

CRYSTALLIZATION –STUDY OF 1 AND 2 KINGS, Week 5**Natural Ability versus the Resurrected Ability of the Maturity of Life
for the Building Up of the Church as the Organic Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 3:1; 11:1-8; Josh. 9:14; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Isa. 45:15; 37:31; Matt. 6:6

- 1 Kings 3:1 And Solomon allied himself by marriage with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and he took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David until he completed the building of his house and the house of Jehovah and the wall of Jerusalem all around.
- 1 Kings 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter — Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,
- 1 Kings 11:2 From among the nations concerning which Jehovah had said to the children of Israel, You shall not go among them, nor shall they come among you, for they will surely turn your heart after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love.
- 1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred princess wives and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.
- 1 Kings 11:4 And when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect toward Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father.
- 1 Kings 11:5 And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable thing of the Ammonites.
- 1 Kings 11:6 And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and did not fully follow Jehovah as David his father had done.
- 1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon.
- 1 Kings 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.
- Joshua 9:14 And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.
- 1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- 1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
- Isaiah 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.
- Isaiah 37:31 And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
- Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Day 1

- Philippians 3:13** Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Romans 8:4** That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

- I. Solomon became a man of wisdom and a man of understanding (2 Chron. 1:10; cf. Col. 2:2b-3); however, because he **took many pagan women and worshipped their idols and built places for the people to worship idols**, he lost his God-given wisdom and his God-given understanding; he became very foolish and brought in damage to his kingdom (1 Kings 3:1; 11:1-8):**
- A. Solomon's father David, a man according to God's heart, failed in this same gross and ugly sin of **indulging his lust** (2 Sam. 11); Solomon's failure in this satanic temptation was much greater than his father's; his fall was in his indulging his lust by **loving many foreign women** (1 Kings 11:1-3), in his **forsaking God**, who appeared to him twice (v. 9b), and in his **worshipping the Gentile idols** through the seducing by the foreign women whom he loved (vv. 4-8).
 - B. Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (v. 3); in order to satisfy their desire, **he built up high places**; his wives "turned his heart after other gods" (v. 4); "Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable thing of the Ammonites" (v. 5).
 - C. "Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon"—v. 7:
 - 1. During the reign of Solomon the temple was built in Jerusalem, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple; the age of the building of the temple was a golden time in the history of the children of Israel—8:10-11.
 - 2. The **unique place**, Jerusalem, signifies **oneness**, whereas the **high places** signify **division**; just as all manner of evil and abominable things were related to the setting up of the high places, so in New Testament terms, **all manner of evil is related to division**—1 Cor. 1:10 and footnote 3.
 - 3. It is remarkable that Solomon, the very one who had built the temple according to God's desire on the ground of the oneness of God's people, **took the lead to build up the high places once again**—1 Kings 11:6-8.
 - D. This caused his descendants to **lose** more than ninety percent of their kingdom and caused the people of God's elect to **suffer division and confusion** among themselves throughout many generations; eventually, they **lost the God-given land and became captives in the foreign lands of idol worship**.
 - E. The nation of Israel is still suffering because of Solomon's failure; what a warning and an alarm this should be to us! We must be careful; even a **little failure** in the indulgence of lust can damage the church life and kill the splendid aspects of the church life.
 - F. Therefore, we must be careful, even in the smallest thing; **we should walk according to the spirit in everything** (Rom. 8:4; cf. Zech. 4:8-10); God's people should **co-live with Him**, always **relying** on Him and being **one** with Him (Josh. 9:14; 2 Cor. 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 1:23).
 - G. Solomon's decease was in gloomy disappointment (1 Kings 11:40-43); his glory fell off like the flower of grass (Matt. 6:29; 1 Pet. 1:24), and his splendid career became "vanity of vanities," as he had preached (Eccl. 1:2).

II. We need to see **Solomon's failure under the light of the spiritual life:**

- A. Solomon was a **wise man but not a spiritual man**; a **man of capability, not a man of life**; his enjoyment of the God-given good land reached the highest level through his God-given gift; however, because of his small measure in the maturity of the spiritual life, he was cut off from the enjoyment of the good land in God's economy because of his unbridled indulgence of his lust—1 Cor. 2:14-15; 3:1, 3.

