

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 1+2 KINGS.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM 1+2 KINGS.**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 1 Kings 3, 11 and 18 and 2 Kings 5, 6, 17 and 25. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Kings chapter 3.

(T) I would like to share from about **Solomon's wisdom**. King Solomon reigned between 972 and 932 B.C. God appeared two times to king Solomon, both times during the night in a dream. During the first time, God said to him that he may ask for whatever he wanted God to give to him. King Solomon was a new and inexperienced king and asked God for wisdom to rule God's people and to distinguish between right and wrong.

First. Solomon acknowledged that Israel was God's people, that God was the real King of Israel and that he had to govern Israel on behalf of God.

Second. God not only answered his prayer, but also *gave him much more than he had asked for*. God said, "Since you asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies, but for the discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be". God also gave him riches and honour and said that if Solomon would walk in God's ways as his father David did, he would give him a long life. Too often, the prayers of people concentrate on praying for things that only benefit themselves. But God is very pleased when we pray for things that will help us to serve him and other people better.

Third. Solomon *really became a very wise king and judge*. Once there were two women who lived in the same house and who each had a baby. During the night, the one woman accidentally rolled on her baby and it died. She then secretly exchanged her dead baby for the living baby. The next morning, the other woman discovered that the baby lying next to her was dead, but also that it was not her baby. However, the first woman persistently claimed that the living baby was hers. King Solomon listened to this case. Then he said, because both women claimed that the living baby was their baby, he would give one half of the living baby to each of them. Then he called a soldier and ordered him to cut the living baby into two halves. The woman whose baby was alive, was filled with compassion and pleaded with the king to let it live and rather be given to the first woman. But the woman, whose baby had died, was cruel and agreed that it should be cut in half. Then king Solomon knew who the real mother was. And he gave the living child to its rightful mother. According to 1 Kings 4:29-34, God gave king Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East. ...He was wiser than any other man. ... And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life ... and taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom." Like Solomon, I want to make sure that when I pray that I ask God for things that please him.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Kings chapter 11.

(S) I want to share from 1 Kings 11 about **Solomon's foolishness**. Towards the end of his life, king Solomon did not live in accordance with his wisdom and he became a foolish king.

The first foolish thing king Solomon did, was to marry more than one woman. In spite of the fact that he must have known that God had said in Genesis 2:24, that a man should leave his parents and cleave to his *one wife* and *the two of them* shall become one flesh, Solomon married 700 wives and had 300 other concubines. Solomon may have followed the practice of the kings of other nations during his days, but he did not follow the command of the living God. The Bible teaches again and again that everyone who puts God's commands and teachings into practice, is a wise man (Mt 7:24-27).

The second foolish thing king Solomon did, was that he allowed his wives to lead him astray. Because Solomon had married women who were not believers in the true God, they turned his heart away from the Lord to worship other gods. His heart was no longer fully devoted to the Lord and he no longer followed the Lord completely. He began to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. He even built a place of worship for despicable idols on a high hill facing the temple!

Therefore God became angry with Solomon and said to him, “Since this is your attitude and you have *not kept my covenant and my decrees*, ... I will certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.” King Solomon’s foolishness was the cause that the kingdom of Israel was split into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

The foolishness of king Solomon teaches me that comfort leads to compromise, and compromise leads to conformity. In Ecclesiastes 2:1-3, king Solomon wrote that he had indulged in *comfort*. He had taken life easy, had tried to live a life of pleasure, had tried to cheer his life with wine, laughter and foolishness. But comfort led to *compromise*. 1 Kings 3:3 says that although he walked according to the statutes of his father David, he made an exception for idolatry. He himself offered sacrifices and burned incense at places of idol worship. His compromise led to *conformity* to the sinful world. 1 Kings 10:26 says that Solomon wanted to be like the kings of the other nations. He accumulated 1400 war chariots and 12000 war horses and he gathered much wealth in the form of precious metals and rare wood. And 1 Kings 11:3 says that he married many wives, just like the kings of the other nations. I want to listen to the apostle Paul’s words in Romans 12:2 (Phillips), “*Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mould*, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.” Real wisdom is to devote my life to uncompromising obedience to God.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Kings chapter 18.

(T) I want to share from 1 Kings 18 about the prophet Elijah and the power of prayer. The prophet Elijah lived about 875 B.C. He was a prophet during the reign of the wicked king Ahab, a king of the northern kingdom of Israel. We read about him in 1 Kings chapters 17-19.

