failed, but God did not cut off the promise of salvation. The grace of this lamp is ultimately completed in Jesus Christ, who came as the descendant of David.

In this chapter Asa, unlike the kings before him, appears as a king who did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He drove out the perverted persons, did away with the idols, and even deposed from the position of queen mother his mother Maachah, who had made an abominable idol of Asherah. Asa's reforms show that even a close relationship and an old tradition must be cast away if they are an idol God hates.

But Asa also had his limits. He could not remove the high

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

places completely, and before the pressure of Baasha he took the silver and gold of the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house and sent them to Ben-Hadad king of Syria. He was a king whose direction was right before God, but he also revealed the weakness of relying on human methods before a crisis. In this way a human king, however good an evaluation he receives, cannot become a complete savior.

Therefore 1 Kings chapter 15 makes us look to the true King, Jesus Christ, to whom the lamp of David leads. Jesus took on all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and accomplished complete salvation by rising again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true lamp that gives life to sinners. We must not hold on only to the outward form of faith like Abijam; we must cast away idols like Asa, and go further, relying not on human methods but only on the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ has completed.

Abijam Became King of Judah in a Divided Age

"In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom" (1 Kings 15:1–2).

1 Kings chapter 15 begins with the scene of Abijam becoming king of Judah. He became king of Judah in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam and reigned in Jerusalem for three years. His reign was not long. But even in this short reign is contained the spiritual stream that had continued since Solomon.

The age in which Abijam became king was after the nation

had already been divided in two. Solomon had departed from God and accepted the idols of his foreign wives, and as a result God tore the nation of Israel apart. In the days of Rehoboam the hearts of the people were divided, and Jeroboam became king of northern Israel, set up golden calves, and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Southern Judah possessed the temple in Jerusalem, but in the days of Rehoboam it too set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, doing evil before God.

It was within this very stream that Abijam became king. His reign, therefore, is not simply the beginning of one king. It is a record that shows what influence Solomon's corruption, Rehoboam's evil way, and Jeroboam's corruption of the law of sacrifice left on the next generation.

Today as well, the wrong faith of one generation influences the next generation. If we do not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in its fullness, and leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the blood of the Cross, those who follow after also fail to know the truth of the remission of sin in its fullness. Therefore we must not think only of the faith of our own age, but must pass on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained to the next generation just as it is.

Abijam's Heart Was Not like the Heart of David

"And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" (1 Kings 15:3).

In evaluating Abijam, the Scriptures say that he *"walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him" (1 Kings 15:3).* In the days of his father Rehoboam, Judah set up

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah, and imitated the abominations of the pagan nations. Abijam did not cut off that evil stream. He repeated the sins of his father's generation.

The Scriptures also say that his heart was not like the heart of his forefather David. David, too, was a weak man. He committed a great sin in the matter of Uriah. But when David was rebuked before God, he turned back, and the center of his heart was directed toward God. He did not replace God with an idol, and he did not change at will the way of salvation God had ordained.

Abijam was not like that. He belonged to the dynasty of David, but he did not follow the heart of David. Outwardly he was a descendant of David and reigned as king in Jerusalem, but his heart was not perfect before God.

This is an important warning for us today as well. The lineage or tradition of faith does not make a person righteous. Even if we are inside the church, in a family of faith, and carry the name of an old faith, if our heart does not stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained, it is not a perfect faith before God.

True faith is believing the truth that Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The heart that believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the right heart before God.

God Left a Lamp in Jerusalem for David's Sake

"Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem" (1 Kings 15:4).

Abijam was not perfect before God, but God gave a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake. He set up his son after him and established Jerusalem. This was not because of Abijam's righteousness, but because of the covenant and mercy God had given to David.

Here the "lamp" shows the grace God left so that the house of David would not be completely cut off. The kings of southern Judah, too, were often not perfect before God, but God left a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake. This shows that God is the One who carries out His promise even in the midst of human failure.

The grace of this lamp ultimately makes us think of the promise of salvation God would accomplish. Even in the midst of human weakness and the failures of the kings, God did not cut off the way of salvation. Through the Christ who would come as the descendant of David, He carried out His will to save sinners.

Jesus Christ came to this earth according to the lineage of David, and by receiving baptism from John He bore all our sins. Then He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and completed salvation by rising again from death. This is the true lamp God has given to sinners. The human kings failed, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord accomplished is the complete light that gives life to sinners.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

David Did What Was Right in the Sight of God

"Because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings 15:5).

Concerning David, the Scriptures say that he *"did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" "all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings 15:5)*. This Word does not mean that David was a complete man without any sin. He clearly committed a great sin. But the Scriptures speak of the direction of his heart. He did not cast God away and make another god his God, and he did not cast away the Word of God and establish his own religion.

David's greatness does not lie in putting forward his own righteousness. When his sin was pointed out before God, he did not hide himself. He fell down before God and sought God's mercy. His was a heart that could return to God.

By contrast, Solomon accepted foreign idols in his last years; Judah in the days of Rehoboam set up high places and idols; and Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. These men, even while holding the position and blessing they had received from God, departed from the way God had ordained.

For us today as well, what matters is the direction of the heart. We are weak, but we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained and stand on that truth. It is not holding on to our own righteousness or deeds, but believing in the righteousness of God—that Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, was judged on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

The Stream of Sin Gave Birth to Continuing War

"And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam" (1 Kings 15:6–7).

Between Rehoboam and Jeroboam there was war all the days of his life. And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam as well. After Solomon's corruption the nation was divided, and that division continued into the next generation. In the days of Abijam, too, the confrontation between southern Judah and northern Israel did not stop.

This war was not merely a political dispute. At its root was the sin of departing from God. Solomon accepted idols, Rehoboam failed to win the hearts of the people, and Jeroboam set up golden calves and a corrupted law of sacrifice to protect his own kingship. As a result, the people of God came to the place of being divided and fighting each other.

When we depart from the way God has ordained, peace disappears. It is the same with a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If a person claims to believe in Jesus while sin remains in his heart, war keeps breaking out within his soul. He wavers between being a sinner and being righteous, and even while repeating prayers of repentance his conscience does not obtain freedom.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives true peace. For Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, ended the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth stands before God as a righteous person who has received the remission of sin.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even Abijam's Short Life Was Recorded before God

"Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. So Abijam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 15:7–8).

The rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. He died and was buried in the City of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. His reign was short—three years. But even that short life was evaluated before God.

In human history, what a king did is recorded. But the Scriptures record as more important with what heart he lived before God. Abijam was buried in the City of David, but his heart was not like the heart of David. He belonged to the lineage of David but did not fully follow the faith of David.

This gives us a deep lesson as well. Whether life is long or short, what matters is with what faith we stand before God. More important than how much we have done is whether we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. What matters is whether we have held on to the truth of salvation accomplished by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

After Abijam, Asa becomes king. God did not put out the lamp for David's sake but raised up the next generation. This shows that God's mercy and covenant continue even in the midst of human failure. But even within that grace, each person must make his own faith clear before God.

1 Kings 15:1–8 Makes Us Look Not at Lineage and Form but at the Faith of the Heart

This passage shows Abijam's short reign and his spiritual evaluation. He was king of Judah, reigned in Jerusalem, and belonged to the lineage of David. But the Scriptures say that his heart was not like the heart of David and that he was not perfect before God. He followed the sins of his father, and the war between south and north continued.

But God left a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake. This shows God's mercy and the faithfulness of His covenant. The human kings failed, but God did not cut off the promise of salvation. That promise was finally completed in Jesus Christ.

Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true lamp God has given to sinners.

Therefore we must not merely possess the lineage and outward form of faith like Abijam. One can belong to the city of David and yet lose the heart of David. One can be inside the church and yet not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One can call on the name of Jesus and yet not believe in the righteousness of God accomplished by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

We must set our hearts on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe the Word of salvation God has ordained just as it is, and pass that truth on to the next generation. This is the way to escape from Solomon's corruption, Jeroboam's sin, and Rehoboam's evil way, and to stand in the faith that pleases God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Asa Became King in the Midst of a Fallen Judah

"In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom" (1 Kings 15:9–10).

Asa became king of Judah in the twentieth year of King Jeroboam. He reigned in Jerusalem for forty-one years. Abijam before him had reigned only three years, but Asa ruled Judah for a long period. What matters, however, is not the length of the reign but in what direction he stood before God.

The age in which Asa became king was an age already much fallen spiritually. Solomon in his last years had accepted the idols of his foreign wives, and in the days of Rehoboam Judah had set up high places, idols, and wooden images of Asherah. Abijam, too, had followed the sins of his father, and there was continual war between the southern and northern kingdoms. In northern Israel, Jeroboam had set up golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, leading the whole people into sin.

In such an age Asa became king. His reign, therefore, is not simply the political story of one king. It is the scene where a movement begins, in the midst of a stream that had departed from God, to stand right before God again.

It is the same today. Even in an age where wrong faith has long continued, God raises up people who stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Though there are many faiths that speak of Jesus and yet leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the Cross, faiths that say one is saved while sin remains in the heart, faiths that try to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts, the way of salvation God has ordained does not change. The believer must be not a person

who follows the current of his age, but a person who turns to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

Asa Did What Was Right in the Eyes of the LORD like David

"Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David" (1 Kings 15:11).

In evaluating Asa, the Scriptures say that he *"did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David" (1 Kings 15:11)*. This is a very precious evaluation. The generation before Asa was not perfect before God. Abijam committed the sins of his father, and his heart was not like the heart of David. But Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, like David.

To be right here does not mean simply to be morally without blemish. It means that the direction of the heart is right before God. David also had weaknesses, but he did not replace God with another god, and he did not change the way God had ordained by his own thinking. He had a heart that knew how to return to God when he was rebuked.

Asa also showed that direction. He did not leave alone the idolatry that had come into Judah. He tried to correct what was wrong and to remove what God hates. This is the fruit of a heart that is right before God.

Today we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also be right before God. A right faith is not pretending to have no sin in one's heart when there is sin. It is setting oneself before the Word of salvation God has ordained. It is believing just as it is the truth that Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

Asa Removed the Perverted Persons and the Idols from the Land

"And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made" (1 Kings 15:12).

Asa banished the perverted persons from the land and did away with all the idols his fathers had made. Earlier, in the days of Rehoboam, there had been perverted persons in the land, and the people had imitated the abominations of the pagan nations God had driven out. Asa did not leave that evil stream alone. He removed the things God hates.

This is the beginning of true reform. To return to God is not merely to seek God with words. It is to cast away the idols God hates. No one can claim to serve God while leaving in place the filthy customs and idols that have settled in the land. Because Asa did what was right before God, he sought to remove the idols and the abominations of the land.

In the heart of the believer today as well there are idols that must be removed. The heart that relies on material things more than on God, the heart that seeks people's recognition and tries to protect one's own kingdom, the heart that holds its own doctrines more firmly than the Word of God—these can become idols. Above all, changing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained into human doctrine is a very fearful idolatry.

Jeroboam replaced God with golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. Today, a faith that tries to

explain the remission of sin while leaving out the baptism of Jesus and speaking only of the blood of the Cross stands in the same stream. If the truth that Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John is left out, we cannot fully know why the blood He shed on the Cross became the judgment of sin. Therefore a doctrine that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot actually remove the sins of the heart.

Asa Even Cut Down and Burned the Idol of His Mother Maachah

"Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron" (1 Kings 15:13).

The most striking scene in Asa's reforms is his deposing his mother Maachah from the position of queen mother. Maachah had made an abominable idol of Asherah. Asa did not leave it alone just because she was his mother. He deposed her from the position of queen mother, cut down that idol, and burned it by the Brook Kidron.

This shows what an honest faith before God is. A person may want to cover over sin because of a close relationship. Because of family tradition, blood ties, and human affection, one may leave in place what God hates. But Asa did not do so. Before God, an idol was an idol. Even though the matter involved his own mother, he removed it.

True faith does not allow anything to come before God. If there is anything we regard as more precious than the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it can become an idol. Family,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

tradition, denomination, people's recognition, and old habits of faith also become idols if they come before the Word of God.

Today we too must be this clear. Even if a teaching different from the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes from someone close to us, or from an old tradition of faith, or from a denomination many people follow, if it differs from the Word of salvation God has ordained, we cannot accept it. Only the truth that Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, was judged for those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death is the way of salvation God has established.

He Could Not Remove the High Places, but Asa's Heart Was Perfect before the LORD

"But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the LORD all his days" (1 Kings 15:14).

Asa removed many idols, but he could not do away with the high places. This point shows that even his reforms had their limits. The high places had long been settled in the faith and life of the people. Asa removed the idols and burned the image of Asherah, but he could not do away with the high places completely.

Yet the Scriptures say that his heart was perfect before the LORD all his days. Here we must see the balance of the Scriptures. It is not that Asa was without shortcomings. But the direction of his heart was toward God. He did not seek to serve idols; he sought to remove what God hates, and he sought to stand honestly before the LORD.

There can be shortcomings in the believer's life as well. But what matters is where the heart stands. We must not hold on to

idols and false faith with our own lack as the excuse; we must have the heart that seeks to stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not become righteous because his deeds are complete either. He has become righteous because Jesus bore all his sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified him by rising again from death. The heart that believes this truth is the ground of a perfect faith before God.

Asa Brought Silver and Gold and Utensils into the House of the LORD

"He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils" (1 Kings 15:15).

Asa brought into the house of the LORD the things his father had dedicated and the things he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. This shows that he had a heart that gives back to God. Earlier, in the days of Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt had taken away the treasures of the house of the LORD, the treasures of the king's house, and the gold shields of Solomon. Judah lost its glory and replaced the gold shields with bronze shields. But Asa again brought dedicated things into the house of the LORD.

The faith that returns to God does not end with casting away idols. It goes on to giving to God what ought to be given to Him. Asa removed the idols and offered to God what had been dedicated. This shows that his heart was directed toward God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Today we too, after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must set apart what we have received from God and offer it to Him. Our time, material things, gifts, and heart were not given to us to build our own kingdom. They were given to us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to give life to souls.

Solomon received many blessings from God, but in his last years he let those blessings flow away into the glory of the flesh and into idols. Jeroboam received the kingship from God, but to keep his own kingship he changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. But Asa removed the idols and offered to God what had been dedicated. We must see this difference.

1 Kings 15:9–15 Teaches Us to Remove the Idols before the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

This passage shows how Asa became king of Judah and did what was right before God. He drove out the perverted persons, did away with the idols his fathers had made, and even deposed from the position of queen mother his mother Maachah, who had made an abominable idol of Asherah. And he cut down that idol and burned it by the Brook Kidron. He could not remove the high places completely, but his heart was perfect before the LORD all his life.

This Word shows what true faith is. The person who has returned to God cannot leave idols alone. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must remove whatever differs from the Word of salvation God has ordained. However strong human tradition, relationships, and one's own thoughts may be, if they cover the truth God has ordained, they must be cut down.

The idols of today are not only golden calves and wooden images of Asherah. A doctrine that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a teaching that says sin can be washed away by prayers of repentance, a religious comfort that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a heart that serves material things and success like God—these too can become idols. Such things must be removed before the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The salvation God has ordained is clear. Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must be honest before God like Asa. We must not leave an idol in place because of a close relationship, nor hold on to a false teaching because of an old tradition. We must cast away whatever does not accord with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and offer to God a heart and a life set apart for Him. This is the lesson of faith that 1 Kings 15:9–15 gives us.

There Was War between Asa and Baasha as Well

"Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings 15:16).

Between Asa and Baasha king of Israel there was war all their days. Asa was king of Judah, and as we saw above, he was evaluated as a king who removed the idols and did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But even in his days the war between southern Judah and northern Israel did not end.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The root of this war lies in the division of the nation that followed Solomon's corruption. Solomon departed from God and accepted idols; the nation was divided in the days of Rehoboam; and Jeroboam set up golden calves in northern Israel and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. As a result, the people who should have served one God were divided into south and north and kept fighting.

Baasha was the man who destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he himself did not depart from the way of Jeroboam. Having seen the house of Jeroboam receive judgment, he should have turned back, but he followed the same stream of sin. This is the fearfulness of a defective faith. A wrong faith does not end with one person; it is passed on to the next person as well.

Today as well, a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot give a person true peace. If the baptism of Jesus is left out and only the blood of the Cross is preached, we cannot know how our sins were passed on to Jesus. Then sin remains in the heart, and we try to resolve that sin with prayers of repentance and our own efforts. Such a faith leaves continual war inside the soul. True peace comes when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

Baasha Built Ramah and Tried to Block Judah's Way

"And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa

king of Judah" (1 Kings 15:17).

Baasha came up against Judah and built Ramah. Ramah was an important junction north of Jerusalem. His attempt to seize that place was a move to block people's coming and going and to press Judah. He tried to hold a strategic military point and block the way of Asa king of Judah.

This scene connects with the continuing stream in which the kings of northern Israel kept using human means to protect their own kingdoms. Jeroboam, too, feared that his kingship would be shaken if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem. So he made golden calves and set up altars at Bethel and Dan. Baasha built Ramah and tried to block the way to and from Judah. The form differs, but the stream of trying to keep one's kingdom by one's own strength and calculation, without relying on God, is the same.

When a person departs from the way God has ordained, he comes to live always by blocking and holding. Jeroboam tried to block the hearts of the people from going to Jerusalem, and Baasha tried to block the actual road. This is a work of blocking the way of freedom and life that God has given.

Today as well, wrong Christian faith can block the way of a soul toward the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we do not preach to people the truth of the remission of sin completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, but teach that the blood of the Cross alone is sufficient, they cannot go forward to the true way of the remission of sin. If we make them try to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and religious efforts, the human conscience remains bound under sin.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Asa Sent the Treasures of the House of the LORD and of the King's House to Ben-Hadad

"Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying" (1 Kings 15:18).

When Baasha pressed him by building Ramah, Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants and sent them to Ben-Hadad king of Syria in Damascus. Earlier, Asa had brought into the house of the LORD the things his father had dedicated and the things he himself had dedicated. But now, when a crisis came, he took out the treasures of the house of the LORD and used them for an alliance with a foreign king.

This part must be viewed very gravely. Asa was a king who had removed the idols, a king evaluated as having done what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But in the face of the crisis, rather than first asking God and relying on Him, he tried to buy a human alliance with the treasures of the temple and the treasures of the king's house.

What has been offered to God belongs to God. The silver and gold of the treasuries of the house of the LORD had been dedicated to God. To send them to a foreign king to obtain political help was to use what had been offered to God as a human means.

Today we too must look back at what we use the things we have received from God for. Our time, material things, gifts, and heart must not become the tools of worldly bargaining to

escape our own crises. What God has given must be used to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to preach the righteousness of God, and to give life to souls. Solomon also received great wisdom and riches from God, but he did not use them to the end in serving the righteousness of God; he let them flow away into the glory of the flesh and into idols. We must fear this stream.

A Human Covenant Can Seem to Solve the Immediate Problem

"Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me" (1 Kings 15:19).

Asa said to Ben-Hadad, *"Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father" (1 Kings 15:19)*. And sending a present of silver and gold, he asked him to break the treaty he had made with Baasha, so that Baasha would withdraw from him. Asa used a political covenant with the king of Syria to resolve Baasha's pressure.

In human eyes this can look like wise diplomacy. Since Baasha was pressing in, it was moving a stronger outside power to hold Baasha in check. In fact, this method brings the effect of solving the immediate problem. But this way is different from the way of faith that relies on God.

The people of God must first ask God in the face of a crisis. They must follow the way God has ordained. But Asa took the treasures dedicated to God and asked a foreign king for help. This is a regrettable point in a king of faith. It shows that even

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

a person who has made a good start can choose the method of the flesh in the face of a crisis.

Today as well, the believer can leave the faith of the gospel of the water and the Spirit before difficulty and take hold of human means. Under the pretext of protecting the church and protecting the ministry, we can blur the truth God has ordained. We must not speak the gospel of the water and the Spirit weakly in order to hold on to people, nor compromise the truth of the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death. The work of God must stand on the truth God has ordained rather than on human calculation.

At Ben-Hadad's Attack, Baasha Stopped Building Ramah

"So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah" (1 Kings 15:20–21).

Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa and sent the captains of his armies to attack the cities of Israel. Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, all Chinneroth, and all the land of Naphtali came under attack. When Baasha heard the news, he stopped building Ramah and remained in Tirzah.

As a result, Asa's plan seems to have succeeded. Baasha stopped building Ramah, and the threat at the junction that had pressed Judah disappeared. But we must not judge this event by its result alone. What matters to the people of God is not only whether the matter was resolved, but with what faith it

was resolved.

Human methods can solve the immediate problem. But if that method does not come from the faith that relies on God, it can become a spiritually dangerous way. This choice of Asa's leads into the stream that later reveals the weakness of his faith. He was a king who removed the idols, but he did not rely wholly on God alone at every moment.

Today as well, we cannot say that because a ministry has succeeded outwardly it is therefore the way that pleases God. Even if many people gather, problems are resolved, and the organization is maintained, if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not at its center, it is not a true spiritual victory. What pleases God is believing in the righteousness of God completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and acting according to that truth.

Asa Built Geba and Mizpah with the Timber and Stones of Ramah

"Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah" (1 Kings 15:22).

When Baasha stopped building Ramah, Asa gave a command to all Judah and let no one be exempted. He had them carry away the stones and timber with which Baasha had been building Ramah, and with them he built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. The materials with which Baasha had been building to block Judah now became building materials for Judah's defense.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

This scene shows that God can also turn the tools of the enemy and use them in another direction. But at the same time, a heavy question remains over Asa's method. He got past the crisis and brought the stones and timber of Ramah to build cities. But in the process, the silver and gold of the treasuries of the house of the LORD passed to a foreign king.

Outwardly, cities were built, but the treasures of the house of the LORD were diminished. The outward defense was strengthened, but what had been dedicated to God was spent as the price of a human alliance. This makes us think about what the believer must protect before a crisis. More important than building cities is keeping the center of faith offered to God.

Today as well, the church and the people of God must not weaken or compromise the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to protect outward stability and organization. In human eyes it may look as though Geba and Mizpah are being built, but if we lose the treasure of the truth offered to God, it is not a true victory. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the treasure of God that must be kept in any crisis.

1 Kings 15:16–22 Asks What We Rely On before a Crisis

This passage records the war between Asa and Baasha, Baasha's building of Ramah, and the event in which Asa sent the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house to Ben-Hadad to ask for help. Asa was a king who had removed the idols, but before the pressure of Baasha he used the treasures dedicated to God for an alliance with a foreign king. As a result, Baasha stopped building Ramah, and Asa built Geba and Mizpah with those stones and that timber.

This Word asks us what we rely on before a crisis. Human methods can solve the immediate problem. But we must not make the truth God has ordained and the things offered to God the tools of worldly bargaining. We must regard keeping the center of faith before God as more precious than solving outward problems.

Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained in order to protect his own kingship. Asa sent the treasures of the house of the LORD to a foreign king in order to get past the crisis of his nation. We cannot say the two are the same sin, but both events make us ask one thing: are we using what God has given us for God, or as a means of protecting our own safety and our own kingdom?

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must regard the truth God has given us as precious above all. Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the most precious treasure God has entrusted to us.

Therefore we must not compromise this truth even before a crisis. We may open a way for a moment by relying on human strength, but if we lose the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we lose the true way that gives life to souls. Looking at both Asa's good points and his regrettable points, we must go beyond the faith that removes idols and stand in the faith that relies on God and on the gospel of the water and the Spirit in every crisis.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

More Important Than the Rest of Asa's Acts Is Faith before God

"The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet" (1 Kings 15:23).

Asa was a king who received a comparatively good evaluation among the kings of Judah. He banished the perverted persons from the land, did away with the idols his fathers had made, and even deposed from the position of queen mother his mother Maachah, who had made an abominable idol of Asherah. He also brought silver and gold and utensils into the house of the LORD. In the stream of idolatry that had continued through the days of Rehoboam and Abijam, Asa was a king who sought to remove what God hates.

But in recording his end, the Scriptures speak of *"the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built" (1 Kings 15:23)*, and then say that these were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. In human history, Asa's might, his achievements, and the cities he built can be recorded. But the Scriptures immediately say, *"But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet" (1 Kings 15:23).*

This Word shows the limit of human might and achievements. Asa did many things, ruled Judah long, and built cities. But he also grew old, and disease came into his feet. Even the might of a king could not hold back the weakness of the flesh. Even a person who has done many things is in the end a frail human being before God.

This gives us an important lesson today as well. However much a person does, and however good the fruit he leaves

within the faith, that cannot become the ground of salvation. Our righteousness does not come from our achievements, our reforms, or our devotion. What makes us righteous before God is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished.

Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is righteous before God. Asa's reforms were a precious work, but he too was not a man made complete by his own deeds. Every person can stand before God only within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Asa, Diseased in His Feet, Shows That the Path of Life Also Has an End

The Word that Asa was diseased in his feet when he grew old is short but deep in meaning. Feet are used for walking a path. They are the members that show which way a person is going. Asa walked many paths as king of Judah. He walked the path of removing idols, and the path of offering dedicated things to God. But before the pressure of Baasha, he also walked the path of sending the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house to Ben-Hadad king of Syria to ask for help.

In Asa's life there are good points and regrettable points together. He was a king who did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but he did not always rely wholly on God alone before a crisis. The record that he was diseased in his feet makes us think that even a good king remains a frail being to the end.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It is the same with us. Even after we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our flesh is weak. Our judgment can fall short, and at times the heart that wants to rely on human methods can arise. Therefore we must not hold on to our own righteousness or our past zeal, but stand to the end on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not save us because our flesh is strong. Rather, because we were weak and in sin, the Lord Himself came to this earth and bore our sins by receiving baptism from John. And He received the wages of those sins on the Cross and gave us complete salvation by rising again from death. Therefore we stand not by the strength of our own feet but by the truth of the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Asa's Death and Burial Show That Every King Returns before God

"So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 15:24).

Asa rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David his forefather. He ruled Judah for many years, but in the end he met death like the other kings. His being buried in the City of David shows that he was a king who belonged to the dynasty of David. But more important than being buried in the City of David is with what faith he lived before God.

The books of Kings record the deaths of the kings again and again. Solomon died, Rehoboam died, Abijam died, and Asa died. The kingship passes on to the next generation, but each person closes his own life before God. Human power may be

passed on, but each person's faith is evaluated before God.

After Asa, his son Jehoshaphat became king. This shows again the fact that God did not completely put out the lamp of the house of David. The human kings were weak and had their failures, but God continued the dynasty of Judah for David's sake. This stream moves forward toward Jesus Christ, who would come as the descendant of David.

Jesus Christ, unlike all human kings, is the King of complete salvation. The human kings grew old, fell sick, and died, but Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross, and gave eternal life by rising again from death. Therefore our hope lies not in the achievements of a good king like Asa, but in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed.

1 Kings 15:23–24 Shows That Even a Good King Has True Hope Only in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

These two verses close Asa's life. The rest of his acts, his might, what he did, and the cities he built were written in the book of the chronicles. But when he grew old he was diseased in his feet, and at last he died and was buried in the City of David. After him, Jehoshaphat became king.

Asa was a king who did what was right before God among the kings of Judah. But his life, too, lay within human limits. He grew old, fell sick, and died. In his life there was also the appearance of relying on God, but there was also the regrettable appearance of relying on a human alliance before a crisis. Therefore, looking at Asa, we must know that even a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

person's good reforms cannot become the ground of salvation.

The ground of salvation is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the true remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must imitate Asa's good points, casting away idols and offering our hearts to God. But at the same time we must also see Asa's limits. Human power, achievements, and reforms come to an end. Our faith must be built not on human deeds but on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed. When we are within this truth, we can hold on to the eternal salvation God has given us even before old age, disease, and death.

Nadab Inherited the Way of His Father Jeroboam

"Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years" (1 Kings 15:25).

From 1 Kings 15:25 the record of Nadab king of northern Israel appears. Nadab was the son of Jeroboam. He became king of Israel after his father and reigned for two years. But his reign did not last long.

What matters is whose son Nadab was. He was the son of Jeroboam. Jeroboam was the man who changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, set up golden calves to replace God, and made priests of ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi. To protect his own kingship, he changed the order of salvation God had ordained. As a result he dragged the

people of Israel into sin.

Nadab became king after this very Jeroboam. He inherited not only the kingship but also the wrong way of faith of his father. This is why this passage must be viewed with fear. A wrong faith does not end in one generation; it can be passed on to the next generation.

It is the same today. If a faith that does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit keeps being passed on in one generation, the next generation also comes to lead a religious life without knowing the truth of the remission of sin. If the truth that Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John is left out and only the blood of the Cross is preached, people cannot know how their sins were passed on to Jesus. Then they come to think they are saved while sin remains in their hearts. This is the inheritance of a wrong faith.

Nadab Did Evil in the Sight of the LORD

"And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 15:26).

In evaluating Nadab, the Scriptures say that he *"did evil in the sight of the LORD" (1 Kings 15:26)*. That evil does not speak only of personal moral corruption. He *"walked in the way of his father" (1 Kings 15:26)*, and walked in the sin by which his father had made Israel sin.

Here the sin of Jeroboam is mentioned again. The sin of Jeroboam was the sin of corrupting the law of sacrifice God had ordained. He feared that if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem his kingship would be shaken. So he set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan and said that they were the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

god who had brought Israel up from Egypt. He also changed the feasts and the priesthood God had ordained.

Nadab did not turn back from this sin. He should have seen what results his father's sin had brought. He should have known that God had prophesied judgment on the house of Jeroboam. But he did not cast away that way. So the Scriptures say that he too walked in the sins of his father.

Today as well, a person can inherit just as they are the faith of his parents, the tradition of his denomination, old doctrines, and the teaching of his pastors. But if these differ from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he must turn back. A tradition does not become truth because it is old. Nor does a way become one God acknowledges because many people have followed it. The way of salvation God has ordained is the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

Baasha's Conspiracy Became the Instrument by Which God's Judgment Was Carried Out

"Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon" (1 Kings 15:27).

Nadab was laying siege to Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. At that time Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him and killed him. Nadab was killed in the midst of war by the treason of his own servant.

This event is not a mere political assassination. It is an event in which the judgment God had already spoken concerning the house of Jeroboam was proceeding. Because

Jeroboam had changed the law of salvation God ordained and had made Israel sin, God had said that He would cut off his house. Nadab's death is the scene where the fulfillment of that Word begins.

It is not that Baasha was used by God because he was a righteous man. Later he himself also walks in the way of Jeroboam. But God uses even human treason and political events to fulfill the Word He has spoken. Nadab was fighting the enemy, but the one who killed him was a servant from within. This shows how unstable a kingdom that has departed from God is.

A faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also look strong on the outside. It can have organization, tradition, and authority. But a faith that has departed from the Word of salvation God has ordained can collapse from within. A faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart cannot give true peace to the conscience. True stability is only within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Word of God Was Fulfilled according to the Prophecy of the Prophet Ahijah

"Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite" (1 Kings 15:28–29).

Baasha killed Nadab and became king in his place. And when he became king, he struck the whole house of Jeroboam.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

He did not leave anyone that breathed, but destroyed them all. This is a very fearful judgment. But the Scriptures say that this came about *"according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite" (1 Kings 15:29)*.

The Word of God is fulfilled without fail. The destruction of the house of Jeroboam in this way was no accident. What God had already spoken through the prophet Ahijah was fulfilled in actual history. People may take the Word of God lightly, but the Word God has spoken is fulfilled just as it is when the time comes.

Jeroboam should have turned back when God warned him. He should have turned back when the altar at Bethel was split apart and his own hand withered and was restored. But he did not depart from his evil way. As a result his house was completely cut off.

Today as well, we must not take lightly the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. The way God has established to save sinners is clear. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death. If we depart from this truth and speak of the remission of sin with human doctrines, the soul comes to depart from the way of life God has ordained.

Jeroboam's Sin Was the Sin of Making Not Only Himself but Israel Sin

"Because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger" (1 Kings 15:30).

The Scriptures state clearly why the house of Jeroboam was destroyed. It was because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin. He did not sin alone. He dragged all the people of Israel into that sin.

He made golden calves and told the people that they were the god who had brought them up from Egypt. He changed the priesthood, changed the feasts, and changed the place of worship. The people thought they were serving God within the system the king had established, but in fact they were committing the sin of departing from the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

This is why the sin of a leader is fearful. When one person establishes a wrong faith, many people follow that faith. When a person who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit stands like a servant of God and preaches only the blood of the Cross, those who hear do not come to know the truth that their sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received. Then they lead a religious life with sin remaining in their hearts.

The servant God is pleased with is the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He must believe that his sins were completely resolved by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and he must preach that truth. If a person leads others without knowing this truth, he can come to stand, like Jeroboam, in the way of sinning himself and making others sin as well.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

More Important Than the Rest of Nadab's Acts Is What Way He Stood In

"Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (1 Kings 15:31).

The Scriptures say that the rest of the acts of Nadab and all that he did were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Nadab, too, as king, would have done various things. There were wars, and there would have been records of his rule. But the Scriptures do not speak of his achievements in detail. They record as more important the fact that he did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father Jeroboam.

In human history, achievements can remain. But before God, what matters more is in what way of faith a person stood. Nadab was a king, but he was a king who had departed from the way God ordained. He inherited his father's sin just as it was, and in the end he was killed within the judgment of that sin.

It is the same today. More important than how long a person has led a life of faith, how much he has done, or what office he has held, is whether he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If he does not believe the truth that sin was completely resolved by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, human achievements cannot become the ground of salvation before God.

The War between Asa and Baasha Was the Continuation of the Unrest Born of Sin

"And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings 15:32).

Between Asa and Baasha king of Israel there was war all their days. Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he himself did not escape from the stream of sin of northern Israel. He became the instrument that struck the house of Jeroboam, but he was not a man who turned back from the sin of Jeroboam.

This shows how wretched the history of sin is. A sinner judges a sinner, a traitor becomes king, and yet another war continues. If we do not return to the way of faith God has ordained, we keep fighting within the same yoke of sin.

Southern Judah and northern Israel were originally one people. But after Solomon's corruption the nation was divided, and through the sin of Jeroboam northern Israel departed as a whole from the law of sacrifice God had ordained. As a result the war did not stop.

A faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit also leaves war inside the soul. If the sins of the heart are not resolved, a person cannot be bold before God. He repeats prayers of repentance, looks back at his own deeds, and wavers between sinner and righteous. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit ends this war. For Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

1 Kings 15:25–32 Warns That a Wrong Faith Gives Birth to a Curse from Generation to Generation

This passage records Nadab's short reign and death, Baasha's treason, and the complete destruction of the house of Jeroboam. Nadab walked in the way of his father Jeroboam and in the sin by which he had made Israel sin. Baasha killed him and became king, and struck the whole house of Jeroboam, leaving no one that breathed. All this was fulfilled according to the Word God had spoken through the prophet Ahijah.

The center of this Word is clear. The sin of Jeroboam brought a curse from generation to generation. That sin was the sin of changing the law of sacrifice God had ordained, making the people serve golden calves like God, and making even the people sin. Nadab did not cast away that way but inherited it. In the end he was killed, and the house of Jeroboam was cut off.

Before this Word, the believer today must fear the inheritance of a wrong faith. Even a tradition learned from people must be cast away if it differs from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts are not the way of salvation God has ordained.

The salvation God has given us is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who has escaped from the sin of Jeroboam and returned to God.

Therefore we must not follow the wrong faith of the

father's generation just as it is, like Nadab. Nor must we become people who strike the sinner and yet repeat the same sin, like Baasha. We must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Only this truth delivers the soul from the curse of a wrong faith handed down from generation to generation and leads it into the true way of life before God.

Baasha Became the Instrument That Judged the House of Jeroboam, but He Himself Did Not Turn Back Either

"In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years" (1 Kings 15:33).

Baasha killed Nadab and became king of northern Israel. He struck the whole house of Jeroboam and left no one that breathed. This was the judgment God had spoken to the house of Jeroboam through Ahijah the Shilonite being fulfilled just as it was. Jeroboam had changed the law of sacrifice God ordained, set up golden calves to replace God, and led the people of Israel into sin. So God had said He would cut off his house, and through Baasha that Word was fulfilled.

But the fact that Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam does not mean he became a man of right faith before God. He became the instrument of God's judgment, but he himself did not return to God. Rather, even after becoming king, he followed the sin of Jeroboam just as it was. This is the very fearful point in this passage.

A person can see another's sin being judged and still not turn back. Baasha saw why the house of Jeroboam was

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

destroyed. He saw that the house was cut off because of the sin of changing the order of salvation God had ordained and making Israel sin. Then he should have cast away the golden calves and returned to the law of sacrifice God had ordained. But he did not do so.

It is the same today. There are people who see the results of a wrong faith and still do not return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They claim to believe in Jesus while sin remains in their hearts; they try to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and their own efforts, and still do not return to the way of salvation God has ordained. The way God has ordained is clear. Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death.

Even a Reign of Twenty-Four Years Did Not Guarantee Right Faith

Baasha ruled Israel from Tirzah for twenty-four years. Twenty-four years is not a short period. He was long on the throne and enjoyed the power of ruling the nation. But the Scriptures record as more important what way he walked than how long he reigned.

