

Through the Bible

1 KINGS

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruville

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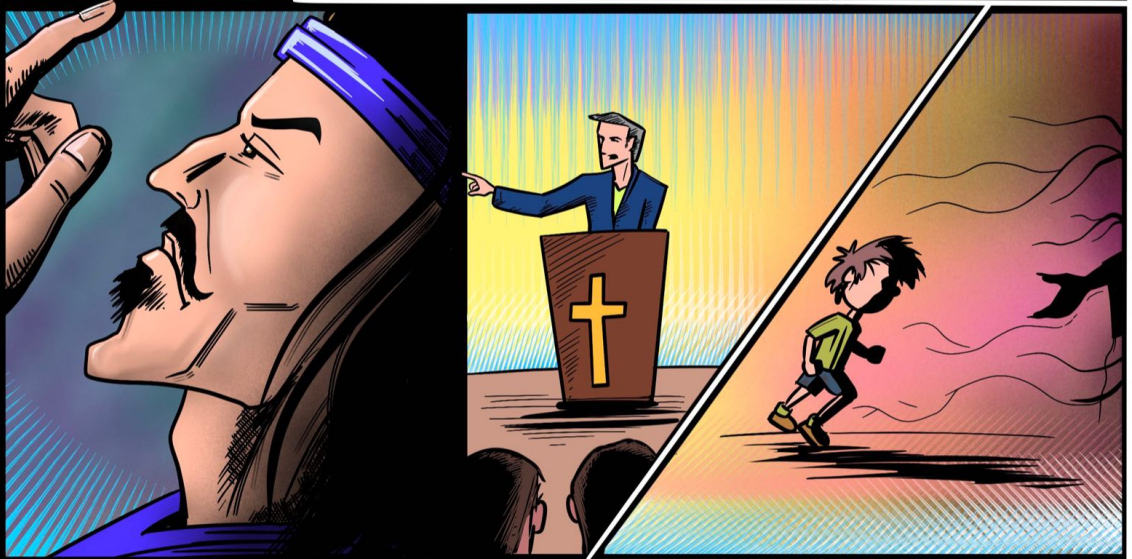
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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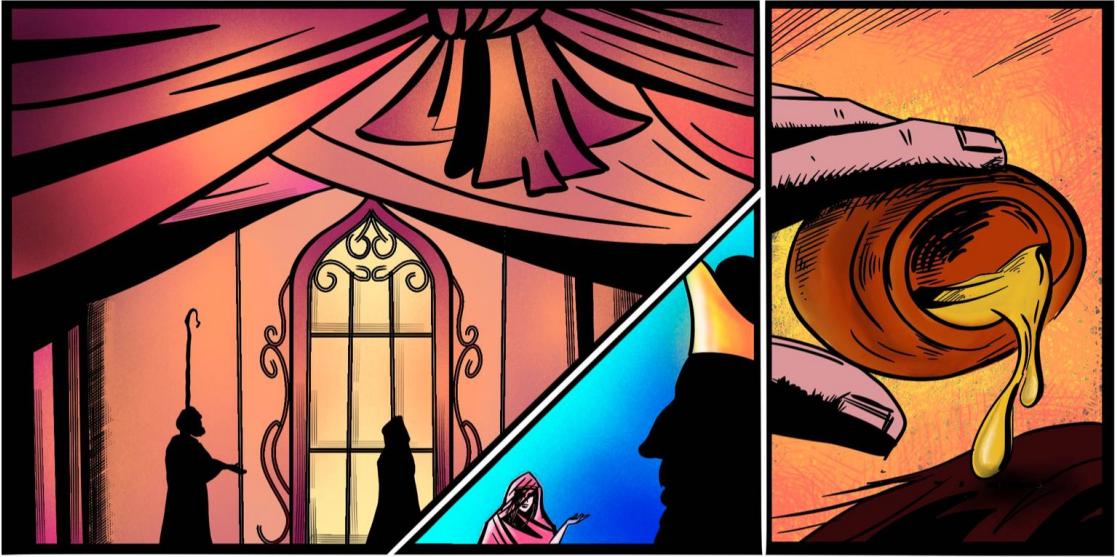
1 ^{KING} KINGS



THIS BOOK BEGINS WITH DAVID, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART AND ENDS WITH AHAB, THE WORST KING EVER TO RULE ISRAEL. ISRAEL BEGINS AS A POWERFUL NATION AND ENDS AS A DIVIDED NATION. THE CONDITION OF GOD'S PEOPLE DEPENDS ON THE SPIRITUALITY OF ITS LEADER. WHEN GOD LOOKS AT THE CHURCHES TODAY, HE SEES THE SAME NEED FOR GODLY LEADERS, IN EVERY GENERATION. DAVID COULD NOT RULE OVER ISRAEL FOREVER. WILL THE NEXT GENERATION LEADER HAVE ONLY THE FOUNDER'S KNOWLEDGE AND DOCTRINES BUT NOT HIS GODLINESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD?



WHEN DAVID WAS DYING, HIS SON ADONIJAH EXALTED HIMSELF AND SAID " I WILL BE THE NEXT KING " HE WAS NOT LIKE HIS FATHER DAVID WHO WAITED FOR GOD TO MAKE HIM KING. PART OF THE REASON WAS THAT DAVID HAD NEVER PUNISHED ADONIJAH EVEN ONCE IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE. HE HAD NEVER USED THE ROD ON HIM AND NEVER EVEN REBUKED HIM WHEN HE DID SOMETHING WRONG. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO A CHILD WHO GROWS UP LIKE THAT - ESPECIALLY IF HE IS A GOOD LOOKING CHILD? DAVID WAS A VERY POOR FATHER. WE CAN TAKE THE WARNING FOR OURSELVES FROM THAT. DAVID WAS SO BUSY ON THE BATTLEFIELD HE HAD NO TIME FOR HIS FAMILY. WE TOO CAN BE TAKEN UP WITH OUR WORK OR OUR MINISTRY THAT WE DON'T SEE HOW OUR CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP. IT'S A SAD THING IF A MAN LOSES HIS CHILDREN TO THE DEVIL BECAUSE HE IS " SERVING THE LORD " .

