

**THE BIBLE AS HISTORY**  
**A SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell



**The Ridge in Jerusalem over Which the Scapegoat was Sent  
Leviticus 16**

**The Bible as History**

**A Survey of the Old Testament**

**The Golden Years of Hebrew History  
The United Kingdom to the Babylonian Captivity**

**The Bible as History**

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**Chapter 9**

## The United Kingdom under Saul

### A King for a Kingdom

Though God had destined Israel to be a unique kingdom among the nations of the world in the form of a theocracy, it was the will of the people to be like other nations. Part of the problem was practical. In his old age Samuel had made his sons judges over the nation (1 Samuel 8:1). The name of his firstborn son was Joel and the name of his second son was Abiah. But his sons were not godly men. They were guilty of accepting bribes in order to give a favorable decision regardless of the facts or justice (1 Samuel 8:2, 3). The conclusion of the people was to overthrow the theocratic kingdom in favor of a monarchy. Unfortunately, this human solution to a spiritual problem only created more concerns for not only was Samuel offended so was the Lord. In holy hurt and divine wrath the Lord told Samuel to give the people what they wanted but warn them of what was to come. Samuel did as instructed. The people were gathered but warned about a certain type of king that would arise.

*“And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day” (1 Samuel 8:11-18).*

### Sins of the Sovereign Ruler of the Land and the Foolishness of the Saints

The specific sinful actions of the new sovereign were enumerated for the people.

- There would be the introduction of forced servitude to minister to the royal household (1 Samuel 8:11).

**Response.** The people thought about that and found the concept exciting that some would be part of the pageantry of royalty.

- There would be the installation of a military draft (1 Samuel 8:12a).

**Response.** The people thought about that and found it patriotic.

- A war industrial complex would be created with resources and energy going not for bread and butter but for weapons of destruction (1 Samuel 8:12b).

**Response.** The people thought about that and dreamed of world conquest.

- Women would be enslaved for harsh domestic work (1 Samuel 8:13).

**Response.** The people thought about that and decided it would not be much extra work for the women.

- Private property would be abolished and redistributed to the undeserving (1 Samuel 8:14).

**Response.** The people thought about that and decided that helping others appealed to their charitable instincts.

- A form of taxation would be laid upon the people for the purpose of paying off political debts (1 Samuel 8:15).

**Response.** The people thought about that and decided they could live on less.

- In the end the monarch would become a dictatorship (1 Samuel 8:16).

**Response.** The people considered that possibility but believed they could handle such a moment by revolt if necessary.

- The people would live to regret the desire to be like other nations and have a king. They will cry and pray but the Lord will not hear (1 Samuel 8:18).

**Response.** The people considered this possibility but decided that God might not be listening to their prayers anyway.

No matter what Samuel warned the matter was settled. The people were determined to have a king regardless of the political, personal or spiritual price they had to pay. Such is the stubbornness of the human heart (1 Samuel 8:19-22). Though the unjust decisions of the sons of Samuel was a grievous problem, striking at the foundation of society was not the wisest solution. Nevertheless, what the people wanted they would have. In this manner God teaches His people the depths of human depravity and the need for Him.

## **The Selection of Saul**

Since the people were determined to have a king God would give them one of His own choosing (1 Samuel 9:15). The young king's name was Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Outwardly Saul was all the people might have dreamed a royal figure should be. He was tall and brave, energetic

and modest. His stated intention was to rule the kingdom according to the Law of Moses and the known will of the Lord so much so that Saul was said to be numbered among the prophets (1 Samuel 10:10-13). Unfortunately, an outward profession of religion does not reveal the secret saturation of sin in the heart. Many a person has appeared in public to be religious and godly while the heart remained full of inward corruption.

### **A Dangerous Personality**

Shortly after being recognized as king by the people (1 Samuel 10:24) the dark side of the soul of Saul emerged as he engaged in one military campaign after another.

### **Saul's Seven Military Campaigns**

- Campaign against the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead
- Campaign against the Philistines at Michmash
- Campaigns against Moab, Edom and Zobah.
- Campaign against the Amalekites
- Campaign against the Philistines under the championship of Goliath
- Campaign against David
- Campaign against the Philistines who kill him in battle on Mt. Gilboa near the Plain of Esdraelon

### **The Waning Years of Samuel**

The emergence of Saul as king caused Samuel to fade in the divine narrative. His ministry was still important to the nation as he taught the Law and established a school of the prophets to do the same ((1 Samuel 10:10, 25) but the salt had lost its savor. The man had a message (1 Samuel 12:1-25) but the people were no longer listening very carefully.

### **First Campaign – War with Jabesh-gilead**

Saul established his headquarters in the town of Gibeah in the tribe of Benjamin. This was the scene of the slaughter of the Levite's concubine and the terrible siege that followed. Word came to Saul that seventy miles away in Jabesh-gilead, lying across the Jordan, the people were being threatened the loss of their right eyes by the Ammonites if they did not surrender the place within a week (1 Samuel 11:1-5). Hearing this report Saul became angry and called for citizen soldiers to gather immediately for war which they did. The result was a great victory for the new king (1 Samuel 11:6-11). An angry people wanted to kill all prisoners of war. A grateful people listened as Saul extended mercy and grace to the same (1 Samuel 11:12-15). With the victory over the Ammonites the authority of Saul was firmly established.

### **Second Campaign – War with the Philistines**

In his second military campaign during the second year of his reign Saul had to contend with thirty thousand plus Philistines (1 Samuel 13:5). Fearing themselves outnumbered the Israelites needed a Word from the Lord that victory would be theirs. To calm their fears Saul did

something very foolish in that he invaded a holy office. *“And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him” (1 Samuel 13:9-10).* Arriving on the scene Samuel comprehended the significance of what Saul had done and properly rebuked the young king. *“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever” (1 Samuel 13:12-13).* It is a serious matter to invade the sacred office of the ministry and to take an unauthorized role upon one’s self.

### **The Military Match at Michmash**

The main force of the Philistines had gathered at the pass of Michmash in the vicinity of Gibeah. Because the pass of Michmash controlled access to the heart of the country it was an important strategic position. With the opposing armies camped together the son of Saul, Jonathan suggested a daring guerilla attack. He and another soldier would climb on top of the crag on the Michmash side and surprise any Philistines that might be posted there. This was done and about twenty Philistines were killed in action (1 Samuel 14:1-16). The dying cries of these men along with a timely quaking of the earth caused the Philistines to panic and flee. The Hebrews pursued the Philistines from Michmash to Beh-aven and westward into the valley of Ajalon where Joshua had long ago chased the Canaanites on the day the sun stood still. At the end of the day, weary with the battle Saul proposed his son Jonathan be put to death for an act of disobedience. But the people would not let this happen for Jonathan was the hero of the day (1 Samuel 14:17-46).

### **Third Campaign – War with Moab, Ammon, Edom and Zobah**

The story of the reign of Saul is the sad story of one military conflict after the other. While often victorious in battle his campaign against the Amalekites proved to be a disaster. Pursuing the various tribes into the southern desert to the borders of Egypt opportunity was provided to destroy people and property in fulfillment of God’s will (1 Samuel 15:10). However, the Word of the Lord was openly violated. Saul thought proper to spare the valuable property of the Amalekites for himself and the people. The result of this defiance was divine discipline in the form of his family being disowned and the kingdom taken from him (1 Samuel 13:14; 15:11, 24-31; 16:1). In place of Saul God would have Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite. The son’s name was David. In gospel obedience to the known will of the Lord Samuel passed over the first seven of Jesse’s sons to anoint the eighth who soon returned to keep His father’s sheep (1 Samuel 16:4-13). In the providence of the Lord this young shepherd would be summoned to the king’s court to play his harp to sooth the king’s nerves and calm his violent temper (1 Samuel 16:14-23).

### **A Giant Named Goliath**

The Greek seafaring people who settled Palestine and became known as the Philistines became the traditional enemies of the Hebrews once Israel began to occupy the land. During the days of King Saul (c. 1025 BC) the Philistines found a champion in the giant of a man named Goliath.

The Masoretic text of 1 Samuel 17:4 says Goliath was 6 cubits and a span, or roughly 9 feet 9 inches. He was a warrior from birth and well-armed to the point he terrorized the best soldiers in the camp of Israel including the warrior-king Saul (1 Samuel 17:1-11). But David was undaunted by the boasting giant. In fact David was so jealous for the Lord God of Israel he became angry with the ungodly Philistine and determined that if no one else fought him, he would – and he did with great success (1 Samuel 17:12-54). Unfortunately for David his success over Goliath led to difficulties with King Saul who became jealous and then murderous in trying to kill David. That part of the story will be told in the narrative on David.

### **The Wickedness of a Witch**

The last encounter Saul had with the Philistines came on the blood soaked fields at the Plain of Esdraelon. Having advanced an army along the seashore the Philistines turned to march towards Shunem. The stage was set for a great battle. Before them lay the heights of Gilboa occupied by the soldiers of Saul. Terrified of what he was facing King Saul sought out a witch at Endor. Though once he had tried to destroy all the soothsayers and wizards according to the will of God (Exodus 22:18) he now went to consult one with a familiar spirit. He wanted to call up the spirit of Samuel who had been dead for several years (1 Samuel 25:1). It is a very sad state when God leaves a man to his own vain imaginations and wicked devises. Speaking to Samuel Saul said, *“I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do”* (1 Samuel 28:15). Samuel could not and would not give any comfort to Saul in his emotional revolt of the soul against God. Samuel would only foretell Saul’s imminent defeat in battle and death (1 Samuel 28:18-19). Perhaps the most tragic part of the narrative is that while Saul was terrified at the judgment of God which fell upon him (1 Samuel 28:20) the emotions passed and he prepared for battle without any sign of gospel repentance. Such is the stubbornness of the human heart that knowing the just judgment of God it persists in evil. Saul did die as Samuel had predicted (1 Samuel 31:1-13). (See Doctrine of Witchcraft and Demonism)

### **Death without Initial Dignity**

Tragically, the sons of Saul died with him as well. When the Philistines discovered the bodies they nailed them to the wall of Beth-shan, a town in the valley of the Jordan. When the men of Jabesh-Gilead heard of what happened they crossed the river Jordan, took the bodies down, re-crossed the Jordan and buried the bodies properly. In this manner the life of Saul came to an end. A few summary statements conclude his life.

- Saul personified the greatest character faults of the Hebrew people – impulsiveness and self-will.
- Saul also manifested at times the greatest character virtues of the Hebrew people, at least during the early years of his life and that is kindness and a great faith in God.
- Was Saul a Christian? Some people argue yes while others argue no. Those who believe that Saul was a Christian point to his initial humility, spiritual sacrifices and his being given to prophesy. Those who do not believe Saul was a Christian point to his jealousy, murderous

spirit and consulting with the dead. Eternity alone will determine if Saul is to be numbered among the elect of God.

- Saul's forty-year reign of Israel ended in great tragedy. His life serves as a warning not to depart from serving the Lord.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 10**

## **The Life of David**

### **Introduction**

Following the death of Saul the way was open for David to rule as king. The reign of David forms one of the most glorious parts of Hebrew history. Coming from the tribe of Judah, David would be used of God to build a strong nation. His father Jesse was a respected man (1 Chron. 2:10) being the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. This in turn meant that David had a spiritual heritage to enjoy as he had a spiritual type to foreshadow. Born in the town of Bethlehem located six miles to the south of Jerusalem, David's life would typify the coming Messiah in many ways. The birth of David took place c. 1080 BC during the days of Samuel who led the nation in repentance and revival. When David is first introduced on the pages of *Scripture* he is a shepherd given to meditation and the appreciation of nature and nature's God, for only a man in love with the Divine could write,

*“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23:1-6).*

### **The Making of a Man**

In the quietness of many hours the shepherd of the hills was being molded by God to be a great man. In time the years of solitude would give way to intense activity of being a great king, a great warrior, a great poet, a great religious reformer. So exalted would David become in the minds of many that even the Messiah would be called the Son of David (Matthew 15:22; 20:30 etc).

### **A Fivefold Division**

The life of David lends itself to a fivefold division.

- The Shepherd's Life at Bethlehem
- The Singer's Life in the Court of King Saul
- The Sought After Life in the Wilderness of Judah and among the Philistines
- The Stable Life at Hebron as King
- The Sovereign's Life at Jerusalem as king of the whole nation

### **Part One The Shepherd's Life at Bethlehem**

During the long days of tending sheep and meditating on nature and the God who made it David was not always idle for there was danger from wild animals. On one occasion David had to defend his sheep from a lion just as Christ must defend His own from the Devil who, “*as a*

*roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). On another occasion David had to deliver the flock from the paws of a bear. The threat these wild animals posed to David and to the sheep was real and life threatening. David did anything and everything to keep his charge safe and secure. The quality of thinking of his duty marked David as a special man. God knew David would do his duty in spiritual matters as well and so we read in Psalm 78:70-72 these words. “He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: 71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.”*

## **Part Two The Singer’s Life in the Court of King Saul**

Once moved from being the Shepherd of the Hills David was called in the providence of God to be a minstrel and armour bearer in the court of King Saul (1 Samuel 16:21,23). That in turn put him in a position to know the affairs of the state and learn of the threat to Israel from Goliath and the Philistines. No longer a child but a man David took the courage in his heart born from prior conflicts and challenged the son of Satan who dared to defy the living God (1 Samuel 17:20-29). According to divine pleasure David emerged victorious over his enemy who was also an enemy of the Father (1 Samuel 17:30-54).

## **Part Three The Sought After Life**

Initially King Saul was well pleased with David and his great accomplishments until one dark day the green-eyed monster of jealousy entered his heart. From that day forward Saul believed thoughts about David that had no basis in reality but that did not matter. For some, perception is reality and so it was that Saul sought to kill David. At least five attempts were made to murder the man who longs to keep the master of Israel safe.

- First, Saul spoke to Jonathan and to his household servants that they should kill David *1 Samuel 19:1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.*
- Second, in his home Saul threw a javelin at David’s head. *1 Samuel 19:10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.*
- Third, Saul sent soldiers to the home of David thinking he was sick. The soldiers were instructed to bring David back on his sick bed. *1 Samuel 19:15 And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.*
- Fourth, Saul sent messengers to Ramah to seize him but the Lord intervened and they were filled with the Spirit. *1 Samuel 19:20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.*

- Fifth, Saul went to Ramah himself only to be numbered with the prophets. *1 Samuel 19:23-24 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?*

### **Divine Protection Remembered in the Psalms**

When Saul could not capture David, in a rage he flung his javelin at his own son Jonathan whom he knew to be a loyal friend to David (1 Samuel 20:33). The Lord protected David from all of his enemies as reflected in Psalm 59. *“To the chief Musician, Al-tas'-chith, Mich'-tam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. 3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. 4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold. 5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah. 6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. 7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear? 8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. 9 Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. 10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield. 12 For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. 13 Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. 14 And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. 15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. 16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. 17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.”*

### **Living outside the Law**

The Flight to Nob. Forced to be a fugitive from human injustice David fled the court of King Saul to Nob, a city of priests located between Gibeah and Jerusalem (1 Samuel 21:1-9). The high priest of Israel resided in Nob along with the portable tabernacle after the occupation of Shiloh. Tragically, David lied to the priest by pretending the king had sent him on an important errand. When the priest showed David hospitality Saul later executed him for helping a traitor. The sins of the saints are grievous and bring not only harm but also death to others.

The Flight to Gath. From Nob David fled westward to the Philistine city of Gath where Goliath once lived. When the servants of King Achish discovered David was in their midst, David grew afraid and decided to feign madness by letting spittle fall upon his beard and scrabbling on the doors. The king finally drove David away declaring with humor he had enough mad men in his kingdom and had no need of another one (1 Samuel 21:15). Psalm 34 records this period in the life of David.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before A-bim'-e-lech; who drove him away, and he departed. *“1 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. 6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encampment round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. 16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. 20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. 22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”*

The Flight to the Cave of Adullam at Mizpeh. Forced to leave Gath David returned to the tribe of Judah to take refuge in the cave of Adullam. When word reached the ears of the people that David had returned to Judah many who were discontent with the rule of Saul joined him (1 Samuel 22:1-2). Like many others before and after him, David was persecuted without cause and suffered unjustly for crimes he never committed. From Adullam David went to Mizpeh of Moab until the prophet of Gad told him to go home which he did (1 Samuel 1 Samuel 22:3-5). It was during this time David learned that King Saul had massacred the priests of Nob for having helped him. Psalms 52, 57 and 142 records this period.

Psalms 52 To the chief Musician, Mas'-chil, A Psalm of David, when Do'-eg the E'dom-ite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of A'him'-e-lech. *“Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. 2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. 3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. 4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. 5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah. 6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: 7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. 8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. 9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.”*

Psalms 57 To the chief Musician, Al-tas'-chith, Mich'-tam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. *“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in*

*the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. 2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. 3 He shall send from heaven, and save from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. 4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. 5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. 6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. 7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. 8 Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. 9 I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. 10 For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. 11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.”*

*Psalms 142 Mas'-chil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave. I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. 2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. 4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. 5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. 6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. 7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

The Flight to the Forest of Hareth in Judah. In this area David fought the Philistines at Keilah while avoiding capture by King Saul. Learning the Keilites would betray him David fled like a bird of prey (1 Samuel 23:1-13).

The Flight to the Wilderness of Ziph. Leaving Keilah David and his six hundred men came to the wilderness of Ziph where he was able to meet with Jonathan and entered into a covenant with the son of the king (1 Samuel 23:16-18). When the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul he fled to Maon.

The Flight to Maon. Totally surrounded by the king's forces David was cut off and was about to be captured when the Lord intervened. Word came to Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land. His personal presence was needed. Since the Philistines were the greater enemy Saul left and David escaped capture once more (1 Samuel 23:19-29). The poetical story of this time period is recorded in Psalm 54.

*Psalms 54 To the chief Musician of Neg'-i-noth, Mas'-chil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziph'ims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us? “Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. 2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. 3 For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah. 4 Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. 5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth. 6 I will freely sacrifice unto*

*thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good. 7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.”*

The Flight to the strongholds of Engedi. Engedi provided an oasis in the barren rocks near the Dead Sea being fertilized by a fountain of living water (S. of Sol. 1:14). When King Saul heard David was in the vicinity he took 3,000 men to capture this fugitive from royal injustice. In the providence of the Lord David was able to find Saul asleep in a cave. Rather than kill the king David cut off the skirt of his robe so that when the king awoke David could demonstrate how his life had been spared (1 Samuel 24:1-15). His conscience being smitten, Saul promised to treat David properly and the two departed in peace. (See Doctrine of the Conscience)

The Flight to Carmel. Able to free himself from Saul for the moment David took his men and went to Carmel in the south of Judah where Nabal, a rich farmer provided for him and his men. With gratitude David provided protection for Nabal and his flocks and herds from Bedouin robbers. When asked to be justly compensated for his protective services David received an insolent response. Only the wise and humble intervention of his wife Abigail kept Nabal from being killed. When Nabal died suddenly David took Abigail for his wife (1 Samuel 25:2-42). During this same time period Samuel also died causing the nation to mourn, for a great leader had fallen in Israel (1 Samuel 25:1). Psalm 63 was written during this time period.

*Psalms 63 A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. 3 Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. 4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: 6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. 7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. 9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. 11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.”*

The Flight to Hachilah. Finding a second opportunity to deliver David into the hands of Saul and gain favor with the king, the Ziphites told the king of David’s presence (1 Samuel 26:1-4). And for the second time, in the providence of the Lord David had a chance to kill Saul but instead spared his life taking only his spear and cruse of water in order to demonstrate how close to the king he had been (1 Samuel 26:5-12). When Saul awoke David made a renewed appeal to the king while taunting Abner the royal bodyguard (1 Samuel 26:13-25). Once more Saul repented of his sin against David and departed in peace.

The Flight to the Philistines. With the departure of Saul David made a decision to live and hide among the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:1-2). Surprisingly enough he is given Ziklag, a border city. But the heart of David was not honest with Achish, for while pretending to be an ally David and his men engaged in genocide by slaughtering men and women and cattle (1 Samuel 27:3-12).

### **Death of King Saul and His Sons**

While the secret blood bath of David and his men continued, more openly did King Saul and his three sons fight the Philistines only to be killed on the field of battle. Even Jonathan died, thus ending not only a great friendship between himself and David but the end of the chance for a son of Saul to rule over Israel (1 Samuel 31:1-13). When the messenger told David of the death of Saul and his sons, hoping to profit financially by the news, David had him executed not knowing the messenger was lying about certain details to his own peril (2 Samuel 1:1-17). In a state of mourning David composed a tender beautiful song celebrating Saul and Jonathan.

### **An Ode to Saul and Jonathan**

2 Samuel 1:19-27

*“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:  
how are the mighty fallen!*

*Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon;  
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.*

*Ye mountains of Gilboa,  
let there be no dew,  
neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings:  
for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,  
the shield of Saul,  
as though he had not been anointed with oil.*

*From the blood of the slain,  
from the fat of the mighty,  
the bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
and the sword of Saul returned not empty.*

*Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
and in their death they were not divided:  
they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.*

*Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights,  
who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.*

*How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
O Jonathan, thou was slain in thine high places.*

*I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
very pleasant hast thou been unto me:  
thy love to me was wonderful,*

*passing the love of women.*

*How are the mighty fallen,  
and the weapons of war perished!”*

## **Part Four** **The Stable Life at Hebron as King**

At the age of thirty, a young but experienced and hardened warrior, men of Judah called David to the throne. Establishing his headquarters at Hebron (2 Samuel 2:1), David reigned for seven and a half years. Hebron was a place of symbolic significance. It was at Hebron Abraham spread his tent under the oak trees. It was in Hebron that Isaac lifted up his eyes to the northern hills and saw camels coming back from Padan-aram with his bride to be. In the sepulchers of Hebron the fathers of the nation rested until the resurrection.

### **A Heart of Gratitude**

As his first official act of business as a king David sent a kind message to the men of Jabesh-gilead thanking them for showing respect to the body of Saul and his sons (1 Samuel 2:5-7). Unfortunately, the kindness of David was not appreciated or accepted. Some members of Saul's family were determined not to surrender the throne without a fight. Under the guidance of Abner, captain of the host, Ish-bosheth, a son of Saul was proclaimed king and was duly recognized by the northern and eastern tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin (2 Samuel 2:8-11). His capital was established at an obscure but well-fortified place called Mahanaim in Gilead, the same place where Jacob had met the angels of the Lord on his way from Padan-aram.

### **The Power behind the Throne**

Though Ishbosheth at age forty was the alleged king it was Abner who was the power behind the throne. Establishing a military headquarters in Gibeon in the tribe of Benjamin, Abner engaged in battle with the forces of David under the authority of Joab. In a military engagement Abner was beaten. Fleeing the scene of the battlefield he was pursued by Asahel, a brother of Joab. Abner turned and killed Asahel (2 Samuel 2:17-23).

Time passed and Abner made peace with David only to be murdered at the hands of Joab much to David's sorrow (2 Samuel 2:25-32; 3:22-39). Never again would David trust Joab for this act of treachery.

## **Part Five** **The Sovereign's Life at Jerusalem as king of the whole nation**

### **A United Kingdom**

With the death of Abner the fighting spirit of the house of Saul was gone. At last, following the assassination of Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 4:5-12) the tribal leaders laid down their weapons of warfare and came to David at Hebron to offer him the crown of a united kingdom (2 Samuel 5:1-5).

### **The Capture of Jerusalem**

With rivals from the house of Saul dead or subdued and with a united kingdom at his command David went forth to capture the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-8). Strategically Jerusalem was better suited to be the capitol than Hebron. Located more centrally in the land, Jerusalem was the place where Melchizedek reigned and where the name of God would be identified. *“But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel”* (2 Chronicles 6:6). On Mt. Moriah, one of the hills nearby, Abraham was commanded to offer up to God his son Isaac. Though the capture of Jerusalem was not without resistance the task was done. Soon afterwards David brought the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem but not without incident reflected in the death of Uzzah who touched the Ark in an unauthorized manner and the disgust of Michal with David for dancing in public in delight (2 Samuel 6:1-20). Finally, the holy city was established.