In human eyes Baasha was a man who obtained the kingship. He was the man who brought down the house of Jeroboam and opened a new dynasty. But before God, what mattered was whether he had cast away the way of Jeroboam. More than whether he was king for a long time, what mattered was whether he followed the way God had ordained.

Faith is like this too. Attending church for a long time does not make a true faith. Nor does ministering for a long time

make one a true servant of God. What matters is whether one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. What matters is whether one believes the truth that our sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received, that those sins were judged on the Cross, and that salvation was completed by His resurrection from death.

If a person leads a religious life for a long time without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he can rather become more deeply bound to his own doctrines and traditions. Just as Baasha ruled for twenty-four years and still did not escape the sin of Jeroboam, a person can fail to know the way of the remission of sin God has ordained even within a long career of faith.

Baasha Did Evil in the Sight of the LORD

"He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 15:34).

The Scriptures evaluate Baasha clearly. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. That evil was walking in the way of Jeroboam. And it was walking in the sin by which Jeroboam had made Israel sin.

What is the way of Jeroboam? It is the way of casting away the law of sacrifice God ordained and building a system of faith by human thinking in order to protect one's own kingship. He set up golden calves to replace God, built altars at Bethel and Dan, and made priests of ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi. He even set the feasts at his own will. This looked like offering worship to God, but in fact it was the sin of tearing down the way of salvation God had ordained.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Baasha walked in this very way. He brought down the house of Jeroboam, but he did not bring down the sin of Jeroboam. The king changed, but the content of the faith did not change. The man changed, but the golden calves and the corrupted law of sacrifice continued. So northern Israel remained continually in sin before God.

The same thing can happen today. Even if the leader changes, the church system changes, and the name of the ministry changes, if there is no gospel of the water and the Spirit, the essence does not change. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance are not the way of salvation God has ordained. Even if the name and the form differ, if the center has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it belongs to the way of Jeroboam.

Even When the King Changes, a Wrong Faith Can Keep Being Passed On

Baasha was not a king who belonged to the lineage of Jeroboam. He was a man who became king by treason. And yet he inherited the faith of Jeroboam just as it was. This shows that a wrong faith is passed on not only through blood but also through systems of faith, doctrines, and habits.

The house of Jeroboam was destroyed, but the way of Jeroboam did not disappear. The faith of the golden calves continued, and the corrupted sacrificial system also continued. This is the tragedy of northern Israel. Even when God judges the house of one king, if the next king holds on to the same sin, the stream of the curse continues.

Today as well, a wrong faith can keep being passed on through denominations, traditions, and human teaching. A doctrine that speaks only of the blood of the Cross without knowing the baptism of Jesus can be handed down from one generation to the next. A teaching that says it is enough to keep praying prayers of repentance even though sin remains in the heart can keep people bound in sin. The fact that many people believe that way does not make it the truth.

The truth is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. Jesus took on the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death. When we believe this truth, we are saved from the sins of the heart.

Even One Who Stands in the Place of Judging Others Must Himself Stand in the Truth

Baasha stood in the place of destroying the house of Jeroboam. But he did not see his own sin. He struck the house of Jeroboam, but he followed the way of Jeroboam just as it was. This shows that pointing out or tearing down another person's wrong does not by itself make one righteous.

A person can see another person's sin. He can also say which faith is wrong. But if he himself does not stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he can end up remaining in the same way of sin. Even though Baasha became the instrument that judged the house of Jeroboam, because he followed the way of Jeroboam he too became an evil king before God.

Before this Word we must look back at ourselves. We must discern wrong Christian faith. We must discern the teaching

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, the doctrine that says one is saved even though sin remains in the heart, and the faith that serves material things and success like God. But we must not stop at discerning them; we ourselves must stand firmly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

True faith does not end with criticizing another person's sin. It is believing the Word of salvation God has ordained and living within that truth. It is standing in the faith that Jesus bore all my sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified me by rising again from death.

1 Kings 15:33–34 Warns Us to Actually Turn Back from the Way of Jeroboam

These two verses record the beginning of Baasha's reign and his spiritual evaluation. He ruled Israel for twenty-four years, but he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in the sin by which Jeroboam had made Israel sin.

Here we gain an important lesson. The destruction of the house of Jeroboam did not mean the end of the sin of Jeroboam. The dynasty changed, but the wrong faith continued. Baasha saw God judge the house of Jeroboam, but he did not learn from that judgment and return to God. He repeated the same sin.

Today as well, a person can see the results of a wrong faith and still not turn back. Even while knowing how unstable a faith is in which sin remains in the heart, he can fail to return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If he does not know the

baptism Jesus received, he cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus, and with the blood of the Cross alone he cannot stand in the assurance that the sins of his heart have actually disappeared. If he still holds on to old doctrines and traditions, that is to keep walking the way of Jeroboam.

The way God has given us is clear. Jesus Christ bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the person who stands in the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

Therefore we must not repeat the same sin after seeing another's sin, like Baasha. We must not become people who destroy the house of Jeroboam and yet follow the way of Jeroboam. Even when the king changes, the name changes, and the form changes, if there is no gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not the way of life. We must actually turn back from the way of Jeroboam and stand firmly within the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God's Curse on Those Who Have Become Heretics

< 1 Kings 15:25-34 >

"Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin."

The Wrong Faith of Heretics Continues from Generation to Generation

The name of Jeroboam's son was Nadab. He succeeded his father, became king of Israel, and came to rule the nation, but he was assassinated by his own subordinate, and his family, too, was wretchedly massacred. King Nadab's faith was exactly like the conduct of his father Jeroboam, doing evil in the sight of the LORD, and so the history of death continued.

While Jeroboam's son King Nadab was fighting a war at a place called Gibbethon, Baasha, who was his servant, rose in treason in the midst of the war, killed Nadab, and became king in his place. When Baasha became king, he struck the whole house of Jeroboam and destroyed them all, not leaving a single one that had life. This was fulfilled exactly according to the Word the LORD had prophesied to the house of Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah. The Scriptures testify that the Word God promised to those kings through the prophets was all fulfilled just as it was. After Baasha, who killed King Nadab and became king, died, his son Elah became king; but his servant Zimri conspired, killed Elah, and became king.

God had said that because of Jeroboam's sin He would kill all the males of that house. Because of Jeroboam's sin the wrath of God was provoked, and He promised that He would kill all who imitated that faith; and all of it was being fulfilled according to that Word. Many kings of northern Israel met violent deaths through conspiracy and assassination, although not every northern king died in this way. Most were killed in the middle of their reign, or else they fell into a treason raised

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

by their own army or by some individual and were put to death. The one thing all those kings had in common was that they committed the same sin of Jeroboam and were put to death by God. Jeroboam's son, too, became king and committed before the LORD exactly the same sin his father had committed. He served as his own god the golden calf his father had served, incurred the wrath of God, and came to be assassinated. He, too, set up anyone among the people who wanted it as priest, and while committing exactly the same sin as his father, he met a cursed death.

Royal succession in northern Israel was often unstable, and several kings came to power through conspiracy or military revolt. Baasha, who appears in today's Scripture passage, was also a servant of King Nadab, and while King Nadab was preoccupied fighting the enemy at Gibbethon, he rose in rebellion and assassinated the king. And when he became king, he did not spare a single male of the house of Jeroboam but killed them all. Yet Baasha, too, after becoming king, committed exactly the same sin Jeroboam had committed. Truly it is wrong faith passed down as an inheritance, and the just deserts of wrong faith. Just as children inherit the blood of their fleshly parents, so the faith of heretics was inherited by their sons just as it was.

Every world of faith, whether it is true faith or not, keeps being handed on to someone and continued. Just as in the royal politics of old the son succeeded his father and became king, so wrong faith also keeps being handed down to someone. Those who became kings of northern Israel committed exactly the sin Jeroboam had committed, and as they committed the same sin, God stirred up the heart of a servant under them and punished them yet again. Here we can learn the lesson that every faith keeps being handed on to someone.

How Far Does the Wrong Faith of Jeroboam Continue?

As we know well, that faith continues down to the Christianity of today. For the Christianity now throughout the whole world is also serving a golden calf as God. Do you know the vicious King Ahab? King Ahab was precisely a king of northern Israel who inherited the faith of Jeroboam. King Ahab's wife was Jezebel, and this pagan woman served so many idols within the nation of Israel, hounding her husband King Ahab as one corners a rat, that she took the lead in turning that nation completely into a pagan country serving idols.

After Jeroboam became king, he made two golden calves before God and made the people believe in them as the LORD God. He became an instigator leading the people of Israel into wrong faith. And that wrong faith continued even down to the age of Jesus Christ. Is it not truly astonishing? Though King Jeroboam clearly held a wrong faith and was punished by God, those who came after him kept imitating that faith.

In this way faith keeps being handed down, whether it is wrong faith or right faith. It is heartbreaking how the people of Israel, even while knowing that this faith was wrong, repeated that wrong and suffered affliction. Though the kings of northern Israel kept changing, their faith was always the same. Whether a man died and his son became king, or a servant committed treason and became king, their faith uniformly inherited the faith of Jeroboam. And so they were uniformly cursed before God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Kings of Israel Who Did Not Turn Back from Their Wrong Faith

As I read the Word of 1 Kings, I thought how truly foolish the people and kings of Israel were. As the line of kings was handed down, when they saw that the former kings had served the golden calf as God and been cursed, they should have turned back at once and believed in God rightly; but they did not turn back from that wrong faith. I hope that you will not do so.

Jeroboam's son became king and committed the sin of serving the golden calf and idols exactly as his father had; and if only that son had done so and it had ended there, it might have been one thing, but the people, too, believed and followed that same way. The nation of Israel perished all together because of the wrong faith of King Jeroboam. When one's faith is wrong, that sin returns to oneself; if they had realized that this was not it, they could have turned back before God and not been cursed. The kings of Israel, far from turning back from their wrong faith, instead taught it to their people just as it was. Since he was the king of the nation, he taught the people that way, and the people believed as the king directed. This is the same as the way church members today believe as the leaders within Christianity teach them.

I have seen this kind of thing. In a certain denomination I heard it stressed that since the pastors who went before were martyred for God, all of us within this denomination should become like them too. It is a fine word. But I have thought at times that rather than rehashing the faith of the pastors who went before, it would be more right to say, let us now also live with a living faith. I believe it is right that faith in God should be to believe the truth within the gospel of the water and the

Spirit, and to be loyal to God willingly, welling up from within the heart. In the end King Jeroboam provoked the wrath of the LORD with the sin he had committed and was destroyed together with his people.

Even Now the Faith That Serves the Golden Calf Continues Just as It Was

In the Christianity of the whole world today as well, we can see wrong faith being inherited just as it was. In today's Christian world there are many denominations. There are the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, and the Holiness Church; the Holiness Church exists in other countries too, but its strength is not great, and it is a denomination that has taken root prominently in our country**.** The denominations that are great worldwide are about these: the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Lutheran Churches. It is because famous theologians founded those denominations. John Wesley was also a great man; Calvin, a Frenchman, was the man who laid the foundation of the Presbyterian Church; and the Lutheran Church was founded by Luther. These are all great men.

But entering the twentieth century, denominations of the Pentecostal line came into being. These are gatherings that value signs and miracles, saying that they pursue the faith of the early Church. But in the end we can see that they, too, serve the golden calf. They believe that the works of God's power that appeared in the early Church are with them. Since miracles of healing, speaking in tongues, and tremblings arise among them, they believe that these are the very works of God, and people holding this kind of faith banded together and formed a denomination. But among them there is no leader who properly

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

discerns and guides whether those miracles and tongues and tremblings and healings are really works given by God. It is because all of them alike are people pursuing the Pentecostal movement of the Holy Spirit. So rather than examining whether their faith is right or not, they made it their greater aim to serve and follow God fervently now.

Let us look a little more at each denomination. What John Wesley advocated was social edification, that is, making society Christian. The Methodist denomination now pours its strength into following that man's faith just as it is, and so it is much interested in social edification. So it does well at helping those in hardship and praises the person who takes the lead in such movements.

Also, those who learned from Calvin of the Presbyterian Church believe in the doctrine of God's predestination. It says that the person predestined in Christ from before the foundation of the world comes to believe unconditionally, and the person not predestined does not believe in Jesus as his Savior. So those under such people all inherit that faith. The Lutheran Church inherited Luther's faith just as it was. In this way their faith keeps being handed down. So if the one who goes before believes wrongly, that faith keeps being passed on below him, and the people below all follow along, whether they all receive blessing or all receive the curse. Therefore, in the faith of believing in God as well, one must stand in the right line.

In the old days, as I read the Old Testament Scriptures, I thought that the seventy years the people of Israel lived as slaves in Babylon came about simply because they had sinned. But I have only now come to realize that all that affliction was because they held a wrong faith like Jeroboam's before the LORD. If only the kings of Israel had turned back from the

wrong faith of their forefathers, all would have been well, but none of them did so; they kept following a faith like Jeroboam's. We must know that even now Christianity has inherited just as it is the wrong faith King Jeroboam held, and lives on without knowing it.

How can anyone set a golden calf inside the temple of God and serve it as God, and serve idols more than God? They believed that if they set up something like a wooden image of Asherah and bowed down to it, their descendants would multiply. Hoping to gain many children in the flesh, to become rich, and to be healthy, they served the image of Asherah like God. They also believed that if they served the god Baal, everything of the flesh would go well. The people of the Old Testament were serving idols in this way and bowing down to them.

How Have the Doctrines of Each Denomination Been Handed Down?

That is why, in the Old Testament, did not many prophets, beginning with the prophet Isaiah, rebuke the people and kings of Israel? Though they rebuked them and told them they were wrong, the kings would not listen to God and to the words of the prophets, and so in the end God killed those kings and kept raising up treasons to strike the kings. Today as well, if Christianity insists on wrong doctrine, that wrong faith keeps being carried on.

Let us take as examples the doctrines each denomination believes. Places like the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church claim transubstantiation. Transubstantiation is believing, as one eats, that at the Communion service the wine

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and the bread change into the body and blood of Jesus. Originally, when Jesus held the Communion, the bread was one loaf. Jesus broke pieces from that great loaf and gave them to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat this bread; this is My body,” and “Take this cup and drink; this is My blood which is shed for many.” But transubstantiation says that when the priest offers the prayer of blessing over the bread and the wine, that bread and wine change into the actual body and blood of Jesus. When the clergyman prays like that, the bread really changes into the living body of Jesus and the wine changes into the blood of Jesus, so that everyone who takes and eats the bread eats the body of Jesus, and everyone who drinks the wine becomes one who drinks the blood of Jesus. This is what the Catholic Church claims as transubstantiation. When people hold the Communion service, they believe that the bread and wine change like this into the body and blood of Jesus, and they eat and drink them.

But in carrying out the Reformation, Luther came out of the Catholic Church carrying the faith of transubstantiation with him just as it was, and claimed it within Christianity. He said that whenever a person partakes of the Communion, he drinks the body and blood of Jesus changed as in transubstantiation, and that therefore the person who eats the bread and wine with faith obtains eternal life. So in the Catholic Church, not being able to take part in the Communion is regarded as a great sin, and it is said that a person who has sin cannot take part in the Communion. In Christianity, too, it is said that a person who has something weighing on his heart should not take part in the Communion service.

Only When We Believe in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Can We Rightly Partake of the Communion

Everyone, in the Lutheran Church, Luther brought out with him the doctrine and rituals the Catholic Church had held, and that faith continues just as it is within Christianity. The faith of the Catholic Church's infant baptism also continues just as it is. But when these faiths are examined in the light of the Word of God, they are all wrong.

For us to take part in the Communion service with faith, we must first be believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A child is not saved from sin automatically because his parents believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Nor is a person saved from sin by receiving baptism physically. One must know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, and why He shed His blood and died on the Cross. For that, we must ask what the root of man is, and whether one properly knows his own sin. We must pass on to everyone the true truth concerning the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But now Christianity's faith has become ritualized and doctrinalized, coming down and down just as it is, and it has ended up becoming a worldly religion.

The Presbyterian Church claims the doctrine of predestination. This is the five-point doctrine standing on the thought Calvin established. It says that God loved the one who believes in Jesus from before the foundation of the world and determined to save him from sin, and that the person so predestined has already received salvation within Jesus Christ. So those who believe this doctrine believe that the people predestined and chosen by God believe in Jesus, receive

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

salvation, and go to Heaven, while the person God did not love and did not predestine to save is cast away. This kind of faith became a religion and has kept coming down.

So the faith of today holds just as it is the faith the reformers of the Reformation era held. Then the question is whether the reformers of that time knew what the gospel of the water and the Spirit was. If they preached a half gospel without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then the people who imitate that faith today have ended up exactly the same. What a fearful confusion this is! Do you know that following this half gospel today is precisely following the sin Jeroboam committed in the Old Testament?

The people of Israel came down through the faith of Abraham. From Abraham came Isaac and Jacob, and through the twelve sons of Jacob the nation of Israel was established. It came down like that until the prophet Samuel; the prophets ruling Israel like kings lasted until Samuel. When Samuel grew old he set up his sons, but they were so worthless that the people of Israel asked for a king to be set over them, and Saul stood as the first king. But God hated a faith like Saul's and wanted a man like David. So God set up David as king, and from then on there continued a rule that held God as King.

David ruled Israel rightly and set up the priests in order from the family of Aaron, and then passed the throne to Solomon. But because Solomon took foreign women, the idols of the pagans came into the nation of Israel, and high places sprang up everywhere. As the people bowed to idols, in the end even Solomon's faith completely collapsed. After Solomon died his son Rehoboam became king, but Rehoboam, too, was one who served idols. Because Solomon had committed so many sins, God tore away ten tribes and gave them to a man called Jeroboam. Jeroboam became king by God.

But after Jeroboam became king, he devised a wicked scheme to keep the people from returning to Rehoboam, in order to protect his own kingship. He set up houses of idols serving golden calves in Bethel and Dan, changed the feast of the Day of Atonement from the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month, rejected the sons of Levi and set up ordinary people as priests, and changed several things at his own will. In the end he exchanged the LORD God for a golden calf. As they served wrong idols in this way, afterward the descendants and kings of Israel all imitated the faith of Jeroboam. So when the leader goes wrong, the people under him go wrong just as he is, and spirit and flesh die together. Even if the people of Israel had tried to believe in God well, they could not change that wrong faith by themselves.

The Appearance of Today's Christianity, Which Has Become a Worldly Religion

People like us in this age who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can say that apart from this gospel every other gospel is wrong, but the people of King Jeroboam's day could only believe and follow as their leader said. That is why the people served wrong idols. In this age, too, most church members believe wrongly according to the doctrine of their own denomination. King Jeroboam believed in God wrongly and taught the people wrongly, so the people kept believing wrongly; and as the kings and people who came after kept believing that way, they kept receiving the curse. The Christians of the whole world today are also like that. In a comedy program on one of our country's broadcasting stations

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

there is a scene where a cult leader who makes a show of fatness comes out and says ridiculous things. I cannot repeat the words well, but let me try it once.

"Away with the skinny things of this world. For soon the age of the fat shall come. Eat. Your beginning was scrawny and starved, but your end shall be corpulent. I am Chulsandra, the symbol of fecundity, who has come to save the lean of this world. O you scrawny, starved sinner. Today I will give you a blessing. Eat. Eat and do penance. You have already received the blessing. Today's message is on the theme that Teacher Shrimp's transformation is no crime. Displaying a chivalrous spirit, he mediated a fight between whales and suffered the injury of a burst back. But did we not mock him, saying his eyes are small? He rather showed the humility of bending his waist. To heal his chronic slipped disc he enjoyed a salt sauna, and so he sacrificed himself as grilled prawns; he showered in starch and enjoyed a facial pack of sauce, and so he sacrificed himself as sweet-and-sour fried shrimp as well. And then, grinding his own body on a millstone and leaping into boiling oil, he was reincarnated as the comb-patterned snack your hand keeps reaching for. When you fall asleep worn out with eating, I will give you the blessing."

People know that Jesus suffered sacrifice, but they do not know that Jesus came to this earth and gave us the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so saved us who believe in Jesus from the sins of the world once and for all. They know that Jesus was sacrificed, but they do not know that with that gospel of the water and the Spirit He completely saved all the people of the world from the sins of the world and made them God's children. They believe without knowing that He has made even our very conscience sinless. So however many Christian denominations there are, the gospel they preach

speaks of and believes in only the sacrifice Jesus suffered by shedding His blood on the Cross.

Their faith agrees up to the point that Jesus loved them and, to save them from the sins of the world, was hung on the Cross and saved them. Because there was Jesus' sacrifice, they say, they have received salvation. But in their hearts there actually is sin. If there is sin remaining in the heart even though one believes in Jesus, is that not all a wrong faith? How contrary to reason it is that although Jesus was nailed to the Cross and sacrificed to save us, there is still sin in the heart!

In this way today's Christianity has ended up changed into a religion no different from a worldly comedy. It seems the person doing that comedy had also attended church, and so he could imitate the words of Scripture just as they are and make a laughingstock of them. What they pass on, in the end, stops at this: that Jesus came to this earth, loved us, suffered sacrifice, and saved us from sin.

Do not the Christians of the whole world, even while claiming to believe in Jesus as the Savior, have sin remaining in their hearts? The point is that there is sin in the hearts of today's Christians. This is precisely the evidence that Christianity has become a worldly religion. It is man-made. They measure Jesus' coming to this earth only with human thoughts, and think only of that and believe only that. Jesus came to save sinners completely, but they do not know it. Even as I hold my sides laughing at the comedy, my heart is heavy, for the appearance of the people who have put themselves in today's Christianity is not so different from it.

They tell church members to shout hallelujah unconditionally and receive God's blessing, and they stress that if you believe in Jesus' sacrifice you are saved from sin and have already been saved. The man on the broadcast also comes

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

down before the audience, and seeing a fat person says, you have already received the blessing; and to a thin person he says, you scrawny, starved sinner, and tells him unconditionally that he has received a blessing. They also say that if you offer more material things to the church, you receive more blessings from God. Today's Christianity has ended up becoming a worldly religion like this. By whom was all this brought about? It came about like that through today's Christian leaders who serve the golden calf.

I respect Christian leaders in the flesh. But spiritually I must say to them what must be said. The reformers of the Middle Ages clearly carried out the Reformation at that time. But is it not true that the Catholic Church of that day and the Christianity of today have alike degenerated into worldly religions? They are completely far from the Scriptures.

Christianity now is merely a worldly religion; they are not people who believe in Jesus who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. At the time of the Reformation, people did try to live more rightly by the Word of God and to draw a little closer to Jesus. But they still remained in a worldly life of faith serving the golden calf. What difference is there between today's Christianity or Catholicism and a worldly religion? The buildings are similar and the behavior is similar.

The Faith That Preaches Only the Blood of the Cross Is Precisely the Sin of Jeroboam

We must know how serious it is that today's Christianity has fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. In today's Scripture passage, Baasha kills Jeroboam's son King Nadab and becomes king himself, and it says that when he became king he

struck the house of Jeroboam and destroyed them all, not leaving a single one that had life. This was fulfilled according to the Word the servant of God had prophesied concerning the sin of Jeroboam. The seed of the house of Jeroboam was wiped out. Does it come home to you?

When Baasha became king, he had his own soldiers kill the king's family without leaving a single one alive, and killed everyone connected with Jeroboam. Why was it so? It was *"because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger" (1 Kings 15:30)*. And it says, *"In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 15:33–34).*

Today's Christian leaders are not only committing that sin themselves; they are making even the church members who come to church commit that sin. How wrong this is! And yet the leaders do not know their own wrong, thinking, surely I am not doing anything wrong. They never dream that receiving the remission of sin by believing only in the blood of the Cross belongs to the sin of Jeroboam spoken of in the Old Testament. They think they are now believing well in Jesus as their Savior, and that only one thing, their own conduct, is lacking, so that they fall just a little short. There is probably not a single person who thinks that the faith that Jesus came to this earth and died on the Cross and so saved them from sin is wrong. Though the denominations differ, they believe alike that Jesus saved them on the Cross. So, because they never think it is wrong, the clergy and pastors preach only the blood of Jesus' Cross as salvation. These people not only do not know the gospel of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

water and the Spirit the Scriptures speak of, but even reject it; and while leading other people, too, to what is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is probably not a single one who considers that teaching wrongly like that is precisely the sin Jeroboam committed against God.

But what do the Scriptures say? That Jeroboam himself sinned and made the people sin as well, and in the end was destroyed. This is the record that comes down from 1 Samuel to Malachi in the Old Testament. How horrifying this is!

People think they are believing in Jesus well. Those who preach only the blood of the Cross think of Jesus' sacrifice, fast and pray, practice with their bodies and not only with words, and consider that they are doing well. They do not think that the faith of their seniors in the faith was even slightly wrong, and they regard what they believe as absolute truth. They think there could be no gospel of the water and the Spirit that obtains salvation apart from the faith that believes in the blood of the Cross. But the Scriptures say that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the real truth and the real gospel (1 John 5:6–8).

When today's Christianity is examined in the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, how wrong it is! That is why Christianity, even with its two thousand years of history, has uniformly and collectively believed wrongly, and is under criticism from society. The Presbyterian Church believes wrongly because of Presbyterian doctrine, and the Catholic Church because of Catholic doctrine, and their doctrines differ from the Word of Scripture, which is the truth. It is completely different from believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is the Real Truth

Does the gospel of the water and the Spirit speak only of the blood of the Cross? No. The gospel of the water and the Spirit says that the Lord came to this earth, took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and, carrying those sins, was hung on the Cross, received all the judgment of our sins, died, rose again from death, and became our Savior. The baptism Jesus received from John not only washed away your sins and mine; He received on the Cross, shedding His blood, all the judgment of the sins of this world, and delivered us from death and destruction and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of God. This is the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Scriptures speak of.

So when one Christian leader believes wrongly, the people of the denomination under him cannot help but all believe wrongly. It is because that is all they know. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit today is the person to whom God has given the blessing of salvation in this last age.

Today's Christianity, however long its history, has gone wrong. It is called two thousand years of history, but after Rome issued the Edict of Milan around A.D. 313, the Catholic Church passed a thousand years in the Dark Ages, and even after the Reformation the doctrines Christianity believes are completely far from the righteousness of God. Christianity now does not properly know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even those who lead their life of faith through the Reformation cannot be said to have come out of the Catholic Church completely. They merely came out holding the doctrine that one obtains salvation by believing only in the blood of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Cross, not the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and were believing in vain. In fact they knew only the blood of the Cross, and could not believe that Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. The leaders could not believe and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

So even Calvin, as he wrote his commentaries, at the end left in his own commentary a written prayer saying, Lord, forgive this sinner. That is, even though he believed in Jesus, he was not without sin but still remained a sinner. Not knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they taught that to become sinless, one must be sanctified to be made completely sinless; people mistakenly came to believe that they enter the Kingdom of God with sin still in them; and they would say that whether one is saved or not is known only to God after death. In this way they inherited just as it was a wrong faith wandering in spiritual chaos and fog.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now are believing the real truth and the true gospel of salvation. Since a heretic like Jeroboam appeared in the Old Testament, that wrong faith continued until the Old Testament era ended, and it came down into the New Testament era, continuing into denominations holding a faith like Jeroboam's. Though Jesus came to this earth and saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, for two thousand years since then Christianity has gone wrong, and the whole world lies in pitch darkness. But today God has shined the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit on the whole world. And so He saves those who believe in this gospel from sin—saving us so completely that we cannot say we have sin.

From the fact that the wrong leaders of Christianity are leading the people wrongly even now, we must learn a lesson. Christian leaders must know rightly, teach rightly, and believe

rightly the gospel of the water and the Spirit; and we must give thanks for the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given to this age and give glory to God. Since it is the truth of the true gospel of the water and the Spirit recorded in the Scriptures, we must believe that gospel and preach it to the whole world even now.

Today's Christian leaders hold blindly to the doctrines of their own denominations rather than knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. People who do not know the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot help it, and so we must rather point out their sin and ask them: Is there sin in your conscience? Jesus received baptism and took charge of that sin, carried that sin and was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us completely. He has removed all your sins like that—do you still have sin? We must ask them this. Having received salvation like that, and knowing the history of Christianity rightly, we must hold a perfect faith, become workers of the Kingdom of God, live for the gospel, and become the harvesters of the last age.

Rather Than Condemning Heretics, We Must Turn Them Back with the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

If you do not know the history of Christianity well and learn it half-heartedly, you will instead end up becoming a heretic. People must properly know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth of Christianity. They think only the gospel of the blood of the Cross is the real gospel, but in fact only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true gospel. The Scriptures testify that only the gospel of the water

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and the Spirit is the real truth.

It is written, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. In order to make a person receive the washing of sin in his conscience and go seeking God, Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved us from all sins once and for all. The Apostles believed like this. The Word of Scripture says that He saved us by the water, the blood, and the Spirit (1 John 5:6–8), and Jesus Himself said that unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, he can neither enter nor see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3–5). To be born again of water and the Spirit is to believe that Jesus received from John the Baptist the baptism by which He took over the sins of the world, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us; and only by believing this is one saved from sin. It is the Word that says that in this way we become God's children and workers, and in the world to come enjoy eternal life and enjoy honor and glory with God.

Because people do not know the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they hold only to the doctrines taught in their own denominations. To study the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must first learn the Scriptures from those who know that truth. For your spiritual eyes to be opened, you must first study the Scriptures with those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I know that the Old and New Testament Scriptures speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this is what God has taught me. We must examine the history of the Christian Church, discern where the gospel of the water and the Spirit came to be believed wrongly, and whether we are believing rightly now, and so believe. If

today's Christians are believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit properly, it is something to thank the ancestors of faith for; and if not, they must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit even now.

A true leader of Christianity must be a person who holds the faith Abraham held. Did we come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit by learning from the theologians of this world? No. Rather, from them we learned another gospel that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is because we at least did not unconditionally inherit even the faith of the reformers that we were able to learn the gospel of the water and the Spirit anew.

The reformers at that time could not help carrying out the Reformation even if they had not wanted to. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, in the so-called witch hunts, drove innocent people into being branded heretics in order to seize their property, confiscated their possessions, and killed countless people by branding them heretics. To seize some rich man's money, they would brand him a devil and put him before a religious tribunal, and set up two people to perjure themselves, making them bear false witness that he had cursed the LORD God or said that Jesus was not God. Then they would seize that person and inflict horrific torture on him until he confessed, and when the verdict was given, they would kill him and confiscate all his property. This is precisely the witch hunt.

Such is the thousand-year history of the Middle Ages. I am not saying the Catholic Church now is like that; I am saying the Catholic Church of old was like that. And yet even among the reformers—for example, Calvin, a Frenchman, acknowledged the divinity of Jesus and believed in Jesus as God, and when a certain man claimed that Jesus was not God, Calvin, like the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Roman church, opened a religious tribunal, condemned him as a heretic, and had him burned at the stake. In the old days religious leaders held that much power.

But do we now have the authority to burn people with fire and kill them, calling them heretics? We have no such authority. It is only that, since they are believing a gospel that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we turn them back from believing wrongly; we have no power to burn them with fire or beat them to death, calling them heretics. Yet in days past, numerous religious leaders wielded such power. Today there are laws in the world, so they cannot do so, but in the old days it was like that. If someone's faith differed from their own, they would even brand him a heretic unconditionally.

In the old days in our country, too, the Presbyterian Church called the Methodist Church heretical, and the Methodist Church and the Full Gospel Church also said each other were wrong and called each other heretics. But how is it today? As the Full Gospel line has grown large, they no longer call each other heretics but recognize one another as sound denominations and fellowship together. Here we learn that when one leader is a certain way, the people under him all believe that way too—that is, how truly important the leader's faith is. One inherits it even against one's will, and if one holds on to a wrong ancestor of faith, one becomes a heretic even while hating to become one. Since the whole world has now collectively become heretical, we come to know that we have the mission to pass on to them the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to explain concretely what heresy is by holding up Jeroboam, and to shed light on today's appearance in the light of Jeroboam's faith, so as to turn numerous people back to what is right.

Let Us Pray for Those Fallen into Collective Heresy and Preach the Gospel

Even if, with our own thoughts alone, we want to corner someone, saying, you must not believe that way, you are a heretic, we must not do so. We must teach them calmly with the Word, showing concretely what is wrong. When the other person is gripped by a certain idea, if we tell him everything at once it is not corrected, so we must divide it into small portions and change his awareness little by little. When he receives such a change and believes the Word rightly, he receives salvation.

Even now numerous people are receiving the remission of sin through the books we pass on to them. There are people who receive the remission of sin after reading one or two volumes, but most read five or six volumes. What is regrettable is that we ought to put the nurturing letters into the hands of those who believe the gospel, but our circumstances are not ample enough to distribute them all. The translations are continuing, and we have also uploaded many as e-books, and many people receive them, which is at least a relief. We must truly know that people today have fallen collectively into heresy, pray for them, and know that we have the mission to save them. And we must live that way.

The reason we must pray is that God hears our prayers. Since God hears our prayers, when we have prayed sufficiently, God works. When God moves people's hearts like this, we see even difficult problems being solved. In the same way, we must always pray for those who have fallen collectively into heresy, asking Him to save them. When we have prayed and then preach the Word, God can make them return collectively. Until now we have been thankful for one person or two returning, but in this age certain denominations could return all

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

at once. I believe there will be a day when they say, we did not know, but seeing your books it is really true, and they return collectively, and the work of God arises among them. We must prepare with prayer and go forward. We must continue the work of saving those who have fallen into collective heresy. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

We Must Cast Away Idols with a Perfect Heart before God

< 1 Kings 15:1-24 >

"In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. So Abijam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David. And he banished the perverted persons from

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the LORD all his days. He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 'Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.' So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah. Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and

the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place."

1 Kings chapter 15 shows the reigns of Abijam and Asa, kings of southern Judah. This chapter is not simply a historical summary recording the deeds of two kings. It shows how, after Solomon's corruption, the southern and northern kingdoms were divided, and how the sin of departing from God, passing through the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, was carried on to the next generation. At the same time, it shows Asa, who even in that dark stream tried to set his heart upright before God.

Solomon received wisdom and riches from God, but in his last years he accepted foreign women and idols. In the days of Rehoboam, Judah also set up high places and idols and wooden images of Asherah, doing evil before God. In northern Israel, Jeroboam made golden calves, changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained, and led the people into sin. In this stream, 1 Kings chapter 15 shows Abijam and Asa side by side.

Abijam belonged to the dynasty of David but failed to follow the heart of David. Asa, on the other hand, despite many shortcomings, removed the idols and did what was right in the sight of the LORD. Through this contrast God is asking us today: Is our faith remaining in outward form, lineage, and tradition, or are we setting our hearts on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained?

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even Those Who Belong to the House of David Can Lose the Heart of David

Abijam became king of Judah and ruled in Jerusalem for three years. He was a man who belonged to the dynasty of David, and he sat on the throne in Jerusalem, the city God had chosen to put His name there. But the Scriptures say that his heart was not like the heart of his father David, and that he was not perfect before the LORD his God.

This is a very fearful Word. A person does not automatically stand in right faith because he is within the right lineage. Being in Jerusalem, belonging to the line of David, being near the temple—none of these means one has a perfect heart before God. Abijam belonged to the dynasty of David, but his heart was not like the heart of David.

David, too, was a weak man. He committed a great sin in the matter of Uriah. But when David was rebuked by God, he did not hide his sin. He returned to God and sought God's mercy. He did not replace God with another god, and he did not change at his own will the way God had ordained. This was the heart of David.

It is the same today. Being inside the church, having led a life of faith for a long time, possessing a tradition of faith—these alone do not make a right faith before God. What God looks at is whether we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He looks at whether we believe the truth that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

God Left a Lamp for David's Sake

Even though Abijam was not perfect, God gave a lamp in Jerusalem for David's sake. He set up his son to succeed him and established Jerusalem. This was not because of Abijam's righteousness. It was because of the covenant and mercy God had given to David.

The "lamp" shows the grace of God not letting the house of David be completely extinguished. The human kings were weak. Solomon also collapsed, Rehoboam was not perfect, and Abijam's heart was not like the heart of David. But God did not cut off the promise of salvation. The lamp of that promise at last shone fully in Jesus Christ, who came as the descendant of David.

Jesus came to this earth according to the lineage of David. But He was not a king who fails like the human kings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and accomplished complete salvation by rising again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true lamp God has given to sinners.

We must not rely on human kings or human deeds. Our hope is in Jesus Christ, to whom the lamp left in the house of David points. The gospel of the water and the Spirit He accomplished is the true light that removes the sins of our hearts and makes us stand before God.

Asa Showed an Honest Heart That Removed the Idols

After Abijam, Asa became king. The Scriptures say that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done. Even in Asa's day Judah was not in a completely clean state. The sins of the previous generations still remained. There were traces of the high places and the idols, and the abominable customs of the pagans had come into Judah.

