

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
CHOICES-PART 3
“FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO IDOLATRY”
1 KINGS 3:2-4

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Introduction

Review the first two choices...

I. *BAD CHOICES—HIS ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT AND MARRIAGE TO THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH—3:1*

THIS CHOICE of his, as well as his other CHOICES regarding other STRANGE WOMEN ultimately caused his heart to turn from the LORD to idolatry! (Cf. 1 Kings 11:1-4)

II. *GOOD CHOICE—HIS LOVE OF THE LORD—3:2-4
LOVING GOD IS A COMMAND, A CHOICE, A CONSTRAINT, and
A CALLING!*

III. **BAD CHOICE—FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO
IDOLATRY! (3:2-4)**

As we read through the Old Testament Scriptures, we find a term mentioned here that is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and it has a negative connotation attached to it—The term is “**HIGH PLACES**”!

When we see that term—**HIGH PLACES**—it is not something that has any significance to us in our day and some questions come to our mind,

What is a HIGH PLACE?

What is the significance of it in the Bible and why does it appear to be such a big deal with God?

What difference does it make?

Well let’s take a look at it from the Bible’s perspective...from the LORD’s perspective if you will so that we can understand what is going on here better:

- A. **What Are Or What Were “HIGH PLACES?”**
HIGH PLACES, very simply, were places of worship (or altars and the things associated with them) that had been set up on elevated pieces of ground.

Now to us that may seem rather harmless and “*no big deal!*”

In fact, we might think when we are on top of a mountain looking down and looking around and looking up, it is rather majestic and seems like it would be a great place to worship the LORD!

But realize that the problem here is not speaking about worshipping on a mountain top. That may be the picture that comes to our mind but there was so much more to it than that!

B. **What Does God’s Law Say About “HIGH PLACES.”**
(Deuteronomy 12:1-7)

We need to understand that these **HIGH PLACES** that Scripture talks about were mostly places that had been originally dedicated and used for idol worship!
(Numbers 33:50-53)

It seems that, at times, these **HIGH PLACES** were set up in a spot that had been artificially elevated. *(2 Kings 16:4* seems to differentiate the “*high places*” from the “*hills.*”)

The *pictures* here refer to carvings and embroidery work having designs of idols or gods.

The *molten images* (and *graven images* of their gods) were metallic idols that the heathen believed had supernatural powers and virtues.

These shrines often included an altar and a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship (animals, constellations, goddesses, and fertility deities).

“FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO IDOLATRY”

1 KINGS 3:2-4

In *Deuteronomy 12:4*, the LORD was very clear—“*Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.*” (That statement refers to setting up images, pillars, and altars on every high hill, and under every green tree according to their choice and desire!)

God did NOT want His people to worship Him like the heathen worshiped their gods! He would choose the place and the manner in which men should seek Him!

But the Israelites **DID NOT** listen to God! They **DID NOT** obey God’s commandments concerning the heathen in the Land!(*Judges 1:21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33; 2:1-3, 11-13, 16-17, 19*)

C. What Difference Did It Make In What Israel Did In The HIGH PLACES? (Vs 2)

1. HIGH PLACE Worship Opened The Forbidden Door To Idolatry!

God had been very clear to the Israelites about other gods!

Exodus 20:3-5— “3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;”

2. HIGH PLACE Worship Continued Israel’s Pattern Of Disobeying the LORD! (e.g. Judges 1-2)

The Israelites were forever turning away from the LORD! They practiced Molech worship and built high places for Baal and worshiped Ashteroth in the groves!

“FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO IDOLATRY”

1 KINGS 3:2-4

3. HIGH PLACE Worship Took The Place Of Their Tabernacle Worship!

a. The Tabernacle Was Dedicated To The LORD!

It was the place where the LORD had chosen!

b. The HIGH PLACES Were Dedicated To Idols!

Should that make a difference? Well, yeah it should have, but it didn’t to them!

These **HIGH PLACES** were CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE, NOT THE LORD! (The Israelites wanted to do things their own way instead of the LORD’s way!)

These **HIGH PLACES** were more convenient than having to go to where the LORD’s Tabernacle happened to be!

Worshiping the LORD had become mundane to them, and these new gods and their worship were more exciting because they appealed more to their flesh!

Worship of the LORD was too restricting...the LORD had certain way He wanted it done!

4. HIGH PLACE Worship Brought With It The Consequences Of Disobedience!

Chastisement or judgment including their eventually being carried into bondage!

“FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO IDOLATRY”

1 KINGS 3:2-4

Jeremiah 32:35 And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

Eventually God had Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians carry His people away into captivity! (Their idolatry had a great deal to do with that happening!)

D. What Difference Did It Make In What Solomon Did In These HIGH PLACES? (Vs 3)

1. He Was Israel’s Leader!

Because he was given the leadership of Israel by God, he was responsible in the example he portrayed before them.

2. He Should Have Known Better!

Deuteronomy 17:18-20 18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

3. It Made It Easier For Him To Stray Further From God!

His marriage to a heathen Egyptian princess opened the door to idolatry!

“FURTHER OPENING OF THE DOOR TO IDOLATRY”

1 KINGS 3:2-4

His **HIGH PLACE** worship opened the door even farther!

Although we will see that Solomon builds the temple of God in Jerusalem, he later established idolatrous high places for his foreign wives outside of Jerusalem and worshiped with them, causing him the loss of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:11).

Conclusion

The people were still sacrificing at the pagan **HIGH PLACES** before the temple was built, and Solomon joined them. He should have been following the Law of the LORD in destroying them! But Solomon’s peace loving makeup caused him to not press the issue and it winds up costing him and costing Israel in the long run.

We will see that after the Lord appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, the king returned to Jerusalem and sacrificed offerings; however, he continued to waver between the two places of worship.

Listen, we need to be careful of what doors we open in our lives! Not every open door is from the LORD! A door that causes us to walk away from what the LORD has for us is NOT a door from Him! Satan can open doors too!