Under the light of the spiritual life, we can see that Solomon was a **wise man but not a spiritual one; a man of capability, not one of life**; a man whose wisdom was a gift, not a measure of life. The careers he accomplished were evidences of his capacity from the God-given gift of wisdom, not manifestations of the ability of the maturity of life.

In the Lord's recovery **we should first take care of life**. Then to some extent and in a certain sense we need capability. In the church our capability should be the manifestation of the maturity of life. **Capability apart from life is like a snake, poisoning the church**; life is like a dove, supplying the church with life. Instead of being today's Solomon, we should be "doves" with the **proper measure of life**. (*Life-Study of 1 and 2 Kings, chapter 7*)

Day 2

1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

- B. Solomon's God-given wisdom made him great in the world in his days; however, **his wisdom was absolutely in the physical realm**, without any spiritual element; his wisdom was a shadow of the real wisdom that was to come, and it was altogether different from the wisdom of Paul—1:24, 30.
- C. Paul's wisdom was a **spiritual wisdom** concerning Christ making His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:17), our walking and having our being according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4), and the two spirits—the divine Spirit and the human spirit—mingled together as one spirit (v. 16; 1 Cor. 6:17).
- D. The mysteries of God's economy were disclosed mainly to Paul (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3-5, 9-10); today, if we would know the highest wisdom in the universe, we must get into the crystallization of the truths in Paul's Epistles; **the real wisdom is God**, who is embodied in Christ, who has become our wisdom to be in us, making us one with God and making us God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead; thus, we become the masterpiece of the Triune God, His poem, displaying His infinite wisdom and divine design (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Eph. 2:10; 3:9-11).

A problem among God's children is the **mixture of the soul with the spirit**. Whenever their spirit is released, their soul is released as well. It is hard to find a person whose spirit is pure. With many people this purity is lacking. It is this mixture that disqualifies them from being used by God. The first qualification in the work is a purity of the spirit, not a measure of power. Many people hope to have great power, yet they pay no attention to purity in the spirit. Although they have the power to build, they are short in purity. As a result their work is bound for destruction. On the one hand, they build with power. On the other hand, they **destroy with their impurity**. They demonstrate God's power, yet at the same time their spirit is a **mixed spirit**.

Our greatest problem is our **mixture**. Hence, God has to work on us to break our outer man as well as to remove our mixture. God is breaking us step by step so that our outer man will no longer be whole. After our outer man is battered once, ten, twenty times, we will be broken, and our hard outer shell before God will be gone. But what should we do with the mixture of the outer man in our spirit? This requires another work—the work of purging. This work is carried out not only through the discipline of the Spirit, but also through the **revelation of the Spirit**. The way to purge mixture is different from the way to break the outer man. The way to purge mixture is often through revelation. Therefore, we find God dealing with us in two ways. One is the breaking of the outer man, and the other is the separation of the outer man from the spirit. One comes through the **discipline of the Holy Spirit**, and the other is the result of the **revelation of the Holy Spirit**. (*The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, chapter 7*)

Day 3 & Day 4

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

2 Corinthians 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts.

III. Solomon was a man full of **natural ability but not a man of life, a man whose wisdom was a gift, not a measure of life; the careers he accomplished were evidences of his capacity from the God-given gift of wisdom, not manifestations of the ability of the maturity of life—Heb. 6:1; Col. 1:28-29; Phil. 3:12-15:**

