

# The world we all want 1 Kings 4v1-34

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[ 0 : 00 ] 10 head of stall-fed cattle, 20 of pasture-fed cattle, 100 sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks, and choice fowl.

For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the river Euphrates, from Tiptia and Gaza, and had peace on all sides. During Solomon's lifetime, Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, and everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

Solomon had 4,000 stalls for chariot horses and 12,000 horses. The district governors each, in his months, supplied provisions for King Solomon, and all who came to the king's table, they saw to it that nothing was lacking.

They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses. God gave 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 people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezraite, wiser than Heman, Calgal, and Darda, the sons of Mahal.

[ 1 : 26 ] And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his song numbered 1,005. He spoke about plant life, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the walls.

He also spoke about animals and birds and reptiles and fish. From all nations, people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world who had heard of his wisdom.

Well, before we start, what I'd like us to do, just by way of ease, you can keep your finger or something. Maybe you can use one of the little cards there and slip it into 1 Kings 4, and then turn all the way back to Genesis chapter 12.

Okay, so keep your finger there in 1 Kings 4, and jump all the way back to Genesis chapter 12. Well, let's pray.

[ 2 : 44 ] Lord, for the food and drink that we have just shared with each other, we say thank you.

And because you are a generous God, we ask that you would continue to pour out your blessing upon us now. Give to us generously your Holy Spirit.

Bring life to these words, that it may cause us to lift our heads, to look to Jesus, to glory in our great and wonderful King.

Help us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, we had been walking for a few hours, and all of a sudden, the talking stopped.

We turned around to a forest, a blaze of reds and oranges and yellow and golds as the autumn leaves began to turn.

[ 4 : 07 ] Below the forest was this deep blue lake, and behind us up above were the towering snow-capped peaks of the Andes Mountains.

The silence, the silence, the crisp, the crisp, cool air. That scene, that beauty remains etched in my mind.

But we all knew that it was an escape from reality. Only the week before, we were working on the edge of a shanty town.

people scraping together in existence, open sores, plastic and tin shacks. the poverty and the pollution was there to see.

But just for those few minutes, as we gazed at the splendour, we escaped the suffering and the brokenness.

[ 5 : 15 ] We all long for those moments to last forever. We long for a good and beautiful world where there is no more suffering or hurts or pain.

Well, 1 Kings chapter 4 paints for us the world that we all long for. It's a picture we can easily miss. We've got this great big long list of names and we've got this strange supply of food for catering purposes. And we look at these lists and we think, no, I won't bother reading that.

And we jump ahead looking for something more exciting. But if you like, stamped across 1 Kings chapter 4 is God's faithful promise to establish a new and beautiful world.

If you want a summary for chapter 4, it's God's faithful promise to establish a beautiful new world. And in chapter 4, God paints for us a picture of the world we all long for.

[ 6 : 29 ] But before we go into the details of chapter 4, we need to look back at God's promise in Genesis chapter 12. First, God promises the world we all long for.

The story of the Bible, which I'm sure is familiar with us all, begins with a beautiful world, doesn't it? The Garden of Eden. Eden means paradise, and it was paradise.

God's people, Adam and Eve, living under God's loving rule. And there they were, enjoying God's abundant provision of all they could ever want or imagine, safe and secure.

It's a place of harmony and beauty. But sadly and tragically, God's people turned and rebelled against God. The world and its people were cursed.

And instead of the harmony, we get sin and suffering. And in place of the beauty, there's death and destruction. Paradise was lost.

[ 7 : 38 ] But into this chaos and into this disorder, God spoke his promise to Abraham.

The promises that we read in chapter 12, verses 1 to 3. God's promises to Abraham were clear. I want to point out four promises that God makes.

Promise number 1, in verse 1. The Lord said to Abraham, go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you, and I will make you into a great nation.

So promise number 1, you are going to be a great nation, a people group. Later, God would promise Abraham that this nation would be as numerous as the grain of sands on the beach.

And then promise number 2. Look again at verse 1. God had said, go to the land I will show you. And verse 7, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to your offspring, I give this land.