But Asa did not leave that stream as it was. He banished the perverted persons from the land and did away with all the idols his fathers had made. Going further, when his mother Maachah made an abominable idol of Asherah, he deposed her from the position of queen mother, cut down that idol, and burned it by the Brook Kidron.

This is an honest heart before God. He did not cover over the idol because of a human relationship. He did not leave the abominable thing in place because of an old tradition. Even in a matter involving someone close to him, he removed what God hates.

The believer today also needs this discernment. Idols are not only golden calves and wooden images of Asherah. The heart that relies on material things more than on God, the heart that tries to protect its own kingdom, the heart that puts people's recognition and the denomination's tradition before the Word of God—these too can become idols. Above all, changing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained into human doctrine is a very fearful spiritual idolatry.

A teaching that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a teaching that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts are not the way of salvation God has ordained. The believer must remove such things from his heart. Standing on the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true reformation.

A Perfect Heart Does Not Mean Having No Shortcomings

Asa removed the idols, but he could not do away with the high places completely. The Scriptures do not hide this fact. Yet at the same time they say that Asa's heart was perfect before the LORD all his life. Here we must see the balance of the Scriptures. It does not mean that there was no lack at all in Asa's deeds. It means that the direction of his heart was toward God.

Man is weak. Even the person who lives by faith has points of lack. What matters is not to keep holding on to idols and false faith, using that lack as an excuse. One must set his heart before the truth God has ordained and have the heart that casts away what God hates.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not become righteous because his deeds are complete either. He has become righteous because Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us completely by rising again from death. Therefore our perfection rests not on the completeness of our own deeds but on the faith that believes in the salvation God has accomplished.

Asa brought silver and gold and utensils into the house of the LORD. This shows that his heart was directed toward God. The person who has returned to God not only removes idols but also sets apart and offers what is to be offered to God. The believer, too, must not spend the time, material things, gifts, and life he has received from God on his own kingdom, but offer them to serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even One Who Has Made Good Reforms Must Rely on God before a Crisis

Asa was a good king who removed the idols, but before the pressure of Baasha he sought help from Ben-Hadad king of Syria. He took the silver and gold of the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house and sent them to Ben-Hadad. As a result Baasha stopped building Ramah, and Asa built Geba and Mizpah with the stones and timber of Ramah.

Seen outwardly, Asa's method looks successful. But seen with the eyes of faith, a regret remains. It is because he used the treasures dedicated to God for an alliance with a foreign king. Even a king who has removed idols can take hold of human methods if he does not rely on God before a crisis.

This gives a great lesson to us today as well. Even a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who at first offered his heart to God and cast away idols, can rely on human calculation when hardship comes. We must not speak the gospel of the water and the Spirit weakly or compromise it—under the pretext of protecting the ministry, with the thought of not losing people, or out of the fear of trying to keep the organization.

The most precious treasure God has given us is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The truth of salvation accomplished by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is a treasure that can never be handed over to a foreign king in any crisis. We must imitate Asa's good points and remove the idols, but seeing Asa's regrettable points, we must stand all the deeper in the faith that relies on God even before a crisis.

Human Reforms Have an End, but the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is Our Eternal Hope

The rest of Asa's acts, his might, and the cities he built were recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. But when he grew old he was diseased in his feet, and in the end he rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. However good a king may be, a human life has its end. Power ends, achievements end, and the flesh grows old and falls sick.

This shows us that even a person's good deeds and reforms cannot become the ground of salvation. Asa did good things. But his reforms, his might, and his long reign could not make him live forever. True salvation is only within the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished.

When Jesus received baptism from John, all our sins were passed on to Him. The Lord carried those sins and received the judgment on the Cross. And by rising again from death He gave us eternal life. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not remain in a faith that has only the outward form, like Abijam. We must have an honest heart that removes the idols, like Asa. But going further than that, we must build our faith not on human reforms or zeal but on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed.

What God desires is that our hearts stand perfect before Him. It is to regard the truth God has ordained as more precious than close relationships, old traditions, and human methods. The person who sets his heart on the gospel of the water and the Spirit can escape from the corruption of Solomon and the sin of Jeroboam, and walk the way of faith that pleases God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

CHAPTER

16

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 16

1) Summary of the Entire Content

1 Kings chapter 16 records the destruction of the dynasty of Baasha and the changes of kingship in northern Israel that continued through Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab. The kings kept being replaced through treason and war, but the golden-calf worship Jeroboam had made did not disappear. Especially in the days of Ahab, the worship of Baal and Asherah spread on a national scale, and the evil of northern Israel grew still worse.

1. Judgment Is Proclaimed on Baasha and his House, Verses 1–4

The Word of God came to Jehu the son of Hanani. God had lifted Baasha up from a low place and made him king of northern Israel, but Baasha did not follow God, who had given him the kingship.

Baasha was the man who had destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he kept Jeroboam's golden-calf worship and false sacrificial system just as they were. Though he had seen why the dynasty of Jeroboam was destroyed, he walked the same way.

God said that He would sweep away Baasha's house completely, like the house of Jeroboam. The name of the dynasty had changed, but because the sin of departing from God was the same, it came to receive the same judgment.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

2. Baasha's Death and Jehu's Rebuke, Verses 5–7

Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah, and his son Elah succeeded to the throne. Baasha exercised considerable might, but the books of Kings evaluate him centering not on his political achievements but on the evil he did before God.

God rebuked Baasha and his house again through Jehu. Baasha became the instrument that destroyed the house of Jeroboam, yet he himself imitated the exact same evil that Jeroboam had committed.

The fact that he had executed judgment on another did not make Baasha righteous. Though he struck the house of Jeroboam, he followed the sin of Jeroboam, and so he was placed under the same judgment.

3. Elah Is Killed by Zimri While Drunk, Verses 8–10

In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Asa king of Judah, Baasha's son Elah became king of northern Israel. He reigned in Tirzah for two years.

While the army of northern Israel was besieging Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, Elah was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, the steward of his house. At that time Zimri, who commanded half his chariots, rose in treason.

Zimri killed the drunken Elah and became king. Just as Baasha had killed Nadab and seized the throne, so Baasha's son Elah was also killed by his own servant.

A kingship established by violence and treason collapsed before yet another violence and treason. What Baasha had done to the house of Jeroboam returned in the same way upon his own house.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

4. Zimri Completely Destroys the House of Baasha, Verses 11–14

As soon as Zimri became king, he destroyed the whole house of Baasha. He removed not only the males belonging to Baasha's house but even his relatives and friends, leaving no one who might challenge his kingship.

With this, the Word of God proclaimed to the house of Baasha through Jehu was fulfilled. It was the result of Baasha and Elah sinning and making even the people of northern Israel serve vain idols.

Zimri removed the house of Baasha in order to make his own kingship firm, but in fact he became the instrument that fulfilled the word of judgment God had proclaimed. Even within man's political schemes, the Word of God was fulfilled exactly.

5. Zimri's Kingship Ends in Seven Days, Verses 15–20

When Zimri became king in Tirzah, the army of northern Israel was besieging Gibbethon. As soon as the army heard the news that Zimri had killed Elah and become king, they made Omri, the commander of the army, king.

Omri led the army up to Tirzah and besieged the city. When Zimri saw that the city was falling, he went into the citadel of the king's house, set fire to the king's house, and died inside it.

Zimri seized the throne through treason, but in only seven days he lost both his kingship and his life. He had judged the house of Baasha, but he himself also did evil, following the way of Jeroboam.

When a person who has departed from God removes another evil man, that act itself does not make him righteous. Zimri was used as an instrument of judgment, but he did not escape the responsibility for his own sin.

6. The Nation Is Divided between Those Supporting Tibni and Those Supporting Omri, Verses 21–22

Even after Zimri died, the confusion of northern Israel did not end. Half of the people tried to make Tibni the son of Ginath king, and the other half supported Omri.

Northern Israel was divided into forces supporting two kings and went through civil war. In the process of setting up a king, rather than asking the will of God, each force chose the man advantageous to itself.

In the end those who supported Omri prevailed over the force that supported Tibni, and when Tibni died, Omri became king of northern Israel. Omri established his kingship through the support of the army and victory in the civil war.

7. Omri Builds Samaria, Verses 23–24

Omri ruled northern Israel for twelve years, reigning the first six years in Tirzah. After that he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver.

Omri built a new city on that hill and called it Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill. Samaria afterward became the capital of northern Israel and the center of its politics, military, and religion.

Omri built a new capital and strengthened the political foundation of the kingdom. His dynasty began to take on a more stable appearance than the dynasties before it. But the standard by which the books of Kings evaluate a king was not city-building or political ability.

8. Omri Does More Evil Than the Kings before Him, Verses 25–28

Omri established a strong kingship, but before God he is evaluated as a king who did worse than all the kings before him.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

He followed all the ways of Jeroboam and kept up the worship of the golden calves.

Building a fine capital called Samaria did not cover Omri's sin. Even though he established a politically strong nation, a kingdom that had departed from God was not a spiritually firm nation.

After Omri died he was buried in Samaria, and his son Ahab became king. The dynasty and the capital Omri had established passed on to Ahab, but the wrong faith that had begun with Jeroboam was inherited along with them.

9. Ahab Does More Evil Than All the Kings before Him, Verses 29–31

Ahab became king of northern Israel in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Asa king of Judah, and he ruled in Samaria for twenty-two years.

The Scriptures evaluate Ahab as having done more evil before God than all the kings before him. Ahab had grown so accustomed to evil that he regarded following the sins of Jeroboam as a trivial thing.

Jeroboam, even while setting up the golden calves, had claimed that they were the god who brought Israel up from Egypt. But Ahab went further: he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon and served the pagan god Baal directly.

If Jeroboam had exchanged God for golden calves and served them, Ahab officially accepted the worship of Baal and cast God away still more openly. The idolatry of northern Israel deepened to a new stage in the days of Ahab.

10. An Altar for Baal and a Wooden Image of Asherah Are Set Up in Samaria, Verses 32–33

Ahab built a temple of Baal in Samaria and set up an altar for Baal inside it. He also made a wooden image of Asherah.

Baal was a god of Canaan thought to give rain and abundance, and Asherah was an idol connected with fertility and prosperity. Ahab tried to obtain from Baal and Asherah the blessings of rain and grain and life that God gives.

The marriage with Jezebel was not a mere royal wedding; it became the channel through which the Baal worship of Sidon entered the heart of northern Israel. When the king served idols, the influence spread through the whole nation.

If Jeroboam and Omri had led the people into golden-calf worship, Ahab spread even the worship of Baal and Asherah on a national scale. He provoked the anger of God more severely than all the kings of Israel before him.

11. The Word Is Fulfilled on Hiel, Who Rebuilt Jericho, Verse 34

In the days of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He lost his firstborn son Abiram when he laid the foundation of the city, and he lost his youngest son Segub when he set up its gates.

This event was the Word of God given through Joshua being fulfilled just as it was, even after a long time had passed. After God tore down Jericho, He had spoken in advance of what would come upon the person who rebuilt that city.

Hiel rebuilt Jericho even though the Word of God stood against it. The spiritual corruption of Ahab's days did not stay within the royal house and Samaria but affected the life of the people as well. An atmosphere of taking God's warning lightly and putting human plans first had spread through the whole nation.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 16

First, being used as an instrument to judge another evil man does not mean that one is righteous oneself. Baasha and Zimri destroyed the dynasties before them, but because they themselves followed the way of Jeroboam, they were judged.

Second, if a wrong faith is not cast away, only the dynasty changes and the history of sin continues. The dynasty of Jeroboam was destroyed by Baasha, and the dynasty of Baasha was destroyed by Zimri, but the worship of the golden calves was carried on just as it was.

Third, power obtained by violence and treason can hardly last long. Zimri killed Elah and became king, but in only seven days he was besieged by Omri's army and died.

Fourth, political success and the evaluation before God can differ. Omri built Samaria and established a strong kingship, but before God he was evaluated as a man who did worse than the kings before him.

Fifth, the wrong faith of a leader greatly affects the whole nation. Ahab married Jezebel and built the temple and altar of Baal, and so made all of northern Israel serve Baal and Asherah.

Sixth, sin grows worse if it is not set right. The golden-calf worship of Jeroboam was passed on to Omri, and in the days of Ahab the worship of Baal and Asherah was added to it.

Seventh, the Word of God is fulfilled without fail even after a long time. The word of Jehu concerning the house of Baasha and the word of Joshua concerning the rebuilding of Jericho were both fulfilled just as they were spoken.

Eighth, in an age that takes the Word of God lightly, individuals, families, and the nation suffer together. The event in which Hiel lost his two sons while building Jericho was the result of ignoring the Word God had already given in warning.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 16 shows that

the kings of northern Israel from Baasha to Ahab killed one another and seized the kingship and yet did not cast away the sin of Jeroboam, so that idolatry grew still worse, and that even in the midst of it the word of God's judgment was fulfilled without fail.

2) Chapter 16 Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 16 shows that though the dynasty kept changing from Baasha through Elah, Zimri, and Omri to Ahab, the wrong faith Jeroboam had made was carried on just as it was. Seen at the level of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it shows that what one believes and preaches matters more than the changing of the names of people and organizations, and that when the Word of salvation God has ordained is replaced with human greed and material blessing, spiritual corruption grows still deeper.

1. Baasha Follows the Way of Jeroboam, Verses 1–4

God lifted Baasha up from a low place and made him king of northern Israel. But Baasha did not follow God, who had given him the kingship; he walked the way of Jeroboam just as it was.

Jeroboam's sin was replacing God with golden calves, and changing the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the feasts God had ordained for the sake of his own kingship. Baasha saw the house of Jeroboam destroyed for that sin, but he did not cast away the worship of the golden calves.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit likewise cannot be changed according to man's purposes. If we leave out part of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the Word of salvation God has ordained and preach only what is pleasing for people to hear, it produces the same result as following the way of Jeroboam.

The fact that Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and the fact that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, are the salvation of God that cannot be changed by human thinking.

2. He Became an Instrument of Judgment, yet His Own Faith Was Not Right, Verses 5–7

Baasha was the man who destroyed the house of Jeroboam. But judging another evil dynasty did not make Baasha's faith right. Even while striking the house of Jeroboam, he followed Jeroboam's wrong faith just as it was.

A person's faith does not automatically become right because he points out another person's wrong. The standard of faith lies not in comparison with other people but in whether it agrees with the Word of God.

More important than what one criticizes is what gospel one believes in one's own heart. If a person claims to believe in Jesus and yet sin remains in his heart just as it was, he must confirm through the gospel of the water and the Spirit how Jesus took charge of that sin.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not rely on his own judgment; he takes as the standard of his faith the Word that Jesus removed all sins by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

3. Elah's Carelessness and Zimri's Treason, Verses 8–14

Elah became king of northern Israel, but while the army

was carrying on the war, he was drinking himself drunk in Tirzah. At that time Zimri, who commanded half his chariots, rebelled and killed Elah.

After Zimri became king, he destroyed the whole house of Baasha. With this, the Word of God proclaimed to the house of Baasha through Jehu was fulfilled just as it was.

Elah inherited from his father not only the throne but also the sin of Jeroboam. Baasha and Elah both followed vain idols and made the people of northern Israel walk in the same sin.

If a person is not spiritually awake, he can accept a wrong faith without even knowing it, following tradition and environment. Therefore we must not follow a faith merely because parents, leaders, and the majority believe it, but must discern through the Scriptures whether that faith agrees with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

4. Zimri's Seven-Day Kingship and Rapid Destruction, Verses 15–20

Zimri seized the throne through treason, but in only seven days he was besieged by Omri's army. When he saw that the city was falling, he set fire to the king's house and died inside it.

Zimri destroyed the house of Baasha, but he himself also followed the way of Jeroboam. He changed only the name of the king; he did not change the golden calves northern Israel served or its wrong system.

Even if a person puts forward a new name and a new organization, if the content of the faith is still wrong, no spiritual change has taken place. What matters is not outward reform but knowing and believing exactly the salvation God has accomplished.

The power and honor man establishes can vanish as quickly

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

as Zimri's seven-day kingship. But the salvation Jesus accomplished never changes. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit regards eternal life as more precious than the power of the world.

5. The People Divided between Tibni and Omri, Verses 21–22

After Zimri died, the people of northern Israel were divided between those who followed Tibni and those who followed Omri. The two forces fought each other, and in the end those who followed Omri prevailed, and Omri became king.

The people were divided over whom to make king, but neither side raised any fundamental question about the golden-calf worship of Jeroboam. They were zealous over the matter of choosing a king, but they gave no attention to returning to the faith God had ordained.

Today as well, people can regard as important which leader and which group to follow, while not deeply examining the content of the gospel they themselves believe. What decides salvation is not a person's fame or affiliation but whether one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart.

The people of God must not be divided around people but become one within the Word of salvation Jesus accomplished. The Holy Spirit leads those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit into one faith.

6. Omri Builds Samaria, Verses 23–24

Omri bought the hill of Samaria for two talents of silver and built a new city there. Samaria afterward became the capital of northern Israel, its political and military center.

Omri laid the foundation of an outwardly strong kingdom. In that he built a new capital and stabilized the kingship, he

was a king with political ability.

But the standard by which God evaluates a king was not the size of the city, military strength, or economic success. What God looked at was what faith he held and where he led the people.

Having great and splendid buildings, much wealth, and a strong organization does not mean that God is with us. If the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not in the heart, outward success cannot resolve the sins of the soul.

7. Omri Does More Evil Than the Kings before Him, Verses 25–28

Omri did worse before God than all the kings before him. He followed all the ways of Jeroboam and made the people of northern Israel keep serving vain idols.

The kingdom grew politically stronger, but spiritually it grew darker. This shows that outward prosperity cannot be evidence that one's spiritual state is right.

If material success is taught as God's most important blessing, people's hearts come to regard wealth and health and worldly success as more precious than the remission of sin Jesus has given. This can become a faith that looks like serving God while actually serving a golden calf.

The greatest blessing God gives to man is to let him believe in the salvation Jesus completed by taking charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death.

8. Ahab Regards the Sin of Jeroboam as a Trivial Thing, Verses 29–31

Omri's son Ahab did more evil than all the kings before him. He regarded following the sins of Jeroboam as a trivial

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

thing and accepted even the worship of Baal.

When sin is taken lightly, one goes on to greater sin. Jeroboam had claimed that the golden calves were God, but Ahab served the pagan god Baal directly. As the wrong faith went uncorrected and continued over generations, it developed into open idolatry.

We must not take lightly the leaving out of even a small part of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If the fact that Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist is left out, we cannot fully know for what sins the blood of the Cross was the judgment.

The salvation of God is not something man may divide up and choose from at will. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death are one complete salvation that accomplishes the passing on of sin, its judgment, and new life.

9. Baal Worship Enters through the Union with Jezebel, Verse 31

Ahab took as his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon. Jezebel brought the worship of Baal and Asherah that she had served into northern Israel, and Ahab did not stop it but accepted it together with her.

The union of Ahab and Jezebel did not stay a personal marriage; it produced the result of changing the faith of the whole nation. Union with a wrong faith made the spiritual corruption of northern Israel still worse.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not accept teachings different from the gospel alongside it. If we accept both that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is right and that the claim that sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus' Cross alone is also right, we end up

mixing different words of salvation.

The Word of salvation God has given is one. We must believe in the salvation Jesus completed by taking charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death.

10. Baal and Asherah Take the Place of Material Blessings, Verses 32–33

Ahab built a temple of Baal in Samaria, set up an altar for Baal, and also made a wooden image of Asherah. Baal was thought to give rain and abundant harvests, and Asherah was an idol connected with the multiplying of descendants.

Ahab tried to obtain from idols the rain and grain and life that God gives. This was putting material abundance and fleshly desire before God.

If a person sets the purpose of believing in God only on wealth and health and worldly success, material things become the idol of his heart. The most important purpose for which God sent Jesus is to save sinners from all sins and make them God's children.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make God a means of fulfilling the desires of the flesh. He regards as most precious Jesus, who washed away all his sins and gave him eternal life, and he offers his life for the preaching of the gospel.

11. Hiel, Who Rebuilt Jericho, Verse 34

In the days of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho, which God had torn down. As a result he lost his firstborn son when he laid the foundation of the city and lost his youngest son when he set up its gates.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Hiel's act was an attempt to raise up again by his own strength what had fallen under God's judgment. The Word given through Joshua was fulfilled just as it was, even after long years had passed.

Spiritually as well, we must not raise up again the problem of sin that God has ended with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross; and yet if we teach that sin still remains in the heart of the believer, it is like rebuilding the city of sin that Jesus has brought to an end.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the fact that all his sins were passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins was finished on the Cross. On the basis of the Word of God he acknowledges that he has become a righteous person without sin, and he lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

12. Even When the King Changes, a Wrong Faith Keeps Being Carried On

In 1 Kings chapter 16 the king kept changing—Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab. But no one removed the golden-calf worship Jeroboam had made.

A wrong faith can be passed on to the next generation even when the names of people and the times change. It begins with a small alteration, but as time passes it can go as far as replacing God with something completely different, like the Baal worship of Ahab's days.

Therefore every faith must be confirmed by the Word of the Scriptures. An old tradition or the fact that many people follow it cannot be the standard of truth. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from

death are the complete salvation the Scriptures testify to.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must cut off the inheritance of wrong faith and pass on the gospel of life to the next generation. When this gospel is preached accurately, people can have all the sins of their hearts washed away and become the people of God.

13. A Life That Puts the Gospel before Personal Greed

Jeroboam made the golden calves out of the greed of protecting his own kingship, and Omri and Ahab, pursuing national strength and material prosperity, expanded idolatry still further.

The person who has been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also has the desires of the flesh. But if he puts those desires before God, his heart drifts from the gospel and comes to serve the wealth and honor of the world.

The saved person does not become a sinner again because of his shortcomings; he believes in Jesus, who has already washed away all his sins, lays down the thoughts of the flesh, and serves the gospel. The Holy Spirit leads him to live not for his own greed but for the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of other souls.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 16

First, if the content of the faith does not change, no true change has taken place even though people and dynasties change. Baasha, Zimri, and Omri tore down the dynasties before them, but they all followed the way of Jeroboam.

Second, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Word of salvation that cannot be changed according to man’s greed and purposes. Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the Cross, and rose again from death.

Third, the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross cannot be separated from each other. With the baptism He took charge of sin, on the Cross He received the judgment of that sin, and by rising again from death He gave new life to those who believe.

Fourth, outward success is not evidence of right faith. Omri built Samaria and established a strong kingdom, but before God he did worse than the kings before him.

Fifth, union with a wrong faith blurs the gospel. Just as Ahab accepted the worship of Baal and Asherah through Jezebel, if we acknowledge other words of salvation together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the center of our faith collapses.

Sixth, putting material things and worldly success before God produces the same result as serving the golden calf and Baal. The greatest blessing God has given is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the washing of all sins, and obtain eternal life.

Seventh, we must not raise up again the problem of sin Jesus has ended. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that all his sins were passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins has completely ended.

Eighth, since a wrong faith can be passed on to the next generation, the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be preached accurately. A leader must put the salvation of souls before his own interests and preach in full the Word of salvation recorded in the Scriptures.

Ninth, the saved person must not serve his own greed as God but must live for the gospel. The Holy Spirit leads the person who has received the washing of all sins to keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit and preach it to the world.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 16 shows, through the process in which the wrong faith of Jeroboam was passed on through Baasha, Zimri, and Omri to Ahab and grew worse into Baal worship, that we must believe and preach in full the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death, without mixing it with any other teaching. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

1 Kings Chapter 16

The Successive Sins of the Dynasties of Israel and the Appearance of Ahab

Introductory Words

1 Kings chapter 16 shows, through the replacement and judgment of the kings of northern Israel, that even when the dynasty changes, if there is no return to the truth God has ordained, the stream of sin is not cut off. Baasha became the instrument that destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he himself did not turn back from the sin of Jeroboam. He struck the house of Jeroboam yet followed the way of Jeroboam just as it was, and God said that He would judge his house like the house of Jeroboam.

In this chapter is recorded the stream of confused kingship that runs through Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab. Though kings changed and power shifted, northern Israel did not return to God. Treason gave birth to treason, those who seized power were judged in their turn, and the human kingdom grew ever more unstable. This shows that power that has departed from the way God ordained, however strong it looks on the outside, is collapsing within.

With Ahab in particular, the sin grew deeper. He regarded the sin of Jeroboam as a trivial thing, took Jezebel as his wife, and brought the worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel. If Jeroboam changed the order of salvation God had ordained

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

with golden calves and a corrupted law of sacrifice, Ahab piled more open idolatry on top of that sin. When sin is counted small, it can spread into greater evil in the next generation.

This Word is a solemn warning to believers today as well. Even if the church's name changes, the leader changes, and the system changes, if there is no actual return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed, the essence does not change. If we leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the blood of the Cross, or try to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and our own efforts, that is changing the order of the remission of sin God has ordained with human thinking, like the way of Jeroboam.

Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. We must stand on this gospel of the water and the Spirit. 1 Kings chapter 16 tells us that what matters is not outward change but the essence of faith. Escaping from the sin of Jeroboam is more important than gaining the kingship, and following the righteousness of God rather than human greed is the true way of life.

The Word of God Came to Jehu and Rebuked Baasha

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying" (1 Kings 16:1).

1 Kings chapter 16 begins with the Word of God rebuking Baasha. The Word of God came to Jehu the son of Hanani. Jehu did not criticize Baasha out of his own thinking. The Word of the LORD came to him, and with that Word he rebuked Baasha.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Baasha was the man who had killed Jeroboam's son Nadab and become king. He struck the whole house of Jeroboam and became the instrument by which God's judgment was carried out. Jeroboam had changed the law of sacrifice God ordained and set up golden calves, making Israel sin, and so his house received the judgment of God. But Baasha, even after seeing that judgment, did not turn back from the sin of Jeroboam.

This is a fearful thing. Even after seeing another person's sin judged, one can keep walking the same way of sin oneself. Baasha struck the house of Jeroboam, but he did not cast away the sin of Jeroboam. The dynasty changed, but the content of the faith did not change. So God sent Jehu and rebuked him.

Today as well, a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit may change only its name and form. Even if the church's name changes, the leader changes, and the system changes, if the truth of salvation completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is not there, the essence does not change. What pleases God is not outward change but the faith that actually returns to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God Lifted Baasha Out of the Dust and Made him Ruler

"Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel" (1 Kings 16:2).

God said to Baasha, "Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel." Baasha seemed to have become king by himself, but God says that even his rise to the throne was under the sovereignty of God.

The words that He lifted him "out of the dust" show that

Baasha's original place was not high. God lifted him from a low place and made him king of Israel. Therefore Baasha should have feared all the more before God. He should have considered why God had raised him up, and, seeing why the house of Jeroboam had been judged, he should have returned to God.

But Baasha did not use the place God had given him to serve the will of God. Even after becoming king, he walked in the way of Jeroboam. God had given him an opportunity, but he did not make it an opportunity to return to God.

We too must receive with fear the place God has given us. If we have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is not a grace given so that we may live for our own benefit. God delivered us from sin so that we may serve the righteousness of God and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Serving this truth—that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death—is the way worthy of the grace we have received from God.

Baasha Walked in the Way of Jeroboam and Made Israel Sin

"You have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins" (1 Kings 16:2).

The heart of God's rebuke of Baasha is this: he walked in the way of Jeroboam and made God's people Israel sin. And so with their sins he provoked the anger of God.

What is the way of Jeroboam? It is the way of casting away

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the law of sacrifice God ordained and making a religion out of human thinking in order to protect one's own kingship. Jeroboam set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan and said that these were the god who had brought them up from Egypt. He made priests of ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and even changed the feasts at his own will. This looked like devotion offered to God, but in fact it was the sin of tearing down the order of salvation God had ordained.

Baasha saw that sin. He also saw the house of Jeroboam destroyed because of it. And yet he went the same way. This is not a problem of mere ignorance; it is the stubbornness of refusing to abandon one's own way even before the judgment God has shown.

The wrong Christian faith of today can also follow the way of Jeroboam. If we speak of Jesus and yet leave out the truth that Jesus took charge of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, we are changing the order of the remission of sin God has ordained. If we speak only of the blood of the Cross and comfort a person whose heart still holds sin by telling him he is saved, that is not leading the soul to the true remission of sin. A teaching that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is not the way of the gospel of the water and the Spirit either.

God Said He Would Sweep Away Baasha's House like the House of Jeroboam

"Surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (1 Kings 16:3).

God said that He would sweep away the house of Baasha.

And He said that He would make that house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Baasha was the man who had destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but now his own house came to receive the same judgment.

Why was it so? Because Baasha became the instrument that judged the house of Jeroboam, yet he himself followed the sin of Jeroboam just as it was. Striking another's sin does not make one righteous. If one does not return to the way God has ordained, one comes to stand under the same judgment.

This Word is very solemn. God did not look first at Baasha's political success or the length of his kingship. He looked at what way of faith he walked in. Baasha became king and gained power, but he did not cast away the way of Jeroboam. So God said He would sweep away his house like the house of Jeroboam.

Today as well, criticizing wrong faith is not enough. Even after seeing another's error, if we ourselves do not stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can remain in the same way. True faith does not end with pointing out another's sin; it is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and living within that truth.

The Judgment Was Proclaimed: Dogs Would Eat Those Who Died in the City, and Birds Those Who Died in the Field

"The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields" (1 Kings 16:4).

God said that the dogs would eat whoever belonged to

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Baasha and died in the city, and the birds of the air would eat whoever died in the field. This is a fearful word of curse in which not even the dignity of burial is allowed. The same kind of judgment that had been proclaimed on the house of Jeroboam was proclaimed on the house of Baasha as well.

The reason God was angered to this degree is that Baasha's sin did not end with him as an individual. Like Jeroboam, he made the people of Israel sin. He dragged the people God called *"My people Israel" (1 Kings 16:2)* into the way of wrong faith. The king who should have restored the law of sacrifice God ordained instead made them keep walking the way of Jeroboam.

The sin of a leader is heavy. When a person who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit leads souls, those who hear his words also fail to escape from the sins of their hearts. If they do not know the baptism of Jesus, they cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus; and if only the blood of the Cross is preached, people cannot know the complete truth of the remission of sin. Then the congregation goes on leading a religious life while remaining sinners.

What God desires is to lead people to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must preach the truth that Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. This truth delivers a person from the sins of his heart and sets him before God as a righteous person.

1 Kings 16:1–4 Shows That We Must Actually Escape from the Sin of Jeroboam

This passage is the Word in which God rebukes Baasha through Jehu. God lifted Baasha out of the dust and made him ruler of Israel. But Baasha walked in the way of Jeroboam and made God's people Israel sin. So God said He would sweep away Baasha's house like the house of Jeroboam.

Baasha saw the house of Jeroboam receive judgment. But he did not learn from that judgment and return to God. He destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but followed the way of Jeroboam just as it was. This is a great warning for us today as well. Even after seeing the results of wrong faith, if we do not actually return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to stand in the same way of sin.

God did not deliver us from sin so that we may live according to personal greed. It is the grace by which He makes us follow the gospel of the water and the Spirit and preach this truth. To have been delivered from the sin of Jeroboam means to have come to know the way of salvation God has ordained. It means to have come to believe the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and accomplished complete salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore we must not become like Baasha. We must not become people who see another's wrong and yet do not cast away the way of Jeroboam within themselves. Even when the king changes and the times change, without the gospel of the water and the Spirit there is no way of life. We must stand firmly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained and live with the faith that follows not personal greed but the righteousness of God and the Word of life.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even Baasha's Might Could Not Cover His Sin before God

"Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (1 Kings 16:5).

The Scriptures say that the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Baasha, too, had his record as a king. He came to the throne, ruled northern Israel, held political power, and did many things. In the history books of men, his might and achievements can be recorded.

But the center of what God saw was not his might. God looked at what way of faith he walked in. Baasha was the man who destroyed the house of Jeroboam. The judgment God had pronounced on the house of Jeroboam was carried out through his hand. But though he struck the house of Jeroboam, he did not turn back from the sin of Jeroboam.

This is the tragedy of Baasha. He stood in the place of striking another's sin, but he himself walked the same way of sin. The dynasty changed, but the faith of northern Israel did not change. The golden calves, the corrupted sacrificial system, and the desire to protect one's own kingdom remained just as they were.

Today as well, a person's deeds and power cannot cover sin before God. Even if we do many things in the church, are recognized by people, and hold religious influence, if we have departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we do not stand rightly before God. We must stand on the truth that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Power and

deeds without this gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot become fruit that gives life to souls.

Even the Throne Could Not Let Him Escape Death

"So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 16:6).

Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. And his son Elah became king in his place. He reigned for twenty-four years, but in the end, he met his death. The power of the king could not hold back death, and what he did and his might could not let him escape the judgment before God.

The Scriptures record the deaths of the kings again and again. A king holds power and rules a nation, but that power also has its end. Baasha was no exception. He seemed to have destroyed the house of Jeroboam and established a new dynasty, but his life also closed with death.

What is more fearful is the fact that his son Elah succeeded to the throne. That the kingship continues can look like stability in human eyes. But God had already said that He would sweep away Baasha's house like the house of Jeroboam. So Elah's accession was not the succession of a blessing but the stream in which Baasha's sin and the judgment to come upon his house passed on to the next stage.

Today as well, a wrong faith can be handed down from generation to generation. If a faith that does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes a tradition, and a doctrine that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross is passed on to the next generation, people keep leading a religious life without having the sins of their hearts resolved. The continuation of a kingship does not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

mean the continuation of life before God. True life is only within the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God Rebuked Baasha for Imitating the House of Jeroboam

"And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them" (1 Kings 16:7).

God rebuked Baasha and his house through the prophet Jehu. The reason was that Baasha, imitating the house of Jeroboam, did all that evil in the sight of the LORD. He provoked the anger of the LORD with the work of his hands. And he had also struck the house of Jeroboam.

This Word must be looked at deeply. Baasha was the man who struck the house of Jeroboam, but he was also a man who imitated that house. He cut off the lineage of Jeroboam, but he did not cut off the sin of Jeroboam. He tore down the dynasty of Jeroboam, but he left in place the golden-calf faith and the corrupted law of sacrifice Jeroboam had made. So God rebuked Baasha.

The sin of Jeroboam was the sin of changing the law of sacrifice God had ordained. To protect his own kingship he kept the people from going up to the temple in Jerusalem, and set up golden calves to replace God. He made priests of ordinary people who were not of the sons of Levi, and even set the feasts at his own will. This was the work of changing with human desire the order God had established to save sinners.

Today this sin connects with the faith that corrupts the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we leave out the truth that Jesus took charge of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and speak only of the blood of the Cross, we cannot explain how sin was passed on to Jesus. A faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained. A teaching that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit may look like serving God on the outside, but it cannot lead the soul to the remission of sin.

Striking Another's Sin Does Not Make One Righteous

What must be specially noted in Baasha's sin is the fact that he struck the house of Jeroboam. He became the instrument of the judgment God had proclaimed. But being used as an instrument of judgment did not mean that he was righteous before God. He struck the house of Jeroboam, yet went right on following the way of Jeroboam.

This gives a solemn lesson to believers today as well. Criticizing another's wrong faith does not automatically set me on the truth. One can point out someone's error and speak of the problems of another doctrine. But if one does not stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit oneself, one can end up within the same stream of sin.

True faith does not end with pointing out another's sin. It is actually returning to the Word of salvation God has ordained. It is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

justified us by rising again from death.

Baasha struck the house of Jeroboam, but he did not cast away the sin of Jeroboam. We must not become like that. We must not stop at discerning wrong faith, but must look at whether our own hearts stand firmly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1 Kings 16:5–7 Warns Us Not to Imitate the Way of Jeroboam

This passage sums up Baasha's life and shows clearly why he received God's rebuke. The rest of Baasha's acts and his might were recorded in history, and he died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah succeeded to the throne. But the heart of what God saw was not his might and deeds, but the fact that he imitated the house of Jeroboam and did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam but did not destroy the sin of Jeroboam. He stood in the place of striking another's sin, but he did not cast away the same sin within himself. So his house also came under the judgment of God.

Today we too must not imitate the way of Jeroboam. We must not change with human thinking the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts are not the way of salvation God has ordained.

The salvation God has given us is clear. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us

completely by rising again from death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not become people who, like Baasha, strike the house of Jeroboam and yet imitate the way of Jeroboam. More important than outward change, the replacement of people, and the shift of power is that the essence of our faith returns to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must actually escape from the sin of Jeroboam that God hates, and live with the faith that follows not personal greed but the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Elah's Short Reign Was the Result of Baasha's Sin Being Carried On

"In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah" (1 Kings 16:8).

Baasha's son Elah became king of Israel in Tirzah. He was on the throne for two years. But his reign did not last long. The Scriptures record Elah's reign briefly, and then immediately show his death and the destruction of the house of Baasha.

Elah was the son of Baasha. Baasha had become the instrument that destroyed the house of Jeroboam, but he himself had not turned back from the way of Jeroboam. God spoke to Baasha through the prophet Jehu: though God had lifted him out of the dust and made him ruler of Israel, because he walked in the way of Jeroboam and made Israel sin, God would sweep away his house like the house of Jeroboam.