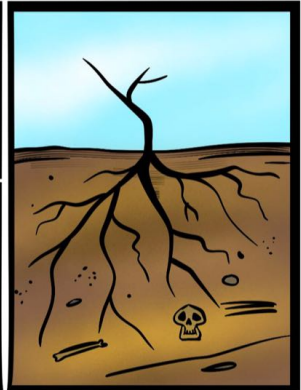
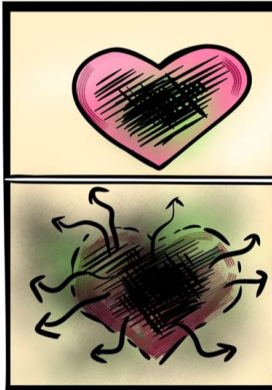


HEARING OF ADONIJAH'S PLAN, NATHAN THE **PROPHET** WENT TO **BATHSHEBA**. HE TOLD HER TO REMIND DAVID OF HIS **PROMISE** TO HER TO MAKE **SOLOMON** HIS SUCCESSOR. HE ALSO WENT AND TOLD **DAVID** ABOUT ADONIJAH'S WICKED PLAN. NATHAN THUS BROUGHT THE **MIND OF GOD** INTO THE SITUATION. A CHURCH IS SO **BLESSED** WHEN IT HAS AT LEAST **ONE GENUINE PROPHET**, WHO CAN SPEAK **PROPHETICALLY** TO IT IN A SITUATION. DAVID TOLD THE PRIESTS TO ANOINT **SOLOMON** AS KING AND **ZADOK** DID THAT PROMPTLY.

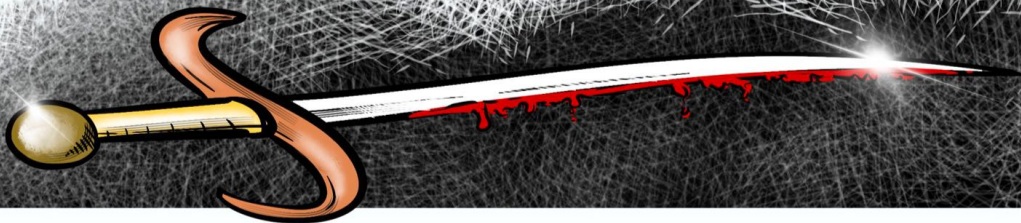
WHEN DAVID WAS **DYING** HE CHARGED SOLOMON WITH CERTAIN MATTERS. BUT DAVID'S **LAST WORDS** ARE VERY **DISAPPOINTING**. GOD'S WORD IS SO **HONEST** WHEN IT TELLS US ABOUT THE **FAILURES** OF ITS **GREATEST SERVANTS**.



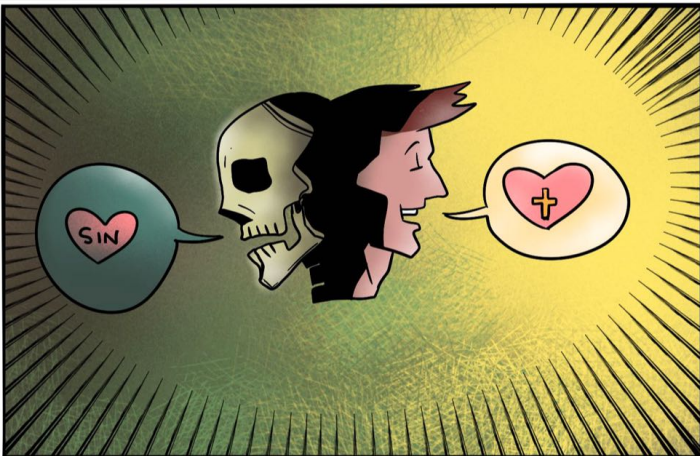
DAVID SHOULD HAVE TOLD SOLOMON HOW TO BE A **GODLY LEADER** AND HOW TO **HONOUR GOD**. HE SHOULD HAVE **WARNED** SOLOMON TO BE CAREFUL WITH **WOMEN**. INSTEAD, DAVID TELLS HIM TO **KILL** HIS FAITHFUL GENERAL **JOAB**. I THINK THE **REASON** IS BECAUSE DAVID NEVER REALLY **FORGAVE** JOAB FOR KILLING **ABSALOM**.



THEN DAVID TELLS SOLOMON TO KILL SHIMEI, BECAUSE HE CURSED DAVID. AT THE **TIME** OF THE CURSING, DAVID **MAGNANIMOUSLY** SAID THAT HE DIDN'T WANT SHIMEI KILLED BECAUSE GOD HAD ALLOWED IT. WHEN DAVID CAME TO JERUSALEM HE FORGAVE SHIMEI AND PROMISED **NOT** TO KILL HIM. BUT NOW HE SAYS THE PROMISE HE MADE WAS **NOT BINDING** ON SOLOMON! HE HAD FORGIVEN **EXTERNALLY** BUT WAS NURSING A **GRUDGE** WHICH WAS **HIDDEN** AS LONG AS HIS **MIND** WAS STRONG BUT AS HE GREW **OLD** AND HIS MIND **WEAKENED**, WHAT WAS IN HIS HEART CAME OUT. AN UNFORGIVING ATTITUDE CAN DEVELOP **ROOTS OF BITTERNESS** VERY QUICKLY (HEBREWS 12 : 15). THERE IS **NO FORGIVENESS** FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT FORGIVE **OTHERS** FROM THEIR **HEARTS** (MATT 6 : 14, 15)



SOLOMON BEGAN HIS REIGN BY **KILLING** HIS STEP-BROTHER ADONIJAH, HIS FIRST COUSIN , JOAB AND SHIMEI . **WHAT A WAY TO START ONE'S REIGN!** AND TO THINK IT WAS **DAVID**, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART, WHO HAD **SUGGESTED** ALL THIS TO SOLOMON AND THIS **STARTED** HIM OFF ON THE PATHWAY OF **DESTRUCTION**. SUCH IS THE **LONG TERM RESULT** OF **UNCLEANSED BITTERNESS**, BY WHICH MANY ARE **DEFILED**. BUT SOLOMON STILL **IMAGINED** THAT GOD WOULD **BLESS** HIM IN SPITE OF ALL OF THIS. WHAT A **DECEPTION!**



ONCE ON THE **WRONG** PATH, WE GO **FURTHER** AND **FURTHER** AWAY FROM GOD. THE NEXT THING THAT SOLOMON DID WAS TO GET **MARRIED** TO A **HEATHEN** WOMAN - PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. IF ONLY DAVID HAD SPENT HIS LAST DAYS **ADVISING** SOLOMON ON MARRYING WISELY. WE READ THAT "SOLOMON " **LOVED** THE LORD " , EXCEPT THAT HE SACRIFICED AND BURNED INCENSE IN THE **HIGH PLACES** ""(3:3) **WHAT A CONTRADICTION!** SOLOMON FINALLY DESTROYED HIMSELF BECAUSE OF SUCH **COMPROMISE**. HE LIVED A **DOUBLE** LIFE- ONE IN THE TEMPLE AND ONE IN PRIVATE. THEY MAKE **LOUD** EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE FOR THE LORD; BUT IN PRIVATE, THEY LIVE IN **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** AND **SIN**. FINALLY THEIR LITTLE BACKSLIDINGS BECOME **BIG** ONES AND **DESTROY** THEM.