### **The Hills of Jerusalem**

Jerusalem stands on the upland ridge that runs along the country from north to south rising 2,200 feet above the Mediterranean sea level and 3,500 feet above that of the Dead Sea. The town is surrounded on three sides by steep rocky ravines – the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the east and the Valley of Hinnom (Gehennah) on west and south. In time the Valley of Hinnom would become a place of idol worship to Moloch and then a garbage dump where fires could be seen consuming the refuse. Jesus used the site as a visible representation of hell (Mark 9:44).

The ravines are shaped like a horseshoe spread over four hills or heights: Zion, Moriah, Acra and Bezetha. The most significant hill is that called Zion in the western part of the horseshoe where the initial town of Jerusalem once lay before it expanded. Between the hills are the valleys. The major valley lay between Zion and Moriah and was called by the Romans the Tyropoeon. After seventeen major sieges of Jerusalem some of the valleys have been filled with rubbish changing the landscape. On all sides mountains rise above the holy city. *“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever”* (Psalm 125:2).

The most celebrated of the surrounding mountains is that of Mount Olivet which is to the northeast rising 400 feet above the Valley of Jehoshaphat and 2,500 feet above the Mediterranean Sea. South of Olivet is the Hill of Offence where Solomon foolishly built shrines to Chemosh and Moloch. Opposite Mount Zion is the Hill of Evil Counsel where Caiaphas led the priests and elders to take counsel against the Lord and put Christ to death. In the west Mount Gihon stands guard over the city while Mount Scopus looks out on the north. The Kidron Brook

once ran through the Valley of Jehoshaphat passing the Garden of Gethsemane near the road to the Mount of Olives and to Bethany.

### **The Desire of the Heart**

Once David was secure in Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant and twice victorious over the Philistines in the Valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem (cf. 2 Samuel 23:15-17) he moved to build a permanent Temple for the Lord. Initially, the prophet Nathan approved of the idea to build but afterwards informed David the Lord was against the proposal as stated. David was not to build the Temple but only prepare for its construction which was to be completed by his son Solomon (2 Samuel 7:1-17). Submitting himself to the will of the Sovereign David bowed before the Lord (2 Samuel 7:18-29).

### **A Time to Fight**

The author of Ecclesiastes says that there is a season for everything. There is “*A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up*” (Ecclesiastes 3:3). For much of David’s reign it was a time to fight. In a long series of foreign conflicts David fought against and subdued the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Amalekites and even the Syrians (2 Samuel 8:1-18; 10:1-19). His conquests brought under his control the land stretching between Palestine and the Euphrates as the Lord had promised to Abraham so long ago. God always keeps His word.

- *Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:*
- *Deut 30:5 [Speaking to the nation of Israel Moses said] God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.*
- *Josh 21:43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it.*
- *2 Samuel 8:3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.*

From his foreign conquest and the spoils of war much wealth came into the Hebrew coffers. While kind and tenderhearted to his own countrymen David was ruthless with his enemies. Psalm 60 was written during this time period.

Psalm 60 To the chief Musician upon Shu'-shan-e'-duth, Mich'-tam of David, to teach; when he strove with A'-ram-na-ha-ra'-im and with A'-ram-zo'-bah, when Jo'-ab returned, and smote of E'-dom in the valley of salt twelve thousand. “*O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. 3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. 4 Thou hast given a banner to*

*them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah. 5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me. 6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. 7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; 8 Moab is my wash pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me. 9 Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? 10 Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? And thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? 11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. 12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.”*

### **In the Middle of a Miracle**

As thrilling as the story of the rise of the Hebrew nation is under the reign of David it is nothing less than a miracle and an act of God’s kindness to a sinful man. Having been the object of mercy and grace David wanted to extend mercy and grace to others. In particular David wanted to do good to someone in the house of Saul. Finding that Mephibosheth, a lame son of Jonathan was still alive, the king brought him to Jerusalem and gave him a place of honor in his court (2 Samuel 9:1-13).

### **The Scarlet Sin of Adultery**

With his kingdom secure David was able to send a word of congratulation to king Hanun on his accession to the throne in the kingdom of Ammon on the other side of the Jordan. For some reason the messengers of David were rudely received which led to war. Joab took his army and went to lay siege to Rabbah, the capital of Ammon (2 Samuel 10:1-19). Against this background the Bible records the decline of holiness in the moral life of David because he chose to lust for Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite who was absent as a soldier serving the king. When word came that Bathsheba was with child David tried to cover up his scarlet sin. One of his schemes included having Joab put Uriah into battle and then withdrawing support for him so that he was sure to die (2 Samuel 11:1-25). With the murder of her husband Bathsheba became a wife in the king’s harem (2 Samuel 11:26, 27).

“Sin is such a frightful mien  
That to be hated is but to be seen.  
But seen too often, familiar with its face  
We first endure and then embrace.”

### **Why Do Passions Rule and Ruin Reason?**

Because of the Fall the passions of men have been greatly corrupted. In the moment of temptation the will succumbs to the greatest influence upon it. A mind that does not constrain sin will find it flooding the soul and carrying the body along with it to perform the most unspeakable of vile deeds. The appeal of sin is found in the momentary pleasure a particular passion brings

and the will to power. The gospel demands evil emotions be mortified and the will bow before God once more and obey Him without question or compromise. In gospel obedience there is not only holiness but also honor in operating within the sphere of life for which one was designed. A feeling of honor, a feeling of spiritual happiness, a feeling of joy awaits those who will meet God on His gospel terms. And while it is not easy to obey God even for the Christian (Romans 7), the struggle must continue for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

### **Under the Chastening Rod**

Because God is a God of righteousness no one ever gets away with sin. It may seem that way for the moment but God rules over a moral universe. The Lord does not wait until eternity to deal with wickedness. The Psalmist thought for a moment that the wicked get away with the evil they do until he considered the end of their ways. In the providence of the Lord the prophet Nathan was sent to David to induce a sense of shame and guilt in his heart (2 Samuel 12:1-13). It is a great gift of divine mercy if God grants repentance and sorrow for sin in the heart for it is possible to become gospel hardened.

- Blindness did not stop the homosexuals of Sodom and Gomorrah from seeking to fulfill their lustful desires (Genesis 19:11).
- The consciousness that Bathsheba was the wife of another man did not stop David from committing the scarlet sin of adultery. Nor did the fact that David was a composer of hymns and the king of Israel deter his moral failures.

### **The Strength of Sin**

Such is the strength of sin that it compels the soul to break down all moral, spiritual, social and reasonable barriers. In this manner sin is a great mystery. Sin cannot be understood or comprehended. The apostle Paul spoke of the “*mystery of lawlessness*”. Modern psychology has tried to understand sin and only managed to label sin’s behavioral distinctives in various forms of addictions and aberrations. Theologians have tried to understand sin but can only conclude that sin is a violation of the moral law of God. The medical community has tried to discover why people get angry, murder, rape and rob but can only notice unusual patterns in the brain or a chemical imbalance for some activities and bring them under control by sedation, but nothing is changed in the heart though the bodily impulses are subdued. The conclusion of the matter is that man needs to enter into another mystery, the mystery of righteousness, where by the Creator puts a new heart, new will and new emotions inside of His creation. This divine act of mercy and grace imparted to some is called regeneration or the new birth.

### **Tragedy and Triumph**

Despite sin’s strength God is still sovereign over evil. Though David repented of the evil he had done there were tragic consequences. The baby born of lust would die (2 Samuel 12:16-18). Greater tragedy followed David for a sword never departed out of his house (2 Samuel 12:10). As he had sown, so would he reap. The ways of the transgressor are hard.

## David's Psalms of Penitence

Following the divine confrontation with David through the prophet Nathan, David recorded his broken heart in Psalm 51. The context is that of a prodigal son who has sinned but wants to come home. Other Psalms such as Psalm 140, Psalm 32, and Psalm 40 reveal the same self-loathing the conviction of sin brings with hope in God's mercy and redemption.

Psalm 51:1-19 Ps 51:1-13 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-she'-ba *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

Psalm 140 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. *Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; 2 Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah. 4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. 5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. 6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD. 7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. 8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah. 9 As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. 10 Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. 11 Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. 12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

Psalm 32 Ps 32:1-10 A Psalm of David, Mas'-chil. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. 3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. 6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be*

*found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. 7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. 9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.*

Psalm 40 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. *I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. 2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. 3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. 4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. 5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. 6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. 9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. 10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. 11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me. 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. 13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. 14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. 15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. 16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. 17 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

### **Breaking up the Fallow Ground**

What the Doctrine of Repentance and the Psalms of Penitence reveal is that the heart can be broken up. The believer has a responsibility in the divine process to break up the fallow ground or the heart that has grown hard to gospel truths. “*For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns*” (Jeremiah 4:3).

“*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you*” (Hosea 10:12).

### **A Fighting Family**

As Nathan had predicted the family of David was plagued by many domestic conflicts. The many wives of David resulted in jealousies for Bathsheba preferred her son over others (1 Kings 1:16-17). Ammon, one of David’s sons raped his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-14). This vile act was avenged by Absalom who killed Ammon at a feast (2 Samuel 13:21-33).

## **A Moral Basis for Anger**

The *Bible* says that when David heard about the rape of Tamar he was “*very wroth*” (2 Samuel 13:21). But how is it that David can be morally outraged when he himself has slaughtered his enemies without mercy including women and taken to bed the wife of a faithful soldier while having him murdered? What is David’s moral basis for outrage? Consider the following thoughts.

- If only those who have never sinned or done wrong have a moral basis to condemn bad behavior then no-one would ever be able to pass judgment upon another person “*for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23).
- An act is evil or meritorious in and of itself regardless of who comments on it. David heard what Ammon had done to his sister and David knew that incest was wrong, as did Tamar who had pleaded with Ammon not to commit such a vile deed (2 Samuel 13:12-13).
- The heart of David was not hypocritical when he condemned Ammon for David had judged sin in his own heart and condemned what he himself had done (2 Samuel 12:13). It is always right to be angry with evil wherever it is found, in self or in others.
- The moral outrage David expressed over the rape of Tamar and the condemnation he passed is consistent with the spiritual experience of other Christians. On the Day of Pentecost Peter condemned the people of Israel for denying the Lord of Glory! Peter who had denied Jesus three times condemned others for the very sin he had committed.
- Had David not been outraged at the rape of Tamar his heart would have been all the more hardened and wicked. Had Peter not condemned the crucifixion of Christ then he would be more wicked still.
- When a person is confronted with their own immorality through the immoral acts of others it is a proper time to feel shame and sorrow over past transgressions but not at the expense of denying the present moment and responding to evil in an appropriate manner.
- David’s response to the rape of Tamar was emotional as well as intellectual. The Bible says he was “*very wroth*” or “*very angry*.” The believer’s response to great sin should also be emotional as well as rational though tempered with mercy and grace.

## **A Treacherous Child**

For avenging the death of his sister Absalom became a fugitive from his father. He fled to the relatives of his mother at Geshur in Syria. In time the heart of David softened towards Absalom and a basis for being reconciled was laid by Joab (2 Samuel 14:1-24). For two years after Absalom returned to Jerusalem he was not allowed to see the king. In a desperate attempt to enlist the help of Joab by burning his fields and thus gaining his attention (2 Samuel 14:28-33)

Absalom was eventually able to come back to the king's court. But the return to the king's court proved to be disastrous for Absalom set out to steal the hearts of the people and turn popular opinion away from his father David (2 Samuel 15:1-6). In the life of Absalom the pattern of deceit is crystallized.

- The heart of the deceiver has a different agenda than what appears on the surface. Absalom wanted to be the king of Israel but he pretended to be a loyal son to David and a caring friend of the people.
- The heart of the deceiver is patient. Absalom was past forty years of age when he finally made his move against the king (2 Samuel 15:7).
- The heart of the deceiver uses persuasive speech to present a powerful argument for his position (2 Samuel 15:3-4).
- The heart of the deceiver gathers a faithful following before making a move against established authority divinely appointed.
- The heart of the deceiver justifies every action taken in the name of the greater good for others.
- The heart of the deceiver is ruthless to the bitter end. Once Absalom made his move against David there was no turning back. It was a fight to the death (2 Samuel 15:1-18).
- Initially the deceiver appears vindicated for all that is said or done through a series of early strategic victories in the maneuvering. Why God allows events to unfold in such a manner is a great mystery apart from the spiritual lessons He would have His people to learn and the power He is determined to display over sin and Satan.
- In the end the deceiver shall die under divine judgment and remain under the wrath of God (2 Samuel 18:9-17).
- God's judgment comes to the deceiver because life was lived for self and not for the glory of the Lord. In the case of Absalom he dared to build a monument of pride for himself (1 Samuel 18:18). God will not share His glory with anyone.

### **Considering the Counsel of a Court Adviser**

When Absalom revolted against his father and prevailed to the point that David had to flee the city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 15:14) counsel was needed. Turning to Ahithophel, Absalom listened to his counsel when the advice was given to have sexual relations with the concubines of David in order to establish his authority in the sight of the people. Since this appealed to Absalom's vanity and pride he was ready to follow this counsel (2 Samuel 16:21-23). However,

when Ahithophel suggested a military action against David so that he could not cross the Jordan and redeploy his troops in strength, the counsel was rejected in favor of waiting for a larger army before combat (2 Samuel 17:1-14). Had Absalom listened to the counsel of Ahithophel his personal outcome would have been different. While Absalom delayed military action, David reached Gilead where he made Mahanaim his headquarters (2 Samuel 17:24). There David gathered his forces and patiently waited for Absalom to cross the Jordan. A great battle took place in the oak wood trees of Ephraim. The large army Absalom had brought together was defeated by the army of David led by Jaob. Absalom was killed while fleeing the scene of conflict.

### **The Return to Jerusalem**

With the death of Absalom the political power of David was once more solidified. However, David realized a simple concept and that is a man has no more authority over others than what they are willing to give him. David was in no hurry to return to Jerusalem without the support of the people of Judah. This tribe, his very own, had supported the rebellion. To encourage the tribe to invite David to return to Jerusalem, Zadok and Abiathar the priests went to speak to the leading elders with positive results (2 Samuel 19:11-15). On his way back home David showed great mercy in dealing with Shimei from the tribe of Benjamin who had once cursed the king (2 Samuel 19:16-23). David also extended royal grace and pardon to Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 19:24-30) while inviting Barzillai the Gileadite to come and dwell with him at Jerusalem. Barzillai was too old to take advantage of the king's kindness but he did accept the honor for his son Chimham (2 Samuel 19:31-40).

### **A Song of Remembrance**

Psalms 3 is associated with this period in the life David. A Psalm of David, when he fled from Ab'sa-lom his son. *"LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. 2 Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. 3 But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. 4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. 5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. 7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8 Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah."*

### **Sheba's Insurrection**

For a variety of reasons the revolt against divinely established authority was constant. The closing years of the life of David were spent responding to yet another assault upon his authority. Blowing a trumpet in public to make an open declaration of his intentions, Sheba, a man of Belial (Satan) from the tribe of Benjamin led the revolt (2 Samuel 20:1-2). The charge against the king was petty and personal in the extreme. It was his accusation that the ten tribes had not been properly acknowledged in bringing back the kind. Now everything was reversed. The tribes

that had been loyal to David revolted against him and the tribe of Judah which had been disloyal to David supported him (2 Samuel 20:1-2). Amasa was commanded by David to gather an army to combat this new threat to the throne but he was slow in obedience (2 Samuel 20:4-5). As a result David entrusted Abishai with homeland defense (2 Samuel 20:6).

### **The Assassination of Amasa**

While the forces of David were going forth to battle internal conflict erupted. Jealous at the promotion of Amasa, Joab met him in the open field and while displaying friendship thrust a sword into his body (2 Samuel 20:7-13). Consolidating his forces Joab went on to pursue Sheba and end the insurrection. When David heard how Joab had murdered Amasa he was angry with Joab but had no way to effectively punish him. (See Doctrine of Jealousy)

### **Famine in the Land**

In addition to war with numerous enemies, family unrest and political intrigue, David had to face a food shortage in the land (2 Samuel 21:1). The cause for the famine was traced to the way Saul had killed the Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21:2). Why God waited so many years to deal with this matter is a prerogative of divine sovereignty. Nevertheless, in His universe God has promised, *“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord”* (Rom 12:19). Long after an incident has passed and men forget what was done, God often bursts upon the scene in holy wrath taking vengeance on those who have done evil or causing others to suffer for injustice.

### **A Blood Gift for the Gibeonites**

Historically the Gibeonites had deceived Joshua into making a peace treaty when Israel was conquering the land (Joshua 9:1-11). For this they were to be bondservants to the Hebrews by being *“hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the house of God and altar of Jehovah (Joshua 9:23, 27)*. King Saul broke this covenant. With religious enthusiasm or patriotism he killed some and devised a general massacre of the rest (2 Sam 21:1-2, 5). Time passed. The famine came. David asked the leaders of Gibeon what could be done to atone for the past. Seven men of Saul's descendants were requested by the Gibeonites, who hanged *them “before the Lord”* in Gibeah, Saul's own town (2 Samuel 21: 4, 6, 8-9). Though no mention is made of the Gibeonites as a distinct people after this incident, but many biblical writers include them among the Temple servants, who were appointed for the service of the Temple (1 Chron 9:2).

### **Memorials of Love**

Two of the men delivered to the Gibeonites for execution were the sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah and a concubine of Saul's. Rizpah appointed herself to watch over the bodies during all the seasons to protect them from birds and beasts of prey (2 Samuel 21:10-11).

Inspired by her faithfulness David gathered the bones of Saul and his sons, which had been buried under a tree and reburied them with more honor (2 Samuel 21:12-14). The famine passed. Divine justice had been satisfied.

## Completing the Cycle of Conflict

The last war David had to fight with the traditional enemies of Israel found him in conflict with the son of a giant. As long as the Philistines had a champion they waged war. However, unlike David's first encounter with a giant he was about to be slain by Ishbi-benob until rescued by Abishai (2 Samuel 21:15-17). Realizing the need to protect David and remove him from harm's way the soldiers told him with love and concern, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel" (2 Samuel 21:17). Commemorating this phase of his life is Psalm 18 which is the same as 2 Samuel 22:1-51.

*Psalm 18:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said, "I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. 3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. 4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. 8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. 10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. 12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. 14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. 15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. 16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. 18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. 19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.*

*23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. 24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. 25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; 26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.*

*28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. 29 For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. 30 As for God, his way is*

*perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. 31 For who is God save the LORD? Or who is a rock save our God? 32 It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. 33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places. 34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. 37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. 38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. 40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. 41 They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not. 42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. 43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. 44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. 45 The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. 46 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. 47 It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me. 48 He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. 49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. 50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

### **Still a Sinner as well as a Saint**

The best of men are but men at best and David was no exception. The heartache of God's people is that they never cease from sinning. When one sin is subdued another corruption breaks forth. In his old age, after many years of ruling Israel, after many great moments in history David would anger the Lord by numbering the people of Israel – thereby suggesting a dependence on the arm of the flesh instead of relying upon faith. The sad story is recorded for spiritual edification in 2 Samuel 24:1-9. To his shame David succumbed to pride. He numbered the people in the same manner that a king of Egypt or Assyria might do. After nine months and twenty days the count showed there was an army of 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah. To David's credit he repented as faith returned. *"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God"* (Psalm 20:7).

To his sorrow God still moved to judge the nation in the form of a plague. *"So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. 16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite"* (2 Samuel 24:15-16).

### **Something Good out of Sin**

Romans 8:28 declares that God is sovereign over every situation including sin. God can cause the evil that men do to resound to His glory. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* David was instructed to meet the Destroying Angel of the Lord on Mount Moriah, at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. There a sacrifice was to be offered. There the anger of the Lord was to be appeased. This spot of atonement later became the site of the holy Temple. The rock on which Araunah is said to have used as a threshing floor still remains with the sacred enclosure where the Temple once stood. In preparation for the construction of the Temple David entrusted to Solomon in a solemn ceremony all the resources he had gathered for the buildings construction according to the divine pattern which had been given to him by revelation.

### **The Last Words of David**

2 Samuel 23:1-5 records the last words of David. *“Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, 2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. 3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. 4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. 5 Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.”* The heart of David spoke of a righteous ruler. Even though David realizes that his house and he himself had not been as righteous as he might have been nevertheless the principle stands sure. David knew God had made a covenant with him. The Messiah would one day come and rule the world with righteousness and the people of earth would rejoice. The dawning of a new day would come without clouds. Everyone would be helped and no one would be hurt under the rule of the Righteous One. Jesus is the Righteous One of whom David spoke.

### **Extinguishing the Flickering Light**

At seventy years of age David was going to die. It was visibly manifested the king was no longer in good health. There would soon be a new ruler in Israel and everyone understood that, especially those of his own household. Who would reign after David excited the imagination of many. Adonijah, one of his sons appeared to be the most likely candidate but through the intervention and intercession of Bath-sheba supported by the prophet Nathan the throne went to Solomon (1 Kings 1:1-31).

Calling Solomon to his side David instructed him to immediately eliminate Joab and Shimei without fear. After giving his final words of counsel David died (1 Kings 2:1-11). Having ruled Israel for forty years David died and was buried on Mount Zion.

### **A Singer of Psalms**

In addition to being warrior, king, counselor, prophet, husband, father and administrator David was also a writer of Psalms. Most of the 150 Psalms are ascribed to David and may be divided in a fivefold manner.

- Psalms of Nature 8, 19, 29, 65
- Psalms of Distress and Faith 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 22, 25, 31, 35, 41, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 64, 69, 70, 76, 109, 123, 140, 141, 143, 143
- Psalms of Repentance 32, 38, 39, 51
- Psalms of thanksgiving and Victory 5, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40, 62, 63, 68, 101, 103, 109, 110, 138, 139, 144, 145
- Psalms of the Holy Sanctuary 15, 24, 26, 30, 122, 133.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 11**

#### **The Life of Solomon**

#### **Political Alliance**

The death of David brought Solomon to the throne of Israel. After consolidating his authority and security by a political marriage to the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt (1 Kings 3:1) attention was turned to building the Temple that David had prepared to be constructed. By accounts the Temple was a magnificent structure constructed on Moriah, one of the heights of Jerusalem, separated from Mt. Zion by the Valley of the Tyropoeon over which a bridge had been formed in order to join the two hills (1 Chron. 22:14; 29:4; 2 Chron. 3: 1). On the east of the city, on the spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14) the temple was to be built.

### **The Construction of the Temple**

Because the hill on which the temple was to be built did not afford sufficient level space, a huge wall of solid masonry of great height, in some places more than 200 feet high, was erected across the south of the hill. A similar wall on the eastern side was also constructed. In the spaces between were placed a number of arches and pillars. In order to provide for cleansing for the many bloody sacrifices Solomon provided a sufficient water supply for the temple by hewing in the rocky hill vast cisterns. Special channels conveyed water from the pools near Bethlehem. Just one of these cisterns had the capacity to contain three million gallons. A conduit led off the overflow to the Kidron. It took three years to prepare before work on the Temple began under the supervision of skilled Phoenician builders and workmen. However, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chron. 3) the work began. Many thousands of laborers and skilled artisans were employed in the work. Stones prepared in quarries underneath the city (1 Kings 5:17, 18) of huge dimension were carefully placed on the massive walls. All the blocks were closely fitted together without any mortar between till the whole structure was completed. No sound of hammer or axe or any tool of iron was heard as the structure arose (1 Kings 6:7).

### **The Completion of the Temple**

When the Temple building was completed the inside ceiling was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The highest point on the Temple that King Solomon built was actually 120 cubits tall—about 20 stories or about 207 feet. It was a magnificent building. In the sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies the floor and walls were covered with pure gold. Then, for thirteen years the Temple stood on the summit of Mount Moriah silent and unused. The main reason for this unusual delay seems to be that Solomon's attention was turned to building his own house (1 Kings 7:1).

### **The Consecration of the Temple**

After thirteen years preparations were made for the dedication of the Temple. The Ark of the Covenant was solemnly brought from the tent in which David had deposited it to the place prepared for it in the temple (1 Kings 8:1). The glory-cloud, the symbol of God's presence filled the house (1 Kings 8:10). Then Solomon ascended a platform that had been erected for him. In the sight of all the people Solomon lifted his hands to heaven and prayed to God (1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Chron. 6, 7).