- A. We need to see the difference between our natural ability and the ability that has passed through death and resurrection; we need to realize the **impotence**, the **insufficiency**, of our **natural being and natural ability** in the things of God—Acts 7:22; Exo. 3:2-3, 14-15; 1 Cor. 2:14; Phil. 3:3-9; 2 Cor. 3:5-6.
- B. We should not have any trust in our natural being in the things of God; rather, we must learn to **reject our natural being and exercise our spirit** in everything for the organic building up of the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:3; Rom. 8:4; 1 Tim. 4:7.
- C. In the Lord's recovery there is no place for our natural being; the churches in the Lord's recovery, as parts of the living Body of Christ, will spontaneously **reject anything that is natural**—1 Cor. 12:12-13.
- D. In the building of the church, every natural thing in us must be broken before we can be joined together; **we can be built only after we have been broken in our natural being**—Hymns, #837, stanzas 6 and 7.
- E. **Natural ability** is **egocentric** and causes us to become **proud**, resulting in boasting and **self-glorification**; **resurrected ability** is **not proud** and **does not boast in itself**—cf. Col. 1:17b, 18b; Phil. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:9.
- F. **Natural ability** is **selfish**, and all its schemes and devices are **for the sake of the self** without any regard for the will of God; **resurrected ability** is for the **will of God**; it has been broken and is **not for self** and has **no element of self**—cf. Matt. 16:24.
- G. **Natural ability** causes **self-reliance** and **self-confidence**, acting on its own and causing us to depend on ourselves and not on God; **resurrected ability** **relies upon God** and **does not dare to act according to self**, though truly able and capable; resurrected ability is **controlled by the Holy Spirit** and does not dare to act according to its wishes—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:6-7; 12:7-9.
- H. **Natural ability** has **no divine element**; it seeks its **own glory** and **satisfies its own desires**; it is mingled with the elements of **flesh** and **temper**; therefore, when it is disapproved, it is provoked; **resurrected ability** is **devoid of the flesh**—cf. 1 Thes. 2:4.
- I. **Natural ability** is **temporary** and is unable to withstand tests, setbacks, or opposition; **resurrected ability** **extols the Father**, acknowledging the Father's will—Matt. 11:20-26; John 2:19; Acts 2:24.
- J. Those who serve according to **natural ability** **desire rewards or appreciation from others**; those who serve according to **resurrected ability** **desire to win Christ** and are determined to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him—Phil. 3:8; Gen. 15:1; Heb. 11:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:9.
- K. **Natural ability** likes to **manifest itself**, to be **known by man**, and to be carried out in front of man; **resurrected ability** likes to **do things in secret** to be one with the "God who hides Himself" and to "take root downward and bear fruit upward"—Isa. 45:15; 37:31; Matt. 6:4, 6, 17-18.
- L. **Natural ability** and capability apart from life are like a snake, **poisoning God's people**; **life** is like a dove, **supplying God's people with life** and causing us to become a person who expresses in his humanity the bountiful God in His rich attributes through His aromatic virtues; life causes us to become like a lily growing out of brambles and like a bright star shining in the dark night—cf. Exo. 4:1-9; Matt. 3:16-17.
- M. Whenever people try to bring their **natural ability** into the church, the **reality of the church is lost**; only that which **passes through death and resurrection** can be **brought into the church**—1 Cor. 3:16-17.

The work of the Holy Spirit is based on the light of God. **The Spirit works according to what God sees**. Therefore, only the discipline of the Holy Spirit is **thorough and complete**. We often are ignorant in ourselves; we do not know what we need to go through. Even our wisest choices are full of errors. What we think we need often is not what we actually need according to God. What we see from our side may only be a tiny fraction of the whole picture. The Holy Spirit, however, **orders things for us according to God's light**. The discipline of the Holy Spirit far exceeds what our mind can fathom. We often are not prepared for a certain discipline, and we think that there is no need for it. When the Spirit's discipline does come upon us, we are taken by surprise. What the Spirit has ordered for us in the environment is not what we expected. Much discipline from the Holy Spirit comes without any warning from God. Suddenly we are struck with a heavy blow. We may think that we are living under God's light, but to God this light may be a very feeble flicker. He may not even consider it as light at all. The Holy Spirit, however, deals with us according to God's light. We think that we know our condition, but actually we do not. **Only God knows us**. From the time we accepted Him, He has been ordering our environment. **Everything that He has ordered is for our greatest benefit because He knows us and He knows our needs**. (*The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, chapter 6*)

God arranges all these things according to our need as He sees it. He knows what is best for our inner man and how best to break and dismantle our outer man. He knows that a certain thing will break our outer man, and He orders it to come upon us once, twice, and again and again. We have to see that all the things we have encountered during the past five or ten years have all been under God's ordering and are for our education. If we **murmur** against any person, we are indeed ignorant of God's hand. If we think that it was bouts of bad luck, we have no idea what the discipline of the Holy Spirit is. We have to remember that all the things that come upon us are measured by our God's hand. All these are for our good. We may not know to choose them, but God knows that they are for our good. I am not sure what misery we would have fallen into had it not been for such discipline from God. **Such arrangements keep us pure; they preserve us in God's pathway.** They are the best for us. God can give us nothing better. Many people cannot submit themselves. They murmur with their mouth and resent in their heart. This is indeed foolish. We have to remember that everything is measured to us by the Holy Spirit and is the best that it can be. (*The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, chapter 6*)

Day 5

Jeremiah 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.