YET GOD WAS **GOOD** TO SOLOMON, FOR HE WANTED HIM TO CHANGE. HE APPEARED TO SOLOMON AND ASKED HIM WHAT HE **WANTED**. SOLOMON ASKED FOR **WISDOM** TO JUDGE THE PEOPLE AND HEART TO **DISCERN** BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. THE LORD WAS **HAPPY** WITH THIS ANSWER. HE GAVE HIM A **DISCERNING** HEART AND **ALSO** HONOUR AND RICHES AND TOLD HIM THERE WOULD BE **NO** KING LIKE HIM. THE **GREAT** **NEED** AMONG CHRISTIAN LEADERS TODAY IS **DISCERNMENT** TO SEE THE **TRUE** STATE OF THOSE IN THEIR CHURCH, ESPECIALLY WHEN GIVING **RESPONSIBILITY** TO ANY THEM - AND ONLY **GOD** CAN GIVE IT TO US. IF SOLOMON GOT IT BY ASKING GOD, CAN'T WE GET IT TOO? DOESN'T GOD LOVE **US** MUCH MORE UNDER THE **NEW** COVENANT? DOESN'T HE HAVE FAR GREATER **CONCERN** FOR THE **CHURCH** WE ARE BUILDING THAN HE HAD FOR SOLOMON RULING ISRAEL? HE **CERTAINLY** DOES. SO, IF WE LACK **DISCERNMENT**, PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE, IN OUR **SELF-SUFFICIENCY** , WE HAVE FAILED TO ASK HIM FOR IT.



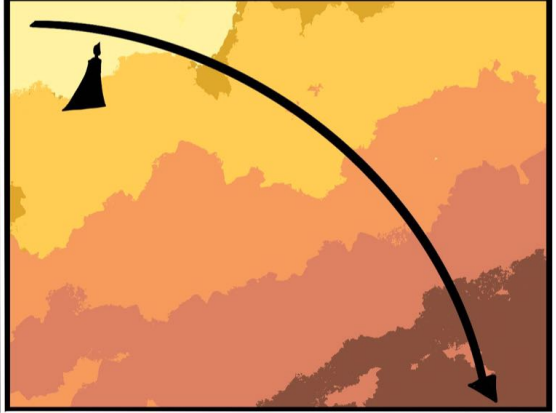
ONCE, TWO PROSTITUTES STOOD BEFORE SOLOMON FOR **JUDGEMENT** ONE DAY. THEY WERE LIVING IN THE **SAME** HOUSE AND HAD DELIVERED BABIES WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF EACH OTHER. ONE NIGHT ONE OF THEM ACCIDENTALLY ROLLED OVER HER CHILD WHILE SLEEPING, AND KILLED IT. WHEN SHE REALISED WHAT HAD HAPPENED, SHE IMMEDIATELY **EXCHANGED** HER BABY WITH THE LIVING ONE. IN THE MORNING, THE OTHER WOMAN REALISED AND AN ARGUMENT ENSUED. SOLOMON SUGGESTED THAT THE LIVING CHILD BE **DIVIDED**. THE REAL MOTHER SAID " **DON'T KILL IT! GIVE IT TO THE OTHER WOMAN!**" THE OTHER WOMAN SAID " **NO! KILL IT!**". EVERYONE KNEW WHO THE **REAL** MOTHER WAS. IN THE SAME WAY, WE ARE **NOT** TO **DIVIDE** A GROUP OF BELIEVERS, IF WE HAVE A FALLING OUT. **LEAVE**, AND START A **NEW** WORK, ENTIRELY.



WE READ THAT **GOD** GAVE SOLOMON **WISDOM**, VERY GREAT **DISCERNMENT**, **BREADTH** OF MIND AND **LARGENESS** OF HEART, LIKE THE **SAND** ON THE SEASHORE. THIS MEANS , FOR US, A **LARGE** HEART THAT CAN TAKE IN ALL OF GOD'S **PEOPLE** WHO ARE LIKE THE SAND ON THE SEASHORE (**GENESIS 22:17**) EVEN IF WE DO NOT **WORK** WITH A BROTHER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION, WHO DISAGREES WITH US ON WATER-BAPTISM OR SPEAKING IN TONGUES , **GOD** HAS ACCEPTED HIM. OUR PRAYER SHOULD BE " **LORD, GIVE ME LARGENESS OF HEART TO WARMLY RECEIVE HIM**" I WANT AS **MANY** BROTHERS AND SISTERS AS **GOD** HAS **CHILDREN!** I WANT TO ACCEPT ALL THOSE WHOM **GOD** HAS ACCEPTED - EVEN IF THEIR CONVICTIONS ARE **DIFFERENT** FROM MINE. I MIGHT HAVE TAKEN YEARS TO **UNDERSTAND** SOME ISSUE, SO LET ME BE **PATIENT** WITH OTHERS..



IN 6:7 , WE READ SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL ABOUT HOW THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT WITH STONES THAT WERE CUT OUT FROM THE HILLSIDE. WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT TO THE BUILDING SITE, THEY HAD **ALREADY** BEEN PERFECTLY SHAPED ON ALL SIX SIDES, SO THAT THERE WAS NO **SOUND** OF CHIPPING AT THE TEMPLE SITE ITSELF. THIS IS HOW THE CHURCH MUST BE BUILT ALSO. WE MUST JUDGE OURSELVES IN **SECRET** IN OUR PRIVATE LIFE, SO THAT THERE IS NO **STRIFE** WHEN WE COME TOGETHER



SOLOMON TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD THE LORD'S TEMPLE AND **THIRTEEN** YEARS TO BUILD HIS **OWN** HOUSE. SO WE KNOW WHAT HE VALUES MORE! SOLOMON'S BACKSLIDING WAS **GRADUAL** - AS BACKSLIDING USUALLY IS. ONCE HE STARTED SLIDING DOWN, THE GRADIENT BECAME **STEEPER**. THIS IS SEEN IN CHRISTIAN WORKERS ALSO WHO START BY SEEKING THEIR OWN AND **DRIFTING** TO THE WORLD. YEARS LATER, THEY HAVE BECOME **EXPERTS** IN **SEEKING THEIR OWN** ..