### **The Celebration of the Temple**

The Feast of Dedication for the Temple lasted for seven days. This in turn was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles and marked a new era in the religious history of Israel. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Solomon dismissed the vast assemblage of the people, who returned to their homes filled with joy and gladness for the goodness that the Lord had done for His people (1 Kings 8:66).

### **An Impressive Alliance**

To build the temple Solomon had depended on Hiram, king of Tyre to supply him with cedar wood and skilled workmen. Leaders of other countries found in Solomon a political friend including the Pharaoh of Egypt. More than five hundred years had passed since the time of the Exodus. During that long period no contact had been made between the two nations though Egypt had been involved in many grand events. Egyptian armies had conquered Asia and carved their exploits in the temples of Karnak in Thebes, which is modern Luxor in Lower Egypt. From Egypt Solomon bought horses, linen and a chariot (1 Kings 10:28, 29) despite the divine prohibition. *Deuteronomy 17:16 But he [the king] shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.* From other countries such as Ophir, believed to refer to India and Tarshish on the south coast of Spain, Solomon brought gold and silver, ivory, apes, peacocks and algum-wood (1 Kings 10:22).

### **Solomon and the Queen of Sheba**

One of the more interesting personalities associated with the reign of Solomon was the Queen of Sheba who came to Jerusalem, “*with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart*” (1 Kings 10:2). It is probable that Sheba refers to the kingdom of Yemen located in the southern part of Arabia. Impressed with his wealth and wisdom the Queen of Sheba charmed Solomon and in turn was charmed by him (1 Kings 10:13).

### **Knowledge is not Enough**

Despite Solomon’s great wisdom the heart of Solomon was led astray by the many foreign wives he married in violation of the known will of the Lord. *Deuteronomy 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

The “*strange women*” whom Solomon married (1 Kings 11:1) were strangers to grace and strangers to the God of Israel. However, they were no strangers to their gods or to the brutality of the demands of their gods. The result was Solomon succumbed to do evil in the sight of the Lord by offering his own children to Molech (1 Kings 11:7), and God was provoked to anger.

### **How Does the Heart Become Hardened?**

How does the heart move from humility and worship to hardness and idolatry? The short answer is, “*By degrees.*” While the pollution of sin lies just below the surface of the mind the power of sin snares its practitioners by degrees. Slowly but surely Solomon moved from God to personal

glory until his own splendor became an end unto itself. This movement from God to personal glory can be traced to the following.

- **A voluntarily enslaved to sin will hardened the heart.** While the natural man does not have a free will the Christian man does. With his freed will the Christian can enter into voluntarily enslavement to sin by the choices he makes. Romans 6:16 says, *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*
- **Non-confession of sin will harden the heart.** When sin is not confessed honestly and humbly before the Lord the heart grows hard because the Holy Spirit is first grieved and then quenched. *Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.*
- **Failure to “break up the fallow ground” will keep the heart hardened.** *Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.*

### **The Judgment of God**

Because God does rule over the affairs of men, because God is personally involved in the actions of His creation the sin of Solomon angered the Lord and moved Him to judge Solomon. Following Solomon’s death the kingdom would be taken from him. *1 Kings 11:11-13 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.* To set the process of taking the kingdom from Solomon and to signal divine sincerity the Lord sent Ahijah, a prophet of Shiloh, to share with Jeroboam the will of the Lord. In addition the Lord stirred up the heart of Hadad, an Edomite, and Rezon against Solomon. Sometimes our enemy is really God. Those who arise to oppose God’s people may simple be an instrument of divine justice as the Lord chastens His people for their improper attitude and actions.

### **The Sum of all Matters**

The combined reigns of David and Solomon have been called the Golden Years of Hebrew History. The tragedy of Solomon’s reign is that he was not happy though he knew the way to happiness which is through vital godliness. The motto “*Vanity of vanities*” has become part of his legacy. Despite the great cities he built such as Tadmor (Palmyra) and Baalath (Baalbec), despite the tremendous wealth that poured into his treasury, despite the exotic creatures he enjoyed, the wives he multiplied and the political esteem given to him, Solomon ended his life saying, “*Vanity of vanities.*” Solomon would have been most wise had he listened to his own counsel. “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into*

*judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).”*

### **A Symbol of the Savior**

To his credit Solomon was used of God to write a large part of the Scriptures that will live and abide forever. In addition Solomon was a type of Christ in that his reign was largely peaceful. As David pictured Christ as a Savior and Warrior-King, Solomon pictured Christ as the Peaceful Sovereign who protects and abundantly supplies for His people.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 12**

#### **Ten Tribes and the Kingdom of Israel**

##### **A Revolt under Rehoboam**

The death of Solomon provided for the ascension of his son Rehoboam (lit. *he enlarges the people*). Rehoboam would reign c. 922 – 915 BC. The opportunity was given to ease the tax burden on the people (1 Kings 12:1-5). However, after consulting with both the old men that has served his father and the young men of his own generation Rehoboam did not ease the tax burden but increased it (1 Kings 12:6-15). Angered by the king's position the people of Israel revolted. Adoram, Rehoboam's main tax collector was stoned to death while the new king fled (1 Kings 12:18).

### **A Golden Opportunity**

Seeing a political opportunity to rise to power, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an officer of Solomon's led Israel in a revolt (1 Kings 12:20). During the days of Solomon, Jeroboam had been appointed "*over all the charge of the house of Joseph*" – that is over the tribe of Ephraim and its allies (1 Kings 11:28). Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh had contacted Jeroboam and predicted that ten of the tribes would be entrusted to his care due to the sin of Solomon in seeking false gods. Solomon heard of the prophetic utterance and sought to kill Ahijah but he was able to flee to Egypt under the protection of King Shishak.

### **Introducing Idolatry**

In order to secure his political base and keep the citizens of Israel from returning to Rehoboam, Jeroboam instituted places of worship in Bethel and Dan. "*And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi*" (1 Kings 12:31). Evil is the person that leads people into sin. Evil is the person that turns the hearts of individuals from righteousness to worship a false god. Jeroboam proved himself to be an evil man.

## **Doctrine of Evil in the New Testament**

1. Jesus promised His followers would have a special blessing when they were reviled, persecuted and spoken against in a false manner.
  - *Matthew 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

- *Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*
  - *1 Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*
2. The word for evil in Matthew 5:11 is *poneros* (*pon-ay-ros'*), which means to be “hurtful” in effect or influence.
  3. Jesus instructed his followers to use honesty and simplicity in speaking lest others be hurt.
    - *Matthew 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*
  4. The Lord does not want His followers to resist evil but to embrace it. If Christians naturally have a hard time defending themselves it probably reflects a new nature consistent with the known will of the Lord.
    - *Matthew 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*
  5. The reason why the Lord does not want His disciples to resist the evil or harm is so they might be the children of God and enter into the world of the divine. God the Father is daily spoken against. His holy name is often used as a curse word. Nevertheless, God makes the sun to shine on the evil or those who hurt others and the good. The Lord also sends rain to feed the just and the unjust.
    - *Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*
  6. Christians are to pray to be delivered from the Evil One, the Enemy who would hurt the believer’s effectiveness and damn the soul if possible.
    - *Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*
  7. Of particular concern to Christ is the eye because it is the window to the soul. The eye can be hurtful to the soul as it gazes upon inappropriate material. Eve saw the food was pleasing to the eye and ate. Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the rich plains before Sodom and moved there. David saw Bathsheba bathing and lusted after her.
    - *Matthew 6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

8. In order to avoid worry Jesus told His disciples not to think of the future but to concentrate on what the day might bring.
  - *Matthew 6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*
9. The word for “evil” in Matthew 6:34 is *kakia* (*kak-ee'-ah*) and refers to trouble not of one’s own making.
10. When addressing the human heart the Lord was brutally honest. He said plainly that individuals are capable of being hurtful and yet are able to do good.
  - *Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*
11. Jesus compared the heart to a tree. A good heart will bring forth good fruit but an evil or hurtful heart like a corrupt tree will bring forth fruit that will only harm a person who eats it.
  - *Matthew 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth-good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*
12. There is a spiritual law that like produces like or after its kind.
  - *Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*
13. Knowing the inner most thoughts of men Jesus exposed the source of hurtful ideas entertained.
  - *Matthew 9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*
14. By telling men they are evil by nature the Lord issues a call to repentance.
  - *Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*
15. Those who set out to hurt someone else do so because the heart is hurtful and a reservoir of hurtful techniques have been stored to use through meditation.
  - *Matthew 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth-good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*
16. Much harm is done by false prophets and by those who seek after false prophecy.
  - *Matthew 12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:*

17. The heart is the origin of hurtful thoughts that include murder, adultery, pornography, thievery, lying and blasphemies. This inward corruption necessitated the death of Christ to pay the penalty for the “*wages of sin is death.*” In some way the soul that would be saved must see these corruptions mortified or put to death.
- *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*
18. A heart that is hurtful will accuse others of doing wrong with what is lawfully theirs.
- *Matthew 20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*
19. A person is declared to be evil or a harmful person if provision is made for sin due to divine delay of the Second Advent.
- *Matthew 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;*
20. Pilate recognized the intrinsic goodness of Christ when he asked what “evil” *kakos (kak-os')* or harmful consequences came from the life of Christ?
- *Matthew 27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.*
21. In order to challenge the thinking of being legalistic to the point that others are hurt by certain actions or by the lack of actions Jesus asked if on the Sabbath day it was lawful to do good deeds or “evil” [bad deeds, *kakopoieo (kak-op-oy-eh'-o)*].
- *Mark 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.*
22. While charlatans in the name of Jesus might do much harm, it is the will of the Lord to leave such people alone because they are not speaking reviling His name [speaking evil, *kakologeo (kak-ol-og-eh'-o)*].
- *Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*
23. Jesus instructs His followers to love their enemies, to do good and give to them without any strings of expectations attached such as an attitude of gratitude or a change of behavior. The basis for this expression of grace is to reflect the grace of God, which is extended to those who never show any appreciation and lack inner virtue due to evil [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*].
- *Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

24. The Bible reveals there is a spirit world consisting of angels some of whom have fallen and are called demons or evil [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*] spirits because they lack moral virtue and cause illness. Many mental health problems can be traced to secret attitude and actions that cause anger, jealousy and inordinate lusts. In matchless grace Christ can and will heal those so afflicted.
- *Luke 7:21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.*
  - *Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,*
25. Christians are to ask forgiveness for sin and plead with God to deliver the soul from that which is atrociously wicked [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*].
- *Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*
26. God the Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask for this gift just as parents, though of inferior moral quality or evil [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*] know how to give good gifts to their children.
- *Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*
27. Not all of life is good. Some people have a superabundance of good things while others have a superabundance of injurious or evil [*kakos (kak-os')*] events. Why this is so is a great mystery. Eternity alone will provide the healing and rest those who have been hurt in time need.
- *Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*
28. The Bible explains the reason individuals love physical and moral darkness in the sense of the absence of judgment is because they know their deeds are evil [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*] and have moral culpability.
- *John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*
  - *John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*
29. While salvation does not depend upon good works, those that do wicked or evil deeds [*phaulos (fow'-los)*] will be judged in the resurrection.

- *John 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*
30. Jesus bore witness to the fact that the works of the world are vicious, corrupt and without moral redemption [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*].
- *John 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*
31. The heart of every believer should be encouraged by knowing Jesus has prayed for divine deliverance from performing acts of evil and from Satan himself.
- *John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*
32. During the darkest hours of His life under the most obscene of circumstances Jesus did not act or speak badly in an evil [*kakos (kak-oc'e')*] way.
- *John 18:23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?*
33. Though God is not the actor in sin He is the sovereign of it. Part of the divine decree is that His people be treated in an injurious or evil [*kakoo (kak-o'-o)*] manner for a long period of time.

### **In the Old Testament Era**

- *Acts 7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.*
- *Acts 7:19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.*

### **In the New Testament Era**

- *Acts 9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*
34. It is possible for some individuals to influence others so that their mind becomes evil [*kakoo (kak-o'-o)*] in the sense they want to hurt others.
- *Acts 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.*

### **Paul Speaks of those Invented Evil Things**

- *Romans 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*
35. When the gospel is rejected the heart will cause harsh thoughts to be uttered to revile [*kakologeō (kak-ol-og-eh'-o)*] both the message and the messenger.
- *Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of That Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*
36. Evil spirits are degenerate [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*] by nature though well informed on the person of Jesus Christ and His bonified ministers. Therefore, it is dangerous to tamper with an evil spirit for if they do not recognize authority they will turn on a person and prevail.
- *Acts 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?*
  - *Acts 19:16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*
37. The Christian is to speak respectfully of the ruler of people who ever that ruler might be. It is the will of God.
- *Acts 23:5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil [badly, *kakos (kak-oc'e')*] of the ruler of thy people.*
38. Upon examination it is possible for a believer to be found innocent of evil or worthless behavior [*kakos (kak-os')*].
- *Acts 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.*
39. The Christian can and should live in such a way they invite close examination. Charles Spurgeon one said, “Write my life across the sky.”
- *Acts 24:20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,*
40. Paul invokes a curse upon every soul that doeth evil in the form of moral depravity [*kakos (kak-os')*].
- *Romans 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;*

41. In order to promote grace the Christian must never advocate a life of sin or the practice of evil [*kakos (kak-os')*]. Not understanding the doctrine of grace the critics of Paul declared he was teaching people to do wrong that good might come out of it.

- *Romans 3:8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just.*

42. The heart of the believer struggles with inward corruptions.

- *Romans 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil [*kakos (kak-os')*] that I would not, that I do.*
- *Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

43. The salvation of the soul does not depend on how much good or evil a person does but the sovereign choice of a holy, righteous and sovereign God.

- *Romans 9:11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*

44. The believer is to abhor anything which is evil or influential in causing degeneracy from original virtue [*poneros (pon-ay-ros')*].

- *Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

45. The Christian is forbidden to engage in hurtful acts as a form of retaliation.

- *Romans 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*
- *Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*

46. To help check the expressions of evil God has ordained government.

- *Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*
- *Romans 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

47. The tenderhearted Christian is to help the weaker brother so that Christian freedom is not spoken of in a negative manner.

- *Romans 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of.*
- *Romans 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

48. While some individuals are mature in evil, Paul desires the believer be innocent and even naïve in matters that pertain in what amounts to worthless [*kakos (kak-os')*] behavior.

- *Romans 16:19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*

49. The stories of the *Old Testament* in general and the wilderness experiences of the Hebrew people are taught to illustrate why the believer should not have intense desires after worthless evil [*kakos (kak-os')*] things. The toys of time such as money, food, clothing and sensual pleasures are to be enjoyed. They were never meant to enslave the soul.

- *1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

50. Paul warns the believer not to speak in a vicious [evil, *blasphemo (blas-fay-meh'-o)*] manner against someone who simply uses his or her Christian liberty.

- *1 Corinthians 10:30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?*

51. People sometimes say they “love” someone else and then speak evil of them. Whatever the words are intended to convey, love is not being expressed.

- *1 Corinthians 13:5 [Love] doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no ill or harm [i.e., evil *kakos (kak-os')*].*

52. The Christian is not to be deceived that words have no effect on a person’s character. They do. Because beliefs, behavior and conversation affect character, there is no secret sinning.

- *1 Corinthians 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

53. Paul was the victim of the tongue of the slanderer.

- *2 Corinthians 6:8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;*

54. Christians should pray for one another that they do no evil as Paul prayed for the believers in the city of Corinth.

- *2 Corinthians 13:7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.*

55. When the question is asked, “*Jesus, why did you die?*” part of the answer is that He might deliver some from this present evil world – for evil the world is.

- *Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

56. Time and again the Lord commands Christians to put away evil speaking.

- *Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

57. As the heart is evil, as the world is evil so the days are evil making it necessary to redeem the time.

- *Ephesians 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are hurtful [evil ponerous (pon-ay-ros')].*

58. By the whole armour of God, without a piece being missing, the believer can stand against evil.

- *Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

59. The believer is not to be ignorant of the fact there are worthless or evil [*kakos (kak-os')*] workers in the world and in the church.

- *Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*

60. It is the will of God that the believer mortify or put to death those spiritual inclinations in the heart including “*evil concupiscence*” [*epithumia (ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah)*] which refers to an intense longing for what is forbidden. Christian responsibility for sanctification is clearly involved in the process of mortification.

- *Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

61. The life of a Christian is to be lived so there is no appearance of evil or hurtful wrongdoing.

- *1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

62. Though Christians have a responsibility in the process of sanctification, ultimately it is the Lord who will establish the heart and keep the soul from evil.

- *2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

63. In very graphic language Paul describes the person who rejects doing God's work God's way and the consequences that follow.

- *1 Timothy 6:3-4 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,*

64. In his pastoral epistle Paul traces the source of much evil to an inordinate desire for money.

- *1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

65. Christians are sometimes accused of being an "evildoer" when they are innocent. Nevertheless, the believer can rejoice that the Word of God freely goes forth.

- *2 Timothy 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*

66. There is a natural downward bend to evil so that apart from redeeming grace individuals grow worse and worse.

- *2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

67. Paul named specifically before the church individuals who did him much evil.

- *2 Timothy 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:*

68. Paul believed that ultimately and finally the Lord would deliver him from those who wanted to hurt him, not in time but in eternity.

- *2 Timothy 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

69. Thoughtful non-Christians recognize the natural depravity of the human heart.

- *Titus 1:12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*

70. The Christian is to strive to live in such a way that no one may be able to say anything evil against the life and make the charge stay.
- *Titus 2:8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*
  - *1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.*
71. No matter how tempting or deserving harsh comments may be it is the will of the Lord to speak evil of no man.
- *Titus 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*
  - *James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*
72. The professing Christian is to take heed, to examine the heart to make sure there is no unbelief residing in it leading to a departure from the Lord.
- *Hebrews 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*
73. The mature believer is characterized by an ability to discern both good and evil.
- *Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
74. The blood of Christ cleanses the conscience.
- *Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*
75. Because God cannot be tempted with evil He will never tempt anyone to evil. It is an attack on His holiness to suggest otherwise.
- *James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*
76. Most people have a sense of right and wrong, of what is just and what is evil.
- *James 2:4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?*
77. The apostle James laments how evil the tongue can be apart from sanctifying grace.

- *James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

78. From petty jealousies and strife comes many evil results.

- *James 3:16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

79. Christians are forbidden to boast and even worse to be proud of their boasting.

- *James 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

80. In very simple language the Christian is told to take off like a garment anger, deceit, hypocrisy, jealousies and evil comments.

- *1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

81. A blessing is promised the Christian who does not return evil for evil.

- *1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

82. The way to enjoy life is to guard the lips.

- *1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*
- *1 Peter 3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

83. The face of God is turned against those who do evil or hurt others.

- *1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

84. Sometimes it is the will of God that a believer suffer for doing well. That is better than having to suffer for doing evil.

- *1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

85. The unconverted and the unsanctified think it is strange when the mature believer does not unite with them in unholy acts and so resort to speaking evil.

- *1 Peter 4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

86. When individuals begin to act badly the first casualty is truth.

- *2 Peter 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

87. It is wrong to speak evil of those ordained of God to rule in government.

- *2 Peter 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*
- *Jude 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.*

88. Because individuals are hostile to the gospel and to the doctrines of grace, evil is spoken of the things not understood.

- *2 Peter 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;*
- *Jude 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*

89. Murder lies in the heart of those whose works are evil.

- *1 John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

90. Christians are not to invoke the blessing of God on those who err in doctrine.

- *2 John 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

91. A sign of salvation is to forsake that which hurts others and seek to do good.

- *3 John 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*

92. The church is commended when it does not bear with those who are evil.

- *Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*

### **The Divided Kingdom**

Because Rehoboam acted so foolishly the opportunity was presented for Jeroboam to become king of ten tribes of Israel. The two tribes of Benjamin and Judah united to form the southern

kingdom while the other tribes united to form the northern kingdom. Jeroboam would reign over the northern kingdom for twenty-two years, 922 – 901 BC.

***The Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam***

**922 – 901 BC**

Tribe of Reuben  
Tribe of Simeon  
Tribe of Dan  
Tribe of Naphtali  
Tribe of Gad  
Tribe of Asher  
Tribe of Issachar  
Tribe of Zebulun  
Tribe of Manasseh  
Tribe of Ephraim

*Note.* The northern kingdom lasted for about 200 years. It was conquered in 721 BC by the Assyrians.

**The Southern Kingdom under Rehoboam**

**922 - 915 BC**

## The Tribe of Judah

## The Tribe of Benjamin

**Note. The southern kingdom lasted until 586 BC. The Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar conquered it.**

### The Nineteen Kings of Israel

### The King Ruling in Judah at the same Time

Name	Length of Reign	Prophets	
1. Jeroboam I	22 years	Ahijah	Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa
2. Nadab	2 years		Asa
3. Baasha	24 years	Jehu	Asa
4. Elah	2 years		Asa
5. Zimri	7 days		Asa
6. Omri	12 years		Asa
7. Ahab	22 years	Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha	Asa and Jehoshaphat
8. Ahaziah	2 years		Jehoshaphat
9. Jehoram	12 years		Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah
10. Jehu	28 years		Joash
11. Jehoahaz	17 years		Joash
12. Joash	16 years	Jonah	Joash and Amaziah
13. Jeroboam II	41 years	Hosea, Amos	Amaziah
14. Zachariah	6 months		Uzziah
15. Shallum	1 year		Uzziah
16. Menahem	10 years		Uzziah
17. Pekahiah	2 years		Uzziah
18. Pekah	20 years	Obed	Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz
19. Hoshea	9 years		Ahaz and Hezekiah

### A Kingdom without a Godly King

The *Bible* says in Proverbs 14:34 that “*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*” Tragically, not one of the nineteen kings of Israel is spoken of in a positive way in *Scripture*. Idolatry was state sponsored as calves were set up to be worshiped in Dan and Beth-el. Jeroboam knew what he was doing when he challenged the living God. He just did not care. Romans 1: 32 speaks of individuals, “*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*” Jeroboam was such a person. And so, in the northern and southern sections of the kingdom the king set up idols. Unlike the Law, which required people to go to Jerusalem three times a year to worship Jeroboam required a pilgrimage once a year. In addition Jeroboam presumed to make a mockery of the religious order by appointing the lowest of the people to be priests with himself as a high priest (1 Kings 13:33-34).

### **Seeking the Lord in Secret**

One day, in the providence of God, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam became very sick (1 Kings 14:1). Jeroboam instructed his wife to secretly seek out the true prophet of God, Ahijah, at Shiloh who had earlier told Jeroboam he would become king. The king’s wife went as instructed but in disguise. However, her disguise fooled no one. The message of hope and comfort she wanted to hear was replaced with fearful words of judgment. “*Go, tell Jeroboam,*” cried Ahijah, “*Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel 8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; 9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: 10 Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. 11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it” (1 Kings 14:7-11). Hearing these words the wife of Jeroboam arose and went home to a dead child. The way of the transgressor is hard (1 Kings 14:17). Judgment had fallen upon the house of Jeroboam. After a reign of twenty-two years he too died the death of the wicked and was buried. Nadab his son reigned in his place (1 Kings 14:20).*

### **The Nasty Nadab**

Following the death of Jeroboam the crown rights went to his son who followed the wicked example of his father. After reigning for only two years (909-907 BC) he was killed during the siege of a Philistine town. Baasha, a man of Issachar murdered the king (1 Kings 15:25-27). Whatever might have been memorable during his brief reign was recorded in the chronicles of the kings (1 Kings 15:31).

### **A Belligerent Baasha**

Having murdered Nadab in order to secure the throne, Baasha first put to death all the members of the house of Jeroboam and then moved to fortify Ramah to prevent communication being established with the kingdom of Judah. Baasha was determined to keep his kingdom at all cost. Caring nothing about national unity or pride he agitated for a constant state of conflict with King Asia of Judah until finally Asa was provoked to bribe Ben-hadad, king of Syria to assist him in his troubles with Baasha. Ben-hadad accepted the bribe offered him by King Asa of Judah which led to war with Israel (1 Kings 15:19).