[ 8 : 57 ] So God promises the nation that they would have a land, a place in which to live. So a nation, a land, promise number 3.

Let's pick that up again in verse 2. He says, I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you and I will make your name great and you will be a blessing.

This promised nation who live in their own land would be blessed, a land of peace and prosperity, everything they need for life and happiness.

So a nation, a land, a blessing. And then promise number 4, verse 3. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. This blessed people would in turn become a blessing to all the other nations. What does it remind you of?

[ 10 : 10 ] Well, it sounds like the Garden of Eden, doesn't it? A people living in their own land, enjoying God's blessing and being a blessing.

And isn't that what we all long for? Where people are living in joy and happiness, enjoying the beauty and living under God's loving rule.

Everything wonderfully good. Into the chaos and the disorder, God speaks an incredible promise.

Well, how would all this happen? How would God's promise become a reality? Well, second, God's promise world is unveiled for us.

Just jump ahead a couple of chapters to Genesis chapter 17. God speaks to Abraham again.

[ 11 : 17 ] But this time, if we look carefully, he adds another promise. So, Genesis 17, verse 5. No longer will you be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.

I will make you very fruitful. I will make nations of you. And here's the other promise. And kings will come from you.

God promises that kings would come who would bring rule and who would bring blessing to the people.

It was through the king that the blessings that God had promised would become a reality. In particular, a king would come from the line from the line of David.

A king whose kingdom would last forever and ever. And we can read it here. God had promised David this. I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood.

[12:27] And I will establish his kingdom and your throne will be established forever. forever. So, God is promising that a king would come and it is through this king who would make the blessings become a reality.

Now, let's jump to 1 Kings chapter 4 and we'll settle there in chapter 4. because in 1 Kings chapter 4 we see these promises beginning to take shape through God's king.

Look at chapter 4 verse 1. So, King Solomon ruled over all Israel and these were his chief officials and we read down through those names and we see verse 3 there were secretaries there were recorders in verse 4 there's commander-in-chiefs and priests in verse 5 we've got governors and advisors and administrators everything you need to establish order and maintain rule in God's kingdom.

And then in verse 7 Solomon had 12 district governors over all Israel so all of this great big land this nation has been divided into 12 areas who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one so each division had to provide supplies for one month in the year. So if they all did their part there would be food for the 12 months of the year.

[14:18] And we get a big long list of all the people who were involved. But look at the supplies look at all the food that they supply. Verse 22 Solomon's daily provisions were 30 cores that's 5 tons of finest flour.

60 tons or 60 cores that's 10 tons of meal. 10 head of stall fed cattle. 20 of pasture fed cattle.

And 100 sheep and goats as well as deer and gazelles and roebuck and the choicest of fowls. One would only hope that he also got part of his five a day with all that meat.

Someone worked out that this was enough food to supply 5,000 kingdom officials.

This is not just one month's food. This is not a year's food. This is every single day. It's enormous.

The provision and the plenty.

[15:29] There's no chaos going on here. There's no disorder in the ranks. Nobody going on strike saying I haven't got enough. Even the animals are well fed.

Look at verse 26. Solomon had 4,000 some say 40,000 stalls for chariot horses and 12,000 horses. Verse 28.

They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and all the other horses. This is in a magnificent kingdom.

A kingdom so great and wonderful that it was the desire and envy of all the other nations. Look back at verse 21. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the river Euphrates so that's right up into the north to the land of the Philistines over on the west over by the Mediterranean and as far as the border of Egypt right down to the south.

These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life. It's like the author is unveiling to us the splendour of the king's rule tempting us making us envy stand back and be amazed at the glory of this kingdom.

[16:57] Look at how great it is. Look at all the people who are ruling here. Look at all the food that's being supplied. Wouldn't you want to live in this kingdom too?

Now the purpose of this king was to bring blessing to the people just as God had promised. And look how wonderful life is under this king.

Verse 20. The people of Judah in Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

Remember that promise that they would be a great nation just as God had promised?