BUT GOD STILL **LOVED** HIS PEOPLE, IN **SPITE** OF THE **BACKSLIDING** OF THEIR KING. SO HE FILLED THE TEMPLE WITH HIS GLORY WHEN IT WAS COMPLETED JUST LIKE HE DID ON THE DAY **MOSES** COMPLETED THE **TABERNACLE**. THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT IN THE **SAME PATTERN** BUT ON A GRANDER SCALE.



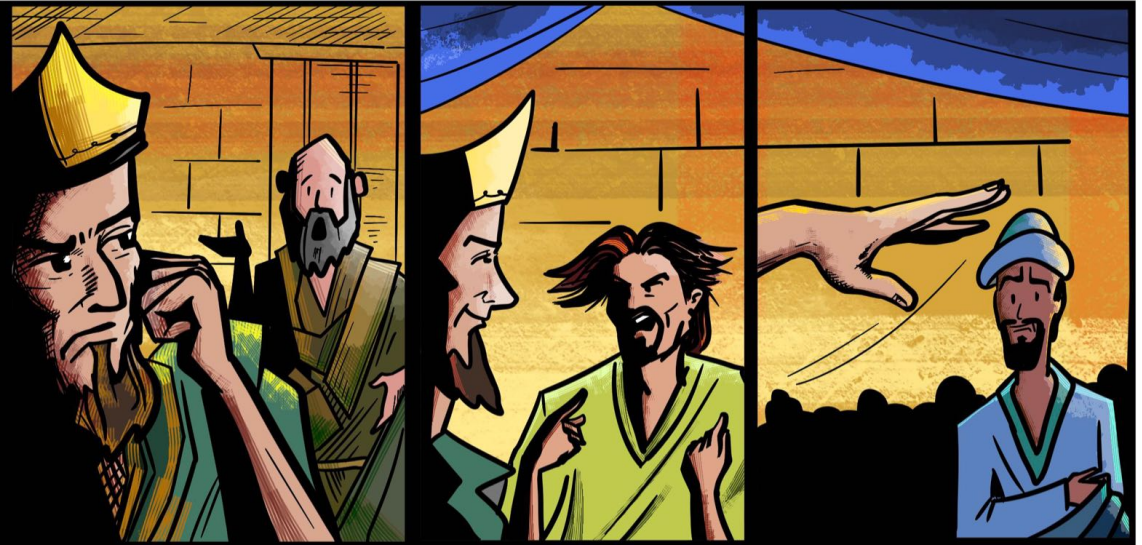
SOLOMON PRAYED A BEAUTIFUL **PRAYER** OF DEDICATION. THE LORD THEN APPEARED TO HIM A SECOND TIME AND TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD HEARD HIS PRAYER AND AGAIN **URGED** HIM TO WALK IN INTEGRITY OF HEART AND UPRIGHTNESS. HE ALSO **WARNED** SOLOMON THAT IF HE TURNED **AWAY** FROM FOLLOWING THE LORD, HE WOULD BE **REMOVED** FROM THE LAND AND THE TEMPLE WOULD BECOME A HEAP OF **RUINS**. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE **BABYLONIANS** CAME AND CAPTURED JUDAH AND DESTROYED THE TEMPLE. GOD HAD WARNED THEM "DO NOT THINK YOU CAN LIVE AS YOU **LIKE** AND THAT I WILL **KEEP ON BLESSING** YOU" GOD WARNS US LONG BEFORE WE START GOING ASTRAY. BUT DESPITE **ALL** HIS **WORLDWIDE** WISDOM, SOLOMON WAS A MIXED UP MAN. HE COULD PRAY BEAUTIFUL PRAYERS TO THE LORD IN **PUBLIC**, LIKE MOST CHRISTIANS. BUT IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE HE WAS AS **GODLESS** AS ANYONE - LIKE MOST CHRISTIANS.



HE RIVALLED SAMSON IN **LUST** - FOR HE MARRIED 700 WIVES AND HAD 300 CONCUBINES AS WELL, MOSTLY FROM THE **HEATHEN** NATIONS AROUND HIM. THOSE WIVES FINALLY TURNED HIM **AWAY** FROM THE LORD TO WORSHIP **IDOLS**. LET US NOT JUST LOOK FOR A **Pretty** FACE WHEN WE GET MARRIED. LET US LOOK WHETHER THEY HAVE A DESIRE TO LIVE A **GODLY** LIFE. MANY NOD THEIR HEADS BUT WHEN THE **TIME** COMES FOR THEIR MARRIAGE, THEY CHOOSE A **WORLDLY** GIRL. SISTERS, **PRAY** THAT **GOD** WILL LEAD YOU TO A **GODLY** MAN.



SOLOMON WROTE THREE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE. **PROVERBS** HAS 31 CHAPTERS WHICH BE READ DAILY. IT CAN PRESERVE US FROM MUCH EVIL. SONG OF SOLOMON IS A WONDERFUL PICTURE OF DEVOTION TO JESUS CHRIST AS HIS **BRIDE**. ECCLESIASTES WARNS US OFF THE **DANGERS** OF **WORLDLY** WISDOM. THIS MAN WHO WROTE THESE **FINALLY** WENT TO **HELL!** LET US NOT IMAGINE THAT EVERYONE WHO **PREACHES** WONDERFUL SERMONS WILL GO TO HEAVEN. BOTH 1 KINGS AND 2 CHRONICLES DON'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT SOLOMON **REPENTING**. JESUS SAID MANY WOULD COME TO HIM MENTIONING THEY HAVE DONE IN HIS NAME BUT JESUS TELLS THEM "DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO **LIVED** IN **SIN**"



FROM CHAPTER 12 ONWARDS WE READ ABOUT THE **DIVIDED** KINGDOM. SOLOMON HAD BEEN A **CRUEL** KING. SO WHEN HIS SON REHOBAM CAME TO THE THRONE, SOME OF THE PEOPLE CAME TO HIM AND ASKED HIM TO " **LIGHTEN** THE YOKE ". REHOBAM THEN CONSULTED THE **ELDERS** WHO TOLD HIM TO BE KIND. THEN HE CONSULTED WITH THE **YOUNG** PEOPLE AND THEY SAID TO BE STILL **HARDER** ON THE PEOPLE. LIKE MANY STUPID PEOPLE, HE LISTENED TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE. THE RESULT WAS THAT HE LOST 85% OF THE KINGDOM. TEN TRIBES BROKE AWAY. HE SPLIT HIS KINGDOM BY **ONE** FOOLISH SENTENCE! JEROBOAM BECAME THE KING OF THESE TEN TRIBES..