### **Battling Ben-hadad, King of Syria**

In quick strikes Ben-hadad moved his army north against the towns of Ijon, Dan and Abe-beth-maachah (1 Kings 15:20) while conquering the district around the Sea of Galilee and the tribe of Naphtali. Baasha, king of Israel left his building project at Ramah to defend his territories (1 Kings 15:21). The Syrians under the leadership of Ben-hadad withdrew without fighting.

### **The Prophet's Rebuke**

The attempt of Baasha to promote idolatry angered the Lord to the point He sent the prophet Jehu to pronounce judgment upon his reign and his dynasty. *“Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, 2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; 3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat”* (1 Kings 16:1-4). After a godless reign of twenty-four years Baasha died (1 Kings 16:6). His son Elah reigned in his place.

### **A Quick End to Elah**

Lasting only two years as king, Elah was the victim of assassination by a military commander named Zimri, *“captain of half his chariots”*. Taking advantage of his drunken state Zimri murdered Elah in his palace and put to death his family members as well (1 Kings 16:8-12).

### **The Shortest Reign on Record**

The reign of Zimri may be the shortest on record in Jewish history for it lasted only seven days. Opposed by Omri, another claimant to the crown, Zimri was cornered in the palace of Tirzah. In a final act of desperation he set the royal house on fire and perished in the flames c. 885 BC (1 Kings 16:15-20).

### **Two Claimants for the Crown**

The death of Zimri brought civil war to the northern kingdom of Israel. For the next four years Omri and Tibni contested the crown rights. At last the forces of Omri prevailed (c. 880 BC). His reign is remembered for three events. First, Omri purchased a piece of real estate to build a city called Samaria. He named it after Shemer, owner of the hill. Second, the king brought to the kingdom of Judah financial prosperity that was legendary. Third, Omri continued to lead the nation into sin. *“But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities” (1 Kings 16:25-26).*

### **The Despicable Actions of Ahab (874 BC - 853 BC)**

The death of Omri brought his son Ahab to the throne, a name that will live in infamy. Married to the wicked woman Jezebel (lit. *chaste*), the nation of Israel was moved towards idolatry to a new degree, which provoked God to wrath and brought the nation to ruin. Jezebel was the daughter of a neighboring king of Phoenicia and a devout worshipper of Baal. An altar and a temple had been erected to this god.

### **Enter Elijah**

Onto the pages of *Scriptures* stepped a man named Elijah. Without warning his majestic presence is felt. Coming from Tishbe in Gilead, Elijah is a man with a message for the king. In an agricultural society it is a frightening message. *“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1).* Though the terrible word “drought” had not been spoken, that is what Elijah meant. Israel was going to experience a drought until God released the rains through the prophet. Hearing this dark prediction King Ahab was enraged. Who was the madman? Who was this prophet of doom and gloom? In raging fury Ahab sought to arrest Elijah who slipped away to dwell by the brook of Cherith near Jericho where the ravens fed him (1 Kings 17:2-7). When the brook dried up Elijah was instructed by the Lord to move to Zarephath where a widow woman had been instructed to sustain him despite her own poverty (1 Kings 17:8-16). God has strange and unusual ways to take care of His servants but take care of them He will. In gratitude for her kindness Elijah was able to repay the widow lady by raising her son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24).

### **The Battle of the Gods**

By residing in the vicinity of Zidon, a center for the worship of Baal, Elijah was able to view in person the nature of the idolatry Jezebel was promoting in Israel. Holy anger stirred his soul and, after three years he moved to challenge the priests of Baal. A contest would take place on Mount Carmel. The true God would emerge victorious. No longer would the people divide their loyalties between Jehovah and Baal. *“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (1 Kings 18:21).*

The results of the contest were without question. By fire from heaven God revealed himself (1 Kings 18:25-39). The prophets of Baal were hunted down and destroyed (1 Kings 18:40). The rain returned to the land (1 Kings 18:41-46).

## **A Jealous Jezebel**

The victory of Elijah over the prophets of Baal enraged Jezebel. Not only did she lose respect in the eyes of the people, but authority as well. In her hatred for Elijah she was determined to put him to death, if possible, which caused the bold prophet to suddenly become afraid (1 Kings 19:1-3). Fleeing southward, Elijah made his way to the wilderness of Beer-sheba where he despaired of life. Lying down under a juniper tree he wanted to die (1 Kings 19:4). In matchless grace God sent an angel to provide food and water to give him strength for the journey (1 Kings 19:5-8). Sometimes only the Lord can come to a heart and give it the strength needed to continue in life. With renewed energy Elijah was able to reach the desolate area of Horeb where many centuries before Moses had watched a bush burn but not be consumed. From this area Moses had been ordered back to Egypt, God came down amidst fire and lightening to the nation and Moses had prayed for the people following the dance of dances around the golden calf. The area would serve to strengthen the prophet's spiritual strength as the food had been provided to sustain his physical strength.

## **Time to Stop Running**

Having enjoyed a period of physical rest and the presence of the Lord, it was time for Elijah to stop running and return to ministry. Elijah was to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael to be king of Syria. Then he was to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. Finally he was to appoint Elisha to be part of the prophetic ministry (1 Kings 19:15-21). While spiritual depression is part of the Christian experience, it is good to be refreshed by the Lord in order to return to spiritual labor. The primary cure for spiritual depression is hope in the Lord. *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance"* (Psalm 42:5).

## **Enemies of the State**

While Elijah battled depression (1 Kings 19:4), King Ahab was forced to turn his attention to the defense of the nation, for Ben-hadad, king of Syria *"gathered all his host together"* (1 Kings 20:1). Allied with thirty-two other kings this coalition of the willing invaded the north, approached Samaria and demanded the submission of Ahab (1 Kings 20:1-3). Full of fear Ahab capitulated to the unreasonable demands (1 Kings 20:4-7) until his courage was fortified by the leaders of Israel and the prophetic word of God (1 Kings 20:8-13). Despite the unfaithfulness of the people in worshipping Baal, despite the moral bankruptcy of the king, despite the fact the people of Israel deserved to be extinguished, God was going to work a miracle on behalf of the nation and give them a military victory against all odds. Such is the nature of grace. It is extended to the most undeserving. Such is the nature of grace that God's goodness is designed to lead individuals to repentance (Romans 2:4). When the battle was over the Syrian forces fled from the field of conflict (1 Kings 20:15-19).

## **The God of All Creation**

Angered over his military defeat Ben-hadad was determined to avenge his losses. His counselors convinced him that the God of the Hebrews was only the God of the mountains and could be defeated on the open plains by cavalry and chariots. Ben-hadad believed this assessment and within a year returned to fight Israel (1 Kings 20:22-27). But the king of Syria was wrong. The God of the mountains is the God of the valleys. In one day a hundred thousand Syrians were slaughtered on the Plain of Esdraelon. Ben-hadad was captured and brought before Ahab who with misguided compassion pardoned him and made a treaty with him calling him his “*brother*” (1 Kings 20: 28-34). No son of Satan is a child of God or a brother to the truly righteous.

### **The Death of Ahab**

Because Ahab had foolishly entered into a political alliance with Ben-hadad the Lord determined He would remove Ahab from power and put Israel under a greater degree of divine discipline. To communicate this message in the form of a parable a prophet was sent to Ahab. The response of Ahab to the word of the Lord was depression and anger (1 Kings 20:35-43). When the war resumed the campaign would be centered in Ramoth, at Gilead on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Convincing Jehoshaphat, king of Judah to unite with him to wage war, preparations were made for battle. Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord warned with biting sarcasm against the expedition (1 Kings 22:1-29). Ahab refused to listen and put Micaiah into prison, the unjust reward of his labors. Though he tried to disguise himself Ahab did die on the field of battle and his army was scattered. Ben-hadad was left to rule on the Gilead side of the Jordan (1 Kings 22: 1-40).

### **The Curse of Jericho**

A final event associated with the reign of Ahab was the fulfillment of a terrible curse. Hiel, a man of Bethel beheld the beautiful fields and fountains of Jericho and decided to rebuild the walls of the city. While laying the foundation his eldest child suddenly died. And when the gates were finally finished his youngest child died. A historic curse found fulfillment.

- *1 Kings 16:34 In his [King Ahab] days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.*
- *Joshua 6:26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.*

### **The Reign of Ahaziah**

The son and successor of Ahab was Ahaziah. A man given to idolatry, his reign lasted only two years (853 BC - 852 BC). The most memorable event of his short rule was a fall he took in Samaria. Fearful that his life was in jeopardy Ahaziah asked Baal-zebul, the god of Ekron if he would recover.

The “lord of the flies” was silent but the true God of Israel was not. Sending Elijah to publically rebuke the king the prophet was almost arrested. Two times fire from heaven came down and

devoured two sets of soldiers (100 men) sent to take Elijah into custody (2 Kings 1:11). A third set of 50 soldiers was spared.

### **Historical Confirmation**

More than one author has pointed out that while the Bible is not written to be a scientific book or a historical journal when it does speak in matters of science and history it is accurate. Time and again the spade of the archeologist has confirmed a biblical statement such as the fact that Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab (2 Kings 1:1). This event was actually recorded on an ancient slab of stone erected in 850 BC by King Mesha of Moab, a great sheep master (2 Kings 3:4, 5). The stone was discovered at Dibon, Jordan in 1868 by F. A. Klein, a German minister.

Although it was broken when Klein tried to purchase it from the Arabs, most of the pieces have been preserved. The Moabite Stone resides in the Louvre. The language of the Moabites is a Phoenician dialect that closely resembles an early form of Hebrew. According to the stone the Moabites were initially oppressed by Omri. The oppression was continued by his son, Ahab. After forty years of being subject to the political policies of Israel the Moabites rebelled. Initially, there were many military victories under Mesha. Some of the Moabite cities were rebuilt and beautified.

### **A New Leader in Israel**

Following the death of Ahaziah after his brief two-year reign came his brother Jehoram. The son of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehoram was the ninth king of the independent kingdom of Israel and reigned for twelve years, 852 BC - 841 BC (2 Kings 1:17; 3:1). He would die childless having lived godless. During the beginning of the reign of Ahaziah the work of Elijah came to an end.

### **The Translation of the Righteous**

Elijah, the faithful Tishbite, was going to be translated into heaven without dying. In this he was not unique for Enoch had also been translated without dying. *“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him”* (Gen 5:22-24). Death is an intrusion into the natural order of the divine design. One day the curse of death will be removed and the sting of death will vanish. There is a generation that will never see death but will be transformed in a moment. The apostle Paul wrote, *“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”* (1 Corinthians 15:51-55). Going from Gilgal to Bethel and on to the Jordan, Elijah and Elisha traveled together to the appointed place of departure (2 Kings 2:1-8). Spiritual power was invested in Elisha as Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kings 2:9-11).

### **Interesting Speculations**

Whether or not Elijah was on board the chariot of fire with horses of fire when taken up by the whirlwind is interesting speculation but nothing more. Also, the argument that Elijah did not depart for heaven but was merely translated to another place of service on earth is also spurious. This belief is based on the fact that less than eight years later a letter from Elijah is brought to Jehoram predicting his death as Elijah had predicted the death of Ahaziah

- *2 Chronicles 21:12-20 And there came a writing to him [Jehoram] from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: 14 Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: 15 And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. 16 Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: 17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. 18 And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19 And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. 20 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.*

Commenting on this passage Matthew Henry notes *“The Spirit of prophecy might direct Elijah to prepare this writing in the foresight of Jehoram's crimes. He is plainly told that his sin should certainly ruin him. But no marvel that sinners are not frightened from sin, and to repentance, by the threatenings of misery in another world, when the certainty of misery in this world, the sinking of their estates, and the ruin of their health, will not restrain them from vicious courses.”* There is no inconsistency between the story of the translation of Elijah into heaven during the early part of the reign of Jehoram (2 Kings 2:1) and the fact that several years later a letter from him appears to Jehoram.

## **The Kings of Judah**

Rehoboam	928-911
Abijah/Abijam	911-908
Asa	908-867
Jehoshaphat	867-851
Jehoram/Joram	851-843
Ahaziah/Jehoahaz	843-842
❖ Athaliah	842-836 (only queen to occupy the throne of Judah)
Joash/Jehoash	836-799
Amaziah	799-786
Uzziah	786-758
Jotham	758-742
Ahaz	742-726
Hezekiah	726-697
Manasseh	697-642
Amon	642-640
Josiah	640-609
Jehoahaz	609-608
Jehoiakim/Eliakim	608-597
Jehoiachin	597
Zedekiah	597-587

### **The Miracles of Elijah and the Miracles of Elisha**

It is interesting to note that Elisha had asked for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. Based on the miracles each performed it seems that particular prayer was answered.

### **Fourteen Miracles Associated with the Life of Elijah**

- A physical draught lasting for three and one half years. *1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*
- Being fed by the ravens. *1 Kings 17:4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

- Miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil. *1 Kings 17:14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.*
- Resurrection of the widow's son. *1 Kings 17:22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.*
- Calling of fire from heaven on the altar. *1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*
- Causing it to rain. *1 Kings 18:45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.*
- Prophecy that Ahab's sons would all be destroyed. *1 Kings 21:22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.*
- Prophecy that Jezebel would be eaten by dogs. *1 Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*
- Prophecy that Ahaziah would die of his illness. *2 Kings 1:4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.*
- Calling fire from heaven upon the first 50 soldiers. *2 Kings 1: 9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. 10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*
- Calling fire from heaven upon the second set of 50 soldiers. *2 Kings 1:11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. 12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*
- Parting of the Jordan. *2 Kings 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*
- Prophecy that Elisha should have a double portion of his spirit. *2 Kings 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

- Being caught up to heaven in a whirlwind. *2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

### **Twenty-eight Miracles Associated with the Life of Elisha**

- Parting of the Jordan River. *2 Kings 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*
- Healing of the waters. *2 Kings 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.*
- Curse of the she bears. *2 Kings 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*
- Filling of the valley with water. *2 Kings 3:17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.*
- Deception of the Moabites with the valley of blood. *2 Kings 3:22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:*
- Miracle of the vessels of oil. *2 Kings 4:4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.*
- Prophecy that the Shunammite woman would have a son. *2 Kings 4:16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.*
- Resurrection of the Shunammite's son. *2 Kings 4:34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.*
- Healing of the gourds. *2 Kings 4:41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.*
- Miracle of the bread. *2 Kings 4:43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.*

- Healing of Naaman. *2 Kings 5:14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*
- Discernment of Gehazi's transgression. *2 Kings 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?*
- Cursing Gehazi with leprosy. *2 Kings 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*
- Floating of the axe head. *2 Kings 6:6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*
- Prophecy of the Syrian battle plans. *2 Kings 6:9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.*
- Vision of the chariots. *2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*
- Smiting the Syrian army with blindness. *2 Kings 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.*
- Restoring the sight of the Syrian army. *2 Kings 6:20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.*
- Prophecy of the end of the great famine. *2 Kings 7:1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.*
- Prophecy that the scoffing nobleman would see, but not partake of the abundance. *2 Kings 7:2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.*
- Deception of the Syrians with the sound of chariots. *2 Kings 7:6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.*

- Prophecy of the seven-year famine. *2 Kings 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.*
- Prophecy of Benhadad's untimely death. *2 Kings 8:10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.*
- Prophecy of Hazael's cruelty to Israel. *2 Kings 8:12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.*
- Prophecy that Jehu would smite the house of Ahab. *2 Kings 9:7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.*
- Prophecy that Joash would smite the Syrians at Aphek. *2 Kings 13:17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.*
- Prophecy that Joash would smite Syria thrice but not consume it. *2 Kings 13:19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.*
- Resurrection of the man touched by his bones. *2 Kings 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.*

### **The Prominence of the Prophet Elisha**

Following the departure of Elijah, Elisha became the most prominent figure in Israel. His ministry took him from healing the bitter waters of Jericho (2 Kings 2:21) to Beth-el to judge some mocking children (2 Kings 2:23) and from there to Mount Carmel and on to Samaria. While Elisha was in Samaria the trumpet of war blew again. When the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom went forth as a coalition to fight against the king of Moab, Elisha was present (2 Kings 3:1-7). The coalition army moved around the southern end of the Dead Sea so the armies could advance into Moab through the territories of Edom. Desperately in need of water Elisha miraculously supplied it (2 Kings 3:6-20).

### **Travels and Ministry**

After the sound defeat of the king of Moab (2 Kings 3:21-27) Elisha moved on to minister near Jericho or Gilgal where he caused a widow's oil supply to prosper so her needs were met and all her debts were paid (2 Kings 4:1-7).

Next Elisha went to Shunem, in the plain of Jezreel, close to the king's dwelling place, where a woman in the highest echelon of society provided a chamber for his use (2 Kings 4:8-11). To show his appreciation Elisha asked the woman what she would like. The answer, a child. *"And he [Elisha] said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid"* (2 Kings 4:16). But Elisha was not wrong. *"And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life"* (2 Kings 4:17).

After being at Shunem, Elisha went to Mount Carmel where he hears of the death of the Shunammite's son whom he is able to raise back to life (2 Kings 4:18-37). Then he is found in Gilgal where he performs a miracle to protect the sons of the prophets from the poisonous effects of a herb. Food was multiplied so that over a hundred men were served (2 Kings 4: 38-44).

### **New Life for Leprosy**

Elisha performed miracle upon miracle. One of the most memorable was the healing of Naaman, the captain general of the army of the king of Syria. The story is filled with tender touches such as the little slave girl who had been kidnapped from Israel and sold to Naaman. Instead of rejoicing at his plight the girl had pity upon him and told him of the prophet Elisha. The king of Syria sent monetary gifts and a letter to the king of Israel asking for the help of Elisha.

However, King Jehoram was filled with fear that the king of Syria was simply trying to provoke a war with him. When word reached Elisha about all that had transpired he told Naaman what he had to do to be healed. Naaman was to go and wash seven times in the Jordan. Eventually Naaman obeyed and was completely healed (2 Kings 5:1-14). Not only was Naaman cured physically he was cured spiritually for the God of Israel became his God. To reflect this he packed two mules with earth in order to have a sacred spot to worship the Lord and asked to be pardoned when he paid outward homage to Rimmon, an obscure god of Syria who was worshipped in Damascus (2 Kings 5:5:15-19).

### **Greedy for Gain**

Following the miraculous healing, Naaman departed northward, up the Jordan Valley towards Damascus. He had not traveled far when Gehazi, the servant of Elisha came after him to request financial compensation in the name of the prophet. What was asked for was received (2 Kings 5:22-24). However, it was wrong for Gehazi to demand money for ministry. It was wrong for him to lie. It was wrong to make merchandise out of God's people. Elisha had not asked for compensation. Gehazi simply lied about that.

For his great sin Gehazi was to suffer the plague of leprosy that had afflicted Naaman. *2 Kings 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*

The Bible warns that the love of money is the root of all evil. *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Timothy 6:10-11).*

### **A School for the Prophets**

Following the incident with Naaman and Gehazi the sons of the prophets asked Elisha to help them establish a building where they could be together without being crowded. Apparently the idea was to stay together and learn. Permission was granted and a spot was found near the Jordan River where wood began to be cut for construction. *“But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! For it was borrowed” (2 Kings 6:5).* Cutting down a stick Elisha cast that into the water where the axe head fell off *“and the iron did swim” (2 Kings 6:6).* Commenting on this passage Matthew Henry says, *“Had the axe been his own, it would only have troubled him that he could not be further serviceable to his brethren; but now, besides that, it troubles him that he cannot be just to the owner, to whom he ought to be not only just but grateful. Note, We ought to be as careful of that which is borrowed as of that which is our own, that it receives no damage, because we must love our neighbour as ourselves and do as we would be done by. It is likely this prophet was poor, and had not wherewithal to pay for the axe, which made the loss of it so much the greater trouble. To those that have an honest mind the sorest grievance of poverty is not so much their own want or disgrace as their being by it rendered unable to pay their just debts.”*

### **War with Syria**

Soon after the axe-head incident the king of Syria moved against the Hebrews once more believing he had a chance to capture the king of Israel not once but twice, only to find he had escaped due to the prophetic word of Elisha (2 Kings 6:8-12). Believing that Elisha could be captured in Dothan, blindness came upon the Syrian army as it was led into Samaria (2 Kings 6:12-19). Once inside the city the blindness was lifted. The king of Syria was at the total mercy of the Hebrews. Rather than kill him and his army Elisha instructed the king of Israel to show kindness to his enemy by feeding them and letting them go (2 Kings 6:21-23). Jesus said, *“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).*

### **The Return of Ben-hadad**

Unfortunately the kindness extended to Ben-hadad did not change his heart. Returning to Samaria with the intention of starving the city into submission the king of Syria remained ruthless. Conditions in Samaria became desperate. Cannibalism broke out as women devoured their own children. Looking for someone to blame, King Jehoram of Israel pointed to Elisha and vowed that he would behead the prophet (2 Kings 6:24-33). Unmoved by the king’s anger Elisha calmly predicted that the next day the people of Samaria would be enjoying prosperity. In a day God can change cursing into blessing and poverty into plenty. The prophetic word was literally fulfilled. Scattered by a midnight panic the Syrian army fled into the night leaving all of their provisions (2 Kings 7:1-16).

## **A Prophet with Honor**

Seven years after the scattering of the Syrian army Elisha visited Damascus. He was received with extraordinary gifts borne by forty camels (2 Kings 8:7-9). Perhaps the apostle Paul would remember the ordeals of Elisha and be able to write, *“I [too] know both how to be abased, and I [too] know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Phil 4:12-13). The gifts conveyed to Elisha were not altruistic in nature. The king of Syria, Ben-hadad had an ulterior motive. He wanted to be healed of a disease he had incurred. Sending a military messenger named Hazael to Elisha he asked the prophet saying, *“Shall I recover of this disease?”* With sanctified sarcasm Elisha replied, *“And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die”* (2 Kings 8:10).

## **A Matter of Murder**

After flashing his sense of dark humor Elisha grew sober and began to weep. When Hazael asked why he was crying Elisha responded honestly. He was crying for the great crimes Hazael would commit against humanity when he became the next king of Syria, for become the next king he would, God had so decreed it (2 Kings 8:11-14). Returning to King Ben-hadad an evil plot was born in the heart of Hazael. He could be king sooner rather than later. All he had to do was murder the king.

*“And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead”* (2 Kings 8:15).

## **The End of a Dynasty**

For the sins of idolatry and murder the judgment fell upon the house of Ahab. The beginning of the end for this dynasty began with a new war between Syria and Israel. The city of contest was Ramoth-Gilead. King Jehoram of northern Israel was wounded in battle and retired to Jezreel. His cousin, King Ahaziah of Judah came to visit him. Meanwhile, Jehu, a captain of Jehoram’s continued conducting the campaign against Syria at Ramoth-Gilead. At this point the divine narrative takes a surprising turn for one of the sons of the prophets was sent to Ramoth to anoint Jehu king of Israel. As such he was to destroy the house of Ahab (8:25-9:10). Jehu accepted not only the divine enthronement but also the bloody role of royal executioner. With the support of the army Jehu mounted his chariot and crossed the Jordan, moving rapidly towards Jezreel. As he dashed along, the watchman from the tower of Jezreel saw him approaching and notified the king. Both Jehoram, king of Israel and twenty-three year old Ahaziah, king of Judah rode out to meet him. Watching their approach Jehu took an arrow and shot it at Jehoram. The arrow found a vital organ and Jehoram, king of Israel was killed in the vineyard of Naboth. Turning to flee, Ahaziah was pursued to Megiddo where he was mortally wounded (2 Kings 9:15-29).

Waiting back at the palace, Jezebel was thrown from a window in Jezreel to be devoured by the dogs (2 Kings 9:30-37). Seventy sons of Ahab were put to death as well. Their heads were put in a basket and sent to Jezreel (2 Kings 10:1-7). Finally, all the priests of Baal were executed as

well. “*So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining*” (2 Kings 10:11).