And here they are as a great number. Verse 20. They ate, they drank, and they were happy. It's like one continuous party, one glorious day after another.

Yes, of course there's work to be done, but everybody's enjoying their work. It's a place of beauty and wonder. It's, well, it's just like paradise.

[18:06] And not only is there a joyful people, but they are abundantly secure. Verse 24. For the king ruled over all the kingdoms west of the river Euphrates, from Tipsha to Gaza, and had peace on all sides.

during Solomon's lifetime, Judah and Israel, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, lived in safety. No crime, no violence, no need to lock your car at night.

Everyone lived in safety. And there's no homelessness here. Look at the end of verse 25. everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

Everyone with their own plot of land, abundantly rich and fertile land, supplying everything that they needed, each one living like a prince or a princess.

It's like paradise. verse 27. The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon. And all who came to the king's table, they saw to it that nothing, nothing was lacking. [ 19 : 33 ] Nothing. Everyone from the king down enjoyed a life of wonderful blessing. It's like Eden.

But I guess that's the point, isn't it? God had promised to create a people who would live in their own land and enjoyed the blessing of God living under his amazing rule.

And here it is on display, unveiled before our eyes in all its beauty and wonder. Stand back and be amazed. God's faithful promise to establish a beautiful new world.

third, God extends his promise of a new world to all nations.

God has unveiled before us what this new world would be like, but this new world is on offer for all nations. Look at verse 29.

[ 20 : 35 ] God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

It wasn't just a great kingdom but a great king who ruled over. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the east and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.

Solomon was like a walking encyclopedia. David Attenborough and Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking all rolled into one. Wouldn't it be great to have somebody around?

You could ask him anything. What's the weather going to be like? What do you think is going to happen? Can you tell us what the skies are predicting? And what about that gnat?

Why does it sting the way it does? Any special treatments for it? You could ask him anything and it seemed he knew the answers to it. But more than that, verse 32, he spoke 3,000 proverbs and his song numbered 1,005, some of which are recorded for us in scripture itself.

[ 21 : 47 ] The book of Proverbs written by Solomon, most of them anyway. Song of songs written by Solomon. God gave Solomon such wonderful wisdom.

But why? Why does Solomon have such vast knowledge knowledge and understanding so that he could be a blessing?

Look at verse 34. From all nations, people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom sent by all the kings of the world who had heard of his wisdom.

God gave Solomon wisdom so that he could rule well to bring peace and prosperity to the people. And now that same blessing is being extended to the nations.

Verse 34, from all the nations, people came to listen to Solomon. They've heard about this great kingdom. They've heard about this great king.

[ 22 : 58 ] They've heard how blessed these people are. And they want to get in on the blessings too. And they're being sent in their droves from all the different nations to come and see.

It was always God's plan. God never intended his blessings to be restricted to just one people, the people of Israel.

God longed that his blessings would flow to all nations and all people groups and all languages.

You see, God's promise of a new world is open to all, to all who will come to his king.

So God promises the world we long for. The promised world is unveiled for us. This promised new world is extended to all nations.

And then force God's people can enjoy this new world through Jesus. You see, 1 Kings chapter 4 is like an unveiling, isn't it?

[ 24 : 13 ] It's like the curtains are being pulled back and we're given a picture, we're given a glimpse of the world that we all long for. But as we gaze in wonder, before our very eyes, the colours on the picture begin to run.

And what was bright and beautiful has become distorted and darkened. It's subtle, but the signs of failure are already written into chapter 4.

Look at the chief officials in verse 2. Look at all the people that Solomon has put together to bring about this glorious kingdom.

He's got secretaries. He's got commanders in chief. He's even got the priests in place. But who's missing?

Who's missing? There's no prophet. Where is God's prophet? The one who spoke God's word, reminding the people of all God's promises and how they should live and receive the promise.

[ 25 : 34 ] It's through the prophets that the promises seem to keep on track. Reminding people and showing people. We saw that right at the very beginning.

David was already old and he had forgotten what he was meant to do. And Nathan the prophet springs into action and brings God's word and rescues the situation. salvation. It seems Solomon has forgotten God's prophet.