THE TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN REMAINED WITH REHOBAM AND THE REST OF THE TEN TRIBES CALLED THEMSELVES " ISRAEL ". JEROBOAM REALISED THAT OF HIS PEOPLE WENT TO JERUSALEM THRICE A YEAR AS REQUIRED FOR THEIR ANNUAL FEASTS, HE MIGHT **LOSE** HIS HOLD ON THEM. SO HE BUILT A PLACE OF WORSHIP IN SHECHEM SO THEY COULD HOLD THEIR FEASTS. HE INSTALLED AN **IDOL** THERE AND EVERYONE GOT INVOLVED IN **IDOL-WORSHIP**.



IN CHAPTER 13 WE READ OF A YOUNG PROPHET WHO WAS GIVEN A MESSAGE OF JUDGEMENT AGAINST KING JEROBOAM. HE WENT AND DELIVERED IT **FAITHFULLY** AND THE LORD CONFIRMED HIS PROPHECY **SUPERNATURALLY**. THE KING THEN INVITED HIM FOR A MEAL BUT THE LORD HAD EARLIER TOLD THE PROPHET **NOT** TO EAT OR DRINK TILL HE REACHES HOME. HE DECLINED THE KING'S OFFER, EVEN IF THE KING WERE TO OFFER **HALF** THE **KINGDOM**! BUT AN **OLD** PROPHET WAS LIVING IN THE AREA AND **DISTURBED** THAT GOD HAD CHOSEN A YOUNGER MAN, HE **LIED** TO THE YOUNGER PROPHET SAYING " **THE LORD HAD TOLD HIM**" TO GIVE HIM A MEAL. THE **FOOLISH** YOUNG PROPHET ATE AND WAS KILLED BY A **LION** FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE. LET US BE **CAREFUL** OF LISTENING TO SUCH PEOPLE..



IN CHAPTER 17 WE READ ABOUT **ELIJAH**. THE FIRST THING I WANT YOU TO NOTICE ABOUT ELIJAH ARE HIS WORDS TO KING AHAB. "AS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, LIVES, **BEFORE WHOM I STAND**" THESE TRUE PROPHETS DID NOT FEAR **KINGS** WHO WERE MERE **SPECKS** OF DUST BEFORE GOD. THE GREAT **NEED** IS FOR PROPHETS WHO LIVE BEFORE GOD'S FACE WHICH IS MORE **IMPORTANT** THAN BIBLE KNOWLEDGE. TO LIVE BEFORE GOD'S FACE, WE MUST KEEP OUR **CONSCIENCE** 100 % PERCENT CLEAR. WE MUST **HUMBLE** OURSELVES TOTALLY. OUR FACE MUST BE IN THE DUST THE **WHOLE** TIME. THAT'S HOW ELIJAH LIVED. IF GOD CAN'T FIND YOUNG MEN, I HOPE HE WILL FIND YOUNG **SISTERS** WHO MAY NOT STAND IN A PULPIT BUT INFLUENCE FROM **HOME**.



ELIJAH WAS A MAN WHO WAS INSTANTLY **OBEIENT** TO TO EVERY LITTLE THING THAT GOD HAD SAID. GOD TOLD HIM ONE DAY TO GO AND HIDE HIMSELF BY THE BROOK **CHERITH** - HE WENT AT ONCE. THERE THE RAVENS BROUGHT HIM BREAD AND MEAT AND HE DRANK FROM THE BROOK. IF THE RAVEN HAD BROUGHT VEGETABLES, THAT ITSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN A **MIRACLE**. BUT FOR A RAVEN TO BRING **MEAT** WHICH IT LOVES, IS A **GREATER** MIRACLE. THAT'S HOW GOD PROVIDED FOR ELIJAH. BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS ELIJAH MIGHT HAVE BEGUN TO **DEPEND** ON THE RAVENS AND **NOT** ON THE LORD! MANY SERVANTS OF GOD **START** OUT TRUSTING THE LORD FOR THEIR FINANCIAL NEEDS. BUT AFTER A FEW YEARS, THEY ARE **NO LONGER** DEPENDING ON THE LORD, BUT ON SOME **RAVENS** - HUMAN BEINGS WHO SEND THEM **REGULAR** SUPPORT. SO THE BROOK DRIED UP AND THE LORD **STOPPED** THE RAVENS. THE LORD WANTED TO **SHAKE** OFF ELIJAH'S **DEPENDENCE** ON BROOKS AND RAVENS AND TO TEACH HIM ONCE AGAIN TO **DEPEND** ON THE **LORD ALONE**. I THANK GOD FOR THE TIMES WHEN HE HAS **TURNED** MY EYES AWAY FROM RAVENS TO **HIM** WHO OWNS "THE CATTLE ON A THOUSAND HILLS" (PSALM 50:10) AND WHO HAS SAID THAT HE WILL SUPPLY **ALL** OUR NEEDS "ACCORDING TO HIS **RICHES** IN GLORY THROUGH CHRIST JESUS (PHILIPPIANS 4 : 19)



THE LORD THEN **CHANGED** HIS METHOD AND TOLD ELIJAH NOW TO GO TO ZAREPHATH, WHICH WAS **OUTSIDE** ISRAEL. ELIJAH MAY HAVE IMAGINED SOME **RICH** BUSINESSMAN THERE WOULD TAKE CARE OF HIM. BUT WHEN HE REACHED ZAREPHATH, WHAT HE FOUND WAS A **POOR** WIDOW WHO WAS ABOUT TO HAVE HER LAST MEAL! GOD'S WAYS ARE TRULY **AMAZING**. HE DOES THINGS LIKE THIS BECAUSE HE IS A **JEALOUS** GOD. HE USES A **WEAK** PERSON SO **NO** FLESH CAN GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE! (1 CORINTHIANS 1 : 29)



ELIJAH ASKED THE WIDOW TO MAKE HIM A LITTLE BREAD CAKE FROM THE OIL AND FLOUR SHE WAS GOING TO MAKE HER **LAST** MEAL WITH. HE SAID THE OIL AND FLOUR WOULD **NOT** RUN OUT. THERE ARE MANY **PREACHERS** TODAY WHO USE THIS INCIDENT TO TEACH **POOR** PEOPLE TO GIVE THEM **MONEY**. THIS IS A TOTAL **MISINTERPRETATION**. FIRST, MOST OF TODAY'S PREACHERS ARE **NOT** PROPHETS AND THEY **LOVE** MONEY, UNLIKE ELIJAH . FURTHER ELIJAH ASKED THE WIDOW FOR JUST A **BARE** MEAL TO **SURVIVE** IN A TIME OF FAMINE; AND HE ATE THE **SAME** FOOD THAT THE WIDOW AND HER SON ATE . TODAY'S PREACHERS ARE ASKING FOR MONEY, **NOT** FOR SURVIVAL, BUT TO SUPPORT THEIR **GRAND** LIFESTYLES. FINALLY, WHILE ELIJAH TOOK ONLY **ONE** MEAL FROM THE WIDOW, HE **PROVIDED** MEALS FOR HER AND HER SON, FOR MANY, MANY MONTHS - UNTIL THE FAMINE ENDED. SO SHE RECEIVED A HUNDRED TIMES **MORE** THAN SHE GAVE TO THE PROPHET. WHICH PREACHER DOES THAT TODAY ?