### **Incomplete Obedience**

Though Jehu did end the dynasty of Ahab and removed the priests of Baal, the symbols of false worship in the form of the calves in Beth-el and Dan were not destroyed. “*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” (Gal 5:9) and little sins corrupt the whole. Because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord the territories associated with Israel began to be taken away during the reign of Jehu (*Jehovah is He*; 879 BC - 850 BC). Extra biblical Assyrian monuments record that Jehu was obliged to pay tribute to Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

## Chapter 13

### The Era of Jonah, Amos, and Hosea

#### Nothing Unusual

The reigns of Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash (Jehoash) his son and grandson covered a period of sixty years without any unusual events. Sometime during the reign of Joash (lit. *Jehovah has given*) the eighth king of Israel, the prophet Elisha died. While he was not able to eradicate idolatry in the nation he was instrumental in arresting its spread so the judgment of God upon the nation was delayed. Also, during the days of Joash and his son Jeroboam II the kingdom of Israel recovered some of the land it had lost in previous generations. It was during the reign of Jeroboam II that some of the Minor Prophets appeared to leave behind their contributions to the canon of *Scriptures*—Jonah, Amos, and Hosea. These were the prophets to the northern kingdom, Israel.

#### Prophets of Doom

There is a principle in the divine economy that grace precedes judgment. The grace of God in the form of a warning and a call to repentance precedes any expression of divine favor. In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were warned not to eat of the forbidden fruit. Grace preceded judgment. Noah was able to preach to his generation about a coming flood. Grace preceded judgment. So the prophets arose to warn Israel that God would not always tolerate the social injustice and the religious idolatry of the nation. Grace was preceding judgment.

#### A Heavy Burden to Bear

The prophets of Israel took no pleasure in preaching the messages God gave them. It was a “burden”, a heavy, painful and mentally distressing job they were asked to perform. Nevertheless the men called of God to preach would proclaim what the Spirit of God directed them in gospel obedience and also to encourage the hearts of the faithful that despite God’s righteous judgment He would be faithful to His covenant promises. There would come a restoration. Most importantly the prophets spoke of the Messiah to come.

#### The Reluctant Prophet

Among the most reluctant of the prophets of God was Jonah. A native of Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, Jonah appeared during the reign of Joash (2 Kings 14:25). It is possible that Jonah had been a disciple of Elisha’s and had succeeded him in public ministry. The first prophetic utterance of Jonah was a word of encouragement; Israel would once more be great among the nations of the earth. The people rejoiced. This prophecy was fulfilled during the reign of Jeroboam II who recovered for Israel Hamath, Damascus and other cities that had been lost (2 Kings 14:25).

But the blessings of God were abused and soon idolatry was rampant again in the land. To rebuke Israel and to illustrate how the Lord can use non-covenantal nations for His glory the Lord told Jonah to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, which was the capitol of Assyria. If

Vul-nizari III was the king of Assyria at this time then Jonah was to speak to a great warrior who was known for his campaigns against Syria. But Jonah did not want to preach to the people of Nineveh. Jonah did not want God's grace and mercy to be extended to the Assyrians. His book tells the story of his reluctance, and how the Lord overcame his will in a miraculous event and the results of his final gospel obedience.

**Salvation is of the Lord**  
**A Sermon on the Prophet Jonah**

**Dr. Stanford E. Murrell**

Jonah was a reluctant prophet. When the word of the Lord came to Jonah and commissioned him to go to Nineveh, that Great City, and cry against it. The nationalistic spirit of Jonah caused him to say, "No!" Jonah would have said "Yes!" to any positive message that God might have had for Israel (Romans 9:1- 5) but when it came to preaching to the enemies of Israel, Jonah said, "No!" There was a reason. Jonah knew the great grace and mercy of God. He knew how longsuffering the Lord could be. Despite the abominations of the heathens they could still be converted and Jonah did not want that to happen. He was personally very angry with his national enemies.

Historically, the Assyrians had been very hostile to Israel. Why should they now be helped? They deserved to be destroyed. So Jonah left the ministry instead of preaching the gospel of redeeming grace. In leaving the sphere of ministry Jonah decided to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Located in western Spain, the servant of God tried to get as far as geographically possible from the place where he knew the Lord wanted Him to be. It was Jonah's considered opinion that the people of Nineveh did not deserve to hear the gospel of redeeming grace. They deserved to be left in ignorance and spiritual darkness for the people of Nineveh were known for their greed and selfishness and cruelty. Jonah wanted not grace but judgment to come to Assyria.

However, God almighty did not ask Jonah his opinion about this matter. The Lord simply commanded Jonah to obey. But Jonah could be stubborn. We do not find the prophet even piously praying about the matter in an effort to get God to change His mind. We do find Jonah beginning to run from God and therefore running into trouble as he boarded a ship heading for the wide-open sea.

It was not long before Jonah found himself alienated from the other people on board ship. There is always something distinct about God's people no matter how hard they try to hide the fact. As David was discovered by some discerning Philistines to be different, as a little maid observed that Peter was a disciple of Jesus, so Jonah was found to be different from the other seamen. Once discovered, by his own confession, Jonah said he was the cause for the unusual turbulent waters the ship had sailed into. He should be cast overboard, he said. And finally he was. Once in the raging waters of the sea, with the waves pounding and cascading upon his head, Jonah may have thought that his minutes alive were numbered.

He believed that he would soon have to pay the ultimate price for disobedience to the known will of God. To his surprise if not sheer terror, Jonah looked into the murky mist and beheld a great fish coming his way.

With a mouth opened as wide as a canyon, the fish swallowed Jonah with one massive gulp. For three days and three nights Jonah would ride as a passenger on the most unique submarine in history. In reading the story of Jonah and the great fish, there are two basic ways to understand the biblical narrative.

The first is to treat the event as a Jewish myth with meaningful lessons to learn. That is how many liberal theologians and skeptic read their *Bibles*.

The second way to understand this narrative is to consider this whole event as a literal and historical event that really did take place. We can take by simple faith that what the *Bible* says happened, happened. Someone said once, *"I believe that the whale swallowed Jonah and if the Bible had said that Jonah swallowed the whale, I would have believed that too."* That is God honoring childlike faith.

In all points great and small the *Bible* is to be trusted. Charles Spurgeon said, *"I would recommend you either believe God up to the hilt, or else not to believe at all. Believe this book of God, every letter of it, or else reject it. There is no logical standing place between the two. Be satisfied with nothing less than a faith that swims in the deeps of divine revelation; a faith that paddles about the edge of the water is poor faith at best. It is little better than a dry-land faith, and is not good for much."*

In Matthew 12:40 we find that Jesus Christ believed in the story of Jonah and the whale. The Lord referred to this event as a perfect picture of His own death, burial, and resurrection. *"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* While in the belly of the whale, the *Bible* says that Jonah began to pray. We do not find Jonah praying up to this point. We find him in open revolt running away from God. Jonah did not pray until there was a great crisis in his life. The irony is that the heathen sailors had acted better than Jonah in this matter for they began to pray to their gods very quickly when the storms of life broke over them. But not Jonah. Only when the prophet was in the depths of despair in the midst of the sea did he cry out unto the Lord.

The experience of Jonah is not unique. How often do God's people act the same way. The pressures of life begin to build but we do not pray. The storm clouds gather. There is thunder and lightening and the threat of disaster. Still, no prayers are offered to calm the raging winds. The heart is cold. The will is stubborn. God is forced to deal more harshly in order to subdue the will of His own and conform it into His image. One can only wonder what might have happened if early on when the storm broke out Jonah had not only recognized his sin (Jonah 1:9) but also confessed his attitude and actions as sin and repented. But Jonah did not confess. He did not repent until the heavy hand of divine discipline swung in judgment and others were caught up in the prophet's moment of chastisement. There was a great crisis and Jonah was about to perish when he began to pray.

The narrative tells us not only when Jonah prayed (Jonah 2:1) but why he prayed (Jonah 2:2). Simply enough, Jonah prayed because of his great affliction. Jonah was being afflicted because of his sin. When affliction comes it is not improper to ask the one seeking comfort, *"Have you*

*confessed specifically all known sins to the Saviour?"* We must go beyond the general prayer for the forgiveness of sin. Sins are single and particular.

We need to be specific with the Lord for there is a spiritual cause and effect relationship to what happens in life if sin is involved. The psalmist said, *"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long"* (Psalm 32:3).

As there is great discipline for willful sinning, so there is great mercy when transgressions are confessed and forsaken. Jonah said, *"I cried and thou heardest my voice."* Jonah knew God would hear. Jonah understood something about the matchless character of God. Jonah understood that the Lord delights in showing mercy. Mercy can only be shown to those who are conscious of needing it. The prophet, in the belly of the whale, in the depths of the sea, had only one hope for salvation and that was the grace of God. He who had shown no mercy to others now needed the same.

There is a wonderful story associated with Napoleon. A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. *"But I don't ask for justice,"* the mother explained. *"I plead for mercy."* *"But your son does not deserve mercy,"* Napoleon replied. *"Sir,"* the woman cried, *"it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for."* *"Well, then,"* the emperor said, *"I will have mercy."* And he spared the woman's son. Jonah cried and he was heard. God spared him for there is no distance too far for the cry of a human heart to reach the ear of God. There is no place beyond the watchful eye of God to behold.

Today, all over the world, people are calling upon God. Some are at home. Others are at church. Some are in trouble. Others are at peace. Wherever people are found calling upon the Lord, there is assurance that He hears. Access to God is something like a large multitude of people going to the Atlantic Ocean with a cup. Thousands upon thousands can dip their cup into the splashing water and take what they need and still the ocean is not drained. Jonah's knowledge about the Lord created a measure of hope in his heart. His faith cried out in 2:3, *"though I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple."* With these words, we hear something of the great faith of the prophet Jonah. Many people have asked the question, *"How can I have great faith?"* The answer is simple, *"Know God."* Know that God will not be mocked and sin will be dealt with in time as well as in eternity. Know also that God is good. There is hope and hope turns into faith. *"I will look again toward thy holy temple,"* said Jonah. *"Despite my sin, despite my failure, despite my rebellion, I will look again toward thy holy temple."*

The holy temple was the dwelling place of God with man.

The holy temple was where the Shekinah glory dwelt.

The holy temple was the place of sacrifice and offerings.

Jonah thought that he could live without the church.

Jonah thought that if he got far enough away from church and the presence of the Lord that he would find peace, security, and happiness.

Jonah thought that the absence of holy duties and righteous demands would make him free.

Jonah thought that if he just said *"No!"* to serving God somehow he would be more mature and more in control of his life. In all of this Jonah was wrong and he admitted it. His heart longed to see the Holy Temple once more. It is a sad truth of human experience that we never really

appreciate what we have until we have them no more. While spiritual objects surround us we think that we can do quite well without religion and without the Lord. Then we are forced to learn the lesson of Jonah 2:8. *“They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.”* There are many lying vanities.

First, there is the lie that a person can go somewhere and be free of the eye of God. Many people find themselves tempted to abandon going to church, reading their Bible. People are tempted to stop praying and singing. There is always a sense of release and freedom when religious duties are no longer faithfully rendered. There is also the forsaking of mercy.

Second, there is the lie that we can be wiser than God in determining who is to have the gospel message. Jonah had determined that the people of Nineveh should never hear the gospel of grace. Jonah forgot that *“God will have mercy on whom He wills.”* Jonah wanted national Israel to be saved and no one else. Because of grace, Jonah was finally able to forsake all of the lying vanities and bond himself afresh to the Lord with a holy vow. Jonah came to the point where he was willing once more to offer sacrifice and praise to the Lord. Jonah became determined to perform all that he had vowed to do.

Jonah became a prophet with a holy passion. He became a new man with a virtuous sincerity. Jonah was given a second chance because he learned that, *“salvation is of the Lord!”* The people of Nineveh had only one hope and that was God would send them the message of salvation. Jonah had only one hope and that was the Lord would show mercy to him and provide salvation. The Lord did have mercy for we read that, *“the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land.”*

As Jonah lay on the dry land he looked around. Life was suddenly beautiful and wonderful. The sky never looked so blue. The sun never looked so bright. The sandy beach was lovely against the green sea. As he lay on the beach, one phrase kept ringing in his ears, *“Salvation is of the Lord!”* That is always true. Salvation is of the Lord. Matthew Henry comments, *“Jonah's experience shall encourage others, in all ages, to trust in God as the God of their salvation; all that read this story shall say with assurance, say with admiration, that salvation is of the Lord, and is sure to all that belong to Him.”* *“Do you belong to Jesus?”* *“Is God your Father?”* *“Is Christ your Savior?”* If not, may the Spirit of the living God make His Son real to you so that you know, *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* Come to Christ.

During the Spanish-American War, Clara Barton was overseeing the work of the Red Cross in Cuba. One day Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came to her. He wanted to buy food for his sick and wounded Rough Riders. However, Clara Barton refused to sell him any supplies. Roosevelt was perplexed. His men needed the help and he was prepared to pay out of his own funds. When he asked someone why he could not buy the supplies, he was told, *“Colonel, just ask for it!”* A smile broke over Roosevelt's face. Now he understood—the provisions were not for sale. All he had to do was simply ask and they would be given freely. God's grace is not for sale. It is free for the asking.

*“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Once salvation becomes a personal possession there is more of a willingness to share the way of salvation with others. In the early part of the 1990's workmen removed marble wainscoting in the lobby of the Washington Monument as part of a yearlong \$500,000 renovation project. Some graffiti had

been written during the 1800's and this is what it said. *"Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory more lofty and enduring (sic) than this."* It is signed BFB. No one knows who that is, or who left the small drawings and 19th century dates on other walls but the message is true. *"Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory."* Like Jonah, we might be reluctant witnesses, but witness we must. Go now and tell others. *Salvation is of the Lord.*

### **The Prophet Amos**

Also ministering during the reign of the fourteenth king of Israel, Jeroboam II (793 BC - 753 BC), was the prophet Amos. A herdsman from Tekoa, in the kingdom of Judah, he was called to give prophetic words to the northern kingdom of Israel and so he relocated to Beth-el (Amos 7:13). With great boldness he pronounced the destruction of Israel and other kingdoms. Of particular concern was the corruption of justice in the land, violence against the poor and crass materialism. In a series of symbolic visions Amos foretold the various punishments that would fall upon Israel and the captivity of the ten tribes leading to a Diaspora. Nevertheless, God would be faithful and after a time of cleansing among the nations the Hebrews would once more return home where the temple of David should be constructed once more (Amos 9:11).

### **The Prophet Hosea**

Beginning his ministry near the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, Hosea ministered for sixty years to the ten tribes, until Hoshea, the last of the kings of Israel (c. 732-721 BC). Like Jeremiah, Hosea was a weeping prophet. He cried over the people and the prophetic words he had to utter. The nation was morally corrupt and ready for judgment. *"They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies. 4 They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened. 5 In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners. 6 For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. 7 They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me"* (Hosea 7:3-7). There is a saturation point of sin in an individual soul and in the soul life of a nation. After that point is reached God moves to judge the nation severely. The specific transgressions of Israel were enumerated.

- Government officials lied.
- Married people committed adultery.
- Worship and prayer to God had ceased.
- Idolatry was rampant in the land. *Hosea 4:12 My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. 13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is*

*good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.*

- Unauthorized political alliances were entered into with Assyria and Egypt. *Hosea 8:9-10 9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers. 10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.*
- Repentance was not sincere. *Hosea 7:16 They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.*
- The word of God was forgotten. *Hosea 8:12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.*

### **No Delight in Doom**

The prophets did not delight in the prophetic utterances of impending judgment. Nor did they present God as delighting in being harsh. Indeed, one of the more tender scenes is that of God in anguish over how He should pour out on Ephraim the fierceness of His wrath. *Hosea 11:8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* That God is a holy God is without question. That He must judge sin is undisputed. What is often forgotten in the midst of judgment is the broken heartedness of the divine. As a loving parent finds no delight in administering discipline to a child, so God finds no delight in being harsh with His children. Nevertheless, “*whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*” (*Prov 3:12*). When a Christian finds himself under the rod of divine discipline the following concepts should be embraced.

- However severe the judgment, it is certainly justified. God does not punish every person immediately for every situation or the soul would despair. There is much grace and forgiveness on a daily basis. But when the rod of divine discipline is laid upon the life it is to be submitted to as justified. Jonah openly confessed he was the cause for the troubled waters the sailors on the high seas found themselves in.
- There is to be no murmuring. Cain murdered his brother and then declared that his mark was more than he could bear. He was wrong to speak. The children of Israel were delivered from the land of bondage only to complain about their food supply. They murmured against the Lord and provoked Him to anger. Silence under the rod will produce more tenderness in the heart of God and cause Him to end the discipline earlier than complaining.
- There is to be hope that the anger will soon pass. *Psalms 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*
- The proper end of discipline brings restoration to favor and blessing. The rod in the hand cannot destroy the love in the heart of God for those who are the objects of His divine

pleasure. *Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* Christian, remember the everlasting love of God. Cling to that. Meditate upon that eternal affection and embrace it for the good of the soul and the glory of God.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 14**

## The End of an Era

### Blood on the Throne

The kings that followed Jeroboam II to the throne of Israel provide a sad history of murder and evil. Zachariah, the last of the house of Jehu, and fourteenth king of Israel, ascended the throne upon the death of his father (2 Kings 14:29), about 753 BC. He reigned only six months, being put to death by Shallum (15:8-10). His murderer, Shallum, sat on the throne for only one month and was put to death by Menahem, the seventeenth king of the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

### A Matter of Menahem

Menahem was the son of Gadi, and probably one of the generals of King Zechariah. When he heard of the conspiracy of Shallum, his murder of the king, and his seizing of the throne, he went up from Tirzah and killed the usurper in Samaria. Menahem in turn took the throne and reduced Tiphshah because it refused to recognize him as king. He continued the calf worship of Jeroboam and contributed to leading the nation into moral and spiritual bankruptcy, as the contemporary prophets Hosea and Amos noted. During his reign the hostile forces of Assyria first appeared on the north eastern frontier of Israel. Tiglath-pileser III (Pul) received from Menahem a gift of one thousand talents of silver, exacted from Israel by an assessment of fifty shekels a head, and became his ally. Menahem's reign lasted ten years, about 752 BC - 742 BC. He left the throne to his son Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:14-22).

### Like Father Like Son

The death of Menahem brought his son Pekahiah (“*Jehovah has opened [the eyes],*” “*Jehovah has observed*”) to the throne as the seventeenth king of Israel. After a brief reign of two years, 742 BC - 740 BC, a conspiracy was organized against him by Pekah, who, at the head of fifty Gileadites, attacked him in his palace, murdered him and his friends Argob and Arieah, and seized the throne (2 Kings 15:23-26). The reign of Pekahiah, though short, was an idolatrous one, as he followed in the sinful practices of Jeroboam.

### The Reign of Pe'kah

Peka (pe'ka; God “has opened” the eyes) came to the throne as the eighteenth king of Israel. He is said to be the son of Remaliah and captain of King Pekahiah, whom he murdered and succeeded to the throne (2 Kings 15:25), c. 740 BC. Because fifty Gileadites were with him in the conspiracy it has been suggested that he was a native of Gilead. Under his predecessors Israel had been much weakened through the payment of enormous tribute to the Assyrians, (see especially 15:20) and by internal wars and conspiracies. Pekah was determined to restore Israel to a state of power and importance.

To accomplish his political objectives, Pekah entered into a foreign alliance with a view to plundering the kingdom of Judah. He probably made the treaty by which he proposed to share its spoils with Rezin, king of Damascus, when Jotham was still on the throne of Jerusalem (15:37). However, the implementation of the planned plunder was long delayed, probably due to the

righteous administration of Jotham (2 Chronicles 27). When his son Ahaz succeeded to the throne the allies no longer hesitated and Jerusalem was invaded. The history of the war is found in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28. During this warring period the great prophecies in Isa 7-9 were given. In the end Pekah lost half of his kingdom, and was made an Assyrian vassal (2 Kings 15:29), c. 733 BC About a year later Hoshea conspired against him and put him to death (v. 30). Of his character and reign it is recorded, *“He did evil in the sight of the Lord.”*

### **No Hope for Hoshea**

Hoshea was the son of Elah, and last king of Israel. He openly conspired against, and killed his predecessor, Pekah (2 Kings 15:30), *“in the twentieth year of Jotham.”* Tiglath-pileser set up Hoshea as the puppet vassal king of Samaria and his personal representative about 732 BC. Hoshea did not become established on the throne till after an interval of at least eight years, in the twelfth year of Ahaz (2 Kings 17:1). It is declared of him that *“he did evil in the sight of the Lord, only not as the kings of Israel who were before him”* (v. 2). Shortly after his accession Hoshea capitulated to the supremacy of Shalmaneser, who entered his territory with the intention of subduing it by force if resisted (v. 3), reflected by the taking of the strong caves of Beth-arbel (Hos 10:14). Discovering that Hoshea had entered into negotiations with So, king of Egypt, Shalmaneser returned to punish the rebellious king with imprisonment for withholding tribute (2 Kings 17:4). Hoshea was probably released by the payment of a large ransom, but a second revolt soon after provoked the king of Assyria to march an army into the land of Israel. After a three years' siege Samaria was taken and destroyed, and the ten tribes were carried away beyond the Euphrates, 721 BC (2 Kings 17:5-6; 18:9-12). How Hoshea ended his life is not known. The death of Hoshea brought the end of an era to Israel's history.

### **Mercy in the Midst of a Warring Nightmare**

Despite continual political intrigue, filled with bloodshed and violence, there was one brief shining moment that took place during the reign of Pekah c. 740 BC. Caught up in a terrible war with Judah, two hundred thousand women and children were brought to Samaria along with the spoils of war. At the gate of the city the prophet Oded appeared to warn the victorious army of the northern kingdom not to offend God by being cruel to the captives.

Oded pointed out that their sufferings were the result of unfaithfulness to God. Their fate might be visited upon the victors if mercy was not shown. *“And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. 9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven. 10 And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God? 11 Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you”* (2 Chronicles 28:8-11). The warning and appeal of Oded was productive. The captives of Judah were treated with unusual kindness. The people were given food, clothing and something to drink. Those who were weak were placed on animals to ride. Mercy was expressed in the midst of a warring nightmare.

## Heathens in the Holy Land

When Shalmaneser, king of Assyria invaded the land of Israel (c. 722) during the days of Hoshea, he finally subdued the city of Samaria, put the king in prison and carried off the leading Israelites to the province of Media. Strangers were then imported from various parts of the Assyrian empire to populate the deserted kingdom of Samaria. Initially these heathens in the holy land worshipped their gods. However, as lions and other wild beasts preyed upon the people a priest of Israel was recalled from exile to instruct the immigrants of “*the God of the land*” so that Jehovah became one of their “gods”.

*“And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. 25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them. 26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. 27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. 28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD” (2 Kings 17:24-28).*

The Samaritans that are mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and in the New Testament were descendants of this mongrel race.

## No Going Home

The kingdom of the ten tribes was never restored to the land of promise, nor did the “*outcasts of Israel*” ever attempt to return as a body to their land of birth except in a spiritual form in the context of the church (James 1:1), according to prophecy.

- *Psalm 147:2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*
- *Isaiah 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*
- *Isaiah 56:8 The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.*
- *James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

Various theories have been advanced as to where the descendants of these Israelites now are. Among the more unworthy teaching is that of British Israelism. British Israelism was quite popular during the ascent of the British Empire, but quickly lost favor as the Empire was

converted into a Commonwealth of Nations. In the early years of the 20th century, Charles Parham and John Allen were the main teachers of British-Israelism in the United States. Parham later went on to be a major influence in the Pentecostal movement. Allen's book "*Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright*" spread the concept through the Adventist and other churches. British Israelism formed a main part of the foundation of Herbert W. Armstrong's (1892-1986) Worldwide Church of God.

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 15**

#### **Rulers and Prophets**

##### **The Kingdom of Judah**

The southern kingdom of Judah lasted about four hundred more years after its separation from the northern kingdom of Israel. During that time period it was ruled over by twenty kings, all of the same dynasty and direct descendants of king David.

