

“Reading the Bible Together”

Issue 11.

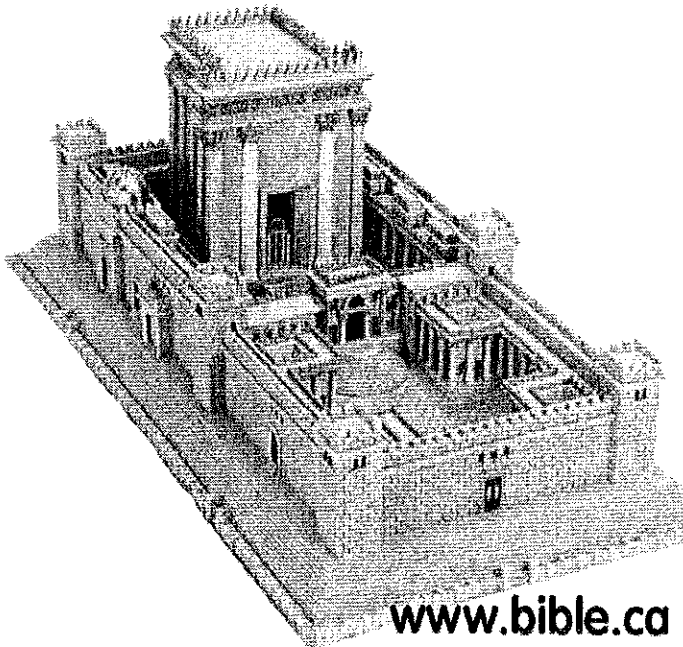
Books of 1Kings (cont'd) and 2Kings:

God continues to work in and through Israel’s turbulent history.

December 2009.

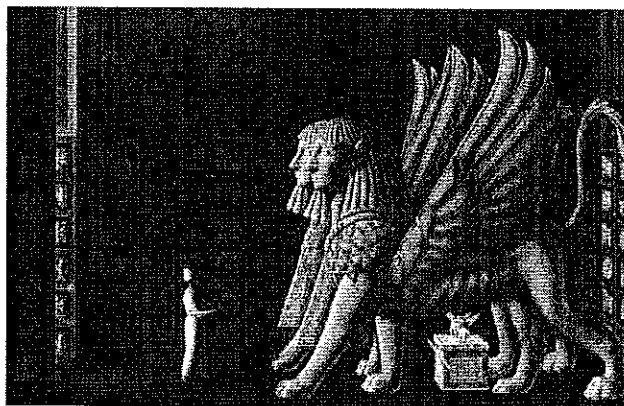
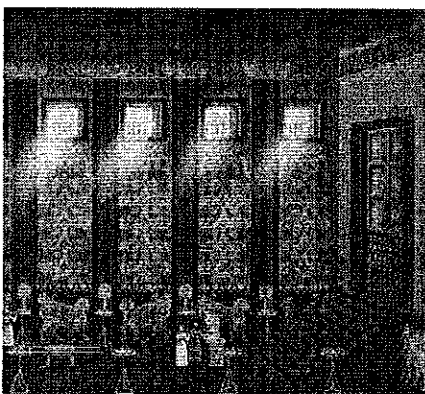
Introduction:

Last month we saw how Solomon finally built the first Temple in Jerusalem. With all those words of description I thought it might be good to see a couple of images of what artists believed the Temple might look like.



From the outside the walled courtyard separated the ordinary from the holy. The outer courtyard of the Gentiles led through into the inner court of the Jews, which in turn led to the steps and entrance of the Temple itself. (See the diagram – left.)

Beyond this, only priests could enter. And then finally, in the Holy of Holies only the High Priest could enter, and then only once a year. (See the two pictures below, one of the general area of Temple – left, and of the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant between the Seraphim – right.)



What’s happening this month in a little more detail:

The key theme, which we looked at last month, running through the Books of Kings is the link between the obedience and faithfulness of the King and the well-being of the nation. To remind us, when the King was faithful and obedient to both God and his subjects then Israel fared well, when the King was unfaithful and disobedient then Israel suffered, often at the hand of invading armies.