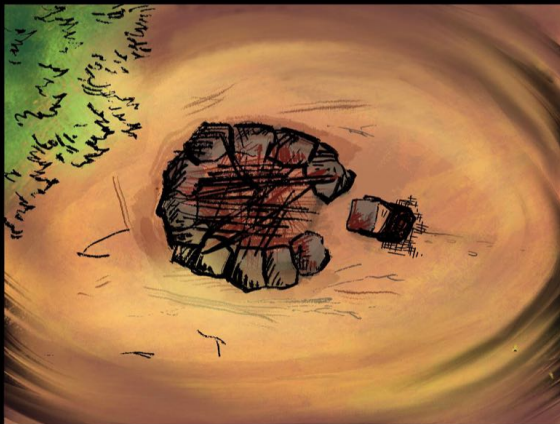
IN CHAPTER 18 WE READ OF A MAN CALLED OBADIAH. HE WAS A **MANAGER** OF AHAH'S PALACE AND IT IS WRITTEN THAT " HE FEARED THE LORD GREATLY " THIS ONLY MEANS HE WAS A **RELIGIOUS** PERSON. IT IS WRITTEN OF **OTHERS** ALSO IN 2 KINGS 17:33 THAT " THEY FEARED THE LORD **AND** SERVED THEIR OWN GODS " . I CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE CAN **TRULY** FEAR THE LORD AND STILL LIVE AS THE **MANAGER** OF A **WICKED IDOL-WORSHIPPING** KING'S PALACE. OBADIAH WAS OBVIOUSLY SEEKING A **COMFORTABLE** LIFE FOR HIMSELF **ALONG** WITH HIS RELIGION. JOSPEH OF ARIMATHEA WAS LIKE THAT. HE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN AND BECOME A **DESPISED** FOLLOWER OF JESUS. HOWEVER, SUCH PEOPLE STILL SERVE **SOME** PURPOSE OF GOD.



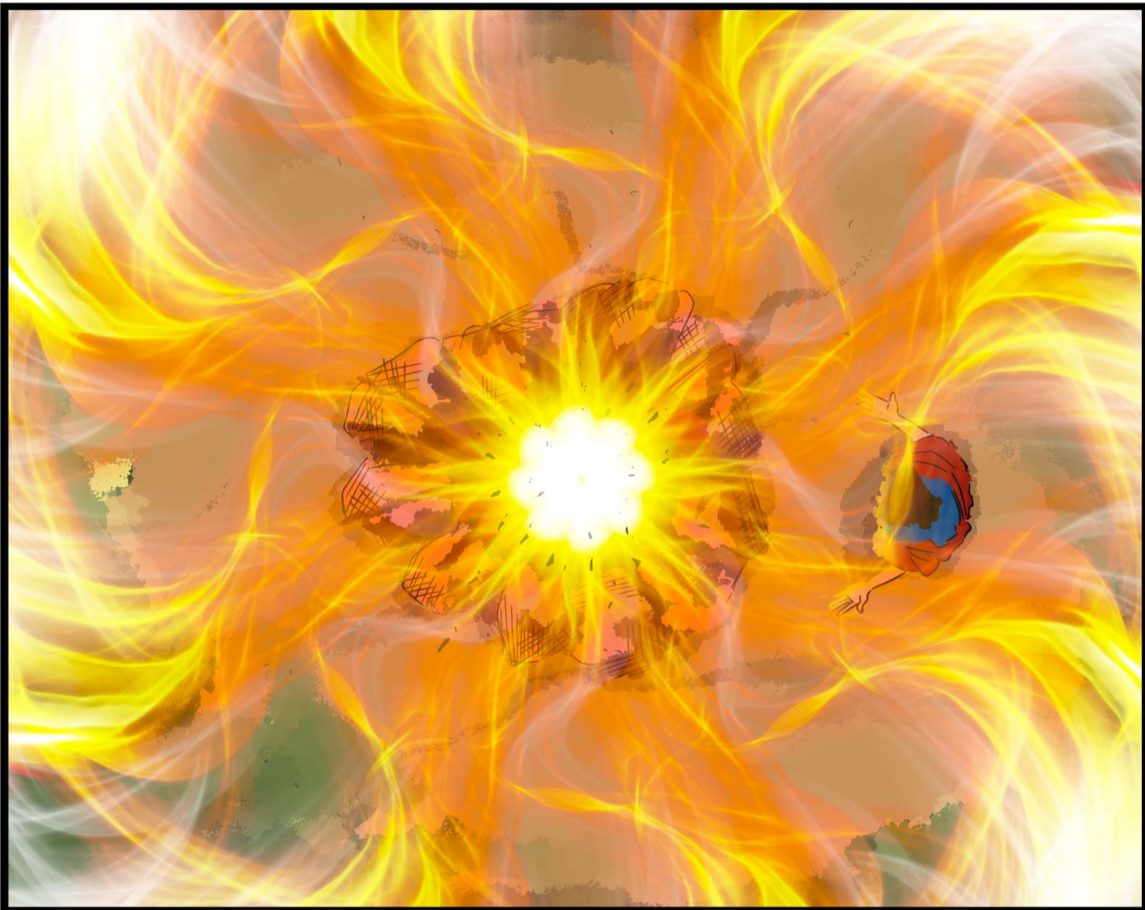
WE READ THEN OF THE **CHALLENGE** THAT ELIJAH GAVE TO ISRAEL. "CALL EVERYONE TO MOUNT CARMEL" HE TOLD AHAB. ALTHOUGH AHAB WAS THE KING, HE **FEARED** ELIJAH. THEN ELIJAH TOLD THE 450 PROPHETS OF BAAL, "LET'S CHOOSE AN OX EACH AND MAKE AN ALTAR **WITHOUT ANY FIRE** UNDER IT. THEN YOU CALL ON **YOUR** GOD AND ASK HIM TO SEND FIRE . AND I WILL CALL ON **MY** GOD. THE ONE WHO ANSWERS BY **FIRE**, LET HIM BE THE **TRUE GOD**." ALL THE PEOPLE SAID " THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, LET'S DO THAT " (18 : 23 , 24)