##### **Rulers of Judah**

### **Southern Kingdom**

1. Rehoboam	First King	c. 931 – 915 BC
2. Abijah (Abijam or Abia)	Son of Rehoboam	c. 915 – 912 BC
3. Asa	Probably son of Abijah	c. 912 – 875 BC
4. Jehoshaphat	Son of Asa	c. 875 - 850 BC
5. Jehoram (Joram) husband of Athaliah	Son of Jehoshaphat;	c. 850 – 843 BC
6. Ahaziah	Son of Jehoram and Athaliah	c. 843 - 842 BC
7. Athaliah and Jezebel; wife of Jehoram; only queen to occupy the throne of Judah	Daughter of King Ahab of Israel	c. 842 - 836 BC
8. Joash (Jehoash)	Son of Ahaziah	c. 836 - 797 BC
9. Amaziah	Son of Joash	c. 799 – 782 BC
10. Uzziah (Azariah)	Son of Amaziah	c. 782 – 751 BC
11. Jotham	Regent, later King; son of Uzziah	c. 751 – 736 BC
12. Ahaz	Son of Jotham	c. 736 – 721 BC
13. Hezekiah	Son of Ahaz; husband of Hephzi-Bah	c. 721 – 693 BC
14. Manasseh	Son of Hezekiah and Hephzi-Bah	c. 693 – 639 BC
15. Amon	Son of Manasseh	c. 639 – 638 BC
16. Josiah (Josias)	Son of Amon	c. 638 – 608 BC
17. Jehoahaz (Joahaz)	Son of Josiah	c. 608 BC
18. Jehoiakim	Son of Josiah	c. 608 – 597 BC
19. Jehoiachin	Son of Jehoiakim	c. 597 BC
20. Zedekiah He was overthrown by the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar	Son of Josiah	c. 597-586 BC

### **Four Major Periods**

The history of the kingdom of Judah may be divided into four major periods corresponding to times of spiritual refreshing until there was a final decline and captivity.

***Period of First Spiritual Decline***

Rehoboam	<b><i>Prophets</i></b>	Shemaiah, Iddo
Abijam (Abijah) Asa	<b><i>Prophets</i></b>	Azariah, Hanani
Jehoshaphat	<b><i>Prophets</i></b>	Jehu, Jahazlel

***Revival***

**Period of Second Spiritual Decline**

Jehoram Ahaziah Queen Athaliah Joash	<b><i>Prophet</i></b>	Zechariah (of Jehoiada)
Amaziah Uzziah (Azariah)	<b><i>Prophet</i></b>	Joel, Zechariah
Jotham Ahaz Hezekiah	<b><i>Prophets</i></b>  <b><i>Prophet</i></b>	Isaiah, Micah  Nahum

***Revival***

***Period of Third Spiritual Decline***

Manasseh Amon Josiah	<b><i>Prophets</i></b>	Zephaniah, Jeremiah
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***Revival***

***Period of Fourth Spiritual Decline***

Jehoahaz Jehoiakim Jehoiachin Zedekiah	<b><i>Prophet</i></b> <b><i>Prophet</i></b>	Habakkuk Obadiah
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***Captivity***

**Revolt against Rehoboam**

The beginning of the reign of Rehoboam did not go well, as a result of foolish counsel which he listened to. Ten tribes revolted to form their own independent nation. Calling forth an army of

one hundred and eighty thousand men from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, Rehoboam was determined to keep the kingdom united. But the prophet Shemaiah told him not to make war on the tribes that had left (1 Kings 12:22-24; 2 Chronicles 11:2-4). Bowing to the sovereign will of God in this particular matter Rehoboam moved to fortify at least fifteen of the major cities in his kingdom. Unfortunately, his trust for the security of the nation was in the arm of the flesh and not in the Lord. All of his labor to protect his kingdom was meaningless against Shishak, king of Egypt, who came against him with a large army and took the fortified cities (1 Kings 11:40; 2 Chron. 12:2-9).

### **A Pretense of Religion**

Despite his own dark heart Rehoboam feigned worship of Jehovah as he welcomed the priests and Levites who had fled to Judah following the revolt led by Jeroboam and the establishment of the northern kingdom. Finally, after three years, Rehoboam stopped pretending and began to violate openly the known will of the Lord by marrying numerous times. Like his father Solomon, no doubt Rehoboam was influenced in a negative way by the pagan gods of his numerous wives. But God was gracious and gave repentance to His people. Following the invasion of Shishak, Rehoboam led the nation in confessing their sins. Unfortunately the spiritual renewal did not last. The divine commentary of the life of Rehoboam is *“he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD”* (2 Chron. 12:9-16).

### **The Acts of Abijam**

The death of Rehoboam brought his son Abijam (Abijah) to the throne for a short reign of three years. Tragically Abijam *“walked in all the sins of his father”* (1 Kings 15:3). It is very rare for ungodly parents to produce godly children. The sins of parents are often passed on to the children. The single great event associated with the reign of Abijam was his leadership in battle during a time of conflict with the northern kingdom. As a result Jeroboam was defeated and some of the border cities were returned to Judah (1 Kings 15:1-8).

### **The Ascent of Asa**

After Abijam came Asa to the throne of Judah. His reign lasted forty one years. For the first part of his reign he enjoyed peace. The favor of God was upon his life as he destroyed the monuments of idolatry and repaired the garrisons that had been spoiled by the Egyptians during the days of his grandfather. Sadly the peace was broken by a Cushite, or Ethiopian prince named

Zerah. Wanting to expand his empire, Zerah waged war against Israel with a million soldiers and three hundred chariots. Despite being outnumbered, at Mareshah, in the valley of Zephathah, the army of Asa met, and defeated by faith, their enemies pursuing them to Gerar (2 Chron. 14:3). A thousand years earlier Abraham and Isaac had dwelt at Gerar. Perhaps Asa remembered the covenant promises made to them while he was on the field of battle. After returning home Asa led the nation in revival. Encouraged by the prophet Oded, Asa gathered people from the tribes of Simeon, Ephraim, and Manasseh. *“And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul”* (2 Chronicles 15:12).

### **The Descent of Asa**

Like all religious movements there is an ebb and flow of the Spirit. The days of spiritual revival passed. In the later part of his reign the faith of Asa became weak. When Baasha, king of Israel began to fortify Ramah to hedge Judah in on the north, Asa entered into an unholy political alliance with Ben-hadad, king of Syria. When Hanani rebuked Asa for his lack of trust in the Lord, the prophet was put into prison (2 Chronicles 16:7-10). Later, when afflicted with a disease in his feet the Bible says that Asa *“sought not the Lord, but [went] to the physicians”* (2 Chronicles 16:12). When Asa died the nation *“buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him”* (2 Chronicles 16:14).

### **The Just King Jehoshaphat**

The death of Asa brought his son Jehoshaphat to the throne. He would reign for twenty-five years, c. 873-848 (1 Kings 22:42; 2 Chronicles 20:31). While in the northern kingdom of Israel one of the most evil of kings ruled in the person of Ahab, in the southern kingdom of Judah reigned Jehoshaphat, one of the most righteous. During the days of Jehoshaphat the kingdom prospered. The specific reason is given for this divine favor. *“And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim”* (2 Chronicles 17:3).

Jehoshaphat was anxious that the people enjoy knowledge of God. To that end he encouraged the priests and the Levites to teach the people. Even the large army he maintained was instructed in worship (2 Chronicles 20:20-21).

### **The Poor Judgment of Jehoshaphat**

Despite his good heart, Jehoshaphat may have unwisely entered into a foreign alliance with king Ahab in his campaign against the Syrians at Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings 22:1-44; 2 Chronicles 18:1-19:1). Though the northern kingdom consisted of fellow Hebrews, spiritually, *“not all Israel is Israel”*. The wrong associations can corrupt the best of people. The heart needs to be guarded against worldly entanglements. The alliance to take Ramoth-Gilead, between Syria and the Jordan, was unsuccessful. Ahab was killed in the battle and Jehoshaphat barely escaped. On the return home the king of Judah was met by the prophet Jehu who rebuked him for his poor judgment. He should have been helping the godly, such as Elijah and not the unrighteous (2 Chron. 19:2-3). Many people are hurt when the righteous are not *“wise as serpents and harmless as doves”* (Matthew 10:16).

## **Waging War**

If the alliance with the northern kingdom of Israel was not justified, waging war against the traditional enemies of Judah was. The combined forces of Ammon, Moab and Edom came against the southern kingdom. They marched along the western shore of the Dead Sea to Engedi, where David once hid from Saul. By faith Jehoshaphat led his troops into battle. His troops sang psalms as they advanced against the enemy. Suddenly, the hostile army disintegrated, as it turned upon itself in a suicidal slaughter. Before Jehoshaphat could engage in conflict, the ground was covered with the dead and dying (2 Chronicles 20).

## **The First Royal Fratricide**

The death of Jehoshaphat brought his son Jehoram to rule over the southern kingdom. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign and he reigned for eight years, 849 BC - 841 BC (2 Kings 8:16; 2 Chronicles 21:1-6). Jehoram was greatly influenced to evil by his wife Athaliah who was the granddaughter of Omri (2 Chronicles 22:2), and the daughter of Ahab, king of the northern nation of Israel. Jezebel was Jehoram's mother-in-law. Moved by jealous fear and unwilling to allow any rivals, Jehoram murdered all of his brothers upon taking the throne. This was the first example of fratricide in Judah in order to avoid a dispute over heirship. Jehoram went on to promote idolatry, and thus treason against the Most High God, for which he would be punished (2 Kings 8:18-19). The Edomites revolted against his authority, and the people of Libnah, in the southern part of the kingdom moved against him. Attacks also came from the armies of the Philistines, Arabians and the Ethiopians (2 Kings 19:8). The royal family was taken into captivity with the exception of the youngest son (2 Chron. 22:1). Death opened wide its jaws to receive the ungodly king Jehoram, who was afflicted with a terrible disease of the bowels (2 Chron. 21:19-20). While death is often viewed as a great evil, sometimes it is a great blessing, especially when the wicked perish. Proverbs 11:10 says, "*When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.*"

## **King for a Year**

Having secured the throne for his son, Ahaziah, Jehoram died the death of the wicked. Ahaziah (Jehoahaz) would not long enjoy the glory of being king of Judah, for he was guided by the counsel of his evil mother, Athaliah. Following in the footsteps of his father, he too promoted idolatry (2 Kings 22; 8:25-27; 2 Chronicles 22:1-4), and showed disrespect to God by making a political alliance with his uncle Jehoram, king of Israel, who was his mother's brother. Combining their forces, Ahaziah, king of Judah, and Jehoram, king of Israel, marched to retake Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. But God was not going to bless that endeavor. The king of Israel was wounded. When Ahaziah went forth to see him, both kings were ambushed and assassinated by Jehu. Ahaziah had reigned for only one year, 841 BC. He was buried in Jerusalem (2 Kings 9:1-28).

## **The Queen of Judah**

Terror gripped the holy city of Jerusalem when word was received that Jehu had assassinated both the king of Israel, and the king of Judah, and slaughtered forty-two near relatives of the household of Ahaziah. But there was one person who was unbowed before these tragic events. Her name was Athaliah. She was no ordinary woman. Consider the fact that Athaliah was the daughter of queen Jezebel (2 Chronicles 22:2), the sister of king Jehoram, of Israel, who had just been murdered by the bow of Jehu, the widow of king Jehoram of Judah whose bowels had gushed out, and the mother of king Ahaziah. She had seen court intrigue and political power grab up close and was not intimidated by the actions of Jehu. “*Let Jehu rule the northern kingdom,*” she thought. “*I will rule the southern kingdom.*” And so she did, by murdering her own grandchildren, and all the royal seed of Judah. Only one person escaped this bloodbath, an infant son of Ahaziah, named Joash, and only then because Athaliah did not know about him. He had been concealed in the Temple by his aunt, Jehosheba, the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. For six years Athaliah ruled on the throne of Judah, 841 BC - 835 BC. But then, in the seventh year the high priest Jehoiada became determined to reveal the young prince. Arrangements were made for his protection, but Joash was publically declared to be the king. When word reached Athaliah about this turn of events she went to the Temple, where her cry of “treason” only made certain her own arrest. She was taken beyond the sacred precincts of the Temple and executed. Later, Mattan, the priest of Baal was also executed, and the temple constructed for the worship of Baal was destroyed (2 Kings 11:16-18; 23:14-17).

### **The Boy-King who became Bad**

Though only seven years of age when brought to the throne as the eighth king of Judah, Joash (Jehoash) would eventually reign forty years, dying c. 796 BC. Protected and guided by the high priest Jehoiada as a child, Joash conformed to the laws of God. However, upon the death of Jehoiada he felt he had a license to sin in his mature years. The law was neglected and idolatry was promoted (2 Kings 12:1-3). So great were the transgressions of Joash that the prophet Zechariah felt compelled to reprove him. For that labor of righteousness he was executed. There was no stopping the evil ways of Joash, though they were arrested momentarily when Hazael, king of Syria, came against him, overwhelmed his forces, and appeared before Jerusalem.

Accepting a bribe from the treasures of the Temple, Hazael withdrew his army. In the end Joash suffered from a painful malady and was at length murdered by his own servants (2 Kings 12:17-21). Though brought up in the Temple, and guided by the high priest, the heart of Joash was never changed, and so he eventually did what he willed. The true test of character is what a person does or does not when outward restraints are removed. The human heart without redeeming and sanctifying grace will give full expression to evil continually. The life of Joash testifies to this truth. The story of Joash is that he was a young boy gone bad. He did not keep covenant with his God.

### **The Making of a Mercenary Army**

The son of Joash, who followed him to the throne, reigned for twenty-nine years, 796 BC - 767 BC (2 Kings 14:1-2; 2 Chronicles 25:1). The reign of Amaziah can be remembered by a war with Edom which he won, and by a war with the northern kingdom of Israel, which he lost. The war with Edom is of particular interest because in addition to raising an army of three hundred thousand, Amaziah hired as mercenaries from the northern kingdom of Israel an additional one

hundred thousand soldiers. This is the first example of a mercenary army in Hebrew history. The mercenary army was dismissed at the last moment according to the prophetic word of the Lord and took out its retaliation by raiding some key cities. Like so many before him, Amaziah found his heart moving away from the Lord to embrace idolatry. Of particular appeal to him were the gods of Edom. The sin of idolatry was actually easy to engage in after murder which Amaziah first committed. He began his reign by killing those individuals who had murdered his father but spared their children according to the Mosaic injunction of Deuteronomy 24:16. *“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”* In the end, like his father, Amaziah died a violent death being assassinated by his servants at Lachish. His body was transported *“on horses”* to Jerusalem and buried in the royal sepulcher (2 Kings 14:1-20; 2 Chronicles 25:2-28).

### **Long Live the King**

The death of Joash allowed his son and successor Uzziah (Azariah) to come to the throne. His reign was the longest that had been known to Judah, for he ruled for fifty-two years, 767 BC (2 Kings 14:21; 2 Chronicles 26:1). A man of great intellect and many talents, Uzziah showed interest in agricultural advancement, engineering works and most importantly to the laws of God. The Lord blessed his reign with peace and prosperity after he defended his nation in a series of conflicts. Sometimes the blessings of God can become a stumbling block, as was the case with Uzziah. The time came when he over stepped his boundaries and his authority as he assumed the duties of the priests. Though opposed by the high priest Azariah and eighty others, since he was not of the household of Aaron, Uzziah was determined to offer incense in the sanctuary on the golden altar. In swift judgment, the Lord afflicted his body with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). God has a right to organize the church and its administration the way He sees fit. On certain matters God has spoken plainly. The proper administration of the incense was something the Lord had spoken about in clear language.

- *Exodus 30:7-8 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.*
- *Numbers 16:40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.*
- *Numbers 18:7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*

At the end of his reign, Uzziah was faced with a military threat from the Assyrian ruler Tiglath-pileser, who was moving westward in 743 BC going forth to conquer. The situation called for a

new Syrian-Palestinian coalition to resist the Assyrian threat. Uzziah (Azariah) would have been a logical choice to lead such an alliance, being the leader of the strongest and most influential state in Syria-Palestine at the time (2 Kings 14:21-22; 2 Chronicles 26:1). Since his name is absent from the Assyrian records scholars have surmised that by 742 BC Uzziah had died, or his fate would have been recorded. *“So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead”* (2 Chronicles 26:23).

### **Son of a Leper**

The next occupant of the throne, as the eleventh king of Judah was Jotham, the son of Uzziah. After his father was punished with leprosy for invading a holy office, Jotham conducted the government for him for almost thirteen years, until his death when he ascended the throne. He was only twenty-five years of age (2 Kings 15:5, 32-33; 2 Chronicles 27:1). The year of ascension was c. 740 BC. Wiser than his father, Jotham did not invade the priestly office. He did try to change the corrupt practices of the people by repairing part of the Temple. He also built *“cities in the hill country of Judah”* and *“fortresses and towers on the wooded hills”* (2 Chronicles 27:2-4). On the military front, when the Ammonites refused to pay the tribute money they had given to his father, he extracted that from them by force (2 Chronicles 26:8). For three years after their defeat he compelled them to pay one hundred talents of silver and ten thousand measures each of wheat and barley (2 Chronicles 27:5). After a reign of eighteen years, including the co-regency with Uzziah, Jotham died and was buried in the sepulcher of the kings (2 Kings 15:38; 2 Chronicles 27:8-9), about 732 BC.

### **Open Apostasy under Ahaz**

During the reign of his father Jotham, Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, began to form a conspiracy to overthrow the southern kingdom. During the reign of Ahaz, the results of the conspiracy were made manifest, as he was driven out of Jerusalem forcing him to flee to Elath, on the gulf of Akabah. There was war also with the Edomites and Philistines. In addition there was open apostasy during the sixteen-year reign of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:1), the twelfth king of Judah (735 BC - 715 BC).

Images and altars consecrated to Baal were permitted, for he burned his own children to this pagan god in the Valley of Hinnom (2 Chronicles 28:3-5). Despite being warned by Isaiah not to do it, Ahaz attempted to make an alliance with the king of Assyria. *“And Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not”* (2 Chronicles 28:20). Foolishly did Ahaz trust in false gods, to the point he destroyed the sacred vessels in the house of God, and closed the doors of the temple for worship. Finally, the Lord had enough and moved to terminate the life of Ahaz. He died when he was only thirty-six.

## A Time of Religious Revival

While corrupt parents tend to have corrupt children, God in grace is sometimes pleased to break the cycle of sin and convert the young ones. Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, offers one example of this principle of redeeming grace. During his twenty-nine year reign he brought spiritual renewal to the nation. His co-regency lasted from 728 to 715 B.C. and his sole regency from 715 to 686 BC. In the first year of his reign and in the first month, he opened the doors of the temple and restored the priests to an honored position in society (2 Chronicles 25:1-5). Confessing the sins of the nation, the king moved to bring the people back to God. He traveled the length of the nation inviting people to hold the Passover afresh in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 30:1). Souls responded to the gracious invitation of the king. There was a religious revival that took place in Palestine.

### Preparations for a Revival: by Jim Eliff

- **Repent of every known sin.** “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

**Resolved:** I will not go to bed this evening nor live this day without fully repenting of all known sin against God.

*James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

*2 Corinthians 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

*Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

*Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

- **Forsake all questionable habits and activities.** “For whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23b).

**Resolved.** I will not go to bed this evening nor live this day without removing from my life every habit or activity I cannot be absolutely sure is approved by God.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

*Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

*Romans 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

- **Make right any wrongs between yourselves and others.** *Matthew 5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

**Resolved.** I will not go to bed this evening nor live this day without doing all that is possible to correct any wrongs between myself and others. Confession should be as public as the sin committed and may include restitution.

*Matthew 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

*Matthew 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. 21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

*23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the*

throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

*Romans 12:17-21* Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

*Colossians 3:12-15* Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

- **Commune with God through prayer and the Word.** “Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word (Psalm 119:107b). Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

**Resolved.** I will not go to bed this evening nor live this day without spending quiet moments with God in prayer and sincerely meditating on His Word

*1 Peter 2:1* Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

*John 17:17* Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

*Colossians 3:15* And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

*Mark 11:22* And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father

*also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

*John 16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

- **Trust God to use you as his instrument in the lives of others.** *James 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

**Resolved.** I will not go to bed this evening nor live this day without asking and expecting God to use me as an effective instrument of revival in someone's life.

*2 Timothy 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

*John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

*Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

*Jude 22-23 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

*1 Peter 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

## **The Surprising Story of Sennacherib**

One of the most ambitious and successful warriors of the ancient world was the king of Assyria called Sennacherib (“Sin,” [the moon god] “has multiplied the brothers”). This son of Sargon ascended the throne on the twelfth day of Ab (July-August), 705 BC. In the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib prepared to invade Judah to force from Hezekiah the tribute he had refused to pay. The armies of Assyria will soon seize Jerusalem. The banner of the enemy will be seen flying outside the city walls. The terrible story is recorded in Isaiah 10. The story is picked up as the Assyrian army is about to leave the great northern road near Beth-el to turn off eastward to Ai. Advancing to Michmash, the supplies for the support of the troops are left there. The army crosses the ravine. The night passes at Geba. The citizens of Ramah, only half an hour eastward, obscured by a ravine, know the foreign army is near. The people are terrified. In the

morning the Assyrian army continues its march southward. In the path of the advance is Gallim, Laish and Anathoth. The evening march finds the Assyrian soldiers at Nob, within sight of the holy city.

### **Destruction of an Army**

Prior to a direct assault on Jerusalem, Sennacherib thought it best to overcome the fenced cities of Judah. With those cities under his control, the heart of Hezekiah became discouraged. He decided to pay tribute to the Assyrian warlord. Sennacherib withdrew, to engage in matters in Egypt, leaving one of his generals to besiege Ashdod, or Azotus, a stronghold of the Philistines. Returning then to Palestine, Sennacherib broke the treaty, and attached some more cities of Judah. He was encamped before the city of Lachish when he sent his general, Rabshakeh, with an intimidating letter to Jerusalem (Isaiah 32:2-20). The surrender of Hezekiah was demanded. Undergirded by faith that he should not surrender, Hezekiah believed the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah that the army of Sennacherib would be destroyed in a marvelous and miraculous way. He would return to Nineveh where he would be killed. The prophecy was literally fulfilled.

- *Isaiah 37:33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. 34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. 35 For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 38 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.*

The sudden destruction of the army of Sennacherib's was one of the greatest miracles of the ancient world. It stood on the same level as the destruction of Pharaoh's army eight hundred years earlier. One army was destroyed by a body of water moved by the hand of the Lord, another by a blast from the breathe of the angel of the Lord.

### **The Death of 165,000 Assyrian Soldiers**

“The Angel of the Lord spread His wings on the blast,  
And breathed on the face of the foe as He passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever were still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all-wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.”

### **A Healing Miracle of Mercy**

During the time the army of Sennacherib was invading Judah and surrounding Jerusalem, Hezekiah contracted a dreaded disease. Earnestly did he pray and ask the Lord to spare his life. God was merciful and promised the king he would not die but would live for fifteen more years. In addition there would be protection from his enemies. *“Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city”* (Isa 38:5-6). Hearing of his marvelous recovery, Merodach-baladan, King of Babylon, which was an independent kingdom at the time, sent word to Hezekiah to congratulate him and also to encourage him to resist the Assyrians. Caught up with the blessings of God to the point of carnal pride, Hezekiah showed the wealth of his kingdom to the messengers of Baladan (2 Chron. 32:27-31). The Lord rebuked this prideful spirit through the prophet Isaiah and told him that one day the successor of Baladan would prove to be hostile to Judah. The agony of a captive people would be heard within the walls of his capitol.

### **The Message of the Prophet Joel**

During this period of Hebrew history the Lord raised up several prophets. Joel, the son of Pethuel, is believed to have ministered during the reign of Uzziah, the tenth king of Judah, c. 782 – 751 BC. Joel predicts an approaching famine while calling the nation to repentance, fasting and prayer (Joel 1:1-6). He promises divine protection and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

*“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions”* (Joel 2:28). The living voice and written testimony of Joel were instrumental in preparing hearts for revival during the days of Hezekiah. The ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy was given on the day of Pentecost, for Peter plainly states that prophecy was being fulfilled.

*“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy”* (Acts 2:16-18).

### **The Message of the Prophet Isaiah**

There is not much that is known about the personal history of Isaiah. He began his ministry during the reign of the northern kingdom’s monarch Uzziah (c. 782 – 751 BC), and continued through the days of Ahaz c. 736 – 721 BC and Hezekiah c. 721 – 693 BC. According to legend he was a member of the royal family, and perhaps the father-in-law of King Manasseh, by whom

it was said he was slain in two (Hebrews 11:37). Classified as a major prophet, based on his writings the book of Isaiah may be divided into two parts: Chapters 1-39; Chapters 40-66.