First. Prayer can have an effect on the powers of nature. God gave Elijah a message to Ahab that there would be no rain or even dew in the next few years except at the prophet’s word. And there was a terrible drought for 3½ years! During the drought, Elijah was cared for by a widow. When her son died, Elijah took the boy to his upper room and prayed to God, asking God to avert this tragedy. And God heard Elijah’s prayer and gave life to the dead boy! Prayer can stop the rain, but prayer can also raise the dead. Prayer to the living God can have an effect on the powers of nature.

Second. Prayer can show the reality and power of God to people who worship idols. For many years king Ahab and his wife Jezebel promoted the idolatry of Baal and Asherah. They killed the prophets of the Lord and pursued Elijah in all the neighbouring countries in order to kill him too. They appointed 450 prophets for Baal and 400 prophets for Asherah. Baal and Asherah are the names of the Canaanite male and female gods of fertility. The Lord sent Elijah to challenge Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab had to call all his 850 prophets as well as all the people of Israel together for a competition between the Baals and Asherahs on the one side and the living God on the other side. The prophet Elijah rebuked the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (21). He then challenged the prophets of Baal to build an altar, to cut a bull to pieces and put it on the wood on the altar, but not to set fire to it. He would do the same. Then they would call on the name of their god to light the fire. The god who answers by fire - he is God! They agreed. The whole morning, the prophets of Baal called on the name of Baal, but there was no response. Then the whole afternoon, they danced around the altar, shouted aloud to Baal and cut themselves with swords in order to get the attention of Baal. The whole day passed and no one answered; no one paid attention. The prophets of Baal had failed! Then Elijah called all Israel and the false prophets to witness what he was going to do. He rebuilt the broken altar of the Lord and dug a trench around it. Then he put the wood on it, cut a bull in pieces and put the pieces on the altar and then ordered the people to pour many jars of water over everything until the water filled the trench. After this, Elijah prayed and said, “God... let it be known today that you are God ... and that I have done all these things at your command. Answer me, so that these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and you are turning their hearts back again” (36-37). Immediately the fire of the Lord fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the water and even the stones of the altar with the soil around it! When the people saw this, they fell on their faces and acknowledged that the Lord is God. The people then killed all the 850 false prophets of Baal and Asherah. Through prayer, people will come to know the reality of the living God and they will turn to him to worship him.

Third. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. After that, Elijah told Ahab that there would be rain again. Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, bent down to the ground with his face between his knees and prayed. Every time he sent his servant to go and look if there were any clouds visible. After praying for seven times, a small cloud appeared and it grew to a storm. The sky turned black, the winds rose and a heavy rain came upon Israel. In James 5:17-18 we read about this prayer. “Elijah was *a man just like us*. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for 3½ years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” Likewise, the prayer of a righteous Christian will be powerful and effective!

Sharing quiet times from 2 Kings chapter 6.

(S) I want to share from 2 Kings 6 about the prophet Elisha and the power of prayer. The prophet Elisha succeeded Elijah as prophet in Israel and lived about 800 B.C. We read about Elisha in 2 Kings 2-7.

First. Prayer can open the *spiritual* eyes of people in order to show them the work of God. At that time, the king of Aram was waging a war against Israel. He pursued the army of Israel to this place and that place, but was never able to catch them, because the prophet Elisha advised the king of Israel. The king of Aram was told, "Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom" (12). The king of Aram therefore wanted to capture Elisha. He sent an army with horses and chariots and they surrounded the town where Elisha was. The servant of the prophet Elisha saw the army and exclaimed in fear, "What shall we do?" Then Elisha said, "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (16). Then Elisha prayed that the Lord would open his servant's eyes so that he may see. The Lord opened his eyes and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha to protect Elisha (17)! Elisha's prayer opened the eyes of his servant to see the protection of God!

Second. Prayer can blind the *physical* eyes of enemies so that they cannot continue to do evil. Then Elisha again prayed to the Lord, "Strike these people with blindness." And the Lord struck all the Aramean soldiers with blindness. They were groping around, not able to find any way. Then Elisha led them to Samaria and the king of Israel. Again Elisha prayed that their eyes may be opened so that they could see. And the Lord opened their eyes and they realised that they were in the hands of the king of Israel. Elisha did not permit the king of Israel to kill them, but instead ordered that food and water be set before them and then that they be sent back. The Israelites prepared a great feast for their enemies and then sent them back (22-23). Since that time, the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory. Elisha's prayer blinded the eyes of his enemies so that they could not harm him.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Kings chapter 17.