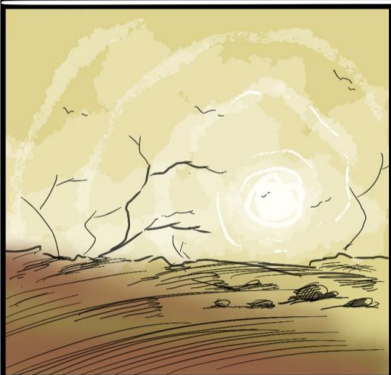
THEN THE PROPHETS OF BAAL PUT THE OX ON THE ALTAR AND BEGAN TO **JUMP, SHOUT AND SCREAM**. **NOTHING** HAPPENED. IT IS GOOD TO NOTE HERE THAT MANY " **CHRISTIANS** " WHO JUMP, SHOUT AND SCREAM CAN BE JUST AS **CARNAL** OR **UNCONVERTED** AS THESE BAAL-WORSHIPERS. ELIJAH **MOCKED** THEM AND SAID " **SHOUT LOUPER**, PERHAPS HE IS **ASLEEP** AND NEEDS TO BE WOKEN UP. OR PERHAPS HE IS IN THE **TOILET!** " (18:27) THEY **CUT** THEMSELVES , CRIED LOUPER STILL AND RAVED FOR OVER **6 HOURS** BUT NOTHING HAPPENED. SIMILARLY, MANY CHRISTIAN MEETINGS HAVE NOISE BUT THE PEOPLE DON'T HAVE A **GOOD CONSCIENCE**. THEY'RE PRAYING BUT GOD HASN'T PICKED UP THE PHONE! PSALM 66:18 SAYS IF WE HAVE **SIN** IN OUR HEARTS THEN GOD WILL **NOT** HEAR US. WE CAN SHOUT FOR SIX HOURS OR **ALL NIGHT !**



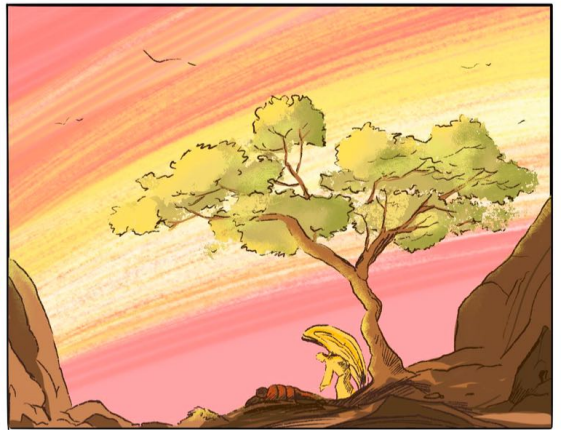
THEN IT WAS ELIJAH'S TURN. HE PICKED UP **12** STONES TO MAKE AN ALTAR. ALTHOUGH 10 TRIBES WERE **SEPARATE** FROM THE OTHER 2 ELIJAH DID **NOT BELIEVE** IN NATIONS OR **DENOMINATIONS-** AND SO HE PICKED UP 12 STONES. HE BELIEVED IN THE **UNITY** OF **ALL** OF GOD'S PEOPLE. SOME MAY HAVE BEEN **UPSET** WITH HIM FOR INCLUDING THE TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN BUT ELIJAH DIDN'T **CARE** FOR THEIR OPINION. TO PROVE THERE WAS NO **SECRET** FIRE UNDER HIS ALTAR, HE ASKED FOR 12 **PITCHERS** OF **WATER** TO BE POURED ON THE ALTAR.



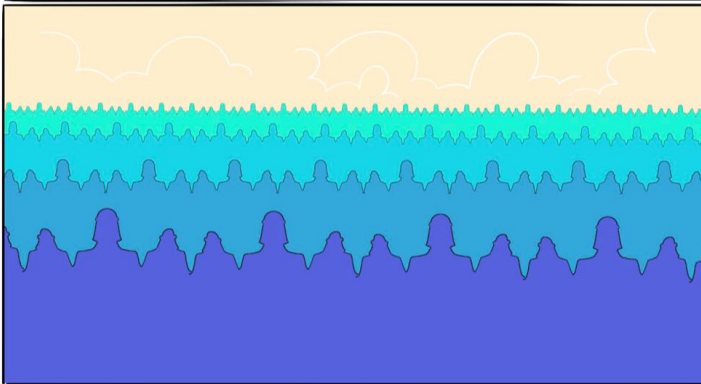
THEN ELIJAH PRAYED - FOR **LESS** THAN A MINUTE, " OH LORD, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT **THOU** ART GOD AND THAT I AM THY **SERVANT** " (18 : 36) THE **FIRE** FELL AND ALL THE PEOPLE FELL ON THEIR FACES AND **ACKNOWLEDGED** THAT THE **LORD** WAS THE **TRUE** GOD. WHAT WE NEED IS THE FIRE TODAY .WITH ALL ISRAEL ON HIS SIDE, ELIJAH CAUGHT THE 450 PROPHETS BAAL AND **KILLED** THEM ALL .



NOW THAT PEOPLE HAD **REPENTED**, ELIJAH TOLD AHAB THAT THE RAIN WOULD BE SOON ON ITS WAY. THERE HAD BEEN NO RAIN FOR 3 AND A HALF YEARS. ELIJAH WENT TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP AND BEGAN TO **PRAY**. HE SENT HIS SERVANT TO SEE IF THERE WAS ANY RAIN COMING ... AGAIN AND AGAIN - **SEVEN** TIMES. AT **LAST** THERE WAS A CLOUD. HERE WE SEE ELIJAH'S **PERSISTENCE** IN PRAYER. THE EARLIER DROUGHT TOO HAD BEEN THE RESULT OF ELIJAH'S PERSISTENT PRAYER. HIS EXAMPLE IS A **CHALLENGE** TO US ALL.



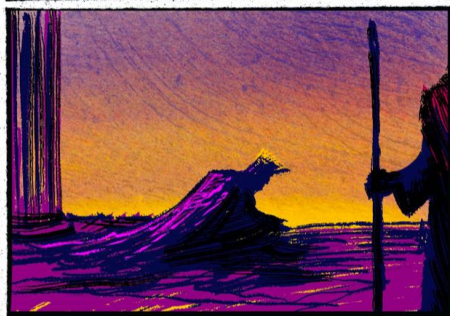
WHEN JEZEBEL HEARD THAT ALL HER FALSE PROPHETS HAD BEEN KILLED, SHE GOT VERY **ANGRY** AND SENT A MESSAGE TO ELIJAH THAT SHE WOULD KILL HIM NEXT. THE **MIGHTY** PROPHET WHO WAS NOT AFRAID OF THE KING, OR OF THE 850 FALSE PROPHETS, OR OF THE WHOLE NATION, NOW COWERED IN FEAR OF **ONE** WOMAN. HOW VERY MUCH LIKE US HE WAS! HE WAS DISCOURAGED AND EXHAUSTED AND WENT AND LAY UNDER A JUNIPER TREE. AN ANGEL CAME AND GAVE ELIJAH **FOOD**. GOD IS VERY "DOWN TO EARTH" IN THE WAY HE HELPS US. MANY A TIME WHAT A DISCOURAGED MAN NEEDS IS SOME **FOOD** AND **SLEEP** MORE THAN MANY SERMONS. WE NEED **WISDOM** TO HELP.