## **A Prophetic Division**

**Near Prophecies.** In the first thirty-nine chapters a variety of writings are recorded at various periods predicting the destruction of many surrounding enemies of Israel, to include Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Philistia, Syria, Edom and Tyre. Some of the more remarkable prophecies involved the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, and the recovery of Hezekiah from death. The conversion of many Jews to the gospel is anticipated, along with the protection of the church from the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

	<b>Isaiah</b>
• An Ignorant Nation	1:2-20
• The Holy City Becoming Unholy	1:21-31
• A Glorious Future	2:1-5
• Judgment to Come	2:6-22
• Justice in Regard to Judah	3:1-15
• The Women of Jerusalem Warned	3:16-4:1
• The Promise of a Return	4:2-6
• God's Vineyard	5:1-7
• Judah's Guilt and God's Judgment	5:8-30
• The Calling of a Prophet	6:1-13
• A Message for Ahaz	7:1-9
• The Sign of the Son	7:10-25
• Invasion from Assyria	8:1-10
• Learning to Lean	8:11-22
• Trusting in the Messiah	9:1-7
• An Angry God	9:8-10:4
• Judgment against Assyria	10:5-19
• Finding Faith in the People of God	10:20-34
• A Davidic Branch	11:1-16
• Sings the Songs of Salvation	12:1-6
• A Message about Babylon	13:1-22
• Taunting the King of Babylon	14:1-23
• A Message about Assyria	14:24-27
• A Message about Philistia	14:28-32
• A Message about Moab	15:1-16:14
• A Message about Damascus and Israel	17:1-14
• A Message about Ethiopia	18:1-7
• A Message about Egypt	19:1-25
• A Message about Egypt and Ethiopia	20:1-6
• A Message about Babylon	21:1-10
• A Message about Edom	21:11-12

- A Message about Arabia 21:13-17
- A Message about Jerusalem 22:1-14
- A Message for Shebna 22:15-25
- A Message about Tyre 23:1-18
- The End of the Earth 24:1-23
- The Giving of Thanks 25:1-12
- Singing the Songs of Zion 26:1-19
- Returning to the Land 26:20-27:13
- A Message about Samaria 28:1-29
- A Message about Jerusalem 29:1-24
- Broken Reefs 30:1-7
- A Word of Warning for Wicked Judah 30:8-17
- New Mercies for the People of God 30:18-33
- No Hope in Human Alliances 31:1-9
- A Day of Divine Deliverance 32:1-20
- A Message about Assyria 33:1-24
- A Message for the Nations 34:1-17
- Never Losing Hope 35:1-10
- The Invasion of Judah by the Assyrians 36:1-22
- Seeking the Sovereign's Help 37:1-20
- The Promise of Judah's Deliverance 37:21-38
- The Sick Sovereign 38:1-8
- Praise in Poetry 38:9-22
- Building Bridges of Friendship to Babylon 39:1-8

### **Far Off Prophecies**

The final twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah look far into the future to speak of the Jews being delivered by a coming ruler named Cyrus. This prediction was made two hundred years before Cyrus was born. The restoration of the Jews to the land was anticipated along with the glories associated with the Messiah. The destruction of idolatry, the calling of the Gentile world, and the rejection of the Messiah, followed by the triumph of the church, are all seen by Isaiah.

- Hope for Hurting Hearts 40:1-31
- God's Great Love 41:1-29
- The Chosen Servant 42:1-9
- The Saint's Song of Praise 42:10-17
- Prophetic Eyes that Cannot See 42:18-25
- A Savior of Israel 43:1-13
- Onward to Victory 43:14-44:5

- Dead Idols 44:6-20
- The Return to and Restoration of Jerusalem 44:21-28
- A King Chosen by God 45:1-13
- The Conversion of the Gentiles 45:14-25
- The False Gods of Babylon 46:1-13
- The Fall of Babylon the Great 47:1-15
- People of a Hard Heart 48:1-11
- Freedom from Babylon 48:12-22
- The Servant of the Lord Sent Forth 49:1-7
- The Return of Israel 49:8-50:3
- An Obedient Servant 50:4-11
- Learning to Trust the Lord 51:1-23
- Divine Deliverance for Jerusalem 52:1-12
- The Suffering Servant 52:13-53:12
- Greatness and Glory for Jerusalem 54:1-17
- Salvation is of the Lord 55:1-13
- A Blessing for all Nations 56:1-8
- Before the Bar of Justice 56:9-57:2
- The Evil of Idolatry 57:3-14
- The Tenderness of God 57:15-21
- Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth 58:1-14
- The Warning of a Wrath to Come 59:1-21
- The Beauty of Holiness 60:1-22
- Hope for the Afflicted 61:1-11
- Praying for the Peace of Israel 62:1-12
- The Death of the Wicked 63:1-6
- A Prayer of Praise 63:7-14
- A Prayer for Mercy and Pardon 63:15-64:12
- The Ultimate Day of Salvation 65:1-66:24

### **The Message of the Prophet Micah**

A contemporary of Isaiah was the prophet Micah. From the tribe of Judah, the Lord sent Micah to minister to the Morasthite, perhaps a reference to the town of Mareshah near which Asa, the king of the northern kingdom of Israel had won a great victory over the Ethiopians. In predicting the destruction of both the northern and southern kingdoms, Micah foretells the invasions of the Assyrians during the days of Shalmaneser and Sennacherib, and the sending of souls into exile during which time prophecy will cease.

Matthew Henry says that Micah wanted to “*convince sinners of their sins, by setting them in order before them, charging both Israel and Judah with idolatry, covetousness, oppression, contempt of the word of God, and their rulers especially, both in church and state, with the abuse of their power; and also by showing them the judgments of God ready to break in upon them for their sins.*” But he also wanted to “*comfort God's people with promises of mercy and deliverance, especially with an assurance of the coming of the Messiah and of the grace of the gospel through him.*”

## **The Message of the Prophet Nahum**

Coming from an obscure place called Elkosh, Nahum ministered in Judah following the deportation of the ten tribes. Through his prophetic word the love of God is spoken of along with the death of Sennacherib and the deliverance of Hezekiah. The fall of Nineveh is also predicted and it did happen in 625 BC. The book of Jonah forms the background to the ministry of Nahum.

### **Chronology of the Literary Prophets Dates BC**

#### **Ninth Century Prophets during the Early Assyrian Period**

Obadiah	845	Concerning Edom
Joel	830	Concerning Israel's destruction and restoration
Jonah	800-780	Concerning Nineveh

#### **Eighth Century Prophets during the Assyrian Period**

Amos	755	Concerning the northern kingdom, Israel
Hosea	750-725	Concerning the northern kingdom, Israel
Isaiah	740-700	Concerning mainly the southern kingdom, Judah
Micah	735-700	Concerning the southern kingdom, Judah

#### **Seventh Century Prophets during the Babylonian Period**

Jeremiah	626-586	Concerning the southern kingdom, Judah
Zephaniah	630-625	Judgments concerning many nations
Nahum	625-612	Concerning the fall of Nineveh
Habakkuk	625-605	Concerning Jerusalem

#### **Sixth Century Prophets during the Period of Exile in Babylon**

Ezekiel	593-570	A message of hope to the people in exile
Daniel	605-536	A message of judgment to the kings of Babylon

#### **Sixth and Fifth Century Prophets during the Post Exilic Period**

Haggai	520	Appeals made to rebuild the temple
Zechariah	520-518	The glory of the Temple will be restored
Malachi	440-432	The last plea for spiritual restoration

## **The Third Revival**

Following the death of Hezekiah (c. 721 – 693 BC), his son, Manasseh, ascended the throne at the young age of twelve (2 Chronicles 33:1). He would rule for fifty-five years. He was hostile to the grace of God and the God of grace. The sins he committed were shocking “*For he built*

*again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger” (2 Chronicles 33:3-6).*

### **Seven Sins that Provoke God to Anger**

1. *Murmuring. Numbers 14:23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:*
2. *Rebellion against established authority. Numbers 16:30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.*
3. *Idolatry. Deuteronomy 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.*
4. *Opposition to spiritual work. Nehemiah 4:5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.*
5. *Failure to show respect to the Word of God. Psalms 78:56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies.*
6. *Wicked thoughts. Psalms 106:29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.*
7. *Backsliding. Isaiah 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*

### **A Just Judgment**

Because of the sins of Manasseh, people were compelled to take part in the false worship of Baal. Children were burned as human sacrifices to Baal. Those who remained loyal to Jehovah were persecuted. Innocent blood surged like water through the streets of the Holy City. The prophets protested the evil that was being done and warned of judgment from the Assyrians (2 Chron. 33:10). But it was to no avail.

### **Broken Barriers**

In matchless grace God moves to restrain evil. Nevertheless, the heart is so wicked and so stubborn that every means of common grace God has instilled to arrest sin can be broken through in order to do wrong. Consider what will not keep the soul from sinning.

- The warning of death will not keep the soul from sinning. *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen 3:1-7). Rom 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*
- Physical affliction such as blindness will not keep the soul from sinning. *“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly...5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. 6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, 7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. 9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. 10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door” (Genesis 13:13; 19:5-11).*
- Riches and wisdom will not keep the soul from sinning. *“22 And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom... 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father” (2 Chronicles 9:22; 1 Kings 11:1-6).*

- Tears of repentance will not stop the soul from sinning. *“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Hebrews 12:15-17).*
- Promises of being obedient will not stop the soul from sinning. *“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not” (Matthew 21:28-30).*
- Knowledge of Bible doctrine and the will of the Lord will not stop the soul from sinning. *“Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. 10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing [of lying to me]? 11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake” (Genesis 20:9-11).*
- Secret shame and self-loathing will not stop the soul from sinning. *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death” (Romans 6:19-21).*
- Public exposure will not stop the soul from sinning. *“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:1-2).*
- Fearful warnings of certain judgment and eternal damnation will not stop the soul from sinning. The apostle Paul speaks of those *“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:32).*
- Memories of Christ and His work at Calvary will not stop the soul from sinning. It is possible to become an enemy of the cross. *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” (Philemon 3:17-19).*
- Enjoying the past mercies of God will not stop the soul from sinning. *“But when he [King Uzziah] was [physically] strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he*

*transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land” (2 Chron. 26:16-21).*

- The learning of practical self-help techniques to change will not stop the soul from sinning. Peter was given a practical vision which he analyzed and understood (Acts 10:9-16). Nevertheless, he had to be corrected by the apostle Paul. *“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation” (Gal 2:11-13).*
- Embracing great ideas will not stop the soul from sinning. *“And I [King Solomon] gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14).*
- A conscious sense of the presence of God will not stop the soul from sinning. Of the fifteenth king of Judah, Amon, it was said he did *“evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 33:22).*
- Religious works of art and the wearing of religious jewelry will not keep the soul from sinning nor will the setting of the *Bible* in a prominent place deter the hardened determined heart. Usually the religious symbols will be removed so evil can be practiced. *2 Chronicles 28:24 And [King] Ahaz [of Judah] gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.*
- Learning ways to escape from evil will not keep the soul from sinning. *1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* However, the way of escaping temptation is not taken advantage of.

- Trying to maintain a busy lifestyle to reach physical exhaustion will not stop the soul from sinning. This was the testimony of Solomon who tried. *Ecclesiastes 2:4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: 5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: 6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: 7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: 8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. 9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.* After all of this activity Solomon's heart was turned back to evil to the point he offered his children as human sacrifices.
- Neither aversion therapy nor diversion therapy will free the soul from the strong chains of evil. *2 Peter 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*
- Making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ will not stop the soul from sinning. *2 Peter 2:9-15 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*
- Religious vows accompanied by acts of dedication and re-dedication will not stop the soul from sinning. In fact *"better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay"* (*Ecclesiastes 5:5*).
- The dreaming of religious dreams will not stop the soul from sinning. *Ecclesiastes 5:7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.*

### **The Secret to Not Sinning**

Cessation from sin will only come through the new birth accompanied by growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whereby the flesh is mortified.

- *2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
- *1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*
- *2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*
- *Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

Since cessation of sin will only come through the new birth there is great wisdom in examining the heart to see if it has come within the sphere of saving grace. *2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* It is possible that an honest examination of the heart will reveal it has never been converted for the strength of sin is too great, the lusts of the flesh too compelling and the abandonment of the body to works of evil is too easily done and too often.

### **Characteristics of the Unconverted Galatians 5:19-21**

#### **The Unconverted are identified through the Works of the Flesh**

- Adultery
- Fornication
- Uncleanness
- Lasciviousness
- Idolatry
- Witchcraft
- Hatred
- Variance
- Emulations
- Wrath
- Strife
- Seditions
- Heresies
- Envyings
- Murders
- Drunkenness
- Revellings and such like

*“I tell you before,  
as I have also told you in time past,  
that they which do such things  
shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Paul

**A List of Those who will not go to Heaven  
Apart from Gospel Repentance and Conversion**

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

Fornicators  
Idolaters  
Adulterers  
Effeminate  
Abusers of themselves with mankind  
Thieves  
Covetous  
Drunkards  
Revilers  
Extortioners

*“And such were some of you:  
but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,  
but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
and by the Spirit of our God.”*

**Others that can be added to the List  
Revelation 22:15**

Dogs  
Sorcerers  
Whoremongers  
Murderers  
Idolaters  
Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie

**The Capture of the King**

Because Manasseh did not repent of the evil he did God allowed the Assyrian, Esarhaddon, to sack the sacred city and capture the king. Manasseh was taken a prisoner to Babylon. By the great mercy of God the heart of Manasseh was finally broken. The heart cannot be healed until it is first hurt. Further mercies of the Lord were manifested in that Manasseh was set free and allowed to rule provided he assisted the Assyrians against the Egyptians. Psammiticus, king of Egypt, was trying to conquer a large part of Asia. The siege of Ashdod lasted for twenty-nine years.

## **Revival Fires**

When Manasseh returned to Jerusalem he was determined to right the wrong he had done, including judging the evil counselor he had inherited from his father, Shebna. In his place of eminence in the royal household Shebna had helped to support a spirit of self-security and forgetfulness of God. Isaiah was sent to pronounce the prophecy of his fall (Isa 22:15-25). Manasseh also *“took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. 16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel”* (2 Chron. 33:15-16). In the end, it is possible the heart of Manasseh was grieved, when he realized that his godless son Amon, would rule in his place—a son of his own making. But then there was hope that his grandson, Josiah, might do better.

## **King Amon and King Josiah**

The reign of the fifteenth king of Judah was brief, lasting only two years (c. 642 – 640 BC). Taking the throne at the age of twenty-two, Amon reigned in Jerusalem for two years doing *“evil in the sight of the Lord”* (2 Chronicles 33:22). When his servants assassinated him the people of Judah killed them, and put his son Josiah, at age eight years on the throne (2 Chronicles 33: 24-34:1). The reign of Josiah would last for thirty-one years (c. 640 – 609 BC). When he was sixteen, Josiah began to earnestly *seek “after the God of David his father”* (2 Chronicles 34:3). When he was twenty, religious reform was brought to Judah, and also the districts of Ephraim and Samaria, as the images of Baal were smashed and everything associated with his worship was destroyed. During Josiah’s reign the prophetic ministry of Zephaniah was honored. Zephaniah moved the heart of the king and the nation when he cried out, *“Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger”* (Zephaniah 2:3).

## **The Weeping Prophet**

As Josiah continued his reform efforts, his heart must have been encouraged to learn of the ministry of Jeremiah. Unlike other prophets, Jeremiah spoke with a broken heart. These were good days in the history of Judah. A godly king ruled, and a prophet wept for the people. The Book of the Law was discovered (2 Chronicles 34:14). The Passover was once more celebrated in Jerusalem, and the Lord God alone was worshipped.

## **Disaster at the Battle of Megiddo**

As was the case so often, religious reform was soon challenged by the pressures of life. On the banks of the Euphrates River neighboring kings gathered to wage war with Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt. Compelled to defend his nation, Josiah gathered an army, and at Megiddo, in the battle field of Esdraelon, opposed the Egyptian army. Pharaoh Necho assured him he had no quarrel with the king of Judah, but to no avail. Josiah would not let the Pharaoh, or his armies pass through the land unprotected. And so a great battle was fought beneath the shadow of Mt. Carmel where two hundred years before Elijah had put to flight the false prophets of Baal. Putting himself in harm’s way, Josiah was mortally wounded. At Anathoth, the young prophet

Jeremiah now had something else to weep over. The good king Josiah was dead. “*And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations*” (2 Chronicles 35:25). Even worse, during the day of the battle, the Ark of the Covenant was taken. Truly the glory of God had departed from Israel. On to the Great River Pharaoh Necho marched his army to the city of Carchemish. There his authority was established over the western part of the Euphrates, for another great empire was about to collapse.

### **The End of the Assyrian Empire**

The Assyrian empire had come under God’s judgment. The Medes and the Babylonians had revolted against the king of Assyria and, not content with territorial independence, had moved against the capital of Nineveh. Initially repulsed, the relentless warfare saw victory to the point the king of Assyria closed himself and all his wives in the palace, set fire to the facilities, and perished in the flames. Nineveh was destroyed. The prophetic utterances of the Hebrew prophets were verified and the “*blood city*” was reduced to ruins (Nahum 3:1).

### **Not Like Father**

In many ways children are like their parents, but not in everything. The sons of Josiah were not like their father. His immediate successor was Jehoahaz, who became the seventeenth king of Judah in 609 BC. He reigned for only three months, because Pharaoh-Necho on his return from Carchemish on the Euphrates captured Jerusalem, took some of the articles of the house of the Lord and carried them to the temple of Bel (his god) in Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6-7), and placed Jehoahaz in chains at Riblah, in the valley of Lebanon, before carrying him to Egypt. A heavy tax was placed on the Jews, and the king’s brother, Eliakim or Jehoiakim, was placed on the throne as a vassal king (2 Kings 23:33-35; 2 Chronicles 36:3-4). Jehoiakim (lit. *Jehovah raises up*) reigned for eleven years. The summary of his life was that he was a wicked, godless and a foolish king, though not without some interesting events.

### **Hostility to the Word**

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, the prophet Jeremiah commissioned a collection of his prophecies to be written out by Baruch, and publicly read in the Temple. This event came to the knowledge of the king. Jehoiakim sent for the prophetic Word and had it read before him. But he listened to only a small portion before in anger he took the roll, cut it in pieces and burned it in the fire. Foolish the action was, because the Lord commanded Jeremiah to take another roll and write upon it the same words, with the addition of another, and more fearful denunciation.

*Jeremiah 36:1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto*

*this day. 3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.*

### **Revolt against Reason**

After three years of being a puppet king, Jehoiakim, influenced by the Egyptian party in his court (cf. Josephus Ant. 10.6.2), decided to withhold his tribute and rebel against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1). This political decision was made against the earnest pleas of Jeremiah, and in violation of his oath. It is possible that Jehoiakim took this bold, if reckless action, after reflecting on the fact that Egypt had withdrawn from the affairs of Syria since the battle of Carchemish. It seemed that Nebuchadnezzar was totally occupied with distant wars. Perhaps Jehoiakim could make his nation independent. Whatever his thinking, it proved to be disastrous. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem to put down the revolt. Amazingly enough he spared the life of Jehoiakim, but decided to deport some of the princes of Judah, among whom were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. While Jehoiakim might have been happy to see Daniel and his friends depart, the heart of Jeremiah must have been broken as he watched the last hope of the nation leave the holy city of Jerusalem.

### **Misery Intensified**

To make matters worse, marauding bands of Syrians and Moabites came in Judah to spread fear and death. In addition there was a great drought as described in Jeremiah 14 (cf. chap. 15 with 2 Kings 24:2-3). Finally, in the closing years of his reign the Ammonites appear to have overrun the land of Gad (Jeremiah 49:1), and other nations ravaged Israel as well (Ezekiel 25). The death of Jehoiakim, as predicted, was violent, and his body was shown great disrespect. Having been thrown over the city wall, it was later taken away and given an unhonored burial (Jeremiah 22:18-19; 36:30; 2 Kings 24:3-4), 597 BC. The people were glad when the king died, for Jehoiakim was a vicious and godless man who encouraged the abominations of idolatry (Jeremiah 19), while exercising needless cruelty (Jeremiah 26:20-23).

### **The Prophet and the Potter's Clay**

It was during the reign of Jehoiakim (c. 609 – 597 BC), that Jeremiah was driven by persecution from his native town Anathoth to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 11:21; 12:6). In the city of Jerusalem, for twenty years, Jeremiah would defend the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as he called the people to repentance. While his personal struggles were severe, and included imprisonment in dungeons filled with slime, Jeremiah never wavered in his public pronouncements of a judgment to come upon the nation if it would not repent. Mingled with the message of doom, was the offer of free grace, and the hope of divine intervention, for the Jews were like a broken piece of pottery which needed to be made again. *“Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel”* (Jeremiah 18:3-6).

## **The Last King**

The final king of Judah was an uncle to Jehoiachin, and another son of Josiah. His name was Zedekiah, and he was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. During the eleven years of his reign (c. 597-586 BC) Zedekiah never heard anything but a message of doom from the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, much to his dismay. Like his predecessor, Zedekiah decided to revolt against the tyranny of Nebuchadnezzar. It was a mistake. With Egypt as an ally, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, and then moved to destroy the city. Zedekiah was taken captive as he attempted to flee along the same route David had taken in his flight from Absalom. Zedekiah was captured in the Valley of Jordan and carried to Riblah, in Coele-Syria, where his brother Jehoahaz had been thrown into chains by the king of Egypt. There Zedekiah was forced to watch the execution of his sons before his own eyes were punched out, and he was carried to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7). During this siege of Jerusalem, the Temple was devastated and burned to the ground. The walls of the city were overthrown. The palaces and other public buildings were devastated. Many were taken into captivity. Only in the hearts of the captives did Jerusalem live. The city was no more.

## **The Bible as History**

### **Chapter 16**

## **The Suffering Saints**

Though the judgment of God upon national Israel in 586 BC was severe, it was just. Unbelief is part of the motivation to sin, along with the hardening of the heart. People simply stop believing God will judge their personal evil in time. The longsuffering of God designed to lead to repentance (Romans 2:24) sometimes only serves to cause individuals to store up wrath for the Day of Judgment. The Lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah records the pathos of the people carried into a foreign land during the Babylonian exile. Enraged by their resistance to his will, Nebuchadnezzar showed no mercy to man, woman, child or beast. Prisoners were maimed and impaled. Some were skinned alive. For lack of food the children fell in the streets unable to rise again. Prisoners raked through the garbage dump, and even dunghills, searching for food. Dead bodies lay piled in the streets. Rot and decay caused the air to grow foul with stench and disease. Princes were hanged by their hands to prolong the agony of crucifixion. Those who fled to the shores of the Dead Sea to hide in caves found the water flowing over their heads. God's hatred of sin was visible, and it was deep. *"For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her"* (Lamentations 4:13) the people of Judah lay under a cloud of divine wrath.

## **A Band of Evil Brothers**

While God does use the natural depravity of the human heart, with all of its imaginative cruelty, He then turns and judges the instruments of His wrath. Babylon would not escape her own

punishment, as Jeremiah predicted. Nebuchadnezzar had given instructions that Jeremiah be treated with great kindness. Given a choice between being deported to Babylon, or remaining in Judea, Jeremiah chose to remain behind. To govern the Jews, Nebuchadnezzar appointed a man named Gedaliah. Gedaliah established his residence at Mizpeh. There he was murdered by Ishmael and a band of ten treacherous men who had become fugitives in the country of Ammon (Jeremiah 41:1-2). Fleeing to Egypt the conspirators were killed after Nebuchadnezzar conquered that land. The death of Jeremiah is uncertain. Tradition states that Jews at Tahpanhes in Egypt killed him.