So Elah's accession was not simply the throne passing to a son. It is the scene in which Baasha's sin and the judgment

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

proclaimed on his house move to the next stage. The kingship continued, but right faith before God did not continue. The father's sin began to appear as judgment in the son's days.

Today as well, a wrong faith can be passed on to the next generation. If people speak only of the Cross of Jesus without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and leave out the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, they cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. Then a faith in which sin remains in the heart keeps being handed down. This is the fearful lesson the age of Elah shows us spiritually.

God's Judgment Came to a King Drunk with Wine

"Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place" (1 Kings 16:9–10).

Elah was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, the steward of his house. At that time his servant Zimri conspired against the king. Zimri was the commander of half his chariots. He was a man who held military power close to the king. And it was this very servant who killed the king and became king in his place.

This scene shows just as it is the unstable spiritual state of the kingdom of northern Israel. The house of Jeroboam fell by treason, and the house of Baasha also fell by treason. A kingdom that has departed from the way God ordained collapses from within, even while it holds power on the outside.

The king was drunk with wine, and the servant was harboring treason. There was no true peace inside the palace.

The fact that Elah was drunk is not a problem of mere lifestyle. He did not realize that God's judgment had been proclaimed over his house. Though the word of the prophet Jehu had already come to the house of Baasha, Elah did not turn back before God. In the place where he should have repented, he stayed in the ease of the flesh.

Today as well, if a person hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and does not turn back, he is like one who is spiritually drunk. If he claims to believe in Jesus while sin remains in his heart, tries to resolve sin with prayers of repentance and his own efforts, and does not return to the complete way of the remission of sin God has ordained, he is failing to wake up even after hearing the word of judgment. True wakefulness is setting one's faith right before the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Zimri's Treason Became the Instrument by Which God's Word Was Fulfilled

"Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends" (1 Kings 16:11).

After Zimri killed Elah and came to the throne, he killed the whole house of Baasha. He did not leave a single male, whether of his relatives or of his friends. This looks like a very cruel seizure of the kingship. But the Scriptures do not view this event as mere political slaughter. They view it as the process in which the Word God had spoken concerning the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

house of Baasha was fulfilled.

Baasha had struck the house of Jeroboam. But he did not cut off the sin of Jeroboam. Rather, he followed the way of Jeroboam just as it was. As a result, God said that He would make the house of Baasha like the house of Jeroboam. Now that Word was being fulfilled through the hand of Zimri.

Here we must distinguish between man's treason and God's judgment. It is not that Zimri struck the house of Baasha because he was a man of righteous faith. But God uses even man's evil treason to fulfill the Word He has spoken. The Word God spoke through the prophet does not disappear with the passing of time but is fulfilled without fail.

The believer must not take the Word of God lightly. It is the same with the Word of salvation God has ordained. The gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death—is the way of life God has established. If we depart from this truth, no matter what religious form we have, we cannot reach life.

The Word God Spoke through Jehu Was Fulfilled Just as It Was

"Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet" (1 Kings 16:12).

The Scriptures interpret clearly the destruction of the whole house of Baasha. This came about according to the Word the LORD had spoken against Baasha by Jehu the prophet. So the death of Elah and the destruction of Baasha's house were no

accidental events. They were the fulfillment of the judgment God had already spoken.

God had given Baasha an opportunity. He could see why the house of Jeroboam had been destroyed. He could know that the house had been judged because Jeroboam set up golden calves and changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. But Baasha did not learn from that judgment. He struck the house of Jeroboam and yet imitated the way of Jeroboam.

So God declared the same judgment on the house of Baasha as well, and that Word was fulfilled just as it was in the days of Elah. This shows that though God's judgment may seem slow, it is fulfilled without fail.

Today as well, a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained surely produces the result of killing the soul. If we leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the blood of the Cross, we cannot know the truth that sin was passed on to Jesus. Then a person holds only religious comfort while sin remains in his heart. This is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

They Provoked the Anger of the LORD with Vanities

"For all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols" (1 Kings 16:13).

The Scriptures make clear why the house of Baasha was destroyed. It was because of all the sins of Baasha and the sins of his son Elah. They not only sinned themselves but also made Israel sin. And with "vanities" they provoked the anger of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

LORD God of Israel.

Here "vanities" refers to the idols they served like God though they are not God. The golden calves Jeroboam made and the false sacrificial system he set up were vanities. They looked like serving God on the outside, but because they were not the way God had ordained, they could give no life. Baasha and Elah did not cast away those vain things and kept even the people in that sin.

There are vain things today as well. Serving material things and success like God is a vain thing. Putting human tradition and the authority of a denomination before the Word of God is a vain thing. Above all, speaking of the remission of sin with human doctrines apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a vain faith that cannot give life to the soul.

When Jesus received baptism from John, all our sins were passed on to Him. The Lord carried those sins and received the judgment on the Cross. And by rising again from death He gave us complete salvation. If we leave out this truth and speak only of the Cross, it becomes a faith with the order of the remission of sin missing. Such a faith cannot actually remove sin from a person's heart.

What God hates is that people, while claiming to serve God, change the way of salvation He has established. Such was the sin of Jeroboam, and the sins of Baasha and Elah also lay within that stream.

More Important Than the Rest of Elah's Acts Is God's Evaluation

"Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of

Israel?" (1 Kings 16:14).

The rest of the acts of Elah and all that he did were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. He, too, would have had his records as king. But the Scriptures do not explain his achievements at length. What the Scriptures regard as more important is what way of faith he was in.

Elah was on the throne for two years, but he did not turn back to the right way before God. The word of judgment had already come to the house of Baasha, but he did not repent before that Word. He could not cut off his father's sin and could not escape from the way of Jeroboam. In the end he was killed by the treason of his servant in the place of his drunkenness.

Many deeds can be recorded in human history. But before God, what matters is whether one believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. More important than how long one was on the throne, how much one did, or what power one enjoyed is whether one believed the Word of salvation God has ordained.

Today we too must not boast of the record of our remaining acts but must examine our own faith before God. We must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death.

1 Kings 16:8–14 Teaches Us to Cut Off the Inheritance of Vain Faith

This passage records Elah's short reign, Zimri's treason, and the complete destruction of the house of Baasha. Elah came to the throne as Baasha's son, but he did not turn back

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

from his father's sin. He was killed by Zimri in the place of his drunkenness, and Zimri, after becoming king, destroyed the whole house of Baasha. All this was fulfilled according to the Word God had spoken through the prophet Jehu.

The Scriptures state the reason clearly. It was because Baasha and Elah sinned and made Israel sin as well, provoking the anger of the LORD with vain things. A wrong faith does not end as one person's problem. When the king goes the wrong way, the people follow that way too. When a leader does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who hear him also fail to know fully the way of the remission of sin.

Therefore we must cast away the vain things. It is not only idols like the golden calves that are vain. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says sin is washed away by prayers of repentance, and the religious comfort that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart are also vain things. They are not the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained.

The way of salvation God has established is clear. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. When we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we escape from the sins of the heart and stand before God as righteous people.

Therefore we must not inherit just as it is the wrong faith of the father's generation, like Elah. We must not become a house that hears the Word of God and does not turn back, like the house of Baasha. Even when the king changes and the times change, if there is no gospel of the water and the Spirit, vain faith continues. We must cut off that stream and stand firmly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained.

Zimri's Seven-Day Kingship Shows the Vanity of Power Built on Sin

"In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines" (1 Kings 16:15).

Zimri killed Elah and became king in Tirzah. But his kingship lasted only seven days. He destroyed the house of Baasha and became king, but he could not rule long. The Scriptures record his reign very briefly. This shows how vain is the power obtained by human treason.

Zimri became the instrument by which the judgment God had proclaimed on the house of Baasha was carried out. God had said that because Baasha walked in the way of Jeroboam He would sweep away his house, and that Word was fulfilled through the hand of Zimri. But this does not mean that Zimri was a righteous man who knew and obeyed the will of God. He conspired against the king and killed him, and he himself was also in the way of Jeroboam.

Here we must see an important fact. The fact that a person was used as an instrument of God's judgment does not mean that he stood in right faith before God. Zimri struck the house of Baasha, but he was not a man who had escaped from the sin of Jeroboam. He gained the kingship, but he had not returned to the way God ordained.

It is the same today. A person does not automatically stand within the truth because he points out another's wrong or tears down some wrong system. True faith is standing on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

completed salvation by rising again from death. Religious power and standing obtained without this truth can end as vainly as a seven-day kingship.

The People in the Camp Made Not Zimri but Omri King

"Now the people who were encamped heard it said, 'Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king.' So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp" (1 Kings 16:16).

The people of Israel were encamped against Gibbethon. When they heard the news that Zimri had conspired and killed the king, they did not acknowledge Zimri as king. Rather, that very day, in the camp, they made Omri, the commander of the army, king of Israel.

This scene shows well the confusion of the kingdom of northern Israel. In the palace Zimri had killed the king and become king, and on the battlefield the people set up Omri as king. Two powers came to face each other within one nation. A kingdom that has departed from the way God ordained has no order and no peace, even though it has the name of a king. Treason gives birth to treason, and one power struggle gives birth to another.

This confusion of northern Israel is not mere political instability. At its root lies the sin of Jeroboam. Jeroboam cast away the law of sacrifice God had ordained and set up golden calves. He tore down the priesthood God had established and changed the order of faith to protect his own kingship. From that time on, the kings of northern Israel drifted not toward the way of faith God had ordained but toward the way of

protecting their own power.

A faith today that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same. If the truth of salvation completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is not at the center, people become bound to defending their own claims and their own places rather than to the peace God gives. Where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is missing, the sins of the heart are not resolved, and so there is religious form but no true peace.

Omri's Besieging of Tirzah Is the Picture of a Kingdom of Treason Falling Again by Treason

"Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah" (1 Kings 16:17).

Omri went up from Gibbethon with all Israel and besieged Tirzah. Tirzah was where the palace of northern Israel stood. Zimri had seized the kingship there, but Omri and the army came up and surrounded the city. Zimri had become king by treason, and now yet another force came up to strike him.

This is the wretched repetition of a kingdom that follows the way of Jeroboam. Jeroboam's son Nadab was killed by Baasha. Baasha's son Elah was killed by Zimri. Zimri in turn was pressed by Omri. Though kings change and dynasties change, if there is no return to God, the stream of sin does not stop.

As the Scriptures keep stressing, the sin of Jeroboam continued from generation to generation. The kings of northern Israel saw why the house of Jeroboam was destroyed and still did not turn back. Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam yet committed the same sin, and Zimri destroyed the house of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Baasha yet was not a man standing in the right way before God. Even the one who strikes the sinner, if he does not turn back from the way of sin, enters the same stream of judgment in the end.

The believer must examine his own faith before this Word. More important than the eye that sees another's fault is whether I myself stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained. A faith that does not know the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross does not know how a person's sins were passed on to Jesus. Then sin remains in the heart, and one tries to resolve that sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts. That is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

Zimri Set Fire to the King's House and Died in It

"And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died" (1 Kings 16:18).

Zimri saw that the city was taken. There was no way of escape left for him. So he went into the citadel of the king's house, set fire to the king's house, and died in it. His seven-day kingship ended like this.

This scene is very wretched. Zimri killed the king in order to seize the palace. But the palace he seized became in the end the place of his own death. The place he entered to gain power became the place of judgment and destruction. This is the end of power built on sin.

When a person departs from God and lives for his own greed, even what he seems to have gained can become the

place of his own judgment. Jeroboam made golden calves to protect his kingship, but because of that sin his house was destroyed. Baasha killed Nadab to become king, but his house was destroyed in the same way. Zimri seized the palace, but he burned to death in that very palace.

Today as well, a person can blur the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to build his own kingdom. To hold on to people, to protect an organization, to gain material things and power, he can try to change the truth God has ordained. But what is built apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot save people in the end. True life is in the salvation Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and taking charge of our sins, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death.

Zimri Also Was in the Way of Jeroboam

"Because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin" (1 Kings 16:19).

The Scriptures explain why Zimri died so wretchedly. He sinned by doing evil in the sight of the LORD. He walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in the sin Jeroboam had committed to make Israel sin.

Zimri's reign was only seven days. And yet the Scriptures evaluate him as one who was in the way of Jeroboam. This shows that what matters is not the length of the time of sin but what way of faith one stood in. Even a seven-day kingship, if it is within the sin of Jeroboam, is an evil way before God.

The way of Jeroboam is the way that changed the order of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

salvation God had ordained. It is the way that made the people serve golden calves like God, changed the priesthood and the feasts, and led the people away from the temple and the law of sacrifice God had ordained. It looked like serving God, but in fact it was the sin of tearing down the way of the remission of sin God had established.

Today this sin connects with the faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the blood of the Cross, we cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. Then a person leads a life of faith with sin remaining in his heart. A teaching that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is not the complete way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

The salvation God has established is clear. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the way of escape from the way of Jeroboam.

Zimri's Remaining Acts Were Remembered as Treason

"Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (1 Kings 16:20).

The Scriptures say that the rest of the acts of Zimri and the treason he committed were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The word that represents his life is "treason." He killed the king and came to the throne, but

that kingship ended in seven days. His record remained not as a glorious reign but as rebellion and a wretched death.

By what is a person's life remembered? Zimri sought power, but before God he was recorded as a man who committed treason. He tried to seize the palace, but he burned to death in that palace. The deeds of a person who departs from the way God ordained remain in the end as a record of his own greed and rebellion.

The believer must think about what record he will leave before God. In human eyes success and power may look important. But what God looks at is the faith that stands within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He looks at whether the person who has received the remission of sin through the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is living according to that truth.

Zimri's seven days were short, but even that short time was evaluated before God. In our lives, too, the direction of faith matters more than length. A life that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and follows the righteousness of God is the blessed record before God.

1 Kings 16:15–20 Shows That Power Built on the Way of Jeroboam Surely Falls

This passage records how Zimri was king for seven days and, pressed by Omri, set fire to the king's house and died. He killed Elah and came to the throne, but the people of Israel in the camp made Omri king. When Omri besieged Tirzah, Zimri saw that the city was falling, and he burned to death in the king's house. The Scriptures say it was because he walked in the way of Jeroboam and did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

This Word is a matter not of power but of faith. Zimri became king, but he was not a man who had returned to God's law of sacrifice, in which the gospel of the water and the Spirit was prefigured. He was within the sin of Jeroboam. So his kingship ended in seven days, and his deeds were recorded as treason.

The believer today must realize clearly before this Word. A faith that has departed from the way of salvation God ordained does not lead to life, however much power and form it has on the outside. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance, and a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart are in the same stream as the way of Jeroboam.

The true salvation God has given is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, all our sins were passed on to Him; the judgment of those sins ended on the Cross; and by His rising again from death we have been justified. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not hold on to a palace gained by treason and greed like Zimri. Power built on the way of Jeroboam surely falls. We must stand on the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live by the faith that follows not human greed but the righteousness of God. This way alone leads us out of the stream of treason and destruction into the life and peace God gives.

Northern Israel Was Divided in Two Yet Again

"Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half

of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned" (1 Kings 16:21–22).

After Zimri died in seven days, northern Israel was divided in two again. Half of the people tried to make Tibni the son of Ginath king, and half followed Omri. In the end the people who followed Omri prevailed over those who followed Tibni, and after Tibni died, Omri became king.

This scene shows in what a state of confusion northern Israel was. The house of Jeroboam was destroyed by Baasha, the house of Baasha was destroyed by Zimri, and Zimri, pressed by Omri, set fire to the palace and died. Now the people were divided again between Tibni and Omri. Kings changed and forces changed, but there was no true peace within northern Israel.

The root of this division lies in the sin of Jeroboam. Jeroboam cast away the law of sacrifice God had ordained and set up golden calves. He kept the people from going up to the temple in Jerusalem and changed the priesthood and the feasts at his own will. When the order of salvation God had ordained collapsed, the kingship also kept being shaken in treason and division.

Today as well, apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit there is no true peace in the soul. If a person claims to believe in Jesus but does not know the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, he cannot know how his sins were passed on to Jesus. Then even though he speaks of the blood of the Cross, sin remains in his heart, and he tries to resolve that sin with prayers of repentance and his own efforts. Such a faith can have the outward form of religion, but it leaves continual division and unrest inside the soul.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Becoming King by Force Does Not Make One Righteous before God

Omri prevailed over those who followed Tibni. In human eyes Omri was a strong man. He had a military base, won more than half the people to his side, and in the end seized the kingship. But the Scriptures do not speak of Omri's victory as a righteous victory before God.

God's evaluation differs from human strength. Omri became king, but before God he walked an evil way. He gained strong power, but with that power he did not restore the way God had ordained. He did not cast away the sin of Jeroboam, and he did not turn northern Israel back to the true law of sacrifice in which the picture of the gospel of the water and the Spirit was contained.

People easily judge right and wrong by the size of a force. When many follow, when one wins outwardly, builds a great city, and gains political power, it looks like success. But God looks at what way of faith a person stands in. Omri won, but he did not escape from the way of Jeroboam.

It is the same today. A faith that many people follow is not necessarily the truth. A big church, a big organization, many ministries, and people's recognition do not in themselves make a faith that pleases God. What God looks at is whether one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He looks at whether one believes and preaches the truth of salvation accomplished by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

Omri Built Samaria but Did Not Return to God

"In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill" (1 Kings 16:23–24).

Omri became king of Israel and reigned twelve years, six of them in Tirzah. Afterward he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer and built a city on it. And he called the name of the city Samaria.

Samaria afterward becomes an important center of northern Israel. Omri was, politically, a king who established a new capital. He did not merely seize the throne; he laid a new foundation for his kingdom. In human history this can look like a great achievement, for it is the work of a king founding a capital and creating the center of a dynasty.

But the Scriptures do not speak of Omri's building of Samaria as his spiritual restoration. He built a city, but he did not return to God. He established Samaria, but he did not cast away the golden-calf faith and the corrupted law of sacrifice Jeroboam had set up. Rather, that Samaria later becomes the center where the worship of Baal and Asherah deepens in the days of Ahab.

This is the difference between man's building and the faith of God. A man can build a city, build a palace, and set systems in order. But if he does not return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all that building cannot become the fruit of life before God.

Today as well, a church can build its outward form. It can put up buildings, form organizations, and equip systems. But

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

without the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death—that outward form cannot give life to souls. The believer must regard the truth of salvation God has ordained as more precious than the outward city of Samaria.

Omri Did Worse Than All Who Were before Him

"Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who were before him" (1 Kings 16:25).

The Scriptures evaluate Omri very sternly. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who were before him. This evaluation is separate from his political ability or his building of a city. In human eyes he was a strong king, but before God he was a more evil king.

The kings of northern Israel kept repeating the sin of Jeroboam. Nadab went that way, Baasha went that way, and the days of Elah and Zimri also passed in treason and judgment. Yet Omri is recorded as having done worse than all who were before him. The stream of sin was not weakening; it was growing deeper.

Sin does not weaken when it is left alone. If one does not turn back to the way God has ordained, it grows ever deeper. After Jeroboam set up the golden calves, northern Israel did not become new with each change of king but flowed into a more evil way. After Omri comes Ahab, and Ahab regards following the sin of Jeroboam as a trivial thing and comes to serve even Baal and Asherah.

Today as well, a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit can harden with time into a more

entrenched tradition and doctrine. It may begin with ignorance of the baptism of Jesus, but as time passes, the wrong doctrine that one receives the remission of sin by believing only in the blood of the Cross becomes a system, and people take it for granted that sin remains in their hearts. This is drifting ever farther from the way of salvation God has ordained.

Omri Walked in All the Ways of Jeroboam

"For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols" (1 Kings 16:26).

Omri's sin is clear. He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. He walked in the sin by which Jeroboam had made Israel sin. And with vain things he provoked the anger of the LORD God of Israel.

The way of Jeroboam is the way that changed the law of sacrifice God had ordained. In the law of sacrifice God ordained was contained the shadow of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ would accomplish. The way the sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering to pass his sins onto it, and the offering shed its blood and received the judgment, shows that Jesus would take charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John and would receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross. And it makes us look toward the complete salvation the Lord would accomplish by rising again from death.

But Jeroboam changed this order at his own will. He led the people away from the temple and the law of sacrifice God had ordained, and made them serve golden calves like God. Omri,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

too, followed that exact same way. So the Scriptures say that he provoked the anger of the LORD with "vain things."

A vain thing is something that cannot give life. A golden calf is not God. Human doctrine cannot take the place of the way of salvation God has ordained either. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross cannot actually remove sin from a person's heart. A faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is not the way of the remission of sin God has established. These things may have religious form, but they are not the truth that gives life to the soul.

Only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the way of salvation God has ordained. Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. When we believe this truth, we escape from the sins of the heart and stand before God as righteous people.

God's Evaluation Matters More Than Omri's Might

"Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (1 Kings 16:27).

Omri had his remaining acts and the might he showed. He prevailed over Tibni and became king, built Samaria, and newly shaped the political foundation of northern Israel. In the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel his might and deeds would have been recorded.

But the Scriptures do not praise Omri with his might at the center. Rather they evaluate him as having done evil in the eyes

of the LORD, done worse than all who were before him, and walked in all the ways of Jeroboam. Man's history books record might, but the Scriptures record faith before God.

This gives us an important standard as well. What faith a person lived by before God matters more than what achievements he left. Omri had might, but he did not restore the way God had ordained. He built Samaria, but he did not return to God's law of sacrifice, the picture of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Today as well, a person's deeds and power cannot be the ground of salvation. Even if he has done much in the church, influenced many people, and built a great organization, if he does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not the faith that has received the remission of sin before God. What God looks at is whether one believes in the salvation completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

After Omri Came Ahab

"So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place" (1 Kings 16:28).

Omri died and was buried in Samaria. And his son Ahab became king in his place. Here the Scriptures prepare the next scene. The age of Ahab, more evil than Omri, begins.

Omri built Samaria, and he was buried there. But the Samaria he built did not become a center of faith returned to God. Rather, in the days of his son Ahab, a temple of Baal was built in Samaria, and an altar for Baal and a wooden image of Asherah were made. The stream of sin did not stop but grew

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

deeper.

This shows that a wrong faith can appear more seriously in the next generation. When Omri did not cast away the way of Jeroboam, Ahab who followed him regarded following the sin of Jeroboam as a trivial thing and went on to more open idolatry. When one generation does not hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the next generation can go into deeper spiritual confusion.

The believer must think of the next generation before this Word. We must not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit dimly. We must preach clearly the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. If this truth disappears, what remains is only a city named Samaria and the records of kingship, and in the end a greater idolatry takes its place within them.

1 Kings 16:21–28 Shows That Even a Strong Kingship Is Vain without the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

This passage records how Omri won the contest with Tibni and became king of northern Israel, bought the hill of Samaria and built a city, and was evaluated before God as evil because he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam. Omri was a politically strong king. He seized the kingship, established a new capital, and showed his might. But before God he was a king who did worse than all who were before him.

Why is that? Because he did not cast away the way of Jeroboam. The sin of Jeroboam was the sin of changing the law of sacrifice God had ordained and leading the people away

from God with golden calves and his own greed. Omri gained the kingship and built a city, but he did not turn back from this sin. So his building of Samaria became not a spiritual restoration but the foundation on which a deeper idolatry would stand.

Today as well, outward success does not guarantee true faith. Even if we build a great city, gain power, and gather many people, without the gospel of the water and the Spirit it is a vain way before God. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross, a faith that says one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and a faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts are not the way of salvation God has ordained.

The salvation God has given us is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not be content, like Omri, with gaining forces and building cities. We must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must cast away the way of Jeroboam and the way of Omri and stand on the Word of salvation God has ordained. Only this truth delivers us from the stream of division, treason, and idolatry, and leads us into the life and peace God gives.

Ahab Went On to a Way More Evil Than Omri's

"*In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him" (1 Kings 16:29–30).

Ahab became king of northern Israel as the son of Omri. He ruled Israel in Samaria for twenty-two years. And in evaluating Ahab, the Scriptures say that he *"did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him" (1 Kings 16:30).*

The kings of northern Israel had already walked an evil way. Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice God ordained and set up golden calves. Nadab followed his father's way, and Baasha, though he destroyed the house of Jeroboam, followed the sin of Jeroboam just as it was. Omri, too, was recorded as having done worse than all before him. But Ahab was more evil still.

This shows the fact that when sin continues without turning back, it grows ever deeper. In the days of Jeroboam they set up golden calves and served them as though they took the place of the LORD God. But in the days of Ahab, Baal and Asherah came in openly. A wrong faith does not weaken by itself if left alone; it can develop into a stronger and deeper idolatry in the next generation.

Today as well, a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit can become a religious system that hardens more and more with time. It may begin with ignorance of the baptism of Jesus, but as time passes, the faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross hardens into tradition and doctrine. Saying one is saved while sin remains in the heart, and trying to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts, come to be regarded as natural. This is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

When the Sin of Jeroboam Is Counted Light, One Goes On to Greater Idolatry

"And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him" (1 Kings 16:31).

Ahab's sin is revealed in that he regarded following the sins of Jeroboam as a trivial thing. He did not merely repeat the sin of Jeroboam; he counted that sin small. And he took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served and worshiped Baal.

The sin of Jeroboam was by no means a light sin. To protect his own kingship he made golden calves and told the people not to go up to the temple in Jerusalem. He changed the priesthood and the feasts God had ordained. This was the sin of tearing down with human thinking the law of sacrifice God had set up as a picture for the salvation of sinners.

Yet Ahab counted this sin light. And he went a step further and served Baal. The marriage with Jezebel was not a mere royal wedding. It became the way of accepting pagan faith and spiritual fellowship with it. Through Jezebel, the worship of Baal and Asherah came deeper into northern Israel.

The believer today also must not take lightly teachings that differ from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we think, 'It does not matter if I do not know the baptism of Jesus,' 'It is enough to believe only in the Cross,' or 'Even if sin remains in the heart, it is all right if I keep praying prayers of repentance,' that is taking lightly the way of salvation God has ordained. It was because Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of all our sins that He could receive the judgment of sin on the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Cross. And by rising again from death He justified us completely. If we take this gospel of the water and the Spirit lightly, the soul can drift into a deeper false faith.

The Altar of Baal Was Set Up inside Samaria

"Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria" (1 Kings 16:32).

Ahab built a temple of Baal in Samaria and set up an altar for Baal inside it. Samaria was the political center of northern Israel that Omri had established. And Ahab set up the temple of Baal inside that very center. This shows that idolatry did not stay at the personal level but entered as the central faith of the nation.

Jeroboam, even while setting up the golden calves, had said that they were the god who brought Israel up out of Egypt. He spoke as though he were serving God while in fact replacing God with golden calves. But in the days of Ahab it was more open. He built a temple in the name of Baal and set up an altar for Baal. It was not a matter of serving God somewhat differently; it was exchanging God for another god altogether.

This is the spiritual corruption of the days of Ahab. The law of sacrifice God had ordained disappeared, and the altar of Baal was set up inside Samaria. The people had their hearts stolen away, not by the way of the remission of sin God had given, but by idols thought to give abundance and rain and the blessings of the world.

There can be altars of Baal today as well. The heart that relies on material success, on prospering in the world, on people's recognition, and on the abundance of the flesh more than on God can become an altar of Baal. And a religious

system that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit can look like serving God on the outside while failing to lead the soul to the remission of sin. But the altar God receives is not the altar of Baal that man builds; it is the faith built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ completed by His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

The Wooden Image of Asherah Provoked God's Anger Still More

"And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33).

Ahab did not stop at building the altar of Baal but also made a wooden image of Asherah. So he provoked the anger of the LORD God of Israel more severely than all the kings of Israel before him.

Baal and Asherah were connected with pagan faith symbolizing abundance and fertility. People served these idols seeking the blessings of rain, good harvests, and many descendants. In the end, the idolatry of Ahab's days was not a faith that serves God but a religion for obtaining fleshly prosperity and worldly abundance.

This is a very important warning for today as well. A person can claim to believe in God while his actual heart is directed only toward the blessings of the world, material things, and success. If he has no interest in receiving the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serving the righteousness of God, and seeks only to prosper, grow rich, and be at ease in the world, that is no different from the heart

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that serves Baal and Asherah.

The purpose for which God saved us is not to let us fulfill worldly desires. Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us by rising again from death, so that we might know and serve the righteousness of God. Therefore we must cast away the heart that serves material things and fleshly abundance like God, and live within the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A Curse Came upon the Man Who Rebuilt the Jericho God Had Torn Down

"In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kings 16:34).

In the days of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He lost his firstborn son Abiram when he laid its foundation, and he lost his youngest son Segub when he set up its gates. The Scriptures record that this came about according to the Word the LORD had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

In the days of Joshua, the city of Jericho fell by the judgment of God. And Joshua warned in the name of the LORD that whoever rose up and rebuilt the city of Jericho would lay its foundation at the cost of his firstborn and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son. Yet in the days of Ahab, Hiel ignored that Word and rebuilt Jericho. As a result the Word of God was fulfilled just as it was.

This event shows how lightly the days of Ahab regarded the

Word of God. The king served Baal and Asherah, and from among the people came a man who rebuilt the city God had torn down. It had become an age that did not fear even when God's warning stood.

Spiritually, Jericho makes us think of the world and the city of sin that God has judged. To rebuild what God has torn down is to return to the worldly desires and the way of sin that God has cut off. The person who has received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not rebuild the Jericho God has torn down. He must not turn back to the way of turning his back on God, making success and riches and recognition in the world the purpose of his life.

The believer must be not a person who rebuilds the city of Jericho but a person who builds the city of faith that pleases God. He must set his heart on preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, serving the righteousness of God, and giving life to souls. Holding on to this truth—that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death—is the true way of faith.

1 Kings 16:29–34 Shows How Deep Idolatry Can Go

This passage shows, through the appearance of Ahab, the scene in which the sin of northern Israel grows deeper. Ahab did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. He counted the sin of Jeroboam a light thing, took Jezebel as his wife, and served Baal. He built a temple of Baal in Samaria and set up an altar, and even made a wooden image of Asherah. In his days Hiel ignored God's warning and rebuilt

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jericho, and according to the Word of God he lost his two sons.

This Word shows that the sin of departing from the way God ordained can grow ever deeper. The corruption that began with golden calves developed with time into the worship of Baal and Asherah. The false faith that had looked like serving God finally became an idolatry that replaced God altogether.

The believer today must fear this stream. If we take the gospel of the water and the Spirit lightly, faith degenerates more and more into human greed, worldly success, and religious form. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross keeps people from knowing how sin was passed on to Jesus, and cannot lead a person whose heart still holds sin to the true remission of sin.

The salvation God has given us is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and justified us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who stands in the way of life God has ordained.

Therefore we must not count the sin of Jeroboam a light thing, as Ahab did. We must not put the abundance of the world and the desires of the flesh before God, as though serving Baal and Asherah. Nor must we become people who rebuild the Jericho God has torn down, like Hiel. We must walk the way of faith that pleases God within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

He Has Delivered Us from the Sin of Jeroboam and Made Us Follow the Gospel, Not Personal Greed

< 1 Kings 16:1-7 >

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 'Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields.' Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place. And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them."

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

I preached on this Word last time as well. Today I want to continue looking at 1 Kings chapter 16. Starting from verse 1, the successors of Jeroboam appear one after another. Jeroboam becomes king, then a man under him becomes king in turn; a son becomes king, and then a subordinate rises in rebellion and a soldier becomes king. In this way treason repeats itself without ceasing.

The Background of Jeroboam's Becoming King

Originally Israel, south and north, is one people. They are one race, like us; but because King Solomon sinned greatly, God, urging repentance, divided the nation in two. And God set up for a time as king not the tribe of Judah, which carries on the royal line of David, but a man called Jeroboam, so as to provoke the descendants of David to jealousy. The nation was divided in that way, and Jeroboam committed the sin God hates.

The Sin Jeroboam Committed

What sin did he commit? As you know well, he built temples of his own in the regions of Dan and Bethel, made a golden calf for each of them, set them up, and served them as god. He also changed the day of sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, and set up ordinary people as priests in place of the sons of Levi whom God had established.

If we put together the whole of what Jeroboam did, the heart of the sin he committed before God is this: he turned away from obeying God and following and serving Him, and lived only for himself, for his own personal, selfish desire. This

is Jeroboam's greatest sin. And the still greater sin added to it is that he made the people of Israel leave the LORD God and led them all to live for personal greed.

A man who has become king of the nation of Israel ought to fear God and inquire of Him, respect and follow the priests and the prophets, and lead the nation rightly. Israel of old lived for God and fought its wars for the name of God, and so it received God's protection and blessing. But Jeroboam changed all of that for his personal greed. He cut himself off from God. As he committed the sin of rebelling like that and the sin of serving idols, God cursed Jeroboam.

The Curse That Came upon the House of Jeroboam

God said that if your descendants die in the house, the dogs will tear and eat them, and if they die in the open field, the birds will peck at their corpses and eat them, and that He would kill your whole house, leaving not one. So He cursed him.

So we must think deeply here. One may fail to feel the seriousness of it, thinking, 'Still, did he not serve the LORD God? He kept two temples, changed the date of the sacrifice, and replaced the sons of Levi, but in the end did he not call on the name of the LORD and offer sacrifice according to that law of sacrifice? It went somewhat wrong, but what did he do that was so greatly wrong?' But look at the words God spoke. He said He would wipe out the seed of Jeroboam and his descendants and would not leave a single one alive. Normally when someone dies the body is buried in the ground, but He said He would not allow even that, and would curse them wretchedly, the dogs tearing and the birds pecking at them.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

That is how much God hates the sin Jeroboam commits. He said He is angered as with the wrath by which He prepared the unquenchable fire of hell for Satan the Devil.

Israel, Where Treason and Annihilation Repeat Themselves

King Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king, and in the southern land of Judah the royal line does not change. When a king dies, his son succeeds him. But in northern Israel, one king reigns for barely seven days. A soldier under him would rise up and kill him with the sword. And the astonishing thing is that those who became king after Jeroboam, without exception, had their houses wretchedly annihilated.

The prophet Jehu rebuked King Baasha. *"Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields" (1 Kings 16:2–4).* In this way He swept them away. Not one person of the house of Jeroboam survived. Man or woman, they were all put to death.

After Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became king, and the people of that house also did not survive; every one of them was put to death. Next, Baasha killed King Nadab and made himself king. But this man, too, commits exactly the same sin of Jeroboam. The sin of Jeroboam is living for one's own

selfish desire. When Baasha became king, he struck the whole house of Jeroboam and killed all who had life, leaving not one alive. And yet he himself repeated the sin of Jeroboam. So the house of Baasha is annihilated as well.

When we set these things side by side, what is wrong becomes plain. God has recorded this history in the Old Testament Scriptures: this man became king, committed the sin of Jeroboam, and was annihilated; that man rose in revolt, became king, and was annihilated—and it goes on without ceasing. This is the history of the nation of Israel that comes down to the book of Malachi. We must draw the proper lesson from it. Even a person like us, who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and lives according to the will of God, commits the sin of Jeroboam if he lives only for his own selfish desire. And the person who leads others, too, to live only for personal, selfish desire is making them fall into the sin of Jeroboam.

The Sin of Serving Personal Greed as One's God

That is why we must not live that way. There is something we must realize here. Someone may say, "Just believe in God—why make an issue of it?" But the person who believes in God must not serve idols. What God hates most is having another god besides God, that is, serving idols. And what is the idol for us? It is precisely personal greed. We have been saved within Christ and we live receiving the care of spirit and flesh within Christ. But if we serve personal greed as our god and chase after it, that is precisely committing the sin of Jeroboam.

Look. Baasha became king and killed everything that had life in the house of Jeroboam, leaving none alive. And then

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

what does he himself do? He commits exactly the same sin of Jeroboam. As long as the kings and people of Israel did not commit the sin of Jeroboam, they were blessed and lived well. But when they committed the sin of Jeroboam, they perished and died. Then what on earth is the sin of Jeroboam? It is serving and following personal greed.

Originally this nation is one. It is the same Israel, and the throne comes down along the line of David—just as faith is handed down through that line. God intended to divide the nation for a time as a chastening, but Jeroboam seized this as his opportunity. Since God had set him up as king, he ought to have served God well, offered sacrifice according to the law of God, obeyed the words of the priests and prophets God had established, ruled the nation rightly, and led the people to serve the LORD well. Then his kingship would have been maintained well and the people would have been happy.

But he tried to serve personal greed as his god. Fearing that if the people went up to the temple in Jerusalem to worship and mingled with one another he would lose his kingship, he built temples in the regions of Dan and Bethel so that they could not go there, placed a golden calf in each, and switched gods. He exchanged the LORD God for golden calves.

The Sin of Exchanging God for Material Things

The golden calf means precisely material things. It means the material world of the flesh. Jeroboam exchanged the LORD God for that material world, and that became the sin of serving idols. The gold is God's, the silver is God's, and all things under heaven are God's. If we live following the will of God, God gives us everything; but Jeroboam instead chose gold over

God. Because he served gold as his god and kept God at a distance, God cursed him. And so Baasha also perished.