But what, or who guided these Kings? Arise the prophets, beginning with Elijah and Elisha. Each were very different characters, from very different background, and each had a very different expression of ministry. But common to each was their commitment to God and to speaking forth God's Word.

We can often think of prophets, and prophecy as foretelling the future. And certainly we have the writings and accounts of the prophets that we do because what they prophesied came true. But prophecy is less about foretelling the truth of events to come, like being able to predict the outcome of the next election, and instead forth-telling the truth as it is today. Forth-telling is about speaking out, for the good of the other or for the nation, quite simply and only the truth – a bit like saying, if you carry on spending money the way you are then you will have none left. The other person or nation may, or may not like or agree with what the prophet says, whether that be to do with money, society, politics or God, but the truth still stands and, of course, if the person doesn't amend their ways sooner or later the prophet sadly will be proved right. In that sense such prophetic truth is timeless and so speaks into every age but always because of a deep love of the other and a desire for their return to 'healthiness' – whether that be personal, spiritual, economic or relationally.

Often, as we shall see, the prophets are not the most popular of people; given that who likes to necessarily thank the messenger who tells you how it really is, but their solace and their own personal challenge is to remain faithful and close to both God and people; to have an ear for the beat of God's heart. We will explore prophecy further in later writings and see how varied and yet appropriate they each were for their day.

Bible Together Meetings: December meetings will be:

Wednesday 2nd December 9.00am – 10.00am – in the Chancel as usual.

Wednesday 16th December 8.00pm – There won't be a Bible Study meeting tonight as so near Christmas.

Scheme of Reading for December:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
Tues 1 st Dec	1Kings 14:1 – 14:31
Wed 2nd Dec	1Kings 15:1 – 15:32
(Bible Together Meeting today @ 9.00am)	
Thurs 3 rd Dec	1Kings 15:33 – 16:34
Fri 4 th Dec	1Kings 17:1 – 17:24
Sat 5 th Dec	1Kings 18:1 – 18:46
Sun 6 th Dec	-----
Mon 7 th Dec	1Kings 19:1 - 19:21
Tues 8 th Dec	1Kings 20:1 – 20:43
Wed 9 th Dec	1Kings 21:1 – 21:29
Thurs 10 th Dec	1Kings 22:1 – 22:53
Fri 11 th Dec	2Kings 1:1 – 1:18
Sat 12 th Dec	2Kings 2:1 – 2:25
Sun 13 th Dec	-----
Mon 14 th Dec	2Kings 3:1 – 3:27
Tues 15 th Dec	2Kings 4:1 – 4:44
Wed 16th Dec	2Kings 5:1 – 5:27
(There will be NO Bible Together Meeting today)	
Thurs 17 th Dec	2Kings 6:1 – 7:2
Fri 18 th Dec	2Kings 7:3 – 7:20
Sat 19 th Dec	2Kings 8:1 – 8:29
Sun 20 th Dec	-----

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
Mon 21 st Dec	2Kings 9:1 – 9:37
Tues 22 nd Dec	2Kings 10:1 – 10:36
Wed 23 rd Dec	2Kings 11:1 – 12:21
Thurs 24 th Dec	2Kings 13:1 – 13:25
Fri 25th Dec	2Kings 14:1 – 14:29
(Christmas Day – The Birth of Jesus, the Lord)	
Sat 26 th Dec	2Kings 15:1 – 15:38
Sun 27 th Dec	-----
Mon 28 th Dec	2Kings 16:1 – 17:23
Tues 29 th Dec	2Kings 17:24 – 18:37
Wed 30 th Dec	2Kings 19:1 – 19:37
Thurs 31 st Dec	2Kings 20:1 – 20:21
Fri 1st Jan 2010	2Kings 21:1 – 21:26
(Happy New Year!! May God bless you.)	
Sat 2 nd Jan	2Kings 22:1 – 22:20
Sun 3 rd Jan	-----
Mon 4 th Jan	2Kings 23:1 – 23:35
Tues 5 th Jan	2Kings 23:36 – 24:20
Wed 6th Jan	2Kings 25:1 – 25:30
(Bible Together Meeting today @ 9.00am)	
Thurs 7 th Jan	1Chron 1:1 – 3:9
Fri 8 th Jan	1Chron 3:10 – 4:43