Romans 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

IV. The forty-one kings of Israel and Judah were in the highest position, but they were **not careful in their enjoyment of the good land; not even David enjoyed the good land in full; we should apply their example to ourselves:**

- A. The root of the evil of the evil kings, like that of the evil of the people of Israel, was their **forsaking** the very God as the fountain of living waters and their **turning away to the pagan idols** as broken cisterns that hold no water; these two evils drowned them in the death waters of idolatry and of the indulgence of lusts—Jer. 2:13.
- B. Today we are kings who are reigning with Christ in life by receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:10, 17); **we should endeavor to follow the pattern of Paul**, who could declare that he had been **crucified with Christ and that he no longer lived but Christ lived in him** (Gal. 2:20); he said that he lived Christ for His magnification by receiving the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the supply of the Body (Phil. 1:19-21a).

Day 6

Philippians 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

- C. In resurrection Christ became the life-giving Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God (1 Cor. 15:45b); this divine, all-inclusive Spirit **enters into our spirit and mingles with our regenerated spirit**, causing God and man, man and God, to become one in the mingled spirit; the two spirits are now mingled together as one entity (6:17; Rom. 8:16).
- D. Today God the Spirit is the **all-inclusive Spirit**, the **compound Spirit**, the **anointing Spirit**, the **revealing Spirit**, and the **consummated Spirit** as the consummation of the processed Triune God—Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:22-25; 1 John 2:27; 1 Cor. 2:10; Rev. 22:17a.
- E. In the Lord's recovery today, we should **pay our full attention to the mingled spirit**, the Spirit mingled with our spirit, and should live, walk, and have our being in and according to this mingled spirit so that we can truly reign in life (Rom. 8:4; 5:10, 17); this mingled spirit is the beginning of the Body of Christ and will consummate in the New Jerusalem (Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18; Rev. 21:10).

The root of the evil of the evil kings, like that of the evil of the people of Israel, was their **forsaking the very God** as the fountain of living waters and their **turning away to the pagan idols** as broken cisterns that hold no water. These two evils drowned them in the death waters of idolatry, of the indulgence of lusts, and of injustice in shedding the blood of the innocent. Their evils offended their God to such an extent that He would not turn His anger from them but cast them off, first into the hands of the Assyrians and then into the hands of the Babylonians, who destroyed and burned the holy temple and the holy city, carried away into captivity the holy people to a pagan land of idol worship, and desolated the holy land for seventy years. Thus, they, as God's elect, **lost the enjoyment of the God-given good land** and, instead of remaining the citizens of God's kingdom in the holy land, they became captives in a heathen land.

The tragic result of such a pitiful history of the kings among God's chosen and blessed elect should be a **serious warning** to us, God's elect in the New Testament age, and should indicate to us **how sober we should be** to take heed to the particular points of each case. Just to be one who is according to God's heart, like David, and **just to be partly right and good** in the eyes of God, like some honest Christians, **do not qualify us** to partake of Christ in full and to enjoy all the rights in Him that we may become adequately the church as the Body of Christ and as the kingdom of God and of Christ. Conformity to Christ's death by the power of His resurrection is required of us, the New Testament Overcomers, that we many die to ourselves, our natural man, and live to God in resurrection. A **life of living Christ, magnifying Christ, and moving and acting with Christ** by the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, **doing everything in and according to the Spirit**, is indispensable for us, God's New Testament seekers, to be winners in the racecourse of the divine life that we may fully enjoy Christ as the God-given good land in the church age and be gloriously rewarded to partake of Christ, in the fullest sense, in the kingdom age. (*Life-Study of 1 and 2 Kings, chapter 23*)