Baasha died and his son Elah became king, and Elah is killed by Zimri, the commander of half his chariots. After that, Omri becomes king. Omri buys the hill of Samaria for two talents of silver, builds a city there, builds a palace, and rules. It is the very Samaria we know well from the Samaritan woman of the New Testament era. And who comes through Omri? The King Ahab we know so well comes. What line of man is Ahab? He is a man who followed the line of the sin of Jeroboam.

Ahab, an Idolatry Grown Still Deeper

Ahab regarded following the sin of Jeroboam as rather a trivial thing. Look from verse 28. *"So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kings 16:28–34).

Omri's son Ahab became king, and he regarded God more lightly and committed more sins than all the kings who had incurred God's hatred before him. Ahab took Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon as his wife, and together with her he served and worshiped the Baal she had served. Now it was open. In the old days they at least called on the name of the LORD while keeping golden calves, but now they carved and set up the image of Baal and cried out, "O Baal, O Baal."

He also made a wooden image of Asherah. Asherah was called the goddess of fertility and was carved in the form of a woman, and they believed that if you prayed before it you would gain many children. Baal was called the god of farming, and they prayed, "O Baal, make the farming go well, protect this nation, send rain in due measure." It is no different from praying in our country to the sun, the moon, the stars, and the Dragon King. Ahab did this even from the throne; he built the city of Samaria, built the temple of Baal, raised an altar and offered sacrifice, and made the wooden image of Asherah and had all the people offer sacrifice to it.

The Sin of Jeroboam and the Collective Heresy of Today

When we hear "the sin of Jeroboam," we recall his changing the date, changing the priesthood, and setting up two golden calves to serve as god, and yet we may think, 'Still, did he not go on believing in and following the LORD God?' But he served God only with words; in reality he served, followed,

and chased personal, selfish desire. This sin is great before God. The sin of changing the way of salvation God has established—the way by which He removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—is exactly the same as the sin of Jeroboam. It is the same as Jeroboam's changing the Day of Atonement.

Collective heresies began from Jeroboam. There are many collective heresies within Christianity—and what sin do they commit? They say they have received the remission of sin by the blood of the Cross alone. But the Lord saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and so was passed the sins of mankind, and carrying those sins He received the judgment of the wages of sin on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day, and so saved us. To change this into having been saved by the blood of the Cross alone is exactly like moving the Day of Atonement from the tenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month.

Next there is the question of what people serve the LORD God with. People today have replaced God with material things. That is why the most popular denominations are the Pentecostal line, the Full Gospel. The Scripture says that it desires for you to prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers (3 John 1:2). This word was spoken by the Apostle John to believers, and it means that if you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and do not chase your own selfish desire, but put God at the center, believing and following Him and living for the preaching of the gospel, the rest of your affairs also go well. But they take this and claim that if you believe in and follow God, you receive on this earth the blessing of material things, the blessing of your livelihood, and the blessing of descendants, and the threefold curse turns

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

into the threefold blessing. This is exchanging the LORD God for the golden calf—for gold. This belongs precisely to the sin of Jeroboam.

The south and the north of Israel are both called Israel; in the north lived ten tribes, and in the south only the one tribe of Judah remained. The ten tribes were far more numerous. They were originally God's people and the descendants of Abraham. But they left God. They replaced God with gold, changed the date of the sacrifice, and set up anyone at all as priests who should have been of the sons of Levi. Because they changed things like this, they became the founders of heresy. Coming down to today's Christianity: it was not so in the days of the early Church, but for the thousand years that followed, the Catholic Church became completely heretical; the Reformation began and was roughly completed, but now the Christianity of the whole world has become a collective heresy.

This history shows that chasing personal, selfish desire becomes so fearful a sin before God. Even if we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if we chase only personal greed and the desires of the flesh, we become heretics. It amounts to serving gold in the place of God. Therefore we must draw a great lesson from this history.

The One who made the universe and saved us by the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is Jesus Christ, God the Trinity. Can He be replaced with gold? Can my greed take the place of God? Whatever we are like, God is still God, the One who saved us, the One who truly loves us, takes responsibility for us, keeps us, and blesses us. Yet Jeroboam exchanged that God, and the kings who followed him all belonged to the sin of Jeroboam, so that the ten tribes of Israel became a body of heresy in their entirety. Among heresies there are individual heresies and collective heresies, and the Christianity of today is

a collective heresy.

It is not a matter of saying “this man is so-and-so and that man is such-and-such.” When we speak of heresy, we must look at its source. Is someone a heretic because he differs from our denomination? Are religions heretics to one another because they differ? Something like Buddhism is another religion, not a heresy. Heresy, written with the character for “different,” means what has departed from believing in God and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God saved us by the water and the Spirit; and not believing in this way, but claiming to have been saved by believing in the blood of the Cross alone in one’s own fashion—this is heresy, and it becomes collective heresy.

Beginning from the sin of Jeroboam and continuing to chase that sin, by the time of King Ahab, Ahab openly brought in the daughter of another nation’s king and served the Baal she had served, even building a temple for it in the city of Samaria. He raised an altar and went in to serve it himself, and made his wife and his officials and his people serve it on appointed days, burning incense and raising every kind of commotion.

In Jerusalem there is the temple God ordained, and there are the descendants of Aaron of the sons of Levi. That is what God has ordained, and it cannot be changed at will. Yet they built a temple in the city of Samaria, raised an altar for Baal, carved and set up a wooden image of Asherah, spread a great table, set the head of a beast upon it, burned incense, sang and danced and raised every kind of commotion. So the wrath of God could not but come.

And so Israel loses its nation for a thousand years—strictly speaking, nearly two thousand years. Other nations invaded, seized all the harvest of their farming, cruelly harmed even the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

women with child, and killed the people wholesale. The wrath of God was so severe that it nearly wiped out their seed. Yet even in the midst of such wrath, God, intending to show mercy, sent the prophets to tell them: you have gone wrong, so repent; surrender to Babylon and seek your God. The prophet Jeremiah cried out like that, but the people tormented him instead; in the end the king's two eyes were put out and his sons were all killed, and the people lived seventy years as captives of Babylon.

Try living seventy years dragged off to another country, carrying loads on your back, digging the ground, and hauling bricks. If life is short, the second generation is already dying out. And yet, having returned, they committed the same sin again. You and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must gain wisdom here. We must know that chasing only personal, selfish desire is so fearful a sin. A person may have personal desires, but he must not serve that desire like a god by his own strength. If he does, he perishes, falls into the sin of Jeroboam, and not only he himself but his children and all who follow him receive the curse. We must realize this.

The Curse That Comes upon Him Who Rebuilds the City of Jericho

This happened when Ahab was king. In the days of Joshua, as they occupied the land of Canaan they tore down the city of Jericho, and Joshua said, "Whoever rebuilds this city that I have torn down shall lose his firstborn son when he lays its foundation, and lose his youngest son when he sets up its gates." That is, God would wipe out the seed of anyone who rebuilt the city of Jericho that He had torn down. In the same way, upon

the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet chases only his own greed, replacing God with that greed, the curse comes from generation to generation and destruction arrives. We must know this.

This is what He is telling us. So look at the Christianity of today, fallen into collective heresy. Just as in northern Israel, whenever someone became king, the commander of the army under him would rebel, kill the king, and become king in his turn, so in the Christianity of the whole world today, driving out a pastor within the church is regarded as a trivial thing, and they say that anyone, whatever sin he has, becomes a pastor if only he goes through seminary. It is because they belong to collective heresy that it is so.

The Blessing That Comes upon Him Who Lives Serving the Gospel

Seen in that light, we are truly fortunate people. Lacking though we are, we have received salvation; and though it is not that we knew and did everything ourselves, we know that preaching the gospel to the whole world is the will of God, and we serve that will. As we live for this work, lacking though we are, God keeps us and blesses us and covers all our lack. I believe that God looks kindly on us who live for the preaching of the gospel, and blesses and embraces us.

But we must not forget: if we turn from here and chase only personal, selfish desire and greed, we fall into the sin of Jeroboam and are destroyed. We must remember it without fail. If we do not remember this truth, we are destroyed. So I too draw the lesson. Truly lacking as you and I are, as we spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

through books and e-books, God is pleased, and I have seen how greatly He blesses our church and the believers. I believe He will bless us greatly in the days to come as well.

In the old days, when the churches of the whole country gathered, two or three vans were enough. But these days, when we call a gathering, there are so many cars that we are busy preparing parking. We reckon how many will come this year and widen the parking lot in advance. Now we have prepared it so that even five hundred cars can park with room to spare. God has blessed us that much.

He has blessed us without lack in what we eat as well. You may say, "Do not the people of the world live like that too?"—but to live like this while serving the gospel is itself the blessing. How great a grace this is—so great that thanks comes out of me even when I wake in the night. If we had ended up belonging to collective heresy, we would never have met this gospel. What is more, they do not even know that they are a collective heresy. There is no one who knows it.

In the Middle Ages Martin Luther said, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17),* and realized that sin is not removed by crawling on one's knees and by ascetic practices, but that one lives by believing in the Word of God. But Luther realized only up to that point; he did not fully realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Calvin is the same. People say that even that much realization was great, but we now know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God has blessed us greatly.

We send this gospel to the whole world in paper books and e-books. Through them people receive the remission of sin. We lay the foundation of the gospel in the Scriptures, and to build on that foundation we take up this work and that, and serve. Lacking though we are, this is what we are doing now. Though it is hard on the flesh, what a great spiritual blessing this is! I

always make work so that the workers of God do not easily grow idle. For if the righteous do not keep on with the work of laying the foundation of the gospel, they fall into the sin of Jeroboam, into personal desire, and then both they and others are ruined.

Of course it is hard for us. In the midst of it we must pray and go forward. Then God holds us up in spirit and flesh, blesses us, and keeps us. We feel we are about to die, and yet we do not die; and if the Lord really takes us, that too is the Lord's will. What a great blessing it is to live like this! It is a blessing, but it is also true that it is hard. There are times when we are irritated, when the inside of our mouths is sore, and we have no appetite. But that we know the sin of Jeroboam and have come out of that sin—for this one thing alone we ought to give thanks.

Thanksgiving for Having Been Delivered from the Sin of Jeroboam

What is certain is this: God has saved you and me by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and has set us on this earth as His own people and His own servants and makes us work. God accomplishes His will over the whole world through us and makes us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. On the day this will is accomplished, we will live in glory together with Jesus Christ. We enjoy blessing even now, but on that day we will enjoy not merely what a king enjoys, but the glory and riches a god enjoys.

Sometimes when I speak of these things I wonder whether it will be taken as a fairy tale, but the facts are so—what can I do? I am so very thankful. I give thanks that He has saved us

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

from the sin like Jeroboam's, that He has given us the remission of sin by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that He has enabled us to serve God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Do Not Mix with the False Ones

< 1 Kings 16:29-33 >

"In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him."

1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles are the Scriptures that record the faith and history of the people of Israel, our ancestors in the faith—that is, of the kings of south and north. As it says, *"Are they not written in the book of the chronicles" (1 Kings 16:5)*, they set down how the kings of the people who believed in God lived. So when we read these Scriptures, we can gain lessons about what we must learn, what we must avoid, and what we must believe.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

King Ahab and His Idolatry

Look at King Ahab, who appears in today's Scripture passage. *"In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel" (1 Kings 16:29)*. In Judah, Asa was king, and over the ten tribes of northern Israel, Ahab became king. Among those who believe in Jesus there is probably no one who does not know King Ahab. He is famous for serving idols; he took the daughter of another nation's king as his wife; he built temples of Baal and Asherah and served them in the place where the house of God stood, and made the people of Israel serve foreign gods throughout. What is more, when he died he died horribly: the dogs licked the blood of him and his wife and tore at their flesh, and he passed away without even a grave.

1 Kings goes on through chapters 16, 17, and 18, all the way to chapter 22, telling how this Ahab became king and how he lived. After Jeroboam committed before God the sin of changing the law of sacrifice, king after king came from under him, and the direct line kept succeeding to the throne. When a king died his son became king, and even when rebellion arose, that line became king again in its turn—until Israel finally perished altogether. The north fell to Assyria, the south to Babylon, and at the last Rome came and scattered those who remained over the whole world. The people scattered in that way exist again as the Israel of today.

Ahab brought in the daughter of a man of another nation and made her his queen, and together with her he served and worshiped the Baal she had served. The ten northern tribes are the people who belonged to Jeroboam, and their city is Samaria. In the city of Samaria there was also the house of God, and yet they built temples of Baal and Asherah there as well and served

them. Ahab served idols far more than King Jeroboam, and more than those who became king before him, and so provoked the anger of the LORD God of Israel. He was a man who committed sin so great that God could not endure it and was angered.

And yet the house of God was there, and worship was offered, and though they were not the descendants of Aaron, they kept a high priest and common priests and called on the name of the LORD—how they could go this far is grievous. Today let us look together at what became of Israel after Ahab became king, and how Ahab's end turned out.

The Drought of Three Years and Six Months, and Elijah

As Ahab set up the house of God and the temple of Baal and the temple of Asherah side by side, serving them himself and having his queen and the people serve them, Israel ended up a polytheistic nation serving many gods, not the LORD God alone. So God said He would not send rain on Israel, and raised up His servant Elijah to declare it to Ahab. *"As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (1 Kings 17:1)*. God had Elijah tell the king that unless His word came, no rain would fall on Israel.

Then God hid Elijah by the Brook Cherith and fed him with food carried by ravens, and for three years and six months He let no rain fall on Israel. As no rain fell, the fields cracked open and famine came, and beasts and people alike were dying. Things were such that the king himself had to go out in search of water. So Ahab set out with his servant Obadiah, saying,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

"You go by this road and I will go by that road, and if you find water, let us tell each other and keep these animals alive." Since no rain had fallen for three years and a half, the famine was beyond words, many of the people died, and the livestock were perishing in droves.

Then God told Elijah to hide no longer but to appear before Ahab and speak. He said that He was doing this because of your sin, the sin of serving idols; drive out the prophets who serve Baal and Asherah, and if you too cast away those gods and serve the LORD God alone, He would give rain. So Elijah appears, and he first met Obadiah.

Obadiah was a man who feared God: when Ahab was killing the prophets of God, Obadiah, though a man of high position in the palace, hid many servants of God in caves and supplied them with food and kept them alive. Elijah said to Obadiah, "Go to Ahab and tell him that I wish to meet him." Obadiah was afraid. The king had searched every corner of the whole nation and the neighboring nations, even making them swear oaths, to find Elijah, and had not found him; if, while he went to inform Ahab, the Spirit of the LORD should carry Elijah away, would he not be put to death by the king? Elijah swore by the life of the LORD that he would surely meet Ahab that day, and told him to go and report without fear. And so he met Ahab.

The Contest on Mount Carmel: Who Is the True God?

When Elijah met Ahab, he proposed that they determine on Mount Carmel who the true God is, together with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred

prophets of Asherah—eight hundred and fifty in all. This was not a fight of fists or armed force, a fight of flesh and blood, but a fight of faith. They offered a sacrifice to determine which god is the true God. Each side slaughtered its offering and laid it on the wood, and they agreed that the god who sent down fire from heaven and burned up the offering would be the true God.

First the eight hundred and fifty who served Baal and Asherah called on their gods from the morning. They cried out, "O Baal, O Baal! O Asherah, O Asherah!"—but the morning passed, and until the sun hung low there was no answer at all. When Elijah said, "Perhaps your god is sleeping, or has gone out—call louder," they cut their own bodies with swords and spears as they cried out. In this world there are still many religions that wound their own bodies like that. Baal being the god of farming and abundance, and Asherah the god who multiplies children, they had prayed: make things go well, give us many children. In the old days many children were counted a great blessing, since they could even be sent to war. But in the end there was no answer.

Then Elijah went a step further and had the trench filled with water, and prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, show that You are the true God." Then the LORD God sent down fire, and burned up the meat and the wood of the burnt offering as an ox licks up water, and dried up even the water pooled in the trench. It became utterly parched, scorched ground. Having won like this by faith, before Ahab's eyes he killed the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. And when he asked God for rain, God sent rain after three years and six months. The Spirit of God came upon Elijah, and he ran mightily ahead of Ahab's chariot as it returned to the palace. And he told them to serve idols no more but to serve the true God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jezebel's Threat and Elijah's Flight

Ahab went home and told his wife that the LORD God was truly the true God—the God who had contended with eight hundred and fifty and won was the true God, and now he would serve the LORD alone. But Queen Jezebel, who had brought in the image of Asherah, was greatly enraged and sent a servant to Elijah, threatening that she would surely kill him, saying, "If I do not make your life like that of the eight hundred and fifty prophets by tomorrow morning, may I be punished." Ahab had resolved through this to serve the LORD God alone, but before his wife Jezebel he was a man who could not lift a finger.

Hearing that he would surely be killed by the next morning, Elijah, that servant of God who had shown such power, took fright and fled with a single servant. This is the affair beneath the famous broom tree. He fled into the desert and collapsed under a broom tree in the blazing midday sun, panting that it would be better to die. He had left his servant behind and fled alone, and fallen beneath the broom tree. God sent an angel, gave him water and food, and touched him, and made him revive. Gaining strength there, he went on his way again, and this time he was staying in a cave when God appeared. Not in rumbling lightning or fire or earthquake, but in a very still voice, He asked, *"What are you doing here?" (1 Kings 19:9)*.

When Elijah said, "There is no servant of God left in Israel; I alone am left, and they seek to kill me as well," God said, "There are yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal—do not worry. Go back and anoint Hazael as king over Syria, anoint Jehu as king over Israel, and anoint Elisha as your successor. Then your work will be finished, and I will take you up alive to heaven in a chariot of fire." And so the age of Elijah ends and the age of Elisha comes.

The Betrayal of Ahab, Who Called Ben-Hadad His Brother

Now while Ahab was king, Ben-Hadad king of Syria invaded Israel, saying, “Hand over to me your wives and your children and your silver and gold.” Ahab was frightened and said, “I will do so. Only spare my children, and I will give you the treasures and even the maidens of the people.” But his officials restrained him, saying, “You must by no means do so. What was promised before is one thing, but not now.” Then a prophet of God appeared and told Ahab: I will protect this nation and deliver that Syrian army into your hand—go out and fight the battle.

So Ahab led out the army and fought. Ben-Hadad, reckoning his own soldiers as many as swarming ants and the soldiers of Israel as nothing, was already celebrating and drunk on the day before the battle. Thinking all Israel was as good as theirs, they drank at their ease. But when Ahab went out believing the Word of God, he struck those who staggered in their drunkenness and won a great victory. Ben-Hadad, astonished, fled in utter panic on horseback with his officials.

The prophet told Ahab that Ben-Hadad would regroup his army and invade again the next year, so he too should prepare. Ben-Hadad reckoned, ‘The LORD is a god of the hills; if we fight on the plain, we will win.’ Just as Rome had the names of many gods, Ben-Hadad thought of the LORD as merely some god of the hills. But the LORD God is the God of the whole universe. So when battle was joined again, God gave power and Israel won a great victory. It was God who had delivered Syria into their hand; it was a battle God won for them, purely and simply.

Having won the battle, he ought to have executed the king

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

of that nation. But Ben-Hadad's servant said, "We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings; if you go out in shabby sackcloth with a rope on your head and beg for your life, he will spare you." Ben-Hadad did just so and pleaded with Ahab to spare him, saying, "I trust that you are a king of mercy"; and Ahab, puffed up at those words, said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother." What mercy is there in war? An enemy ought to be executed, but because the man had flattered him, he spared him.

Then he called Ben-Hadad up, seated him at his side, comforted him, and entertained him. Ben-Hadad, outwardly grateful, said he would return the land his fathers had seized and would set up streets named after Ahab even in Syria. Ahab, greatly pleased, called the king of Syria his brother and sent him home. Then the prophet of God said that because he had spared the man God had delivered into his hand and called him brother, he would surely be put to death.

Naboth's Vineyard and Ahab's End

Beside Ahab's palace there was a vineyard. Ahab coveted that vineyard and said to Naboth, one of the people, "Give it to me, and I will make it a vegetable garden." But Naboth said, "This is the land handed down to us from our fathers, received from God, and I can by no means give it to you." Israel was a nation in which the twelve tribes had received their allotted land and handed it down to their descendants from generation to generation, so that not even a king could take that land at will.

When Ahab could not get that land and lay sulking at home, Jezebel said, "I will seize it for you—do not worry." She

proclaimed a fast, seated Naboth high among the people, and had men set up to bear false witness that Naboth had cursed God. So they stoned Naboth to death, and she seized the vineyard and gave it to her husband. Then the servant of God said, "The dogs shall lick the blood of Jezebel, and the dogs shall lick the blood of Ahab as well. This shall surely come to pass." When Ahab heard this he was afraid, put on sackcloth, and humbled himself. God, seeing him humbled like that, said He would not bring the disaster at once but would bring it in the days of his son.

Ahab joined hands with the king of Judah and went out to war, and being afraid of what the servant of God had said, he disguised his identity and fought in a soldier's clothes. But an arrow that a certain man shot at random struck Ahab, and he died in his chariot. The dogs licked his blood, and it came to pass exactly as the servant of God had said. Later, when the house of Ahab fell, Jezebel too, in the palace, was thrown down from a window in a revolt raised by a servant and died, and the dogs ate her corpse—she died wretchedly, exactly as the servant of God had said. So the life of Ahab comes to its close.

And Ahab's son Ahaziah becomes king, and it says, *"He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done" (1 Kings 22:52–53).* Here we see how fearful the sin of Jeroboam is, and how long it continues even to his descendants.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

If You Mix, You Perish

When 1 Kings ends, 2 Kings follows, and their descendants continue on like this from generation to generation. When 1 and 2 Kings are finished, Israel is carried captive to Babylon, and after Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, no servant of God appears for four hundred years. Since God neither raised up nor sent a servant, that nation fell into ruin. Look at what this one king Ahab did: he became friends with Jehoshaphat king of Judah and fought wars with other nations together, and this proved contagious, so that the king of Judah ended up doing the same things.

Because Solomon sinned much before God, God set up his servant Jeroboam as king. But after Jeroboam became king, in order not to lose his kingship and his people—fearing that the people of Israel might return to Rehoboam—he built separate temples at Bethel and Dan, exchanged the LORD God for golden calves, and set up anyone at all as priests in place of the priests of Aaron and the sons of Levi. Because of this sin of changing the law of sacrifice, Israel perishes. And with Ahab, who followed the line of Jeroboam's sin, he made all Israel serve Asherah and Baal, and as if that were not enough, he even committed the betrayal of sparing the enemy, counting him a brother and family. From that, the wrath of God began. It was because he served another god and changed the law of sacrifice.

I do not go out of my way to draw lines between other denominations and ours. Whatever the denomination, if it preaches just as it is the gospel by which God saved us with the water and the Spirit—according to the Word of God, according to the law of sacrifice God ordained—it need not be our denomination. I welcome it and can fellowship with it as much

as you please. But this one thing: I cannot go together with people who change the law of salvation. It is all right to have human weaknesses and shortcomings of every kind, but this one thing can never be accepted. For *"in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger" (1 Kings 16:13)* means that the wrath of God explodes.

The Sin of Changing the Law of Sacrifice Calls Down Wrath

Why did Israel perish like that? The nation disappeared and was restored through the Zionist movement—but why did that people suffer such wretched things, tens of thousands dying in the gas chambers of Germany and being massacred all over the world? Why did the anger of the LORD come upon them? It is because they changed the law of sacrifice. They changed at their own will the law of sacrifice by which sin is remitted—the law by which God remits our sins—and so the anger of the LORD exploded. This we can know through the history of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. We must never walk in these tracks again.

What is worrying here is the passage where Jehoshaphat king of Judah joined hands with Ahab and fought a war together. They mixed, on the ground that they believed in the same God anyway. If you mix, you perish. If you mix, you receive the curse. Even if no human hand touches you, God brings down the curse. He made an enemy his friend and called him brother. A person who has not yet received the remission of sin, though he be kin in the flesh, is spiritually not one of God's people but one of the Devil's people. Still more, a person who attacks God's people Israel is a servant of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Devil. Such a one must not be spared and called brother.

In Israel there was the temple of God; priests were set up according to the law and sacrifice was offered according to the law, and so the people all received the remission of sin. The people of Israel sinned, yet they were a people without sin. Not that they were sinless because they did not sin—they sinned, but through that law of sacrifice they received the remission of sin, and so they became a sinless people. That is why God could dwell with them. But because the kings of Israel, south and north, changed this law of sacrifice and offered sacrifice accordingly, a whole nation utterly perished, they and their descendants after them. We must take the lesson from this history. When we read Kings, we must not pass over it with a mere 'So that is how it was.' God is teaching us by history that because Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice to protect himself, a whole nation perished.

Do Not Mix with Those Who Believe Only in the Blood of the Cross

On this earth there are those who are called evangelicals, and these days I keep preaching on this point. I consider that until the Lord comes we must pass on this lesson together with the gospel. For the way for God's people not to perish is not to mix. Judah did not perish because it did not mix. Judah had the priests and the law of sacrifice alive, and so, though it was but one tribe, it had strength to fight its wars and was a nation that received God's blessing. But when it mixed, what happened? It perished together and died together.

What gives the greatest lesson to us born-again people is 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. If we do not know this

and simply carry on a religious life, we too end up mixing. Then we die and perish. The reason this whole world goes to hell and perishes is that they change the law of sacrifice. If we mix this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe with those who say it is enough to believe only in the blood of the Cross, and pronounce them likewise without sin, then the people of the whole world end up unable to receive the remission of sin and go to hell.

Ahab killed a man to get a vineyard, and tried to turn that vineyard into a vegetable garden. The vineyard is the church. He tried to do away with the church and turn it into a field planted only with the vegetables his flesh needed. Ahab tried to do away with the church of God and to erase the LORD God from the people of Israel—he is a symbol of the Devil. Today, too, there are many people like Ahab. Just as Ahab served the golden calf, among the evangelicals who believe in Jesus and say they are without sin there are those who serve material things—gods of abundance like Asherah and Baal. They chase after becoming rich, drawing in many people, and collecting much offering money, and they say there is no sin if one believes only in the blood of the Cross.

They accept anyone at all if he believes in Jesus and says he is without sin—and that is like calling Ben-Hadad a brother. Even if ordinary people come to a meeting, hear a sermon that says, “Believe in Jesus and it will be good, you will be blessed,” and profess to believe in Jesus, to acknowledge them on that basis is not yet the remission of sin. The water and the blood are salvation. This must be believed. But fearing that if they present this gospel those people will leave and go elsewhere, they unconditionally accept whoever believes in Jesus and says he has no sin. That is precisely like calling Ben-Hadad a brother. We must not commit this sin. A weakness like stealing

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

food out of hunger can be understood; but the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this law of salvation by which God removed our sins, must never be changed.

The Worship Offered without Sin through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Therefore, through 1 and 2 Kings we must keep it firmly in mind not to provoke the anger of the LORD. The way God saves us is this. In the Old Testament, without fail, hands were laid on to pass the sins, the throat of the sacrificial offering was cut, its blood was received, and sacrifice was offered before God, and so He saved the people of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and was passed all the sins of mankind, and received the judgment of the wages of those sins on the Cross and died, and so saved us who believe. Whatever happens, we must not change this law of salvation.

Among those called evangelicals today there are many who say that believing only in the blood of the Cross is salvation. In ordinary churches too there are many such people. But when a person who says he is without sin by believing only in the blood of the Cross sins again tomorrow, what becomes of that sin? If he says, “That sin too He has already taken away, so it does not matter,” that is deceiving God and acting profanely before God. We must not trifle with God or treat Him as a liar.

When did Jesus take away our sins? When He received baptism from John the Baptist, He was passed the sins of mankind. If one merely says, “He took them away on the Cross unconditionally—just believe,” that is only his own private way of believing; the sins are not actually removed. Since the

sins are not removed, prayers of repentance creep in. They say that each time one prays, “God, I have sinned, wash me,” the sins are washed away. But that is not the true gospel.

The true gospel is this. When we believe in the water and the blood—that is, in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross—and receive the remission of sin, then even if we sin afterward, that sin also has already passed on to Jesus through John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and so we say we have no sin. Because Jesus carried that sin to the Cross and received the judgment for us, we say we are saved people with nothing left to be judged for. Without holding by faith, in the spirit, to this law of salvation, no one can say before God that he is without sin. Even in his conscience he cannot say it.

A few days ago on a broadcast, a certain pastor said that these days there are people who say they have no sin, but that we are absolutely not righteous before God, and he preached to the end that we are sinners, quoting, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” He had failed to grasp even the one chapter of Romans 3. If he is a sinner and his church members are all sinners, where will they all go when they die? That is precisely falling into the sin of Jeroboam; it makes them Jeroboam’s descendants. But we are the descendants of David, the descendants of Abraham. Unless one believes that his sins passed on to Jesus when Jesus was baptized, there can be no remission of sin.

They say they received the remission of sin today, and tomorrow they sin again—how can they say that even tomorrow’s sins were all settled on the Cross? Once or twice one might say it, but they keep on sinning. It is because there is that salvation by which He was passed our sins through John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and because we believe it, that we, lacking though we are, have no sin spiritually. And we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

have received salvation. And so we say we have no sin, before God and before people, and we have become workers who preach the gospel to people, saying, “The Lord has removed your sins as well, so receive the remission of sin.”

We are spiritually the people of Israel. Without going through the law of sacrifice God ordained, without passing on sin by the laying on of hands, no one can say he is without sin. It has been fixed by this law. If one does not do this but leaves the offering and goes away, saying, “Handle it as You see fit,” his heart is not at ease even after he returns. Though he kill a hundred or a thousand animals and offer them, it is useless. For unless it is done according to the appointed law, the sin does not pass on.

Do you know what is spreading today in our region, in the whole country, and over all the world? Crowds are rising up crying, “If you believe only in the blood of the Cross you have no sin; if you believe in Jesus you have no sin.” Believing in Jesus is good as far as it goes, but saying there is no sin when there is sin is precisely committing the sin of following Jeroboam. That way lies ruin. Some even say, “I am righteous—but I have sin.” Their conscience is not at ease enough to say they have no sin, so they cannot bring themselves to say it. Why is that? Because, not knowing and not believing the baptism of Jesus Christ, they have abolished this law and heard only the gospel of the Cross and the blood.

Though they believed in their own fashion, sin still remains in their hearts. How can the Holy Spirit come where there is sin? The Holy Spirit comes upon what is holy and without sin. He said that if you repent and are baptized and receive the remission of sins, you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). When we believe in the baptism of Jesus Christ and the blood of the Cross and so believe the complete

salvation—that is, when we receive the remission of sin—the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and becomes our God and our Savior and the Helper who helps us.

If a person says he has no sin and yet his conscience is not at ease in saying it, he is still a sinner. He is leading his religious life in the place where the law of sacrifice has been changed; it is like leading one's life of faith having gone in under the king of Syria. Such people are rising up in great numbers all over the world, and in this last time they arise all the more. Ask a person who believes in Jesus and he says he has no sin; but ask him what then becomes of the sins he commits afterward, and he says, "I pray prayers of repentance." Saying he has no sin and yet still having sin—it is because he has cast away the law of sacrifice.

However lacking we are, because the Lord took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan and received the judgment in our place on the Cross, and because we believe that salvation, we have no sin. We say boldly before God, "God, I have no sin." This is a word that only the person who has received the remission of sin can say—only the person who has received the remission of sin completely through the law of sacrifice God ordained. So we say it has come about not by our deeds or good works but by the grace of God's salvation. This salvation is a gift.

God ordained the law of sacrifice and removed our sins according to that law: hands were laid on to pass the sin, the offering died in our place and received the judgment, and the sacrifice was offered by fire on the altar of burnt offering, and so He saved us. Because we believe that law of sacrifice, we say before God that we have no sin.

If we came to church today and did not believe in the baptism, how could we worship before the holy God, singing

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

"Holy, holy, holy"? Clearly there are many of us who have sinned even within the past week. If that sin has not been resolved, if that sin has not passed on to Jesus Christ through the baptism, how could we worship? With sin in the heart, worship cannot be offered. But however lacking we have been, when in our hearts we go again to the Jordan and go again to the Cross, and by faith pass our sins on through John the Baptist, we worship the holy God as righteous people in a state without a single sin.

How lacking are you and I? And yet do we have sin? We do not. Because we have no sin, we come out, hear the Word, praise, and worship before God. We sit here not because we are fine people who have not sinned, but because, lacking though we are, we believe the salvation by which the Lord has saved us. This is what the salvation of God is.

We Do Not Change the Truth for Fear That People May Go Back

We are not Ahab. Ahab's son Ahaziah walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and provoked the anger of the LORD. This continues on into 2 Kings, and the result is always ruin. But we, however lacking, are not ruin but salvation. This is what matters. The words "he walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat" are not my words but the Word of the Scriptures. Go home and read the Scriptures. In the history of Israel, whenever someone does wrong, it says without fail, "he walked in the way of Jeroboam." What God hates most is the changing of the law of sacrifice.

The wrongs an individual commits out of weakness are all bearable. But changing the law of sacrifice is different. God is

pleading with us: “I saved you like this and fixed the law of salvation and removed your sins—if you change that law, how will you receive the remission of sin? Is that not ruin? I beg you, put that one thing back wholly in its place.” We must not fall into this error.

I am in no danger of falling into this sin. Whatever anyone does, I am not shaken. Though everyone should degenerate, quit, and leave, I would build a chapel alone on a mountaintop and preach this gospel alone, with no one there. What is certain is this: whether people who hear the gospel we preach receive the remission of sin or not. However lacking a person may be, however many sins he has committed, if only he accepts this Word, his sins vanish on the spot. The person who believes this gospel, however lacking, has no sin. And so he can serve and follow the Lord at any time.

But the person who, apart from this, says he has no sin by believing only in the blood of the Cross collapses after a little while, however zealous he is. If such a person is a bit more zealous than others, it may show on the outside, but it cannot compare with what is fundamentally different. The ministers who serve Baal claim, “This church is right and that church is right, all are salvation, only ours is a little better.” But what we say is not that one is a little better and another lacking. It is that the root is different. So different that they cannot even be set side by side.

Whoever falls into this sin perishes. Layman or leader, whoever falls into the sin of Jeroboam—the sin of changing the law of sacrifice—it is ruin. Jesus took charge of all your sins on the Cross; when He was nailed, He poured out blood through arteries and veins, and in pain that shook His whole body He said, “It is finished,” and died. Jesus Christ bore the whole wages of sin in such agony and died—do you have sin?

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

No one who has heard that fact can say he has sin.

I once attended a meeting where there were quite a few newcomers, and when it was asked, “Raise your hand if you have no sin,” they all raised their hands. They could not bring themselves to say before that assembly that they had sin. I truly hope you do not fall into such a sin. May there be no making an enemy a friend and keeping him as a brother; may there be no allying with those who have changed the law of sacrifice and fighting wars together with them, as Jehoshaphat joined hands with Ahab. Why do I preach this Word? Because if you fall into this sin, you die. Even a worker, if he falls into this sin, dies.

From of old until now, two streams have come down: Rehoboam and Jeroboam—those who offer sacrifice before God according to the law of sacrifice just as it is, and those who offer it with the law changed. These two kinds have continued. But one kind was cut off midway and has come alive again. In this last time God has revived it. Yet that changed law of sacrifice of Jeroboam still flourishes the more and has covered the whole world. If we fall into it again now, there is no further opportunity. If we forsake this which has barely been found and set up again, we perish. Those who forsake it are all serving Baal—the god of abundance.

Suppose our church holds a meeting. I could speak the gospel perfectly well without once mentioning the baptism of Jesus. If I speak only of the Cross—“The Lord has taken away all your sins, many as the fog and red like crimson”—people are moved and believe: “It is truly so; it is right that one believes in Jesus and has no sin; I too have no sin.” But that person merely feels he has no sin by emotion; his sin has not truly been removed by the Word of the water and the Spirit. If he sins again tomorrow, he is a sinner again.

Now if I acknowledge this person as he is, he becomes one of our church members, gives offerings, serves faithfully, and does whatever he is asked. But if I tell him, "You are not there yet," and speak fully of the baptism and the blood of the Cross, he says, "I have no sin as I am—must I really believe like that?" and leaves. So if I were one who serves Baal, afraid of losing people, I would not say that word to him, but would shake his hand and receive him: "You also have no sin—do you believe? Then you are a brother." Then that person does not go back to his old church. The old church says that even believing in Jesus he is a sinner, while here he is called righteous, so he concludes that this church is better and comes out to this one.

Then the numbers grow and much offering money comes in and there is abundance. That is precisely the result of serving Baal. It is serving God and also setting Baal beside Him and serving it. Then am I any different? I too like money. Only, I need the money that is truly necessary now for doing God's work and for food and living; I do not love money to store up. Money heaped up that cannot even be spent is of no use to me. If one chases material things like that, he goes back to serving Baal.