(T) I want to share from 2 Kings 17 about the deportation of the northern kingdom of Israel. In the year 721 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was deported to Assyria. This chapter says that all this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God. Instead of being God's people who lived differently than the nations around them, they *imitated the evil practices* of these nations and *followed their customs*. The Israelites *secretly* did things against God that were not right. They built worship places for their idols, burned incense for them and even sacrificed their own children to these despicable gods by first slaughtering them and then burning their bodies in the fire. They forsook the commands of God and instead did what was expressly forbidden by God. They made idols and they bowed down to the stars as if the stars determined their lives. They practised fortune-telling, hand-reading and card-reading (divination) and they practised witchcraft (sorcery). They did all these evil things as if God did not see what they were doing! The Bible says that they did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord saw everything they were doing. In spite of the fact that God gave them more chances to repent and turn back to him, by sending prophets to them, they refused to listen and thus hardened their hearts against God. They no longer believed in God and rejected the teachings of God in the Bible. The first result of following worthless idols was that they themselves became worthless. The second result of their back-sliding was that God rejected Israel as his people, punished them at the hands of a plundering army, removed them from his presence and deported them to become slaves in a foreign country. This is a serious warning that *whoever rejects the covenant of God will be rejected by God!*

Sharing quiet times from 2 Kings chapter 25.

(S) I want to share from 2 Kings 25 about the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah. In the year 586 B.C., the southern kingdom of Israel was finally exiled to Babylon. Actually, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Judah three times, and every time he took some exiles with him to Babylon.

The first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar took place in 605 B.C. He besieged and captured Jerusalem, bound king Jehoiakim in chains and took with him some temple vessels and some hostages, in order to secure Judah's loyalty and payment of tribute. It was during this time that Daniel and his three friends were exiled to Babylon (Dan 1:1-3). Jehoiakim must have soon been released and returned to Jerusalem to resume his reign. Jehoiakim died about 3 months before the end of Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion of Judah.

The second invasion of Nebuchadnezzar took place from 598 to 597 B.C. He besieged and captured Jerusalem, after king Jehoiachin, his mother, servants, military captains and political officials went out to Nebuchadnezzar to capitulate. Nebuchadnezzar removed the rest of the temple vessels to the temple of Marduk in Babylon and led many more people into exile to Babylon. It was during this time that king Jehoiachin, his mother, all the political officers, all the military captains together with their courageous soldiers, all the craftsmen and artisans were exiled to Babylon (1 Ki 24:14-16). Only the poorest people were left behind in Judah.

The third invasion of Nebuchadnezzar took place from 588 to 586 B.C. After Jerusalem was besieged for 1½ years, it was captured. King Zedekiah and his army of soldiers escaped during the night, but Zedekiah and his sons were captured. Nebuchadnezzar was a brutal king, and he killed Zedekiah's sons in front of Zedekiah's eyes and then blinded Zedekiah. Then he exiled him in chains to Babylon and imprisoned him there until his death. The next year, Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of his bodyguard to destroy Jerusalem and take the people into exile to Babylon. He

burned the temple, the palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. His army broke down the wall of Jerusalem. He took almost everybody into exile, but left some of the poorest people to be vine-dressers and plough-men. The book of Kings teaches that because of all the evil, which the kings and people of Judah did against God, God said in 2 Kings 23:27 that he removed Judah from his presence just as he removed Israel, and that he rejected Jerusalem as the city he had chosen and that he rejected the temple as the place where he would allow his presence to be experienced. The southern kingdom of Judah was not any better than the northern kingdom of Israel. Both rejected God and his covenant. Therefore God rejected both as his people, he rejected Jerusalem as being a special city and he rejected the temple as a special place of worshipping him. God shows no partiality (Dt 10:17). Whoever rejects God and his covenant, will be rejected by God and excluded from his covenant! Also Christians must fear God, because God is a consuming fire and it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! (Heb 12:29; 10:31).

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Exodus. The selected chapters are 2 Chronicles 16, 20, 26, 32, 33, 34 and 36. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".