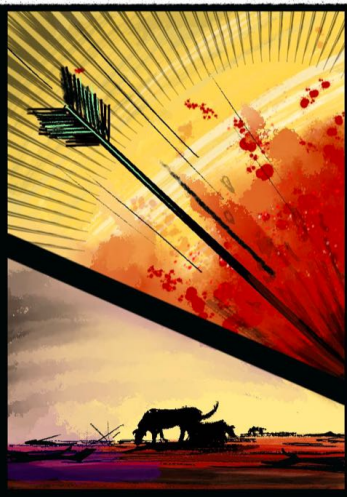
HOWEVER, ELIJAH WAS UNDER THE **OLD** COVENANT. TODAY, WE RUN THE RACE LOOKING UNTO **JESUS**, WHO WAS **NEVER** DISCOURAGED. ELIJAH IMAGINED HE **ALONE** WAS LEFT IN ISRAEL STANDING FOR GOD. BUT GOD SHOWED HIM THERE WERE 7000 PERSONS THAT REFUSED TO BOW TO BAAL. BUT THERE WAS A **VAST** DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE 7000 AND ELIJAH. **NONE** OF THEM COULD BRING DOWN **FIRE** FROM HEAVEN AND TURN THE NATION **BACK** TO GOD. THIS IS A PICTURE OF BELIEVERS WHOSE TESTIMONY IS **NEGATIVE**. THEY DON'T SMOKE, DRINK ETC. BELIEVERS LIKE **ELIJAH** STAND BEFORE **GOD**, AFLAME WITH HIS **FIRE** THROUGH WHOM GOD CAN **ACCOMPLISH** MORE !



GOD HAD PREPARED SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER FROM ELIJAH. ELIJAH WAS TO ANOINT **ELISHA** TO TAKE OVER FROM HIM. ELISHA WAS WORKING **HARD** IN THE FIELDS WHEN ELIJAH CALLED HIM. **GOD ALWAYS** CALLS THOSE WHO ARE WORKING HARD AND **FAITHFUL** IN THEIR **SECULAR** OCCUPATIONS. MOSES, AMOS, PETER, JAMES, JOHN AND ANDREW, MATHEW. IF WE ARE NOT FAITHFUL IN **EARTHLY** MATTERS, HOW CAN WE BE FAITHFUL IN HEAVENLY MATTERS? **SECOND**, WE NOTICE THAT ALL THESE MEN DROPPED **EVERYTHING** AND WENT AS **SOON** AS GOD CALLED THEM. **GOD** CALLS THOSE WHO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY AND **WHOLEHEARTEDLY**. THEY MAY SEEK TO **CONFIRM** GOD'S CALL BUT ONCE THEY ARE SURE THEY ACT **QUICKLY**. GOD'S SERVICE REQUIRES **INSTANT** OBEDIENCE, TOTAL COMMITMENT AND HARD WORK. IF WE ARE SLIPSHOD, **HOW** CAN GOD CALL US ?



IN CHAPTER 21, WE READ OF A MAN CALLED **NABOTH** WHO WAS A NEIGHBOUR OF AHAH. NABOTH HAD A **VINEYARD** THAT AHAH WANTED TO BUY. BUT NABOTH **REFUSED** TO SELL IT, ACCORDING TO GOD'S LAW (LEVITICUS 25:23). JEZEBEL, HOWEVER, GOT NABOTH **FALSELY ACCUSED** AND KILLED, AND THUS AHAH TOOK POSSESSION OF THE VINEYARD. THE **FEARLESS** ELIJAH NOW CONFRONTED AHAH AT GOD'S DIRECTION, AND TOLD HIM THAT GOD WOULD **JUDGE** HIM FOR KILLING NABOTH AND THAT THE DOGS WOULD LICK AHAH'S BLOOD ONE DAY, AND HIS FAMILY WOULD BE DESTROYED. AHAH WAS **SCARED** AND **TORE** HIS CLOTHES AND FASTED (VERSE 27). THEN GOD TOLD ELIJAH THAT HE WOULD HAVE **MERCY** ON AHAH AND SEND THE JUDGEMENT ON HIS FAMILY ONLY IN THE **NEXT** GENERATION. IT IS **AMAZING** TO SEE HOW **MERCIFUL** GOD IS. GOD VALUES **HUMILITY** SO **GREATLY** THAT EVEN WHEN AHAH (WHO WAS SO **WICKED**) **HUMBLED** HIMSELF, GOD TOOK NOTICE OF IT AND **SUSPENDED** JUDGEMENT.



IN CHAPTER 22, WE READ ABOUT JUDAH'S KING, **JEHOSHAPHAT**. AHAH ASKED HIM TO JOIN HIM IN A BATTLE AGAINST KING OF ARAM. JEHOSHAPHAT AGREED IMMEDIATELY AND **THEN** DECIDED TO SEEK GOD'S WILL ABOUT IT, **AFTER** AGREEING (22:4, 5). AHAH IMMEDIATELY ROUNDED UP 400 FALSE PROPHETS WHO READILY "**PROPHESIED**" THAT THE LORD WOULD GIVE THEM THE VICTORY (22:6). IT IS **AMAZING** TO SEE SO SOON AFTER GOD'S FIRE FELL, FALSE PROPHETS ARISING **AGAIN** IN ISRAEL! BUT JEHOSHAPHAT HAD ENOUGH **DISCERNMENT** TO RECOGNISE THAT NONE OF THESE 400 WERE GENUINE PROPHETS. MICAIAH, A TRUE PROPHET, WAS CALLED, AND HE PREDICTED THE **DEFEAT** OF ISRAEL'S ARMY. AHAH WAS SO **ANGRY** WITH HIM THAT HE LOCKED HIM UP IN **PRISON** AND WENT TO WAR. AHAH DISGUISED HIMSELF BUT A STRAY ARROW THAT WAS FIRED CAME AND **KILLED** HIM -- AND THE DOGS LICKED HIS BLOOD, AS GOD HAD SAID.