If we do not turn back to serving Baal, the numbers do not grow. In fact it is rather abnormal for the church of God to swell greatly in numbers. How could two hundred thousand, three hundred thousand be normal? How hard it is for even one person to receive the remission of sin and be united! A human being cannot bear twenty or a hundred at a time. A fish lays thousands and tens of thousands at once, but not a human being.

Jeroboam, fearing that the people of Israel would return to Rehoboam, built separate temples, changed the law of sacrifice, made even commoners priests who were not of the sons of Levi, and set up golden calves to be served as God. It was

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

because he feared they would go back. That was his one and only reason. But I do not do such things for fear that you may go back. If you want to go back, go—that is my temperament. If you go, there is only the curse; and I, however lacking, am a man of God. I have that faith, and this is the truth. So I do not practice human means and methods on people.

There are many who say, "This too is salvation, and that too is salvation." But are there two answers? There is one. Man is weak and lacking, so we can understand this and understand that; but the way God saved us is one alone. It is Jesus Christ alone—Jesus Christ who came to this earth, received baptism, and died on the Cross, and so saved us. There is no way but this. There is no other way. Let us pray together that we may not fall into such error. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

God's Curse That Comes upon Those Who Rebuild the City of Jericho

< 1 Kings 16:29-34 >

"In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun."

In the northern nation of Israel, Ahab the son of Omri became king. This Ahab, who ruled northern Israel from Samaria for twenty-two years, did more evil than all who were

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

before him. He regarded following the sin of Jeroboam as rather a trivial thing; he took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, served and worshiped Baal, set up an altar for Baal, and made a wooden image of Asherah. And so, the Word testifies, he provoked the anger of the LORD God of Israel more severely than all the kings of Israel in their generations.

King Ahab, Who Turned His Back on God and Served Baal

This Ahab is a king we know well. Ahab counted it a small thing even that Jeroboam had left God, changed the dates of the feasts, and failed to live by the statutes of God. Jeroboam had at least called on the name of the LORD and offered sacrifice to God after his own fashion, but Ahab went beyond that level altogether. He took as his wife Jezebel, the daughter of a man of the pagan region of Sidon who served Baal; he let his wife serve Baal, built a shrine of Baal inside the palace, carved wood into an image, raised an altar before it, and made bowing down to it official. It was not a matter of serving God somewhat incorrectly; he exchanged the LORD God outright for another god. In the days of King Ahab, northern Israel, from the king down to the people, became so corrupt that they became exactly like the pagan nations that do not know God.

Elijah, the Servant of God Raised Up in an Age When Sin Abounded

In this age when sin abounded, God brought Elijah onto the

scene. The servant of God Elijah appeared and showed all the people of northern Israel and southern Judah that the LORD God is the true God, and led the people of Israel before the LORD God. We can see that ministry through the Word. Just at that time, in the days of King Ahab, a man named Hiel who lived in the region of Bethel built the city of Jericho. When he laid its foundation he lost his firstborn son Abiram, and when he set up its gates he lost his youngest son Segub—and so, the writer of Scripture records, it came about according to the word the LORD had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun. God has set this event side by side with the days of King Ahab and left it for us on record, speaking to us through it.

The Fall of Jericho and the Faith of Rahab

If we look at Joshua, Joshua sent two spies into the land of Canaan to spy it out. At that time Jericho was an exceedingly strong city. Its walls were double, and archaeologists tell us they were wide enough for a great cart to pass along the top. But inside that city there was a woman named Rahab. Rahab believed in the LORD, the God of Israel who had come into the city, and by that faith she hid the two spies. And she made a covenant with them: when this land was taken, she and her whole family were to be spared. The spies told her to gather into that house all who were to be saved and to let a scarlet cord down from the window. They promised that the house from which the scarlet cord hung down would not be struck, and everyone inside it would be spared.

After that, the people of Israel, with Joshua and the priests, marched around the city of Jericho once a day, and on the seventh day they marched around it seven times. Jericho was

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

an impregnable city, but when they did as God had commanded—the priests going ahead blowing the trumpets, marching around, and at the last a great shout going up—its walls collapsed.

The Oath of Cursing That Joshua Left

As we know well, Jericho appears also in the parable of Jesus in Luke chapter 10, of a certain man who went down to Jericho and fell among robbers. The word Jericho refers to the world. After Joshua brought down this city of Jericho, he gathered all the people and gave command: whoever laid again the foundation of the city of Jericho and built a city upon it would lose his firstborn son when he laid the foundation, and lose his youngest son when he hung its gates.

Joshua 6:26 says this: *"Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, 'Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates'" (Joshua 6:26).* Joshua had the people swear an oath and warned them. Swearing in the name of the LORD, he said that whoever rose up and built the city of Jericho would be cursed before the LORD, losing his firstborn son when he laid the foundation and losing his youngest son when he set up the gates. To lose one's children—that is, He would take them away.

God's Command Not to Return to the World

This Word is a Word the Lord has given to you and me as

well. It is a Word the Lord commanded us with an oath, staking His own name. He swore by His own name that if we lay again the foundation of the city of Jericho He tore down, or set up its gates and build it, He will take our children. Yet in the days of King Ahab a man named Hiel ignored this command, laid again the foundation of the fallen city of Jericho, and built a city of brick upon it. What does it mean that he lost his firstborn son when he laid the foundation and lost his youngest son when he hung the gates? It is God's oath and command that He will do the same to us righteous people who have been saved.

We born-again people can also stumble. But we must stumble within the Lord; we must not go out into the world. God cut off our heart that was turned toward this world and did away with our old existence in the world; if we go out into the world again to succeed, chase the wealth of the world, and try to live well in the world—if we cast God aside and set every purpose of our life on the world—God says He will take our children. This is a tremendously fearful Word. To take a person's children is the same as to take his whole estate.

God's Solemn Warning That He Will Take the Children

You and I must keep this Word firmly in mind. If a person has been saved out of the world and yet goes out into the world again, God surely takes his firstborn son. If even then he does not come to his senses and keeps going out into the world, God takes the next child as well—the child who would carry on the line. This is not a human word; it is the Word of command God swore by His own name, saying He will surely do so. One can

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

fall into some temptation. Even so, we must not turn our hearts back to the world as before and pile up the things of the world.

This Word applies to us today as well, and there are believers who have already gone through it. This is a gathering of young people, and most of you are not yet married; but if in days to come you marry and bear children, and your heart goes out into the world and, like King Ahab, you seek to succeed in the world, God will take those children. What this Word teaches us is not to lay a foundation again in the city of Jericho and not to set up gates there. It is that we should not undertake to achieve some success in the world. Since we have been saved out of this evil generation, let us no longer set our hope or purpose on this evil generation but live serving the gospel.

The Wretched End of Ahab and Jezebel

King Ahab cast God away and gave up serving God. In the end King Ahab also died wretchedly, and Jezebel met a horrible end. Jezebel was thrown down from the wall by her own servant, and just as God had prophesied through the lips of Elijah, her corpse became food for the beasts, and there was not even enough left to gather up and bury. Ahab likewise went out to war, was struck by an arrow, and died, and his blood was disposed of just as God had said. Not one of the words God spoke fell to the ground; they were fulfilled just as they were.

What do we learn through King Ahab, and through Hiel, who lost his eldest son and his youngest son while building the city of Jericho? That we born-again people, lacking though we are, must give our strength to the preaching of the gospel. However evil, weak, and lacking we may be, the one heart that would forsake the Lord, go out into the world, and succeed in

the world—that we must cast away without fail. That can never be accepted.

The Devil's Temptation That Draws Us toward the World

Satan the Devil often works on us like this: "Now that you have received salvation, fold up your life of faith and go out into the world and try again—if you try again, you can do well." So he tempts us. But what becomes of the person who actually follows that heart and goes out into the world? If we look at the book of Ruth, Naomi leaves Bethlehem to escape the famine, loses both her sons, and returns to God. In the end, from the righteous who seek to prosper and succeed in the world, God takes their children and tears down the tower of Babel they have piled up in the world.

Therefore we cannot do so. However hard and difficult things are, other matters may go this way or that; but going out into the world to achieve success of my own—that alone must not be. Long ago, when I was ministering in the provinces, there was a couple, a brother and sister, like this. When the couple had paid into a savings pool and reckoned that if they saved for some years it would come to such-and-such an amount, they made up their minds to stop attending church and did not come to worship. I visited them many times and exhorted them, but they would not come, making this excuse and that. Being human, they could do so. It would have been far better to attend church and ask God for blessing, but they clung only to that calculation and made light of the faith.

But about a month after they left the church, a rumor went around the village: that brother was getting drunk every

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

evening and wandering about all night. What use is all the saving? With the husband drinking every day, that money in the end is all scattered and goes out in hospital bills. The plan they had set up went wrong like that.

Living for the Gospel Is the Believer's Right Answer

God swore Himself that He would surely do this to the person who builds the city of Jericho and sets up its gates, and He commanded us not to do so. This is a command given to the born again and to the servants of God. Even a servant of God cannot say he has no desire at all to go out into the world. Servants have such a heart, and so do brothers and sisters. Nevertheless we must not, like King Ahab, turn our backs on God and the church and serve Baal. Baal is the god said to make you rich in this world, and Asherah the god said to give you many children. What we would seek if we turned our backs on God and the church and went into the world is likewise to prosper, get rich, and be happy—so it is no different from serving Baal and Asherah.

The born again must live for the gospel. Whether we amount to something or not, we lay all that down; living for the gospel is precisely the right answer for a Christian. However lacking and weak a person is, if he lives for the gospel, he scores a hundred. Conversely, however good and gentle and well-mannered he may be, and however well he seems to carry on his religious life, if he lives without doing the work of preaching the gospel, he scores zero. Still more, if he casts God aside, turns his back on the church, and goes out into the world, God surely pursues him and repays. This is the command God

has sworn.

Some brothers and sisters conclude on their own that since they have received salvation, that is enough, and go out into the world. When I exhort them and they have firmly decided and go, I do not force them back. That matter is God's to handle, and that person will face it before God. But it must not be so. However lacking we are, we must preach the gospel, be united within the church and within God, and live serving the gospel; then God gives blessing. Only then do we have any prospect. If God determines to strike, who can escape His hand? In this one thing—living for the gospel—we must be well-pleasing before God.

Draw the Line in Your Heart and Cut Off the Devil's Shaking

Is this Word fearful to you? It ought to be feared. Does not Satan the Devil put into your heart the thought of going out into the world? If you take that road, your future becomes more wretched than now. This is not my word. Though you earn with all your might, build a picture-perfect house on the green meadow, and bear children and live there, if God takes those children, what joy is left? What use is money?

Other Words are exhortations that we should live thus, and Words that our Lord has saved us; but this Word is God's oath that He will surely do this to us. Therefore we must remember this Word as an oath. Even if the Devil gives you the heart to go out into the world, do not yield that far; never negotiate with the word that it is all right to live with your back turned on God. Within Christ everything is possible and grace can be received, but once you leave, it is the end.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

In fact, of those who left the church and did not serve the LORD God but served other gods, nothing has ever turned out well. Only the living God is the true God; the other petty gods are not gods but only devils. So this much we must keep firmly in mind: the one thing we must never do is leave or compromise. Somehow or other we must live with God, with the gospel, with the church, preaching the gospel all our life long, and then go before the Lord. We must preach this gospel to our neighbors, to our schoolmates and workmates, and to everyone above and below us.

We must draw a clear line in our hearts. Jesus said to Peter that Satan had asked to sift him like wheat. That is exactly how the Devil shakes our hearts. When wheat is winnowed, the chaff flies outside and the kernels come inside. The Devil shakes the heart of the born-again righteous to drive it outside. But in this we must not yield. We must settle it in our hearts: if we die, we die within the church; if we live, we live within the church; if we prosper, we prosper within God, and if we fail, we fail within God. Every time the Devil gives us such a heart, we must draw that line, and draw it again.

I too, when I had not been born again for long, often felt like giving it all up whenever things were hard. But I could not do so, and so I did not quit. If I had, it would have been disastrous. Drawing this line was truly difficult. Perhaps I will have to preach this Word to you often. Especially in this age there are many who will leave, and many even among the servants of God who will leave, so it must be preached all the more often.

Build Not the City of Jericho but the City of Jerusalem

Everyone, will it do to set our hearts on the city of Jericho? Will it do for us to repair and stack again the fallen bricks of the city of Jericho that God tore down? Shall we rebuild this world that God is destroying? Let us not build the city of Jericho again. What we must build is the city of Jerusalem. We must give our strength to building the Jerusalem of southern Israel—the temple of God.

Whether we live or die, we must live for the preaching of the gospel, laboring and toiling for the gospel and serving the Lord, and so meet our Lord. This is right faith and the right way. If you are weak, be weak within the church and weak within God. If you set your heart on leaving the church and going into the world to try something, know for certain that God begins this work. I hope you will live the rest of your life with the firm faith that if you die, you die within God, and if you live, you live within God—determined somehow to live together with God and the church. Let me close the Word here. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Even If You Build Samaria, If You Set Up an Altar for Baal, It Is an Evil Kingdom before God

< 1 Kings 16:1-34 >

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 'Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields.' Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place. And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them. In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah. Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. Now the people who were encamped heard it said, 'Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king.' So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned. In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab

did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun."

The latter part of 1 Kings chapter 16 shows the age of Omri and Ahab. Omri seized the kingship as a strong force within northern Israel, and he bought the hill of Samaria and built a city. In human history Omri can look like a politically important king. He established a new capital and set the foundations of the kingdom in order. But the Scriptures evaluate him as an evil king before God. He did worse than all who were before him and walked in all the ways of Jeroboam.

After Omri, Ahab becomes king. Ahab was a more evil king than Omri. He regarded following the sin of Jeroboam as rather a trivial thing, and took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of the king of Sidon. And he served and worshiped Baal, built a temple of Baal in Samaria, and set up an altar. He even made a wooden image of Asherah. The sin of northern Israel did not stop at the golden-calf faith of Jeroboam; in the days of Ahab it deepened into the worship of Baal and Asherah.

This Word shows that outward success and spiritual truth can differ. Omri built Samaria but did not return to God. Ahab set up the altar of Baal in the center of the kingdom. The city and the palace were built, but the way of salvation God had ordained receded further away.

Today as well, a church can build its outward form. It can build buildings, organizations, and systems, and gather many people. But without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

not a kingdom of life before God. The truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death must be at the center. Without this truth, even if we build Samaria, our faith can become one that raises the altar of Baal.

The Kingdom's Division in Two Was the Result of Hearts Departing from God

After Zimri died, the people of northern Israel were divided in two. Half followed Tibni, and half followed Omri. In the end those who followed Omri prevailed, and after Tibni died, Omri became king. Northern Israel had already been divided from southern Judah, and now it was divided in two again within itself.

Division is not a merely political problem. At its root lies the sin of departing from God. Jeroboam made golden calves to protect his own kingship and kept the people from going to the temple and the law of sacrifice God had ordained. The moment it departed from the way God ordained, northern Israel lost its true center. So with every change of king, treason and division continued.

A faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit also loses the center of the heart. If a person claims to believe in Jesus while sin remains in his heart, he cannot be bold before God. He repeats prayers of repentance and holds on to his own deeds, but his conscience does not gain freedom from the problem of sin. Such a faith leaves division inside the soul. He lives in the contradiction of calling himself righteous while feeling in his heart that he is a sinner.

The true peace God gives is within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When Jesus received baptism from John, our sins passed on to Him; on the Cross the judgment of those sins was ended; and by His rising again from death we have been justified. The person who believes this truth stands before God as a righteous person who has received the remission of sin.

The Building of Samaria Does Not Mean Spiritual Restoration

Omri bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver and built a city on the hill. And he called the name of the city Samaria. Samaria afterward becomes the center of northern Israel. Seen with human eyes, Omri was a king who did great things. He secured a new center for the kingdom and laid a politically stable foundation.

But the Scriptures do not speak of Omri's building of Samaria as spiritual restoration. Rather, they say that he did evil in the eyes of the LORD and did worse than all who were before him. He built Samaria, but he did not cast away the way of Jeroboam. The golden-calf faith and the corrupted law of sacrifice remained just as they were.

This gives us an important lesson today. Building the outward form is not in itself standing rightly before God. Putting up a church building, equipping an organization, and doing many works do not in themselves make true faith. What God looks at is whether the gospel of the water and the Spirit is at the center.

An outward form without the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like Samaria. It can look great and solid, but the altar of Baal can be set up inside it. If we leave out the baptism of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus and speak only of the Cross, we cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. Then sin does not disappear from a person's heart. Before building the outward form, the believer must first stand on the truth of salvation God has ordained.

When the Sin of Jeroboam Is Counted Light, It Deepens into the Sin of Ahab

Ahab regarded following the sin of Jeroboam as rather a trivial thing. This is the starting point of his great sin. The sin of Jeroboam was by no means a light sin. It was the sin of changing the law of sacrifice God had ordained, making the people serve golden calves like God, and leading the whole people into wrong faith. But Ahab regarded that sin as something small.

Ahab, who counted the sin of Jeroboam light, went on into deeper idolatry. He took Jezebel as his wife, served Baal, built the temple of Baal in Samaria, and set up an altar. He even made a wooden image of Asherah. The sin of northern Israel now developed into open pagan idolatry.

Sin deepens when it is counted light. If we count the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained a light thing, faith degenerates more and more into human desire and worldly religion. If we think, 'It does not matter if I do not know the baptism of Jesus,' 'It is enough to believe only in the Cross,' or 'Even if sin remains in the heart, it is all right if I keep praying prayers of repentance,' we drift away from the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

The baptism Jesus received is not a secondary element of salvation. Because Jesus received baptism from John, our sins passed on to Him. The Cross is the judgment that came upon

the Lord, who had taken charge of those sins. And His rising again from death is the proof that that salvation is complete. If we count this gospel of the water and the Spirit light, we can end up flowing, like Ahab, into deeper idolatry.

Baal and Asherah Are the Heart That Puts the Abundance of the Flesh before God

Ahab served Baal. Baal was regarded as a god of abundance, rain, and farming. Asherah, too, was an idol connected with fertility and the prosperity of the flesh. In the end, the faith of Ahab's days became a religion not for seeking the remission of sin and the righteousness that God gives, but for obtaining the abundance of the world and the blessings of the flesh.

There can be Baal and Asherah today as well. The heart that counts material abundance, success, health, the prosperity of one's children, and doing well in the world greater than God is the heart that serves Baal and Asherah. If a person claims to believe in God but has no interest in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and seeks only that the circumstances of his flesh may go well, that is no different from the idolatry of Ahab's days.

The purpose for which God saved us is not to let us fulfill the desires of the flesh. The Lord delivered us from sin so that we might serve the righteousness of God. Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again from death, so that we might live as a people belonging to God.

The believer can ask God for material things. But material things must not take the place of God. We can pray for the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

needs of life. But the abundance of the flesh must not come before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The faith of Baal and Asherah cannot lead a person to God, and in the end it provokes the anger of God.

If We Rebuild What God Has Torn Down, the Curse Follows

In the days of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He lost his firstborn son Abiram when he laid its foundation, and he lost his youngest son Segub when he set up its gates. This came about according to the Word the LORD had spoken through Joshua. The Word that a curse would come upon whoever rebuilt the Jericho God had torn down was fulfilled just as it was.

Jericho was a city God had judged. When a man tries to rebuild what God has torn down, it becomes an act of taking the Word of God lightly. In the days of Ahab, the king served Baal and Asherah, and from among the people came a man who did without fear what God had warned against. This shows how much that age despised the Word of God.

Spiritually as well, we must not rebuild what God has torn down. The person who has received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not set up again the desires of the world, his own righteousness, and false faith. The Lord ended our sins by His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from death; we must not set up again a faith that tries to wash away sin by our own efforts and prayers of repentance. We must not build again the city of sin God has torn down.

The believer must be not a person who builds Jericho but a

person who builds the house of faith on the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not set up again the worldly desires and false doctrines God has already judged, but remain within the truth of salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

An Outward Form without the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Becomes in the End a City of Idols

1 Kings chapter 16 shows that outward success and spiritual corruption can go together. Omri built Samaria. Ahab built the temple of Baal inside that Samaria. The kingdom seemed to grow more solid, but before God it flowed into deeper idolatry.

The church and the believer today must also look back at themselves before this Word. What are we building? Are we building an outward form like Samaria, or are we building souls on the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? There may be buildings and organization and scale of ministry; but if the salvation completed by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is not at the center, it is not a city of life before God.

What pleases God is the faith that stands on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John. The Lord received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and justified us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not count the sin of Jeroboam a light thing. We must not become people who build a city and yet do not return to God, like Omri. We must not put the abundance of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the flesh and the success of the world before God, as though serving Baal and Asherah, like Ahab. We must not become people who rebuild the Jericho God has torn down, like Hiel.

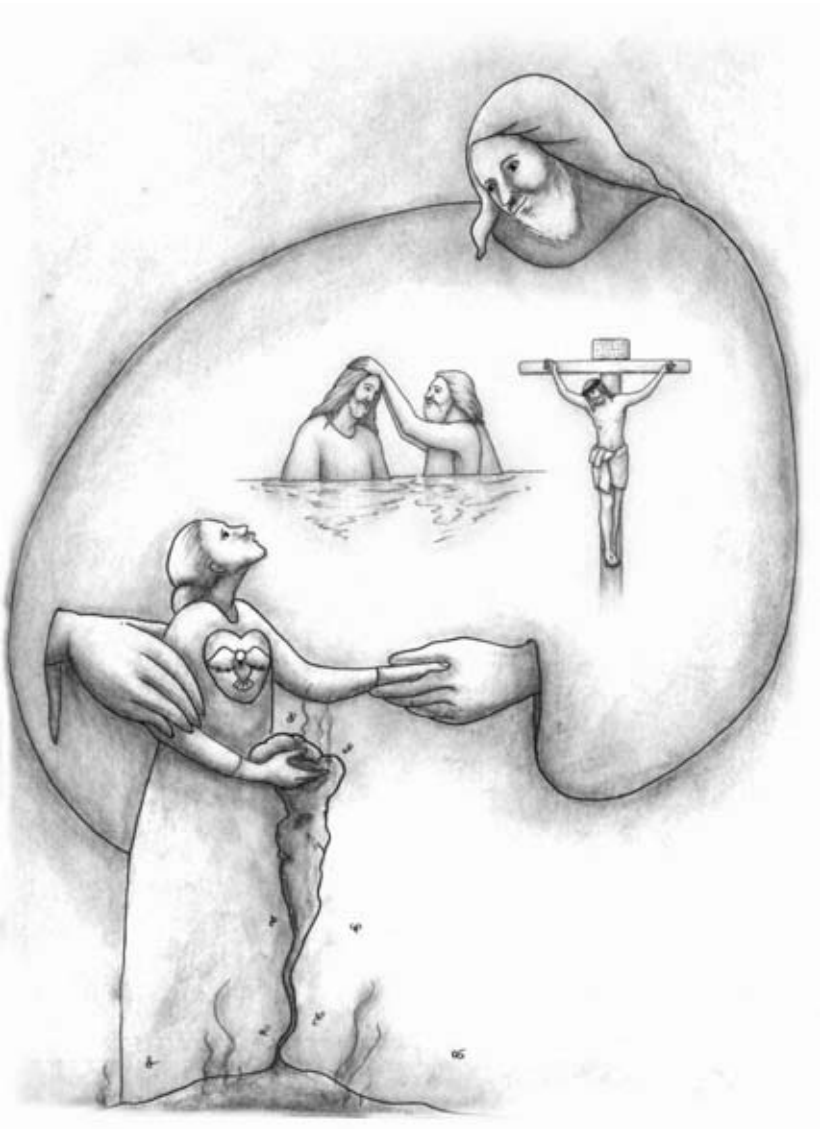
The believer must hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit as his most precious treasure. With this truth he must keep his own heart, and he must pass this truth on to the next generation and to souls. More important than Samaria is the Word of salvation God has established. More precious than the altar of Baal is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has accomplished. Only the person who stands on this truth can escape the deep stream of idolatry and stand within the life and peace God gives. ✉

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

CHAPTER

17

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings Chapter 17

1) Summary of the Entire Content

1 Kings chapter 17 records how, in the age when Ahab and Jezebel were spreading Baal worship, Elijah appeared and proclaimed a drought, experienced God's provision at the Brook Cherith and at Zarephath, and brought the dead son of the widow back to life. This chapter shows that the One who rules over rain and food and life is not Baal but the living God, and that when we believe and follow the Word of God, that Word is fulfilled just as it is.

1. Elijah Proclaims a Drought to Ahab, Verse 1

Elijah the Tishbite, who lived in Gilead, suddenly appeared before King Ahab. Elijah declared that the God of Israel whom he served lives, and that for years there would be neither rain nor dew until he gave word.

Ahab served Baal and had built the temple and altar of Baal in Samaria. Baal was thought to give rain and the abundance of farming, but through the drought God revealed who it is that rules over the rain and the produce of the land.

The drought Elijah proclaimed was not a mere natural disaster but a judgment on the idolatry of Ahab and northern Israel. Even if the king and the people asked Baal for rain, no rain could fall unless God allowed it.

2. Elijah Hides by the Brook Cherith, Verses 2–4

After the drought was proclaimed, God commanded Elijah to go eastward and hide by the Brook Cherith, which is before

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the Jordan. It was God's guidance to protect Elijah from Ahab's threat.

God told Elijah that He would let him drink from the brook and would supply him food through the ravens. The God who had him proclaim the drought also prepared the way to feed and protect His servant within that drought.

What Elijah needed was not to know in advance everything that was to come, but to believe and obey the Word of God given at that time.

3. The Ravens Bring Food to Elijah, Verses 5–6

Elijah went to the Brook Cherith according to the Word of God and stayed there. The ravens brought bread and meat every morning and evening, and Elijah drank from the brook.

A raven is not ordinarily a bird that brings its own food to a person, but God commanded even the ravens and fed Elijah. Elijah's survival depended not on his own preparation or ability but on God's provision.

Even in the midst of the drought, God supplied what Elijah needed day by day. He did not pile up food for a long period at once, but gave as much as was needed morning and evening, making him keep relying on God.

4. The Brook Cherith Dries Up, Verse 7

As no rain fell, after a while the Brook Cherith also dried up. Though it was the place God had sent Elijah, the water there did not remain forever.

The fact that the brook dried up did not mean that God had abandoned Elijah. It meant that the provision through one place had ended and the time had come for Him to lead him to another place.

Looking at the dried-up brook, Elijah had to wait for a new

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Word of God to come rather than move by his own judgment. God, while changing the circumstances, grew Elijah's faith and led him to the next ministry.

5. God Sends Elijah to the Widow of Zarephath, Verses 8–12

God commanded Elijah to go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon. Zarephath was in the region of Sidon, the homeland of Jezebel, but it was in that very place that God had planned to protect and feed Elijah.

God said He would feed Elijah through a widow. But the widow Elijah met was not a person with ample food. All she had left was a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar.

The widow was gathering sticks to make her last meal, eat it with her son, and then wait for death. Humanly speaking, she was a person with no ability at all to feed Elijah.

God chose not a person of plenty but a widow with nothing left. Through this He showed that the power that keeps Elijah and the widow alive comes not from human possessions but from the Word of God.

6. The Widow Believes the Word of God and Makes Bread First, Verses 13–14

Elijah told the widow not to fear, and told her to make first a small cake for him with the remaining flour and oil, and after that to make food for herself and her son.

With this request God's promise was given together: the Word that the bin of flour would not be used up and the jar of oil would not run dry until God sent rain on the earth again.

The widow had to choose whether to believe the small amount of flour and oil before her eyes, or to believe the Word of God given through Elijah. Her making the bread first was an

act of faith that put God's promise before her own life.

Elijah's request was not simply to relieve his own hunger but a process of leading the widow to receive the Word of God by faith.

7. The Bin of Flour and the Jar of Oil Are Not Used Up, Verses 15–16

The widow did according to Elijah's word. As a result, the widow and Elijah and her household were able to eat for many days.

It was not that an enormous amount of flour piled up in the bin at once, or that much oil suddenly filled the jar. Each time food was made, the flour and oil that were needed kept remaining.

This means that God supplied the food needed each day until the drought ended. Looking at the bin and the jar every day, the widow experienced the Word of God living and working.

The Baal that Ahab and Jezebel served could not give the nation rain or food, but God fed a poor widow of the region of Sidon and her household. God's power was not limited by the borders of Israel or by a person's station.

8. The Widow's Son Dies, Verses 17–18

After experiencing the miracle of the flour and the oil, the widow's son became so seriously sick that in the end his breath left him. Even a family that had experienced God's provision was visited by an affliction hard to understand.

The widow connected her son's death with her own sin. She thought that by Elijah's coming to her house her sin had been exposed and, as a result, her son had died.

The widow's reaction shows the fear and guilt felt in the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

face of a sudden death. She had experienced the miracle of the flour and oil that were not used up, but before the greater problem of death she could not understand the will of God.

Through this event God intended to show that He is not only the One who supplies food but also the One who rules even over death.

9. Elijah Takes the Dead Child and Prays to God, Verses 19–21

Elijah took the child from the widow's arms and went up to the upper room where he was staying. He laid the child on his own bed and cried out earnestly to God.

Elijah did not accept the child's death with indifference. He regarded the widow's sorrow as his own problem and carried it before God.

Elijah stretched himself out on the child three times and pleaded that the child's soul might come back into his body. It was not that he had the power to bring a person to life; he earnestly asked God, the Owner of life.

Elijah, who had been fed by the ravens at the Brook Cherith and had experienced the miracle of the flour and the oil at Zarephath, now came to rely on God over the life of a dead person. His faith grew ever deeper through the events that followed one another.

10. God Brings the Child Back to Life, Verses 22–23

God heard Elijah's prayer. The child's soul came back into his body, and the child came to life again.

Elijah took the living child, came down from the upper room, and gave him back to his mother. To the widow was revealed a power of God greater than receiving her daily food.

Baal and Asherah were thought to give abundance and life,

but the One who actually brought the dead child to life was the God of Israel. This event shows that God rules not only over nature and food but also over a person's life and death.

Elijah was not the hero of the miracle but the man who delivered the Word of God and prayed to God. The power that brought the child to life came entirely from God.

11. The Widow Acknowledges Elijah and the Word of God, Verse 24

When the widow saw her son alive again, she acknowledged that Elijah was a man of God and that the Word of God in his mouth was the truth.

The widow had experienced God's power through the supply of the flour and the oil, but through the event of her son's coming back from death she came to hold an even clearer assurance about the Word of God.

This chapter begins with Elijah proclaiming the Word of God to Ahab and ends with the widow of Zarephath confessing that that Word is true. Ahab rebelled against the Word of God, but a poor widow of a pagan region believed and obeyed the Word and experienced God's provision and life.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 17

First, God is the One who rules over the rain and nature. In the days of Ahab, when Baal was served as the god of abundance, God sent a drought and revealed who the true Sovereign is who rules the rain.

Second, even in the midst of God's judgment, God protects and provides for the person who follows His Word. Elijah was supplied food through the ravens and the brook, and afterward was protected through the widow of Zarephath.

Third, God uses people and methods no one expects. The

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

ravens and a poor pagan widow were used as instruments to feed Elijah.

Fourth, even the circumstances of a place to which God has led can change. The Brook Cherith dried up, but God's provision had not ended; the way He led Elijah had changed.

Fifth, faith is putting God's promise before the circumstances in front of one's eyes. The widow of Zarephath did not look only at her last remaining flour and oil, but believed and obeyed the Word of God given through Elijah.

Sixth, God supplies what is needed day by day. The bin of flour and the jar of oil were not used up until the drought ended, and the widow's family experienced God's faithfulness every day.

Seventh, affliction can come even to a person who has experienced God's grace. The event of the widow's son dying did not mean that the provision of God she had experienced was false; it was the process of coming to know the greater power of God.

Eighth, God is the One who rules over life and death. By hearing Elijah's prayer and bringing the dead child to life, He revealed that not only food but also life belongs to God.

Ninth, the Word of God is fulfilled without fail and is true. The proclamation of the drought, the provision by the ravens, the promise of the flour and the oil, and the event of the child coming to life were all fulfilled according to the Word of God.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 17 is the record of how, in the days of Ahab when Baal worship abounded, God proclaimed a drought through Elijah, supplied food at the Brook Cherith and at Zarephath, and brought a dead child to life, and so revealed Himself as the true God who rules nature, food, and life.

2) Chapter 17 Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

1 Kings chapter 17 shows the process by which God raised up Elijah in an age that had fallen into physical drought and spiritual famine because of Baal worship, and gave food and life to those who believe the Word of God. Seen at the level of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it shows that the true food that gives life to a soul dying in sin is the Word of salvation Jesus accomplished, and that God takes responsibility for and leads the person who believes and serves this gospel.

1. A Drought Is Proclaimed in the Age of Baal Worship, Verse 1

Ahab and Jezebel served Baal and Asherah. Baal was thought to give rain and abundance, but Elijah proclaimed that for years there would be neither rain nor dew until the living God allowed it.

The drought was a judgment on the idolatry of Ahab and northern Israel. God revealed that the one who rules rain and farming and life is not Baal but God.

Spiritually as well, when a person casts away the gospel God has given and follows false teaching, the food of life disappears from his heart. However many religious activities there may be, if the Word of salvation that washes away sin is not there, the soul falls into famine.

In a heart without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, sin remains as it is. Because such a person does not know the salvation God accomplished through Jesus, he tries to resolve the problem of sin with his own good deeds and religious efforts, but he cannot obtain true peace.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

2. Elijah Delivers the Word of God Just as It Is

Elijah did not reduce or change the Word of God out of fear of King Ahab's power. He proclaimed the Word God had given him just as it was, before the king.

The person who preaches the gospel must not alter the Word of salvation out of fear of people's reactions either. If, worrying that the hearers will dislike it, he leaves out the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist or stresses only the blood of the Cross, he cannot preach the complete salvation.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel Jesus completed by taking charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death.

The person who preaches the gospel must accurately deliver not his own knowledge or feelings but the Word of salvation God has recorded in the Scriptures.

3. God Feeds Elijah at the Brook Cherith, Verses 2–6

God told Elijah to go to the Brook Cherith and hide. There He let him drink from the brook and supplied him bread and meat morning and evening through the ravens.

Elijah did not endure the drought by his own ability. God had him deliver the Word, and He Himself took responsibility even for the life of the man who delivered that Word.

God used even the unexpected ravens to feed Elijah. This shows that God can supply in various ways what is needed by the person who lives for the gospel.

The person who believes in and serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit must believe God and not look only at his own circumstances. God does not abandon the person to whom He has entrusted the gospel; He supplies what is needed at the needed time and enables the work of the gospel to continue.

4. After the Brook Cherith Dries Up, a New Way Opens, Verses 7–9

As no rain fell, the Brook Cherith also dried up. The drying up of the water at the place God had sent him did not mean that God's protection had ended. God had a plan to move Elijah to Zarephath.

When the familiar way of provision is blocked, a person can think that God has abandoned him. But God prepares another way when one way ends, and leads him on into a broader faith.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also meet changes of circumstances. At such times he must not judge only by his own calculation but follow the way the Holy Spirit leads through the Word.

God sent Elijah to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon. Even in the heartland of Baal worship there was a soul God had prepared, and God had a plan to feed Elijah through that person.

5. The Widow of Zarephath, Who Had Only Her Last Food Left, Verses 10–12

When Elijah arrived at the gate of Zarephath, a widow was gathering sticks. All she had left was a handful of flour and a little oil. The widow intended to make her last meal, eat it with her son, and wait for death.

This widow had reached a state in which she could not live on by her own strength and possessions. She was a person for whom every human possibility had vanished and who looked only toward death.

Spiritually as well, the person who receives the gospel of the water and the Spirit must know the fact that he cannot resolve his sin with his own good deeds and righteousness. He comes to acknowledge that by his own religious efforts he

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

cannot become righteous before God and cannot escape death, the wages of sin.

A person who holds on to his own righteousness finds it hard to receive in full the righteousness Jesus accomplished. But the person who knows that he cannot resolve the problem of his sin by his own ability can receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the Word of life.

6. Elijah Asks the Widow for Bread First, Verses 13–14

Elijah told the widow not to fear and to make first a small cake for him. And he delivered the promise that the flour and the oil would not run out until God sent rain.

The widow had to choose whether to believe the last visible food or the Word of God given through Elijah. Her making the bread first was an act of faith that entrusted her life to God's promise.

This does not mean that if one offers material things one unconditionally gains more material things. What the widow believed was not a reward for her own act but the promise God had given.

Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is likewise putting God's promise before one's own thoughts. Even if sin is seen in one's heart, it is believing the Word that Jesus took charge of all sins and washed them away.

7. The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is the True Food That Gives Life to the Soul

In the sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins onto it. The offering that took over the sins shed its blood and died, and so bore the judgment of sin in the sinner's place.

Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind on His own

body with the baptism He received from John. And carrying the sins of the world, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist is the work of salvation by which all sins were passed on to Jesus, and the blood of the Cross shows that the judgment of those sins was completely carried out. Jesus' rising again from death shows that He has given eternal life to those who believe.

The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of the person who believes that this salvation of the water and the blood is true. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin by believing the Word that all his sins were passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins has ended.

This gospel is the true food of life that a soul dying in sin must eat. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart becomes a righteous person without sin and obtains the eternal life God gives.

8. The Bin of Flour and the Jar of Oil Are Not Used Up, Verses 15–16

When the widow of Zarephath believed the Word given through Elijah and did just as it said, the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry. The widow and Elijah and her household could keep eating throughout the drought.

The flour became the food that sustained life, and the oil made it possible to prepare that food. Spiritually, the flour makes us think of God's Word of life, and the oil of the Holy Spirit who works in the heart that believes that Word.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not used up no matter how many people it is preached to. Nor does one

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

person's being saved by believing this gospel reduce the salvation another may receive. The salvation Jesus accomplished is sufficient to wash away the sins of all mankind.

The person who believes the Word keeps eating the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the food of his heart as he lives. The Holy Spirit makes the believer remember the gospel and gives him strength to keep his faith and live even in hardship.

9. The Person Who Has Received God's Provision Goes On to a Life That Serves the Gospel

The widow of Zarephath gave up the last food meant for herself and her son, but as a result she came to serve not only her own family but Elijah as well. Through the widow's small faith God protected His servant and kept her family alive too.

The person who has been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop at rejoicing over his own salvation. He comes to serve the preaching of the gospel so that other souls may also hear this gospel and receive the remission of sin.

Each person's talents and time and material things differ, but the Holy Spirit leads each one to serve the gospel in the way he can. God uses lives offered for the gospel so that the Word of life is passed on to more people.

God's provision is not meant to fill personal greed; it must be used to serve the gospel and souls. The person who thinks of the gospel first comes to experience God taking responsibility for his life.

10. The Widow's Son Dies, Verses 17–18

After the miracle of the flour and the oil, the widow's son became sick and died. Unexpected affliction came even to a family that had experienced God's provision.

In the face of her son's death, the widow thought of her own sin. Death makes a person think of his fundamental sin and of his state before God.

Receiving material food alone does not resolve a person's most fundamental problem. A person needs not only the food of the flesh but the salvation that delivers from sin and death.

God did not stop at giving the widow flour and oil but made her know that He is the One who rules over life. Through this He established her faith more deeply and clearly.

11. Elijah Cries Out to God for the Dead Child, Verses 19–21

Elijah took the dead child from the widow's arms and went up to the upper room. He laid the child on his own bed and cried out earnestly to God.

Elijah had no power to bring a dead person to life. Relying on God, the Owner of life, he asked that the child's soul might come back into his body.

The power that gives life to souls does not come from human wisdom or eloquence either. Only in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is there the power that gives life. The person who preaches the gospel must not rely on his own ability but rely on God, so that the Holy Spirit gives life to souls through the Word.

Just as Elijah embraced the widow's sorrow as his own problem and prayed, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not turn away from souls in sin but preach the gospel to them so that they may believe the Word of life.

12. The Dead Child Comes Back to Life, Verses 22–23

God heard Elijah's plea, and the child's soul came back into

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

his body and he came to life again. Elijah gave the living child back to his mother.

The One who brought the dead child to life was not Elijah but God. God is not only the One who supplies food but the One who overcomes death and gives life.

Every person is born cut off from God because of sin. But Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so gave sinners new life.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is saved from sin, becomes a child of God, and obtains the life of Jesus, who rose again from death. Even though the flesh dies, on the last day he will live again and live with God forever.

13. The Widow Comes to Know That the Word of God Is True, Verse 24

When the widow saw her son alive again, she came to know that Elijah was a man of God and that the Word of God in his mouth was the truth.

The widow's faith did not stop at receiving the flour and the oil. She experienced the power of God who gives life and came to be assured that the Word of God is true.

The faith of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also founded on the Word of God. He believes not his own feelings but the Word that Jesus removed all sins by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death.

The Holy Spirit gives the assurance of salvation to the heart of the person who believes this Word. He does not claim to be righteous by looking at his own deeds; he confesses that he is a righteous person without sin because he believes the salvation

Jesus accomplished.

14. In an Age of Spiritual Famine, the Gospel of Life Must Be Preached

In the days of Ahab there were many prophets of Baal, but the true Word that gave life to Israel was proclaimed through Elijah. The fact that people are many does not make what they preach the truth.

Today as well, religious teachings are many, but the Word that clearly tells how a sinner is saved from all his sins can be rare. If the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not preached, people believe in Jesus and yet go through spiritual famine with sin in their hearts.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must preach this Word of life accurately. He must make known to the whole world the fact that Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Just as God accomplished the work of life in the age of drought through Elijah, so through those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit He delivers the food of salvation to souls fallen into spiritual famine.

The Core Gospel Meaning of 1 Kings Chapter 17

First, when we depart from the Word of God, the soul falls into famine. Just as rain was cut off from the land when Ahab and Jezebel served Baal, in a heart without the gospel of the water and the Spirit there is no Word of life that washes away sin.

Second, God takes responsibility for the person who believes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The God who fed Elijah through the ravens and the widow of Zarephath supplies what is needed to the person who serves the gospel.

Third, the person whose human resources have all been cut off can receive the Word of God. The widow of Zarephath, with only her last food remaining, believed God's promise rather than her own circumstances.

Fourth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true food that a soul dying in sin must eat. Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Fifth, the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross accomplish one complete salvation. With the baptism He took charge of sin, and by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross He washed away all the sins of those who believe.

Sixth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not exhausted no matter how many people it is preached to. Just as the bin of flour and the jar of oil were not used up until the drought ended, the salvation Jesus accomplished is sufficient to save all the people of the world.

Seventh, God takes responsibility not only for material needs but for the life of the soul. The God who gave the widow food also brought her dead son to life, revealing Himself as the Sovereign over life and death.

Eighth, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must take part in the work of giving life to other souls. God uses the time and talents and material things of those who believe the gospel so that the Word of life is passed on to the world.

Ninth, the assurance of salvation comes not from feelings or deeds but from the Word of God. The person who believes

in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is assured of his salvation on the ground of the Word that Jesus completely removed all sins.

To sum up in one sentence, 1 Kings chapter 17 shows, through the events in which God gave food and life to Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in the famine caused by Baal worship, that the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection from death, is the true food of life that gives life to souls dying in sin. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

1 Kings Chapter 17

God Who Revealed Unfailing Grace and Life

Introductory Words

1 Kings chapter 17 is the chapter in which God raises up Elijah in the deep darkness of the days of Ahab. Ahab had brought the worship of Baal and Asherah into northern Israel, and the hearts of the people had drifted still further from the law of sacrifice and the way of salvation God had ordained. In such an age God had Elijah proclaim that for years there would be neither rain nor dew. This was God's rebuke, revealing that Baal is not a god who gives rain and abundance but a vain idol.

But the drought was not merely a judgment for destruction. By stopping the rain, God intended to wake Israel and make them return to the true God. The reason God points out sin is not to cast the sinner away but to bring him to life. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same. Exposing wrong faith is not meant to condemn people, but to bring them back to the true way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

After delivering the Word of God, Elijah hid by the Brook Cherith. God fed him through the ravens and let him drink from the brook. But after a while that brook also dried up. Being a servant of God does not mean passing through none of the dryness of reality. Yet the drying up of the brook was not the end but the process of moving him on to the next Word.

God sent Elijah to the widow of Zarephath. That widow had only a handful of flour and a little oil, but when she believed

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and obeyed the Word of God, the bin of flour and the jar of oil did not run dry. Then, through the event of her son dying and coming back to life, God revealed that He is the One who rules over life and death and that the Word of God is true.

All this Word makes us look to the grace of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our circumstances can dry up, and what remains in our hands can look small. But the Word of salvation God has given does not dry up. Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again from death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is supplied by the living God even in an age like famine, and comes to stand as a vessel of faith that serves this truth.

God Raised Up Elijah in the Darkness of Ahab's Days

"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.'" (1 Kings 17:1).

1 Kings chapter 17 begins with the appearance of Elijah. In the previous chapter Ahab was recorded as the king who did more evil in the sight of the LORD than all who were before him. He counted the sin of Jeroboam a light thing, took Jezebel as his wife, and brought the worship of Baal and Asherah deep into northern Israel. In Samaria the temple and altar of Baal were built, and the hearts of the people drifted still further from the law of sacrifice God had ordained.

In such an age God raised up Elijah. Elijah stood before

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

King Ahab and spoke, saying, *"as the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand" (1 Kings 17:1)*. These words show where Elijah's faith rested. In an age filled with Baal and Asherah, he was a man who served the living LORD God.

Elijah proclaimed, *"there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (1 Kings 17:1)*. Baal was an idol thought to give rain and abundance. But through the mouth of Elijah, God revealed that rain and dew are not in the hand of Baal but depend on the Word of the living LORD God. This was not the forecast of a mere natural disaster but God's judgment to wake Israel, which was serving a vain idol.

Today as well, God does not leave alone a faith that has departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If a person claims to believe in Jesus and yet does not know the truth that Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, he cannot know how sin was passed on to Jesus. Then even though he speaks of the Cross, sin remains in his heart, and he tries to wash it away with prayers of repentance and his own efforts. This is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained.

The salvation God has established is clear. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. Believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the way of returning to the living God.

Stopping the Rain Was Meant Not Only to Destroy the People but to Turn Them Back

The drought Elijah proclaimed was something that shook

the whole of Israel. When no rain falls and no dew descends, the land dries up, the grain cannot grow, and people and beasts alike suffer. But God's allowing such a judgment was not merely His intent to destroy Israel. He intended to wake the people who were dying under the idolatry of Ahab and Jezebel.

The people of Israel believed that Baal gives rain and abundance. So God, by stopping the rain, revealed that Baal is a vain idol. He made them know that the idol they relied on could do nothing, and made them realize that the One who truly rules rain and life is the LORD God.

God's rebuke is heavy, but within it there is mercy. God hates sin, but He desires that the people in sin return. His sending Elijah was not to cast Israel away but God's work to bring them back to Himself.

The work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit today is the same. Pointing out wrong faith is not meant to condemn people. Exposing why a faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross cannot resolve the sins of the heart is meant to bring souls back to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because God loves sinners, He makes the true way of the remission of sin clearly known.

God Hid Away the Servant Who Had Delivered the Word

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan" (1 Kings 17:2–3).

After Elijah proclaimed the drought to Ahab, the word of the LORD came to Elijah again. God told him to leave that place, turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

flows into the Jordan. After delivering the Word of God, Elijah did not immediately perform great works before the people; he went into hiding in the place God had appointed.

This shows that a servant of God is not a man who moves by his own zeal or his own methods, but a man who moves according to the Word of God. Elijah stood before Ahab by the Word of God, and he also hid according to the Word of God. A servant of God is a man who entrusts to God both the times of being seen before people and the times of being hidden.

The Brook Cherith was for Elijah both a refuge and a place of training. While Ahab and Jezebel sought Elijah and hated him, God protected His servant. But that protection was not carried out in a palace or a place of plenty. It was carried out in the lonely place by the brook.

The person who believes in and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also at times be hated by the world and by false faith. When we preach that the remission of sin was completed by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, religious faith that still holds sin in its heart can be made uncomfortable. But God knows the person who delivers His Word. Even without people's recognition, He lets him receive God's provision in the place God has appointed.

God Fed Elijah at the Brook Cherith

"And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there. So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and

meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook" (1 Kings 17:4–6).

God told Elijah to drink from the Brook Cherith, and said He had commanded the ravens to feed him there. Elijah did according to the word of the LORD and stayed by the Brook Cherith. Then the ravens brought bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening. And Elijah drank from the brook.

God fed His servant even in the midst of the drought. Though there was no rain and no dew in all the land, for the person who lived according to the Word of God there was the provision God had appointed. A raven, by human thinking, is not a creature likely to bring food. But when God commands, even a raven becomes an instrument that feeds the servant of God.

This shows the fact that God takes responsibility for the person to whom He has entrusted His work. He fed Elijah not because Elijah was special, but because God had sent him. It was not Elijah's ability but God's faithfulness that kept him alive.

It is the same today with the person who serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even when the way looks blocked in people's eyes, God supplies what is needed to the person who does the work God has entrusted. The work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not accomplished by human strength alone. It is accomplished because God pities souls and turns sinners back through this truth.

What we must rely on is not human methods but the Word of God. When we hold on to the truth that Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death, God Himself leads the life that serves this truth.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Drying Up of the Brook Was the Place of Waiting for God's Next Word

"And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land" (1 Kings 17:7).

After a while the Brook Cherith dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. Even Elijah was not entirely outside the reality of the drought. He was a servant of God, and he was supplied food through the ravens, but the brook he drank from also dried up in the end.

This scene shows that even a servant of God passes through the hardships of reality. Serving God does not mean that every circumstance is always abundant. There are times when the brook God has been using to supply us dries up. But that does not mean God has abandoned us. It is the process by which God moves us on to the next Word.

Even after the brook dried up, Elijah did not move by his own thinking. In the next passage God speaks again and sends him to the widow of Zarephath. So the drying up of the brook is not the end but the beginning of the next obedience.

We too, as we live believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, can meet times when the Brook Cherith dries up. Circumstances can be blocked, supply can shrink, and human help can disappear from view. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given does not dry up. Our circumstances may dry up, but the salvation Jesus accomplished by His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from death does not change.

Therefore, even when circumstances dry up, we must hold on to the truth God has given. God stopped the rain to wake Israel, which relied on Baal, and at the same time fed Elijah at the Brook Cherith. Even within judgment God has His way of

salvation and provision.

1 Kings 17:1–7 Shows the Beginning of God's Turning Them Back to the True God

This passage is the scene in which Elijah proclaims the drought to Ahab, hides by the Brook Cherith according to the Word of God, and is supplied food through the ravens. The days of Ahab were an age in which the worship of Baal and Asherah had deepened. The people relied on vain idols and had drifted from the law of sacrifice and the way of salvation God had ordained. In such an age God raised up Elijah and had him proclaim that rain and dew would cease.

This drought was a judgment exposing Baal as a vain idol that can do nothing. At the same time it was the beginning of mercy meant to turn Israel back to God. God hates sin, but He desires that the people in sin return. So He sent Elijah, and through his word He began to wake Israel from its spiritual sleep.

Today as well, what God desires is that people return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the Cross cannot resolve the sins of the heart. A faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and one's own efforts is not the way of the remission of sin God has ordained either. The way God has established is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and accomplished complete salvation by rising again from death.

Just as Elijah stood before the living LORD God and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

delivered the Word to Ahab, so the believer in this age must clearly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the living God has accomplished. Through this truth God wakes the souls that rely on vain idols and brings them back to the true God.

Even after the Brook Cherith Dried Up, the Word of God Continued

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.'" (1 Kings 17:8–9).

Elijah was the prophet who delivered the Word of God in the very middle of the idolatry of Ahab's days. In the days of Ahab and Jezebel, the worship of Baal and Asherah had come deep into northern Israel. Baal was an idol thought to give rain and abundance. But God had Elijah proclaim that neither rain nor dew would fall. This was God's work of exposing Baal as a vain idol and turning Israel back to the true God.

After that, God hid Elijah by the Brook Cherith and fed him bread and meat through the ravens. But after a while that brook also dried up, because no rain had fallen on the land. Being a servant of God did not mean passing through none of the reality of the drought. Elijah too had to watch the brook dry up.

But the drying up of the brook did not mean the end of God's guidance. The word of the LORD came to Elijah again. God sent him to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and said that He had commanded a widow there to provide for him.

This shows that God can change the way of provision. First He fed him through the ravens and the brook; now He feeds

him through the widow of Zarephath. The man of God must follow not circumstances but the Word of God. When the brook dries up, he must not think it is the end, but wait for the next Word and obey that Word.

We too who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can meet times when the Brook Cherith dries up. Circumstances can be blocked, human help can shrink, and visible supply can grow weak. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given does not dry up. The salvation Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and taking charge of all our sins, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again from death does not change in any circumstances.

The Widow of Zarephath Was a Poor Woman Facing Death

"So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.' And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.'" (1 Kings 17:10–11).

Elijah went to Zarephath according to the Word of God. There he met a widow. She was gathering sticks at the gate of the city. This shows that she was not a person of plenty. It was a time of severe drought, a time when there was nothing to eat. She was gathering sticks to prepare her last meal.

Elijah first asked her to bring a little water. And as she was going to get it, he called her again and asked her to bring a morsel of bread. In human eyes this was a very burdensome

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

request. The widow was not a person of plenty. She was rather a person preparing to eat her last meal with her son and die.

But the Word of God sometimes goes beyond our calculations. God fed Elijah not through a rich or powerful person, but had him served by a widow who had only one last meal left. This shows that God looks not at a person's abundance but at faith.

Today as well, in the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God does not look first at how much or how little a person has. It is not that one can do God's work only with great wealth and great ability. What God looks at is whether the heart believes the Word of God. Even if one's circumstances look small, the heart that regards the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained as precious and seeks to serve that truth is precious before God.

Will You Hold On to the Last That Remains, or Believe the Word of God?

"So she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.'" (1 Kings 17:12).

The widow spoke honestly of her circumstances. She had no bread. She had only a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar. With that she was thinking to prepare her last meal, eat it with her son, and after that die.

These words show how severe the famine of that age was. The widow of Zarephath had nothing more to hope for. All that remained to her was a handful of flour and a little oil. In human

eyes, it was the last lifeline she had to protect.

But in that very place God required faith. It was the moment that would reveal whether she would hold on to the last that remained as her own life, or believe the Word of God and lay it before that Word.

This applies to our lives just as it is. When hardship comes, people try to clutch what remains to them. They want to hold their last time, their last material things, their last strength, and their last opportunity for themselves. But there are times when God requires faith of us for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. At such times we must believe not our own calculations but the Word of God.

Of course, this Word does not mean to dispose of what we have indiscriminately. What matters is the Word God has spoken. The widow of Zarephath did not merely hear the demand of Elijah as an individual; she came to stand before the promise of God delivered through Elijah. The believer also must live by faith not under human compulsion but within the Word of God and the will of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Believing the Word of God First Is the Greater Vessel of Faith

"And Elijah said to her, Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son" (1 Kings 17:13).

Elijah said to the widow, "Do not fear." The beginning of faith is escaping from fear. The widow could have feared losing the last she had. But the Word of God told her to act not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

in fear but in faith.

Elijah told her to make a small cake first and bring it to him, and afterward to make some for herself and her son. This was not simply a human demand to feed the prophet first. It meant to believe first and obey the Word God had spoken through Elijah. When she first believed the Word of God, God promised to keep her and her house alive.

This is the greater vessel of faith. By human calculation, a handful of flour and a little oil are one's last means of survival. But seen by faith, they become the beginning of experiencing God's promise. If the widow had clutched the last she had in her own hand, it would have ended as one meal. But when she believed the Word of God and obeyed, it led to God's provision that fed them for many days.

Today we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also prepare this vessel of faith. The salvation God has given us was not given so that we alone might live comfortably. It is the grace by which He intends, through us, to pass on to more souls this truth—that Jesus took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death. Therefore we must not look only at our own circumstances, but see by faith how God intends to use us for the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God's Promise Kept the Flour and the Oil from Running Out

"For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'" (1 Kings 17:14).

Elijah delivered God's clear promise. Until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth, the bin of flour would not be used up and the jar of oil would not run dry. This was not Elijah's personal comfort but the Word of the LORD God of Israel.

The Word of God was concrete. It was the promise that food would not run out until the drought ended. What the widow needed was not a great storehouse. It was that the flour and oil for each day would keep being supplied within God's promise.

This Word shows that God is the One who fills the needs of the person who obeys in faith. God fed Elijah through the widow of Zarephath, and at the same time kept the widow's house alive through Elijah. The work of God is not a work that one-sidedly consumes one person. God keeps alive together the person who believes His Word and serves it.

The work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same. When we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God gives life to other souls through that work and keeps us alive as well. A life that serves the righteousness of God is not a life that only loses. God supplies the needed grace to the person who offers his heart for the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The flour and the oil make us think spiritually of God's supply of life. Our strength is small and limited, but the grace of the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given does not dry up. The salvation accomplished by the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death is not knowledge believed once and finished; it is God's provision that keeps giving life to our hearts and lives.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

When She Obeyed according to the Word, They Ate for Many Days

"So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15–16).

The widow of Zarephath did according to the word of Elijah. She did not cling to her last remaining flour and oil and move only by her own calculation. She believed God's promise and obeyed. As a result, she and Elijah and her household ate for many days. According to the word the LORD had spoken by Elijah, the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry.

What matters here is the fact that the Word of God was fulfilled just as it was. The widow's bin did not become a great storehouse from the start. But the flour and oil needed each day were never cut off. God fed that house in the drought just as He had promised.

Faith is actually following the Word of God. The widow could have feared, but she obeyed. Looking only at her circumstances it was impossible, but she believed the promise of God. So her last meal did not end in death but became the beginning of experiencing the provision of life.

Today we also need this faith before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By human calculation, what we have may look small. But if God has entrusted the gospel of the water and the Spirit to us, we must serve that work in faith. God can feed souls even through our small vessel. What matters is whether that vessel is open before the Word of God.

1 Kings 17:8–16 Teaches Us to Prepare a Greater Vessel of Faith

This passage shows the scene in which Elijah leaves the Brook Cherith and goes to the widow of Zarephath, and the miracle in which the widow's bin of flour and jar of oil do not run dry. In the severe famine, the widow of Zarephath intended to eat her last remaining flour and oil with her son and die. But when she heard the Word of God and first obeyed in faith, God fed that house for many days.

This Word teaches us to prepare a greater vessel of faith. The vessel of faith is not the abundance or lack of material things, but the heart that believes the Word of God and seeks to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The widow of Zarephath had only a handful of flour and a little oil, but through it God fed Elijah and kept the widow's house alive as well.

Today God desires to give life to souls through those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. The person who believes this truth is the person who has received the remission of sin before God.

Therefore we must not look only at our own circumstances and fear. When even the small strength that looks like our last is offered in faith before the Word of God, God accomplishes the work of life through it. We must prepare a greater vessel of faith for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must set our hearts on serving the truth God has given and passing it on to the souls that need it.

Just as the widow of Zarephath's bin of flour and jar of oil

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

were not used up, the grace of the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has established does not dry up. The circumstances may be famine, the Brook Cherith may dry up, and it may look as though we have only a handful in our hands. But to the person who believes and obeys the Word of God, God supplies the needed grace. With this faith we must live a life that serves the righteousness of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Son's Death Exposed the Deep Sense of Sin in the Widow's Heart

"Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, 'What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?'" (1 Kings 17:17–18).

In the house of the widow of Zarephath there had already been a miracle of God. The bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry. God fed that house in the famine through Elijah. But after that the widow's son became sick, and his sickness grew so serious that his breath left him.

This event cannot be understood in the manner of "if you have faith, there is no affliction." The widow's house had experienced God's provision, yet it came to stand before the problem of death. Even a person who has experienced the miracles God gives can still stand before death, the fundamental problem of man. The miracle of the flour and the oil was a grace that preserved the life of the flesh, but the son's death exposed a deeper problem that human strength cannot solve.

The widow said to Elijah, *"Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" (1 Kings 17:18).* These words show that deep in the widow's heart there was a sense of sin. But we must not conclude from this Word that her son died because of some particular sin of hers. The text says only that in the face of her son's death, she was reminded of her sin. Death makes a person think deeply of his sin and of his standing before God.

It is the same with people today. In times of ease a person may not see his sin well. But standing before death and affliction, the human conscience is reminded of its sin before God. So what a person needs is not merely the help of the flesh. He needs the salvation that actually resolves the sins of the heart.

The true salvation God has given is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death. When we believe this truth, we can hold the assurance of the remission of sin even in the face of death.

Elijah Carried the Problem of Death to God

"And he said to her, 'Give me your son.' So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed" (1 Kings 17:19).

Elijah took the child from the widow, carried him in his arms, and went up to the upper room where he was staying. He laid the child on his own bed. Elijah did not argue with the widow. He did not answer her reproach with words. He carried the dead child up before God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

This is what a man of God must do. The problem of man's death and sin cannot be solved by human words. It is not solved by words of comfort alone, nor by human knowledge or experience. Elijah carried that problem before God. For it is God who rules over life.

The people of Ahab's days served Baal as though he were the god of rain and abundance. But Baal could give neither rain nor life. When the widow's son died, the one who could bring that child to life was not Baal either. Only the living LORD God was the One who rules over life.

Today as well, what gives life to a person's soul is not man's religious methods. A faith that leaves out the baptism of Jesus and speaks only of the blood of the Cross cannot explain how sin was passed on to Jesus. A faith that tries to wash away sin with prayers of repentance and its own efforts cannot give life to a dead soul either. What gives life to the soul is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has ordained.

Elijah's Prayer Was Directed to God, Who Rules over Life

"Then he cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?' And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.'" (1 Kings 17:20–21).

Elijah cried out to the LORD. He prayed, *"O LORD my God" (1 Kings 17:21)*. To Elijah, God was not a God of theory but the living God whom he himself served and relied on.

Elijah stretched himself out on the child three times and

prayed to God. This act shows an earnestness in which Elijah seemed to lay even his own life before God together with the child. He asked God for the restoration of life: *"let this child's soul come back to him" (1 Kings 17:21)*. Man cannot bring back the soul of the dead. Only God can give life again.

This scene makes us look toward the saving power that Jesus Christ would accomplish. Man was dead before God because of sin. Even though the flesh is alive, if there is sin in the heart, before God one is cut off from life. So what man needs is not moral improvement or religious zeal but the salvation that actually brings him to life out of sin.

Jesus came to this earth to accomplish this salvation. By receiving baptism from John He took charge of all our sins on His own body, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again from death. If Elijah's prayer is the scene of asking God for the life of a dead child, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is God's complete salvation that actually gives life to souls dead in sin.

God Made the Child's Life Return

"Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived" (1 Kings 17:22).

The LORD heard the voice of Elijah. The soul of the child came back into his body, and the child revived. This is not Elijah's own power but the power of God. Elijah prayed, and God answered. The One who gave life was the LORD God.

This event reveals who the true God is amid the idolatry of Ahab's days. Baal can neither send rain nor bring the dead to life. But the LORD God is the One who stops the rain and sends it again, and who also makes the life of a dead child return.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Through this miracle God also made the widow of Zarephath know that He is the true God. At first the widow had intended to eat her last meal and die. But when she believed the Word of God and served Elijah, the bin of flour and the jar of oil did not run dry. Now she saw her dead son come back to life. God led her faith into a deeper place.

We too must come to know the God of life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God is not merely the One who fills the needs of the flesh. He is the One who resolves the problem of sin and death. Through the baptism Jesus Christ received, the Cross, and His resurrection from death, God has completely removed our sins and set us in new life.

Returning the Child to Her Arms Shows the Mercy of God

"And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, 'See, your son lives!'" (1 Kings 17:23).

Elijah took the living child, came down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And he said, *"See, your son lives!" (1 Kings 17:23).* The child who had died returned to his mother's arms. This shows how real the mercy of God is.

God's miracle was not abstract. The widow actually received her son again. Her sorrow was turned into joy. But the center of this event does not lie only in the reunion of mother and son. Through this it was revealed that the living God was with Elijah and that the Word of God is true.

God's work of giving life to people is the same. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an abstract doctrine. It is the

power of salvation that actually removes sin from a person's heart and sets him before God as a living righteous person. Through the baptism Jesus received our sins were passed on to Him; on the Cross those sins were judged; and by His rising again from death new life has been given to us.

Therefore we must believe this salvation as something real. It is not comforting ourselves that we are saved while sin remains in the heart. It is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained, so that sin disappears from the conscience and we stand boldly before God.

The Widow Acknowledged the Man of God and the Word of God

"Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.'" (1 Kings 17:24).

The widow said to Elijah, *"Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24)*. This confession is the conclusion of the whole event. God did not merely bring one child to life; He established in one person's heart faith in the Word of God.

At first the widow did not fully know Elijah as a man of God. She was a woman holding her last flour and oil in a severe famine. But she heard the Word of God and obeyed; she saw the miracle of the flour and the oil that did not run dry; and now she saw her son come back to life from death. As a result she came to confess that Elijah was a man of God and that the Word of the LORD in his mouth was the truth.

This is the important purpose of what God did through Elijah. God turns back to the true God the people who are in

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

vain faith. In an age filled with Baal and Asherah, God revealed that only the living LORD is the true God. And He made known that the Word of God is always true.

The work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit today is the same. It is not merely giving people religious knowledge. It is making them know that the Word of the remission of sin God has ordained is true. It is leading them to believe that this Word is true: that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death.

1 Kings 17:17–24 Teaches Us to Return to God, Who Brings the Dead to Life

This passage is the event in which the son of the widow of Zarephath died and came back to life through Elijah's prayer. In the face of her son's death, the widow was reminded of her sin, and Elijah carried the problem of that death to God. God heard Elijah's prayer and made the child's soul come back into his body so that he lived. As a result the widow confessed that Elijah was a man of God and that the Word of the LORD in his mouth was the truth.

This Word shows that God is not only the One who gives the food of the flesh, but the One who rules over life and death. The God who kept the bin of flour and the jar of oil from running dry also brought the dead child to life. This was God's work of exposing the Baal of Ahab's days as a vain idol and turning people back to the living LORD God.

For people today as well, the greatest problems are sin and death. These problems are not solved by human morality or

religious zeal. They are solved only by the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has ordained. Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave us eternal life by rising again from death.

Therefore, like the confession of the widow of Zarephath, we must believe that the Word of God is true. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a human word but the Word of life God has given to bring sinners to life. The person who believes this truth is the person who has escaped the power of sin and death and returned to the living God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God Turns Heretics Around and Brings Them Back

< 1 Kings 17:17-18:46 >

"Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, 'What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?' And he said to her, 'Give me your son.' So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?' And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.' Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, 'See, your son lives!' Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.' And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, 'Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.' So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

severe famine in Samaria. And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab had said to Obadiah, 'Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock.' So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, 'Is that you, my lord Elijah?' And he answered him, 'It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'' So he said, 'How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here''! And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'' He will kill me!' Then Elijah said, 'As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

will surely present myself to him today.' So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?' And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.' So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.' But the people answered him not a word. Then Elijah said to the people, 'I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.' So all the people answered and said, 'It is well spoken.' Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.' So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us!' But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was, at noon, that

Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.' So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, 'Israel shall be your name.' Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, 'Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.' Then he said, 'Do it a second time,' and they did it a second time; and he said, 'Do it a third time,' and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!' And Elijah said to them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!' So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.' So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' So he went up and looked, and said, 'There is nothing.' And seven times he said, 'Go again.' Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, 'There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!' So he said, 'Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'' Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

Today we have read much of the Word of God, so I will share the message in due measure. These days we are preparing several business ventures to support the work of preaching the gospel. Many of you are worn out and unwell from all the work. We must take good care of our health for the Lord's sake. A car lasts long if you oil it, polish it, tighten it up, and take it often to the shop, but otherwise it is soon dragged off to the junkyard; in the same way we must look after our bodies well and serve the Lord for a long time. It is not that we are afraid of

sickness; it is for the Lord's sake.

The works we do we carry on by joining our strength and dividing them into parts. Each one bears his own share well, helping one another, and above all we intend to use the fruit of these ventures to preach the gospel to the whole world. My heart is wholly set on the literature ministry. These days we are pouring all our strength into preparing a book that discerns false gospels.

As I go over that writing, I see afresh how truly many are the crowds that have departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who hears and believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet does not serve the gospel, and the person who does not unite with the born-again church of God, have likewise strayed from the right way. This is not my own thought; the Word of Scripture testifies so. If a person has received the remission of sin and yet does not serve the gospel but chases the world and idols, he has left what is right. So we are diligent in this work, to make people know what is the true gospel and what is a false gospel.

Northern Israel Full of Idols, and King Ahab

In today's passage from 1 Kings, King Ahab appears. Ahab was, like King Jeroboam, a king who served many idols—in a word, a very evil king. He was the king of northern Israel. Northern Israel served idols to a singular degree. Even while God was angered, the level of their sinning reached the point of counting sin a light thing and even egging it on. To such a degree that even the sin committed by the earlier king Jeroboam seemed trivial, Ahab turned the whole nation of Israel outright into a nation serving foreign gods. In that nation

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the people who called on the LORD God were exceedingly few, and it became a nation where bowing to pagan idols, praising them, offering sacrifice, and burning incense were common.

Until then, God had put to death the kings who served idols and destroyed their families. King Jeroboam, his son, and the kings who followed them were wiped out with their families amid treason and wrath. Such wrath of God had continued down to the time Ahab became king. Yet Ahab took the pagan woman Jezebel as his wife. Jezebel brought in foreign gods on a great scale, and she was so overbearing that King Ahab could not lift a finger before her. She served the foreign gods she believed in on a grand scale and made the king support it with material means.

God Stops the Rain for Three Years and Hides Elijah

At that time God, seeing that the curse that had fallen only on the kings' families was now coming upon the whole people so that all were about to die, rather had compassion on the people of Israel. So, as one administers a drastic remedy, He sent the prophet Elijah. It was to bring the ten tribes back to God. God came upon Elijah and said that He would not send rain on the land of Israel for three years, and told him to go and deliver that word to Ahab and then hide. Elijah hid for three years by a brook and then at a widow's house, so that no one could find him.

Ahab sent out his officials to find Elijah, but could not find him. As no rain fell for three years, so great a famine came that the animals were all dying. Ahab divided the land with Obadiah and went about searching for springs of water and

brooks. Then one day God appeared to Elijah and told him to go to Ahab and tell him that He would send rain on the face of the earth.

Elijah Appears before Ahab Again

Rather than stepping straight out before Ahab, Elijah delivered the word through Obadiah, who was the highest official of the palace under Ahab. Elijah appeared before Obadiah as he was going about in search of water, and told him to go to his king and tell him that Elijah was here, and to come and see him. Obadiah pleaded that if Elijah, who had not been seen for three years, should vanish, he himself would be put to death; please do not run off while I go and report.

At last Ahab and Elijah meet. Because of the suffering he had gone through with no rain for three years, when Ahab saw Elijah he called him the one who troubles Israel. The Word tells of that moment like this: *"Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?' And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table'" (1 Kings 18:17–19)*. Elijah said that it was not he who had troubled Israel, but Ahab and his father's house, who had forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals, and he told him to gather to Mount Carmel all Israel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Contest on Mount Carmel: Who Is the True God?

Now a contest is held to determine who is the true God. Two bulls were brought; each was slaughtered and laid on the wood, and it was settled that the prophets who served Baal and Asherah would call on the names of their gods and Elijah would call on the name of the LORD, and the god who answered by fire would be the true God. All the people said it was well spoken. Elijah told the false prophets to go first, for they were many. The four hundred and fifty false prophets went first. They piled up wood for an altar and laid the slaughtered bull on it.

The four hundred and fifty called on the name of Baal from the morning, crying out. Past noon they cried out, cutting their bodies with knives and lances according to their custom, but there was no sound and no answer. … They had been believing in something as god that never comes down however one calls.

Only then did Elijah step forward. He repaired the broken-down altar of the LORD and had water poured generously over his own altar. He made a trench, and had four waterpots of water poured three times over the wood and the offering, so that the water ran all around the altar and even filled the trench. He soaked it through so that fire could hardly catch.

Now Elijah goes forward and prays.

The Fire of the LORD Falls, and the False Prophets Are Judged

The four hundred and fifty called on the names of Baal and Asherah from the morning, crying out. Past noon they cried out, cutting their bodies with lances according to their custom, but there was no sound and no answer. Beside them Elijah says something like this: "How do you know whether your god is meditating, or has gone on a journey, or has fallen asleep? Call louder and wake him." They poured out all their strength until evening, but that god never answered. They had been believing in something as god that never comes down however one calls.

Now Elijah goes forward and prays. *"And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings 18:36–38).* Then the fire of the LORD came down and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and licked up even the water in the trench. All the people saw it and fell on their faces, crying out that the LORD, He is God. Elijah seized the prophets of Baal, not letting one escape, and executed them at the Brook Kishon. Who the true God is was made plain before all the people.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God, Who Turned the Hearts of the People Back

What we must see here is not the exalting of Elijah, but God's turning back the hearts of the people of Israel. The ten tribes, who were originally God's people, had lived taking the serving of foreign gods for granted, so that though they were God's people they did not even know who God was. So God Himself showed them what kind of God the true God is. To turn back the hearts of the people of Israel, God purposed it, sent Elijah, and accomplished this work. It was not that Elijah had power; it was God who did it.

No rain had fallen for three years; and after this Elijah went up to Ahab and told him to eat and drink, while he himself went up to the top of Mount Carmel and prayed, sending his servant seven times to look toward the sea, until at last a small cloud as small as a man's hand rose up. Elijah told Ahab that a great rain would now pour down, so ride your chariot and go down; and that cloud covered the whole sky and a great rain poured out. Ahab rode his chariot, and Elijah, clothed with the power of the LORD, ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel. All this was God's ministry to bring Ahab and the people of Israel back before God.