God's word doesn't seem to be high priority. And instead of a prophet, look at the end of verse six. We have Adoniram, son of Abda.

What did he do? In charge of... Sorry, is that meant to be in there? Forced labour? That doesn't sound like loving rule to me.

You can be sure that those people under forced labour were not a joyful people. No peace and prosperity for them. This beautiful world pictured before us is beginning to crack.

[ 26 : 46 ] And then in verse 26, we're told that Solomon had 4,000 stalls for chariote horses and 12,000 horses. It sounds very grand, doesn't it?

Well, why don't you just take a look back to Deuteronomy chapter 17. Deuteronomy chapter 17. Deuteronomy chapter 17.

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Deuteronomy chapter 17.io. Deuteronomy 16. So here's God's word saying to the people, look, when you have a king, this is what the king must be like. Deuteronomy 17 verse 16 the king moreover must not acquire what great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to egypt to get more of them solomon no no no horses solomon well why wouldn't he have horses well more than likely because it was a way of building a vast and great army and your dependence was on the army and not on god himself but here in one kings chapter four has solomon forgotten his word all because he didn't have the prophet in place the beautiful world pictured before us in one kings chapter four is tragically being torn apart it's it's beginning to crack the colors are running and it's distorted and darkened like a contagious disease it begins to spread and by the time we reach the end of kings well this model kingdom before us now is broken and destroyed god's people are not in their own land they're in exile they're not enjoying blessing they're in slavery all over again you see the world when it's left in our hands is always doomed to fail left to ourselves we can't create god's new world our sinful hearts are a constant reminder that we are a failed people we do not obey god's word as we should we trundle through life parking it to one side we do not deserve god's new world and yet and yet amazingly god in his grace has made it possible for us to enjoy his new world let me show you how we can enjoy and be part of all that god had promised go to galatians in the new testament galatians galatians chapter 3 and verse 14 galatians 3 verse 14 just one verse see what it says god redeemed us in order that the blessing given to abraham might come to the gentiles through christ jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the spirit so let me just show you three things that guarantee our place in god's new world right from this verse first the faithful promise you see the only way we can ever enjoy god's new world to come is because god is faithful to his promise god is faithful to his promise despite centuries and generations of failure

since solomon and before solomon god still keeps his promise and despite our ongoing failure the promise still stands look at verse 14 he redeemed us in order that the blessings things given to abraham might come to the gentiles to people like us this promised blessing of a people living under god's loving rule and enjoying his favor forever and ever that promise extends to us and is still alive because god is faithful to you and to me that's why we can be guaranteed of our place in the new world but second faith in christ because this promise still stands and the way to receive that promise to experience and to know it for ourselves is by faith so look at verse 14 again he redeemed us in order that the blessing given to abraham might come to the gentiles that's people like us through christ jesus or as he's been saying all the way through chapter 3 through faith you see christ came to take our failure and the suffering and the suffering that we deserve he took the curse upon himself so that we might receive the blessings of the promise the promises that god has made are now ours through our faith in christ jesus the promise of forgiveness of adoption into his family to be loved and cared for now and for all eternity and when christ returns we will receive the fullness of the promise life forever in the new creation god's beautiful new world our place is guaranteed because god is faithful and because of faith in what christ has done and achieved for us but here's the third reason filled with the spirit look at the end of verse 14 so the blessings so the blessings might come to people like us through christ jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the spirit to guarantee our place in god's new world god has given to us his holy spirit the spirit is like god's seal of blessing upon us a mark upon us to say you are mine and you belong to

me and where i am you will be we are never ever going to be separated and god gives to his people fills us with his holy spirit to assure us and to keep us until we are part of god's glorious new world god is faithful and god has come to us in christ and god has filled us with his holy spirit so that we can look forward and be assured that what god promised is ours today and will be ours in all its fullness when christ returns one kings chapter 4 is like an unveiling the curtain being pulled back to just give us a glimpse of what is to come and through  
[ 35 : 34 ] christ it is what we are guaranteed forever and forever let's just stop and pray as we reflect you