The people of Israel came to know that the LORD God is the true God and confessed it with their own mouths. God made the people confess like that and return to Him. This is the very reason God places His servants on this earth: to bring many people back to God, so that they receive the remission of sin and live enjoying the blessings God gives.

God, Who Even Today Turns People Back through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

We too are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. What is the true gospel? Just as the Baal and Asherah that the four hundred and fifty clung to were not the true God, but the LORD God was the true God, so today God desires to reveal which gospel is the true gospel. Among those who believe in Jesus, those who believe only in the blood of the Cross are as many as four hundred and fifty to one. But those who fully believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection—are truly few. God is having this gospel preached to the whole world in paper books and e-books, and is clearly revealing which gospel is the true gospel.

The reason God has placed you and me on this earth and entrusted this work to us is to bring the Christians of the whole world back before God. It is to teach that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth, and that whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sin and receives blessing from God. God is revealing this work in order to save many lost souls.

God still loves and pities those who believe in Jesus and yet believe wrongly, considering that they have received the remission of sin by the blood of the Cross alone. He desires that they turn and come back to the true gospel. God sent His Son, had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist and so be passed the sins of all mankind, had Him pay the wages of those sins on the Cross, and after His Son died, raised Him again, and so removed the sins of all mankind and saved us completely. He wants to make this fact known and believed, so

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that everyone who believes returns before God and enjoys eternal life in the world to come and blessing in this present life.

The Mission Entrusted to the Servants of God

It was not Elijah who troubled the nation of Israel, but Ahab and his father's house. Because the kings did wrong, the nation was cursed. God truly loved the people of Israel and delighted to save them. Today, too, God does this work through His servants. Looking at this Word, I realize afresh that it was not that Elijah had power, but that God Himself works in this way.

Does God love the people of the whole world, and especially Christians? He loves them. Though many crowds have strayed from the right gospel, and though among their leaders there are those who, like King Jeroboam, live only for themselves and their own families and exploit the people, God still loves those people. He pities those who believe in Jesus in this age and wants them to come back. To bring them back, He has us testify and preach what the true gospel is and who the true God is.

The Work of the Gospel Carried On by Faith

We must join our strength and carry this work. Through the various ventures we mean to raise the material means to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit amply to the whole world, and to testify in print and in e-books with writings that discern false gospels. I believe God will raise up the work whereby numberless people will see those books, realizing, and

returning. We must pray that it may be so.

All work is hard. But I believe that when we plan and take up the challenge, God provides the material things that are needed. You and I live for that very work, and exist for that work. Even in this sweltering summer we are laboring with all our strength for that work. We must hold the faith and the mission that we are, like Elijah, servants of God who bring numberless people back to God, servants who convey the heart of God. God has set you and me up so.

Looked at as individuals, we wonder what one person could do. But God, through you and me, brings the Christians of the whole world back to God and has us testify to those who do not believe in Jesus who God is. He has entrusted that weighty task to us and carries on that work together with us.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Anyone can say it went well after it has gone well. But seen by faith, it is already accomplished. I want the workers of God to be people who know how to be rich and how to be poor in this world. Not people who are shaken because a little money has come in, but people who, even in plenty, still serve God and serve the gospel; people who enjoy what God has given and yet do not serve idols but live as servants of God. I believe God will make it so.

Cast Away Idols and Serve the LORD to the End

I give thanks before God. I truly look forward to the publishing of the book that discerns false gospels. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet says, “I have believed this gospel, so that is enough; I can come back around the time I die,” and chases the world, is like Jeroboam

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and like Solomon. Solomon was stripped of ten tribes, and Jeroboam and his sons, and those who became kings of northern Israel after them, were all cursed and wiped out. One who is like King David will receive blessing, but those who became king carrying on Jeroboam's line received the curse.

Everyone, do not be discouraged. Hold faith and hope, wait, and keep the center of your heart well. Do not serve idols; however weak you are, serve the LORD God. The name Jehovah is the form rendered in our language; in the original text it stands as Yahweh. That God is the God of gods and the King of kings, the God who cares for His people, blesses them, and keeps them.

Take care of your health as well, and do everything in due measure. My heart is wholly set on the literature ministry. Once one's heart sinks into that work, it stays wholly there—and I think it is the same with you. I give thanks before that God. Let me close the Word here. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Let Us Prepare a Greater Vessel of Faith

< 1 Kings 17:8-16 >

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.' So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.' And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' So she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' And Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'' So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah."

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Today I want to share the Word along the same lines as yesterday. These days a long winter lies before us. In this time when the world is hard and livelihoods are pinched, I keep in my heart the question of how we are to pass through this season, and whenever I meet the workers we discuss it together and gather wisdom. This morning, too, we went about together, settled several things to be done in the days ahead, and set our hearts to bear these works by faith.

Why We Prepare a Greater Vessel by Faith

We are serving the Lord with the work we now do, but we want God to give greater blessing so that we may prepare a greater vessel. The purpose is one alone: to preach the gospel to every nation of the world. We want to send the books containing the gospel of the water and the Spirit to each nation in large quantities, and to help cover the cost so that they can be sent out again from within those nations, so that the peoples of those lands can meet the gospel. So we lay this work before the Lord as our desire, pray, and leap over the wall by faith and take up the challenge. I believe the living God is with us and will accomplish this work.

When I look at myself, my heart shrinks; but when I look at God, new strength springs up. When we look only at our circumstances, the heart tightens; but when we look at God, courage rises. So I always look at God.

Sending books to each nation and covering the cost of sending them out is a work that can never be reduced. Only, to pass this winter wisely, we have agreed to translate first the books most needed into several languages into which they have not yet been translated, and to defer for a while the parts

already much translated, until circumstances improve. The work goes on steadily without change; we mean to cross this season by faith. I believe God will be with all this work and bless it. Do you believe it too?

God, Who Sent Elijah to the Widow of Zarephath

The passage is a story from the days of King Ahab. When Israel served the golden calves and left God, God allowed a famine through the prophet Elijah in order to turn them back. Elijah lived by the brook, eating the bread and meat the ravens brought him, but even that brook dried up. Then God spoke to Elijah: *"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you" (1 Kings 17:9).*

When Elijah came to Zarephath, a widow was gathering sticks at the gate of the city. Elijah called her and asked her to bring a little water in a vessel, and also asked her to bring a morsel of bread in her hand. For God had already said that He would feed Elijah through that widow.

But the woman's circumstances were desperate. *"I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die" (1 Kings 17:12).* The bread spoken of here was nothing grand; it was a thin loaf of kneaded flour baked over the fire. The people of that region still bake and eat it that way today. When you see that they are strong in body even without eating richly, the way God has made us is marvelous.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Faith of the Widow Who Gave Up Her Last Meal

All that widow had left was one son and a bare handful of flour. She reckoned there was nothing left but to make one last meal of it, share it with her child, and then starve to death. And then a man of God came and asked her to make bread for him first out of that last food. In human eyes it was a request impossible to grant. Her child was about to starve—who would hand that over to a stranger? But Elijah delivered the Word of God: *"Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth'" (1 Kings 17:13–14).*

The woman who lived in Zarephath heard the word of the man of God and obeyed it just as it was. Then the bin of flour did not run out and the jar of oil did not run dry, so that she and Elijah and her whole household could eat for many days. The Scriptures record this to teach us how God keeps alive and preserves the person who fears God, and how He protected His servant Elijah.

We Who Serve the Gospel in an Age of Famine

I see this famine of three years and six months as being like the season we are now passing through. The world is truly hard. It is a season hard to endure for those who do business in the same line as ours. But God makes us live in this age, and live with enough and to spare. So we set our hearts on serving the

gospel more than on our own eating and living. We mean to send out books in quantity and help cover the costs, so that the books of the gospel may reach those who seek God—those who fear God like the widow of Zarephath. For this work we take up the challenge by faith and prepare a greater vessel.

By God's blessing we have done much up to now, but the work we must bear from now on is far greater. Just as the Apostle Paul regarded preaching the gospel to the Gentiles as a debt he was bound to repay, so we are debtors to the gospel toward the whole world. How many are the nations and languages to which the gospel must be preached! So while continuing steadily the work we now do, we are preparing to find new nations and send the books of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their languages. I believe God will be with His servants and the church and accomplish all these things.

The Hardship of Today Is a Famine of the Word

How greatly the people of the whole world are now suffering, serving idols and having left God! Things like the recent financial upheaval are also a kind of famine. The Scriptures say that the famine of the last days is a famine that comes not from lack of water but from the absence of the Word of God. There is much Christianity in the world today, but those who rightly know and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit are rare. When I speak of other things my strength drains away, but when I speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, strength wells up instead.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Do Not Fear Persecution but Preach the Gospel

The gospel is the truth and so it must be preached, yet even believers shrink from preaching it for fear of persecution. Preaching the gospel is not in fact difficult. Preach it by faith and that is all. But people refute it and brand the one who preaches as a wretch. If you receive a personal attack, simply concede it. If they say you are small, say it is so; if they say you lack this or that, say it is so and concede it, and there is nothing more to quarrel over. And then, on the question that really matters—why the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth—on that alone you answer clearly, and that is enough.

The reason people find this work hard is, above all, that they are hated. They cannot bear being treated as heretics within Christianity, losing people and possessions and honor, and being all but buried in society. But in fact it is not so unbearable a thing as that.

To Preach the Truth Clearly Is a Precious Differentiation

In business, too, doing things differently from others looks strange at first, but as time passes that differentiation becomes rather a good thing. A restaurant that does things differently draws people. It is the same with spiritual work. To preach the truth of God clearly is a differentiation the people of the world shrink from, but it is the work that clearly saves one person and saves all the people of the world. If people fail to understand and call you a heretic, then instead urge them to receive the remission of sin. How glad and happy people live once they have received the remission of sin! It is said that those who

turn many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever. So that much persecution we can bear as much as need be.

This afternoon, too, I visited a restaurant where you can enjoy all kinds of seafood to your heart's content. People naturally gather to a restaurant set out differently from others. Even in worldly business what is distinctive prospers—how much more, then, in the work of clearly preaching the gospel that saves all mankind? What is there to hesitate over?

Compared with the joy of saving souls, upholding the work of God, and fearing God, a moment's persecution is nothing. Though people should try to bury me, there are plenty of places in the world that welcome me. The world of God is this wide—what is there to feel cramped about? So to preach this gospel distinctively is a truly good thing.

Do Not Chase People's Recognition and Honor

These days, when my body is worn, there are moments when I look at those who have left this world and think they must be at ease. But such thoughts must not be harbored in the heart. Everyone who has a body of flesh has hardships; it is better simply to accept that. Do not try to pick out only the good things; bear hardships too with a steady heart.

How long does the recognition one receives from people last? Human honor is such that a good reputation can collapse in a day. Why then cling to that one thing and agonize so over not being recognized? Though someone should slander you with harsh words and drive you into a corner, how many things are there in this world more precious and more valuable than such recognition? There is nothing that need collapse because you hear some rough words or are put to shame in the world.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Though someone should try to push me out, the world is wide, there is much to do, and there are many places that welcome me. To be bound to the single thread of people's recognition, hurting one's heart and even wearing down one's health, is the truly foolish thing. There is no reason to let one's heart be stolen by such things.

I too, living in this world, have times when my heart is heavy, and nights when I cannot sleep for thinking of my health. But when I keep my body moving diligently and work, sleep comes well instead. If you sit still and only fret, sleep does not come; but the one who has worked and sweated grows weary and soon falls asleep. Having gathered like this and moved our bodies, I think I will sleep well tonight too.

The Work We Do Is More Precious and More Blessed

The hardships we go through are in fact nothing. Through us God accomplishes His will and saves souls—how precious a thing this is! When I see the books passed on to the people of each nation through our coworkers abroad, and see them fellowshipping with one another and being built up within the gospel, I set great expectation on that work. Though it looks feeble at first, I believe it will get better and better. Hard as it is, there is no work more rewarding than this.

The small hardships we suffer are truly nothing compared with the great and precious work God is accomplishing through us. Therefore, even when there is slander against me, I do not strain to answer it point by point. Rather, when I keep silent, the coworkers who serve the gospel with us sometimes speak for us in our place. That sight of each building up the other is

truly precious.

God, Who Keeps Alive Those Who Fear Him

In that hard age God sent Elijah to the widow of Zarephath to be provided for. That widow was a person who feared God. All she had left was a handful of flour, and she was in the extremity of intending to make one last meal of it, share it with her son, and die. In such a situation, when the man of God asked for bread, a person who did not fear God could never have brought it out. But God sent Elijah there in order to keep that widow and her son alive. Even in that age, God kept alive in this way those who fear Him, and accomplished His will.

Therefore, living in this last age, I believe that however hard it is, God will feed us and keep us alive. And I believe that however hard it is, He will have us preach the gospel to the whole world. The harder things are, the more God intervenes and blesses, saying: prepare the vessel, ask, and I will fill it. That is why we want to work by faith in this age.

God, Who Fills with Five Loaves and Two Fish

I believe that God works in us step by step and accomplishes the work He delights in. So I lay down anxiety. It is not that we cannot serve the Lord because we lack material things; it is that we fail to serve Him because we lack faith. When God worked the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, with a child’s small lunch of five barley loaves and two fish He fed more than five thousand people and had twelve baskets left over. God is the One who gives us blessing and provision

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

enough and to spare to preach the gospel to the whole world through us.

Look Not at Yourself but at the Lord Who Saved You

I am not trying to launch things recklessly. Since God holds our church in peace, it is all the better. God desires the preaching of the gospel even more than we desire it—how then could He ignore us? So, lacking though we are, we want to keep those steps by faith and follow the will of God. We want to carry on without ceasing, until the day the Lord comes, the work we now do of sending books and covering the costs. We want workers to be raised up in every new nation and the work of the gospel to arise.

When you live serving the gospel, never look at your own height or lowness or weakness. What is lacking, simply acknowledge. It is true that we are unworthy and weak, but the Lord does not fault us for it. Look at the perfect Lord who has saved us completely, and do His will by faith, and that is enough. The Lord has made us sinless, set us up as workers of righteousness, and delights in us—who then can do anything to us?

God saved me and saved you and made us His workers; we have only to believe quietly and follow the work God delights in. What is there to worry about as if to die? Acknowledge every lack, but look at God who saved us and uses us, and there is no anxiety at all. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Where is there anyone as much at ease in heart as we are?

If we carry this work of preaching the gospel on to the day

the Lord comes, the whole world will hear the gospel and the fire of the Holy Spirit will rise among souls. On the other hand, the world will move in a current that tries to bind the many religions into one, and a time will come when one cannot even exhort another about a different faith. As our preaching of the gospel and such worldly currents interlock and move in tandem, at last, when the time is fulfilled, the Lord will call us. The road is still long, but I want God to raise up many good workers so that the work of the gospel arises in every nation.

When we believe God and prepare the vessel, God blesses us. You also, hold faith in your steps as you follow the Lord from now on. Believe God. Then God will be with you and bless you, and I believe He will keep and establish you and me and the church, and even our coworkers abroad. I have finished the Word. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

God Who Brings Dead Life Back to Life

< 1 Kings 17:1-24 >

"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.' Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.' So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.' So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.' And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' So she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' And Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'' So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, 'What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?' And he said to her, 'Give me your son.' So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?' And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.' Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, 'See, your son lives!' Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.'"

1 Kings chapter 17 shows how God dealt with the Israel of Ahab's days. Ahab counted it a light thing to follow the sin of Jeroboam, and brought the worship of Baal and Asherah deep into Israel. The nation that ought to have served God left God and became a nation serving idols. So God sent Elijah and had him proclaim that no rain would fall.

But this chapter does not end as a mere story of famine. God fed Elijah at the Brook Cherith, kept the flour and the oil from running out at the house of the widow of Zarephath, and at the last brought a dead child back to life. This flow shows clearly what kind of God He is. God is not only the One who gives rain to the dry land, but the God who brings dead life back to life.

The Limits of Man Revealed in the Famine

The widow of Zarephath was going through the age of famine with her whole body. She had only a handful of flour and a little oil left. She was at such a dead end that she meant to eat one last meal with her son and die. This woman had no strength, no one to lean on, and no future in sight.

Yet God sent Elijah to that very house. This shows that the grace of God is not built on human plenty. God is not One who uses only those who have much. God meets the person who knows he cannot live by his own strength, the person who lowers his heart before the Word.

This woman heard Elijah's word and first made a small cake and brought it to the servant of God. Then, as God had

promised, the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry. The famine continued, but in that house there was God's provision. The world was drying up, but the house that believed the Word of God was alive.

But the Problem That Remained Was Deeper

Food was supplied to the house of the widow of Zarephath. But after a while a greater thing struck that house. The woman's son fell sick, and his breath left him. The gaining of food to eat had not solved every problem. Now the problem of death visited that house.

This shows what man's fundamental problem is. Even with food to eat, before the problem of death a man has no strength at all. Though he has material things, religious forms, and human comfort, before sin and death he cannot save himself. What a person truly needs is God, who gives life again.

The widow of Zarephath said to Elijah, *"What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" (1 Kings 17:18)*. In the face of death, a person comes to think of his sin. Sin and death cannot be separated. Sin entered into man, and as the result of sin, death came. Therefore the salvation a person needs is not mere comfort or the improvement of circumstances, but the remission of sin and life.

Elijah, Who Stretched Himself Out on the Dead Child

Elijah carried the child up to the upper room where he was

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

staying. And he stretched himself out on the child three times and cried out to the LORD. God heard Elijah's prayer and made the child's soul come back into his body. The child came to life.

What matters here is not that Elijah himself had the power to give life. Life belongs to God. Elijah was a servant entrusted with the Word of God, and God revealed His will through him. God did not merely give the widow of Zarephath flour and oil; He made her know who the God is who brings the dead to life.

This event makes us look toward the salvation that would be completed in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth to save us from sin and death. And by receiving baptism from John He took the sins of the world upon His own body. Carrying those sins He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and by rising again from death He gave us true life. Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a doctrine that merely covers over sin, but the power of God that gives life to the soul that lay under sin and death.

True Faith Leads Us to Know the Word of God

After the child came to life, the widow of Zarephath said to Elijah, *"Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24)*. This confession is important. The widow had already experienced the grace of the flour and the oil that did not run out. But through the event of her son coming back from death, she came to know more clearly the truthfulness of the Word of God.

The purpose for which God shows grace to a person does not lie only in improving his circumstances. God makes us

know that His Word is true. And He makes us know that the truth delivered through the mouth of the servant He has raised up is the Word that gives people life.

It is the same today. People seek comfort within religion and ask for material blessing. But what God most wants us to know clearly is the truthfulness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He wants us to believe that these Words are true: that Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and that He rose again from death and gave us new life.

We Must Come to Life from Spiritual Death

The son of the widow of Zarephath actually died and came to life again. But this event makes us look at our own souls today. The person who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even though he claims to believe in God, lives carrying his sin in his heart just as it is. If he knows only the Cross of Jesus and does not know that Jesus took charge of sin with the baptism He received from John, he does not know how sin was passed on to Jesus. Then the sins of the heart go unresolved, and his faith stays within guilt and the repetition of repentance.

God wants such souls to come to life. Just as He sent Elijah to turn back the Israel that had fallen into idols in the days of Ahab, so today God has the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached and brings dead souls to life. The person who hears and believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to know how his sins were passed on to Jesus. He also comes to know why the Cross was necessary. And he comes to believe that Jesus' rising again from death is the event that gave him new life.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Servant of God Is Used in the Work of Delivering Life

Before Ahab, Elijah proclaimed the judgment of God; at the Brook Cherith he experienced the provision of God; and in the house of the widow of Zarephath he revealed the power of God who gives life. All these things were not meant to exalt Elijah as an individual. God, through Elijah, turned people's hearts back to God.

This is also the work entrusted to the servants of God and the church in this age: to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, so that souls dead in sin come to life. This work is not done by human wisdom or ability. It is a work God does through the Word. But God delights to accomplish this work through His servants and His church.

Therefore the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be a person who is saved himself alone and ends there. Just as the work of life came to the house of the widow of Zarephath, so we must pass this Word of life on to other souls. We must join our hearts to the work of testifying to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that those dead in idols and false faith may hear the Word of God and come to life.

God Is Greater Than Death

1 Kings chapter 17 shows God who is greater than famine, greater than poverty, greater than death. God feeds even by ravens, keeps a family alive for many days even with a handful of flour and a little oil, and brings even a dead child back to life. Therefore our faith must not be held captive to circumstances.

Our faith must stand on God, the Owner of life, and on the gospel of the water and the Spirit He has completed.

Jesus Christ came to bring to life us who lay under sin and death. By receiving baptism from John He took charge of our sins, on the Cross He received the judgment of those sins, and by rising again from death He gave us eternal life. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin and becomes one who has come alive before God.

Just as the widow of Zarephath confessed that *"the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24)*, we too must stand within the faith that the Word of God is true. And we must believe that this Word is the power of God that brings dead souls to life. Even today God brings those dead in sin to life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who is used in this work of life is a truly blessed person. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

◇ Next in the Series: “1 Kings Volume 4”

Following this book, the 1 Kings Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series, Volume 4, which examines, from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the path the kings of Israel and Judah walked after the kingdom was divided and the providence of God, who sent prophets and spoke in their midst, will soon be published.

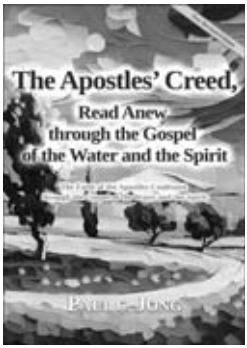
> ***1 Kings Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (IV)***

We sincerely hope that the books of Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will strengthen your faith and become spiritual food for your soul.

All of Pastor Paul C. Jong’s books are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org in eBook (PDF, EPUB) and audiobook (M4A, MP3) formats as soon as each new title is published, and they can also be read directly on the website at any time.

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

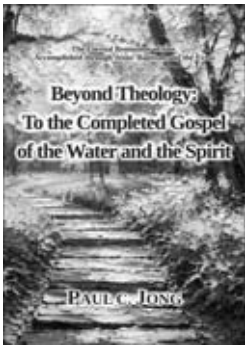


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (Coming Soon)



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

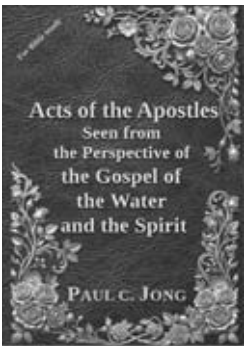
This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Acts of the Apostles Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



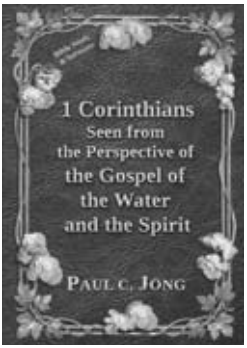
"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Acts of the Apostles is commonly read as a record of the growth and miracles of the early church. However, the core that the Bible intends to say through the Acts of the Apostles does not lie only in testifying to the work of the Holy Spirit. How the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit was testified to the whole world, that is the central message of the Acts of the Apostles.

This book explains the Acts of the Apostles from Chapter 1 to Chapter 28 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record following how the gospel of Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and then resurrected from the dead—was testified.

By reading this book, we come to confirm how the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord is propagated to the end of the earth. Furthermore, we will clearly receive testimony on how this gospel saves sinners from the sins of the world through the two structures of the baptism and the Cross.

1 Corinthians Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"(1 Corinthians 2:2).

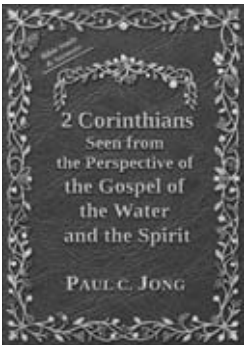
1 Corinthians is commonly read as a practical epistle dealing with church problems. However, the core that the Bible intends to speak through 1 Corinthians does not lie in the order of the church or the arrangement of spiritual gifts. Upon what gospel the church in the midst of division and confusion must stand again, that is the central message of 1 Corinthians.

This book explains 1 Corinthians from chapter 1 to chapter 16 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record that follows how Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and then resurrected from death—and that gospel answer all the problems of the church.

By reading this book, we come to confirm the fact that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes the church become one and establishes the saints truly holy. Furthermore, how this gospel completely saves sinners from the sins of the world will be clearly testified through the two structures of baptism and the Cross.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

2 Corinthians Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



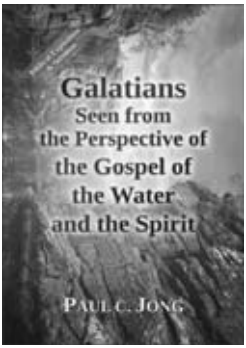
"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

2 Corinthians is commonly read as a personal letter containing the Apostle Paul's hardships and defense. However, the core of what the Bible intends to say through 2 Corinthians does not lie in the apostle's personal explanation or the restoration of his relationship with the church. How God's power is fully revealed in the midst of weakness—that is the central message of 2 Corinthians.

This book explains 2 Corinthians from Chapter 1 to 13 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record that traces how Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment for those sins on the cross, and then resurrected from death—and His gospel become true comfort and power in the midst of tribulation and weakness.

By reading this book, we come to confirm the fact that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit sustains the apostle's ministry and establishes believers as new creations. Furthermore, we will clearly receive testimony, through the two structures of baptism and the cross, of how this gospel calls sinners as workers of the new covenant and ministers of reconciliation.

Galatians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1)

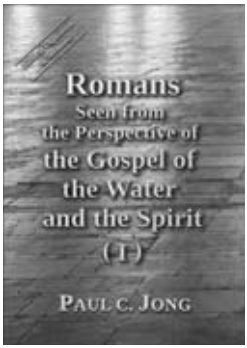
Galatians is often read as a textbook of the Reformation that cried out "faith alone" against legalism. However, the core that the Bible intends to speak through Galatians does not lie in the religious debates or theological slogans of an era. How the righteousness that can never be obtained by human deeds settles upon a soul at once—that is the central message of Galatians.

This book explains Galatians chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record that follows how Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment for those sins on the cross, and then resurrected from death—and His gospel become true freedom and eternal righteousness to souls shaking under the yoke of the law.

By reading this book, we come to confirm the fact that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit sustains the ministry of the apostles and establishes the saints as eternal children. Furthermore, through the two structures of baptism and the cross, it will be clearly testified how this gospel moves sinners from being slaves of the law to heirs of the promise, and from the yoke of slavery to free people working through love.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (II)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

Even while saying they have received the eradication of sins, there are many people who still look at their own sins and condemn themselves. However, if you open this text holding onto the gospel that Jesus received the transfer of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for those sins on the cross, and then resurrected, you will finally begin to see why the Apostle Paul asserted, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

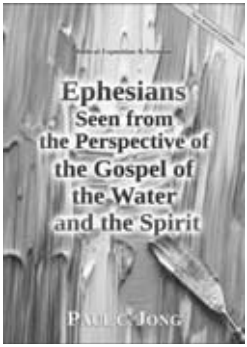
The Apostle Paul reveals that our old man, who was baptized into Christ, died together and was made alive together with Him, and honestly exposes the fact that the law cannot make us holy. Upon that, he proclaims the confirmed salvation of the one whose condemnation has disappeared, and through his sorrow toward Israel, he testifies that salvation comes not by human zeal but only by God's mercy.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that they themselves are already dead to sin and alive to God. Even if the flesh is still weak, that weakness cannot turn them back into a slave of sin again. The person who lays down the zeal to establish their own righteousness and accepts with their heart the righteousness that God has already accomplished will not be put to shame and will enjoy the richness of the Lord's grace.

Salvation has already been completed once and for all. What remains now is to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, and to live preaching that gospel in newness of life.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Ephesians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]



Ephesians is a letter that sings of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" which God has bestowed upon us in Christ. Into this single letter the Apostle Paul poured the highest and deepest truths of the gospel—from the love of God, who chose us before the foundation of the world, to His raising us by grace when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and finally to His eternal plan of uniting all things into one in Christ. This book expounds that Epistle to the Ephesians from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the gospel through which Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the whole world by being baptized by John, paid the full penalty for those sins on the Cross, and, by rising again, gave us eternal life.

Above all, Ephesians is "the letter of the Church." God has built His Church upon the faith of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Church of God is none other than the gathering of those who have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, if faith in this gospel dwells in your heart, you can live a life of true faith. And such a life of faith is possible only within the Church of God. It is my earnest hope that, through this book, all of you will hold fast to the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts and live a life of true faith worthy of that grace within the Church of God. All thanks be to God.

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)



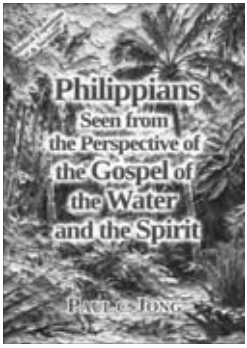
For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a Bible study that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Philippians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

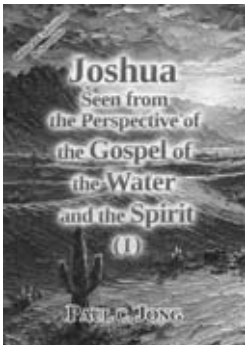


This book offers a fresh understanding of the Epistle to the Philippians from the perspective of the 'gospel of the water and the Spirit.' When we hold fast to the truth that Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon Himself by being baptized by John, suffered judgment on the Cross, and was resurrected, the true source of Paul's joy becomes absolutely clear.

Paul discarded everything he once boasted of as rubbish, proclaiming instead the righteousness received from God through faith alone. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already been delivered from sin and granted citizenship in heaven. Even though our flesh is weak, we are never again placed under condemnation; this is the root of true joy that remains unshaken in any circumstance.

Salvation has been accomplished completely, once and for all. Now, we must believe in this gospel with all our hearts and live boldly, sharing it in our new life. This book serves as a clear guide along that path.

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)



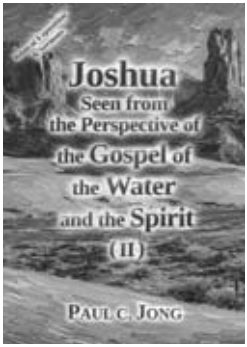
The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)

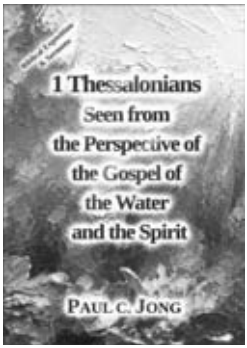


The latter half of the Book of Joshua records the borders of the land and the distribution of the inheritance more than the wars of conquest. But Joshua chapters 13 through 24 are not a mere record of land distribution. They are the Word in which God fulfills His promise, gives each tribe its inheritance, and calls them to serve God only within it.

This book explains Joshua chapters 13 through 24 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Caleb's request for Hebron as his inheritance, the tabernacle of meeting at Shiloh, the cities of refuge, the altar of witness by the Jordan, and Joshua's last exhortation and the covenant at Shechem show the salvation and the spiritual inheritance given in Jesus Christ. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Enjoy by faith the remission of sins, the true rest, and the spiritual inheritance God has given. Cast away your own righteousness and your idols, be united with the Church of God, and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Believe that all of God's promises are surely fulfilled, and pass the gospel of the water and the Spirit on to the next generation.

1 Thessalonians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



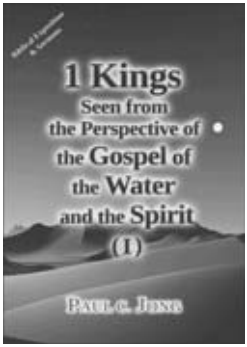
The young church in Thessalonica, established not long before, might well have collapsed under the persecution that pressed in from every side; yet with firm faith, love, and hope it carried the gospel throughout the whole region. What kept these weak people from falling? It was not a religion delivered in word only, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which came in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

This book opens the five chapters of First Thessalonians anew with that very gospel. It is the gospel by which Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of the world, was judged in our place for that sin on the cross, and rose again from death, delivering us from sin and death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power of God that turns a sinner into a righteous one, and turns the fear of death into living hope.

If you desire a faith unshaken in the last days, open this book. Here is the sure word by which you receive the remission of sins—life and true comfort for you.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

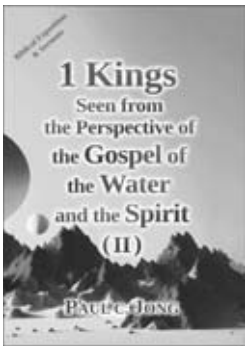


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (II)



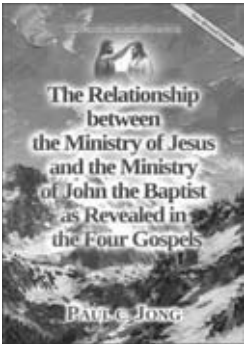
Why was the heart of Solomon, who built the Temple and received great wisdom from God, carried away by idols? 1 Kings chapters 8–12 show us everything from the event in which the glory of God filled the Temple to Solomon's fall and the division of the kingdom, and to Jeroboam's worship of the golden calves. Even our past achievements of faith cannot guard our hearts for us today.

This book clearly proclaims the law of God's salvation for the remission of sin, a law that no one can change. By the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world; on the Cross He received the judgment of that sin and died; and by rising again He completed salvation. This is the unchanging gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Do not let your heart be carried away by idols. Stand firm in the righteousness of God, be united with the church, and use everything you have received for preaching the gospel and for the salvation of souls, and so preach this gospel of life to the next generation and to the whole world.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

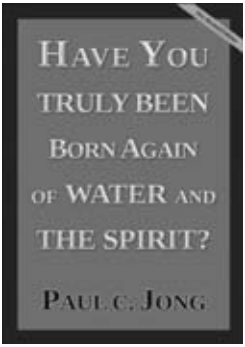
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

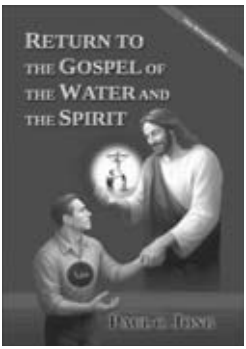
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

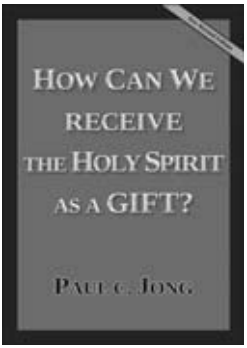
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

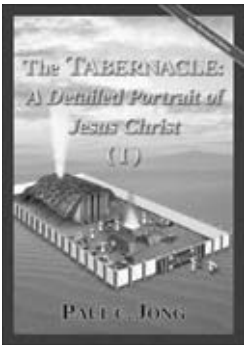
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



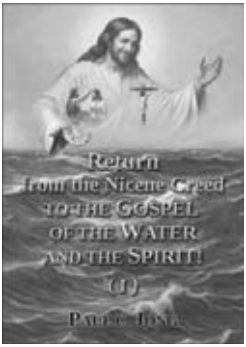
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Visit our website to discover this and other Christian books,
available as e-books (PDF/EPUB) and audiobooks.

Scan the QR code to view the book’s details!

DOWNLOAD

Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian ebooks and audiobooks
on your smartphone, tablet or PC at our website.
After downloading, You can read and listen to them anywhere, even when you don't have an internet connection.



Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

If you wish to possess printed books to build up spiritual nourishment, or if you sincerely wish to participate in our gospel spreading ministry, please apply by writing your reason, name, contact information, and address to the email address below.

If there is a coworker officially certified by our mission in your area, we will deliver the free books you have requested.

Would you like to join us in our mission of bringing the word of truth to more people around the world? If so, we would greatly appreciate it if you could link to our website on your blog, social media, website, etc.

►www.bjnewlife.org

Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



Recommendation for E-book and Audiobook Storage and Downloads

In preparation for rapidly advancing AI, rapidly changing world affairs, and environmental changes, we strongly recommend downloading and storing God's true sermon messages to your personal storage devices.

Please prepare in advance by saving e-books and audiobooks to your external hard drives, USB drives, CDs, mobile phones, or MP3 players, so you can read and listen to them from your personal storage during the last days.

We pray that you will live a victorious life through God's blessings in these last days within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"The New Life Mission's sermon series and audiobooks are available worldwide in multiple languages, offering both paid books and free e-books."

www.bjnewlife.org

Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 85-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

1 Kings, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—

Among the countless religious teachings that look alike, how can we discern the true gospel of life?

The standard of discernment is not a person's position or years of experience, but the word God gave at the first. The man of God who came from Judah overcame the king's threat, but he believed the lie of the old prophet and died.

Jeroboam changed the law of sacrifice that God had established, and that sin was repeated in the kings who followed. Ahab built a temple of Baal and an altar in Samaria and made a wooden image of Asherah.

Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment on the Cross, died, and rose again from death. If we leave out the baptism of Jesus and preach only the Cross, it is to change God's law of salvation.

Even in a spiritual famine God fed Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. Look to God rather than to your own circumstances, prepare a greater vessel of faith, and preach to the whole world the gospel of the water and the Spirit, unmixed with other teachings.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.