### **The Prophet Habakkuk**

Ministering during the declining years of the nation of Judah was the prophet Habakkuk. Nothing is known of him as a person but what might be deduced from the conclusion to the Psalm in chap. 3, “*For the choir director, on my stringed instruments*” (Habakkuk 3:19). It is probable that Habakkuk was officially qualified to take part in the liturgical singing of the Temple and therefore belonged to one of the Levitical families who were charged with the maintenance of the Temple music. Like the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Habakkuk probably came from the priestly households belonging to the tribe of Levi. His message was sober and sorrowful as he foretold the doom of Jerusalem. His book concludes with a hymn of prayer and praise calling for revival and trust in God.

### **A Song of Prayer and Praise**

#### **Habakkuk 3**

*1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.*

*2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. 3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah.*

*His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. 5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? 9 Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah.*

*Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. 12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. 13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for*

*salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.*

*14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. 15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. 16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.*

*17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*

*To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

## **The Prophet Obadiah**

During this dark period in Hebrew history, the treatment of the Jews by the Edomites was singled out for special retributive judgment. By the rivers of Babylon the Jews wept, but their cries for help and mercy went unheeded. The traditional enemies of the Jews should have sympathized with their brothers, but instead they applauded Nebuchadnezzar in his vicious actions. The people prayed, “Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof” (Ps 137:7). Obadiah came forth to denounce the pride of the descendants of Esau. Thinking they were secure in their cliff dwellings, Obadiah predicted their destruction. And while Jerusalem would be restored to divine favor and mercy, Edom would not know great grace ever again. “For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. 17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions” (Obadiah 1:16-17).

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 17**

#### **Hebrew Society**

##### **Response to Unrighteousness**

While the prophets might appear at times to be extreme religious reactionists, they were simple the divine response to much unrighteousness. God had a controversy with His covenant people. His blessings were being misused. The gifts of grace meant to enhance enjoyment of life, and elicit prayer and praise in worship were leading the hearts of the Hebrew people away from holiness and spiritual worship. Such is the savage nature of sin that it can transform all that is good into something ugly. The pattern was established in the Garden of Eden when Satan took a creature and made it an instrument of his evil design. Then the Enemy found a way to appeal to the woman through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). She ate of the forbidden fruit and was transformed into a child of the devil in need of redeeming blood and grace. The ability to take anything that is good and decent and holy and transform it into raw evil is a terrible power properly hated and abhorred. So the prophets were sent by God to speak against the sins of the saints and society. Among the most offensive practices of the people were the following.

- Luxurious living. Isaiah denounced those who “*join house to house, and lay field to field, that they may be pleased along in the midst of the heart*” (Isaiah 5:8). Some individuals, such as Naboth, who did defend their paternal rights, were murdered for the land. Others were able to redeem their possessions. *Jeremiah 32:7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it.* Many people lived in expensive homes of “*hewn stone*” (Amos 5:11), which were beautified by extra ornaments. There were winter houses, summerhouses, and even houses of ivory (Amos 3:15). The meals were sumptuous and extravagant. What were once considered a special meal of lamb and calves were now common (Amos 6:4). Wine was drunk from beautiful bowls. Sometimes the drinking continued through the night and became a topic of prophetic rebuke. *Isaiah 5:11-12 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! 12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.*
- Ostentatious dressing. It was the counsel of John Wesley for his people to make all the money they could, save all they could, and give all they could to the work of the Lord. The gifts of God are not to go unappreciated or unused. However, there is a balance that is called for because excess in any area violates the natural order and brings only sorrow and shame. In the area of dress, the Lord’s counsel has always been that the principle of modesty should characterize the decisions made as to what to wear, or not wear.

Women in particular are exhorted to dress in “*modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works*” (1 Timothy 2:9-10). The prophets noted the women of their day often dressed in a luxurious and highly ornamented manner to the point it produced personal pride, a sinful display of wealth, and led to sensual temptations. Isaiah warned the day would come when God would judge even the garments that were worn. *Isaiah 3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.*

- Intellectual Superiority. In times of cultural prosperity where food, clothing, and housing is in abundance, and advances are made in the arts, a sense of entitlement is found in the privileged generation that never knew hardships and a sense of dependency on the Lord. Being the recipients of all that is good in life, including an education, the secular mind has no need to think of spiritual matters, such as righteousness, truth, justice, and the world to come. Isaiah spoke of “*the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator*” (Isa 3:3).

The story of history demonstrates the results of a non-religious or irreligious society has more lawlessness and disrespect for tradition as self is consumed with self, and every person does that which is right in their own eyes. A feeling of intellectual superiority emerges to

reject the concept of divine revelation guiding beliefs and behavior in favor of the more “enlightened” idea that man is capable of ruling his own affairs apart from the supernatural.

The enlightened idea moves to embrace any theory that will dismiss the Creator from His own creation. If there is any form of religion accepted, it involves the occult, with soothsayers, and sorcerers, all of whom the prophets denounced, for a covenantal people should seek God, not idols. *Isa 8:19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? 20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

- Constant Immorality. Among the variety of emotions God has been pleased to create in humans is the enjoyment of the sexual drive. The *Bible* teaches that sexual expression is honorable within the context of marriage where the bed is undefiled. Outside of that context sexual sins will be judged. *Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Like every other gift of God sexual sins abound both in the present, and in the past. A terrible and evil vocabulary has been created to describe the perversion of the sex act including pedophilia, fellatio, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, snuffer films, necrophilia, incubus, prostitution, fornication and adultery. In the *Bible* itself there are many references to sexual sins, one of the most horrific being found in the church of Corinth. Writing to the church the apostle Paul noted,

*“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor 5:1-5).*

### **The Seriousness of Sexual Sins**

1. God takes sexual sins very seriously. The world was once destroyed, with the exception of eight souls, in large measure through sexual sins. Genesis 6:1-3 explains. *“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”*
2. It is the will of God that Christians abstain from sexual immorality in every expression and form. *1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter:*

*because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

3. Christians are not immune to sexual sins, as the life of David testifies. The inappropriate relationship of David with Bathsheba brought eternal shame and sorry as reflected in Psalm 51. *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.”*
4. Once a person is addicted to sexual sins there are invisible chains that bind the soul to them. Only Christ can set the captives free. *“And he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:16-19).*
5. Through His work at Calvary Jesus laid the foundation not only for salvation, but for sanctification. However, the believer does have a responsibility in the process.
  - The Christian is responsible to dedicate the body to the use of the Lord. *Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*
  - The Christian is responsible to mortify, or put to death the impulses that lead the soul into sin. *Col 3:5Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* This mortification of the flesh is to be done through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Failure to do so produces certain spiritual death. *Romans 8:13-14 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
  - The Christian is responsible to resist the devil while drawing near to God. *James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
  - The Christian is responsible to flee every appearance of evil and all sins associated with sexual misconduct. The reason is given. In the *Old Testament* era the covenanted people of God made temples to engage in sexual misconduct in the name of Baal or Ashtaroth. In the *New Testament* economy the body is declared to be the temple of God and so must not become a place of mental or physical prostitution. The body is the habitation of the divine. *1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the*

*body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

- The Christian is responsible to make no provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. *Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*
  - The Christian man should make a covenant with their eyes not to look upon evil as Job did. *Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?* Of course sexual sins are not restricted to men. Under the cover of darkness, through the use of the Internet and chat rooms, in local bars and other public gathering places both men and women unite to engage in evil conversations and behavior.
  - The Christian is responsible to repent and forsake evil. *Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*
6. Those who refuse to repent of sexual sins will know an increasing hardness of the heart as a frantic search for new stirring passions is sought. This “*chasing of the monkey*” of personal pleasure and delight consumes hours that should be redeemed for the glory of God.
  7. Personal addition to sexual sins is not only a spiritual and physiological addition it is mental. There is a conscious and deliberate decision made to do wrong. This decision is not logical, but it is compelling, for no one ever acts contrary to their will.
  8. While no one can truly repent of sin and the expressions of sin, for repentance is the gift of God to be granted, what individuals can do is seek this gift of divine grace by breaking up the fallow ground of the heart.
    - *Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*
    - *Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.*
  9. Breaking up the hard fallow ground of the heart can be accomplished by using the proper spiritual tools. As the farmer needs the right farm equipment to break up the hard ground he wishes to plant seed in, so the Christian must use the right spiritual equipment in order to break up a hard heart so that the gospel seed can produce spiritual fruit.
  10. In Ephesians 6 this spiritual equipment is said to be “*the whole armor of God.*” *Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against*

*powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

11. Biblical repentance includes a deep emotional sorrow for sin and a forsaking of the same. Anything less than abandonment of wrong attitude and actions while embracing righteousness is a mockery. Insincere repentance is yet another sin which God will judge.

*Isaiah 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

12. If the heart needs a motive to change it will be found not in emotion but in reason. *Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

The most compelling reason to turn from sexual sins in particular, and other expressions of evil in the moment of temptation, is because it is the will of God. No other motive will deter the soul from sin. The essence of obedience is not selfish in nature, but is other directed and that is what God wants. He wants hearts to put Himself in the center of life through understanding by deliberate choice, for He seeks individuals to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Fear of judgment, weariness of the consequences of wrong choices, shame, guilt and a sense of failure are in some desperate cases not strong enough motives to turn from sin, nor are they the best of motives, for they are self-centered. Simple obedience, because it is the known will of God, is the highest motive to stop sinning, because it is the original motive as made known in the Garden of Eden.

13. For those who will not repent, for those who refuse to turn from sexual sins, God has a question, “Why will ye die?” *Ezekiel 18:31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

### **Other Social Sins**

In addition to sexual immorality in the lives of the covenanted people of God in Hebrew society, there were other social sins the prophets denounced. The poor were oppressed. People were sold

for silver and as cheaply as the price for a pair of shoes. *Amos 8:6* *6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?* The story of Hosea teaches that wives were bought and sold. The prophets denounced the princes and rulers for their pride, covetousness, acts of oppression and murders.

- *Isaiah 1:23* *Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*
- *Isaiah 10:1* *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;*
- *Hosea 9:15* *All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters.*

With the rampant spread of robbery, lies, and deceitful trade, genuine emotions could not be displayed. Individuals “*skilful of lamentation*” had to be hired to cry for the dead. *Amos 5:16* *Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.*

### **The Limitations of Spiritual Renewal**

Like the ebb and flow of a great ocean beachfront, the spiritual revivals that Judah experienced came and went. With the passing of spiritual vitality came sin, and with sin came the severe hand of divine discipline. The only hope to be found in the darkness of this period of national history was in the coming of the Messiah, and in a study of the Word of God. To this end Psalm 119 was cherished.

### **An Overview of Psalm 119: C. H. Spurgeon**

**Title.** There is no title to this Psalm, neither is any author's name mentioned. It is the longest Psalm, and this is a sufficiently distinctive name for it. It equals in bulk twenty-two psalms of the average length of the Songs of Degrees. Nor is it long only; for it equally excels in breadth of thought, depth of meaning, and height of fervor. It is like the celestial city, which lieth four square, and the height and the breadth of it are equal. Many superficial readers have imagined that it harps upon one string, and abounds in pious repetitions and redundancies; but this arises from the shallowness of the reader's own mind: those who have studied this divine hymn, and carefully noted each line of it, are amazed at the variety and profundity of the thought.

Using only a few words, the writer has produced permutations [changes] and combinations of meaning which display his holy familiarity with his subject, and the sanctified ingenuity of his mind. He never repeats himself; for if the same sentiment recurs it is placed in a fresh connection, and so exhibits another interesting shade of meaning. The more one studies it the fresher it becomes. As those who drink the Nile water like it better every time they take a

draught, so does this Psalm become the more full and fascinating the oftener you turn to it. It contains no idle word; the grapes of this cluster are almost to bursting full with the new wine of the kingdom.

The more you look into this mirror of a gracious heart the more you will see in it. Placid on the surface as the sea of glass before the eternal throne, it yet contains within its depths an ocean of fire, and those who devoutly gaze into it shall not only see the brightness, but feel the glow of the sacred flame. It is loaded with holy sense, and is as weighty as it is bulky. Again and again have we cried while studying it, "Oh the depths!" Yet these depths are hidden beneath an apparent simplicity, as Augustine has well and wisely said, and this makes the exposition all the more difficult. Its obscurity is hidden beneath a veil of light, and hence only those discover it who are in thorough earnest, not only to look on the word, but, like the angels, to look into it.

The Psalm is alphabetical. Eight stanzas commence with one letter, and then another eight with the next letter, and so the whole Psalm proceeds by octonaries [eight stanzas] quite through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Besides which, there are multitudes of appositions of sense, and others of those structural formalities with which the oriental mind is pleased, -- formalities very similar to those in which our older poets indulged.

The Holy Spirit thus deigned to speak to men in forms which were attractive to the attention and helpful to the memory. He is often plain or elegant in his manner, but he does not disdain to be quaint or formal if thereby his design of instruction can be the more surely reached. He does not despise even contracted and artificial modes of speech, if by their use he can fix his teaching upon the mind. Isaac Taylor has worthily set forth the lesson of this fact:

*"In the strictest sense this composition is conditioned; nevertheless in the highest sense it is an utterance of spiritual life; and in thus finding these seemingly opposed elements, intimated commingled as they are throughout this Psalm, a lesson full of meaning is silently conveyed to those who shall receive it -- that the conveyance of the things of God to the human spirit is in no way damaged or impeded, much less is it deflected or ciliated by its subjugation to loose modes of utterance which most of all bespeak their adaptation to the infancy and the childlike capacity of the recipient."*

**Author.** The fashion among modern writers is, as far as possible, to take every Psalm from David. As the critics of this school are usually unsound in doctrine and unspiritual in tone, we gravitate in the opposite direction, from a natural suspicion of everything which comes from so unsatisfactory a quarter. We believe that David wrote this Psalm. It is Davidic in tone and expression, and it tallies with David's experience in many interesting points. In our youth our teacher called it "*David's pocket book*", and we incline to the opinion then expressed that here we have the royal diary written at various times throughout a long life. No, we cannot give up this Psalm to the enemy. "*This is David's spoil*". After long reading an author one gets to know his style, and a measure of discernment is acquired by which his composition is detected even if his name be concealed; we feel a kind of critical certainty that the hand of David is in this thing, yea, that it is altogether his own.

**Subject.** The one theme is the word of the Lord. The Psalmist sets his subject in many lights, and treats of it in divers ways, but he seldom omits to mention the word of the Lord in each verse

under someone or other of the many names by which he knows it; and even if the name be not there, the subject is still heartily pursued in every stanza. He who wrote this wonderful song was saturated with those books of Scripture which he possessed. Andrew Bonar tells of a simple Christian in a farmhouse who had meditated the Bible through three times. This is precisely what this Psalmist had done, - he had gone past reading into meditation. Like Luther, David had shaken every fruit tree in God's garden, and gathered golden fruit there from. "*The most,*" says Martin Boos, "*read their Bibles like cows that stand in the thick grass, and trample under their feet the finest flowers and herbs.*" It is to be feared that we too often do the like. This is a miserable way of treating the pages of inspiration. May the Lord prevent us from repeating that sin while reading this priceless Psalm.

There is an evident growth in the subject matter. The earlier verses are of such a character as to lend themselves to the hypothesis that the author was a young man, while many of the later passages could only have suggested themselves to age and wisdom. In every portion, however, it is the fruit of deep experience, careful observation, and earnest meditation. If David did not write it there must have lived another believer of exactly the same order of mind as David, and he must have addicted himself to Psalmody with equal ardor, and have been an equally hearty lover of Holy Writ.

Our best improvement of this sacred composition will come through getting our minds into intense sympathy with its subject. In order to do this, we might do well to commit it to memory. Philip Henry's daughter wrote in her diary,

*"I have of late taken some pains to learn by heart Psalm 119, and have made some progress therein."* She was a sensible, godly woman. Having done this, we should consider the fullness, certainty, clearness, and sweetness of the word of God, since by such reflections we are likely to be stirred up to a warm affection for it. What favored beings are those to whom the Eternal God has written a letter in his own hand and style. What ardor of devotion, what diligence of composition can produce a worthy eulogium for the divine testimonies? If ever one such has fallen from the pen of man it is this 119th Psalm, which might well be called the holy soul's soliloquy before an open Bible.

This sacred ode is a little Bible, the Scriptures condensed, a mass of Bibline, Holy Writ rewritten in holy emotions and actions. Blessed are they who can read and understand these saintly aphorisms; they shall find golden apples in this true Hesperides [legendary garden producing golden apples], and come to reckon that this Psalm, like the whole Scripture which it praises, is a pearl island, or, better still, a garden of sweet flowers.

## **Psalms 119**

### **Aleph X**

*"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. 2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. 5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! 6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all*

*thy commandments. 7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. 8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.*

### **Beth**



*9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 12 Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. 13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. 14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. 16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*

### **Gimel**



*17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. 18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. 19 I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. 20 My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. 21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. 22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. 23 Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. 24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.*

### **Daleth**



*25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. 26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes. 27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. 28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word. 29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. 30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. 31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. 32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

### **He**



*33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. 35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. 37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. 38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. 39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. 40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.*

**Vau**  
ו

*41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word. 42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. 43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. 44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. 45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. 46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. 47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.*

**Zain**  
ז

*49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. 50 This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. 51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law. 52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself. 53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. 54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. 55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law. 56 This I had, because I kept thy precepts.*

**Cheth**  
ח

*57 Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. 58 I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. 59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. 60 I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. 61 The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. 63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.*

**Teth**  
ט

*65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word. 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. 68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. 69 The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. 70 Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law. 71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. 72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*

**Jod**  
י

*73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments. 74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in*

*thy word. 75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. 76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. 77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight. 78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts. 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies. 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.*

### **Caph** כ

*81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word. 82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? 83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes. 84 How many are the days of thy servant? When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? 85 The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law. 86 All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. 87 They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts. 88 Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.*

### **Lamed** ל

*89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. 90 Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. 91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants. 92 Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. 93 I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. 94 I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. 95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies. 96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

### **Mem** מ

*97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. 102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. 103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

### **Nun** נ

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. 106 I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. 107 I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word. 108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. 109 My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts. 111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. 112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

### Samech



113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. 114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. 115 Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. 116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. 117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. 118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood. 119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. 120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments. 121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

### Ain



122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me. 123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness. 124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes. 125 I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. 126 It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. 127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. 128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. 129 Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

### Pe



130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. 131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments. 132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. 133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. 134 Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts. 135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes. 136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law. 137 Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

### Tzaddi



138 Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. 139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. 140 Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it. 141 I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts. 142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth. 143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights. 144 The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

### **Koph**

ק

145 I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes. 146 I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies. 147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. 148 Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word. 149 Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment. 150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. 151 Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.

### **Resh**

ר

152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever. 153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law. 154 Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word. 155 Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes. 156 Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments. 157 Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies. 158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word. 159 Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness. 160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.

### **Schin**

ש

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. 162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. 163 I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love. 164 Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments. 165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. 166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. 167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. 168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.

### **Tau**

ת

169 *Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.*  
170 *Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.* 171 *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.* 172 *My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.* 173 *Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.* 174 *I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.* 175 *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.* 176 *I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 18**

##### **A Table of Nations of Contemporary History**

###### **The Ethiopian Dynasty of Egypt**

More than seven hundred years before Christ, Sabaco, a warrior king from Ethiopia conquered Egypt and took over the throne. He is called in Scripture So. In 725 BC, Hoshea, the last king of Israel depended upon his help against the Assyrians but to no avail (2 Kings 17:4). He was imprisoned and the ten tribes were taken captive (2 Kings 18:10-11). Tirhakah, another king of the Ethiopian dynasty to rule Egypt (2 Kings 19:9) was the prince whose coming conflict with Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 BC led him to encourage Hezekiah, king of Judah to submit and not hope that Tirhakah could be an ally. “[*Rab-shakeh, ambassador of the king of Assyria*] *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?*” (Isaiah 37:10-11). Taking the matter to the Lord in prayer, Hezekiah received word that the Army of Sennacherib would be turned away (Isaiah 37:33-35).

###### **A Succession of Rulers**

Meanwhile Egypt struggled to find political unity and social stability. In time a man named Psammiticus came to the throne, to be followed by Pharaoh Necho, who killed in battle King Josiah of Judah (2 Chronicles 35:20,22; 36:4). Pharaoh Necho attempted to unite the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by digging a canal, which resulted in one hundred and twenty thousand men dying. Turning elsewhere, he sent out a naval fleet that circumnavigated Africa and returned to Egypt by the Pillars of Hercules, now known as the Strait of Gibraltar. His successor was Apries, the Pharaoh-Hophra mentioned in Jeremiah 44:30 who perished trying to suppress the rebellion of the militant leader Amasis. During this period Egypt was alienating herself with Greece being influenced by that culture, while trying to conquer Asia. In the end, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar repelled the invaders, and Egypt was forced to pay tribute to Babylon.

### **The Assyrians**

The history of the Assyrians is a history filled with great violence, conquest, and then itself being conquered by the Babylonians. In the records of Nineveh two stories are told: the great campaigns and conquests, and the great buildings erected by several kings. Sardanapalus I in c. 930 BC built the great northwest palace of Nimrod, while Sennacherib, at Koyunjik, built the most majestic palace of all. Nineveh itself became a show place under Sennacherib, who reigned from 705 to 681 BC. A warrior king, he destroyed seventy-nine cities, and eight hundred and twenty villages.

From the Nabateans, and Hagarenes, Sennacherib took captive more than 200,000 political prisoners. The resistance of Hezekiah to Sennacherib becomes all the more impressive against this background.

The rule of Esarhaddon, another Assyrian warrior king (680-669 BC) who carried Manasseh, the fourteenth king of Israel (696-642 BC) into captivity to Babylon (2 Kings 21:1; 2 Chronicles 33:1), was also a great king. He constructed thirty temples “*shining with silver and gold, as splendid as the sun*” along with three new palaces.

Assur-bani-pal, known by the Greeks as Sardana-palus, succeeded Esarhaddon. Invading Egypt, he defeated Tirhakah and declared himself the ruler of the country. Unfortunately, the city of Thebes was then sacked. In time, in the providence of God, Assur-bani-pal was ultimately driven from Egypt. Turning his attention against the Elamites, whom he conquered and treated with barbaric cruelty. In one procession, Gunanu, king of Gumboil and his brother Samgunu, were forced to march with the severed head of the king of Elam, and his son, hung around their necks. At the end of the march, Gunanu and other prisoners were staked to the ground. Their tongues were cut out and their skins were flayed off. Others had their arms and legs torn off. Such was the savage conduct of the times. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah would be subject to such treatment.

### **The Nation of Babylon**

When the sins of the Assyrians had reached a saturation point, God moved to destroy that empire. His instrument of destruction would be a new empire called Babylon (modern Iraq). Initially dominated by Assyria, it was the destiny of Babylon to conquer its conquerors. Little did the Assyrian king, who appointed Nabopolassar governor of Babylon realize that he had

appointed a capable but treacherous man, who was able to become the founder of the new Babylonian empire. In league with Cyaxares, the Median monarch, Nabopolassar attacked Nineveh, and destroyed it (625 BC). Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son Nebuchadnezzar who would be God's instrument of judgment against Judah.

### **The Nation of Media**

Though Babylon enjoyed dominating the world under Nebuchadnezzar, it was not to last. Already planning their move were the Medes, a people of Eastern origin who immigrated from near the Indus to the country to which they gave their name. Once dependent upon the Assyrians, the Medes at last, under King Cyaxares, achieved political independence, and then united with the Babylonians to destroy Nineveh. Under King Cyrus, the Medes united with the Persians to form one great empire that succeeded the Babylonians after conquering the city of Babylon, which he ruled from 539 until his death in 530. Cyrus is spoken of in Scripture as a chosen instrument of God to rule over nations and allow Jews to return to Israel to rebuild the temple.

- *Isaiah 41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he [Cyrus] shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.*
- *Isaiah 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*
- *Isaiah 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; 2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*
- *Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia [559 BC], that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.*
- *Ezra 4:3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. 4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah,*

*and troubled them in building, 5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*

- *2 Chronicles 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.*
- *Daniel 1:21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.*
- *Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.*

### **The Nation of Phoenicia**

While no stranger to warfare, the Phoenicians pursued maritime and commercial industries. As a result Tyre reached a glorious height of wealth. As Elijah passed through Tyre, on his way to Zarephath, he would have been astonished at the markets, warehouses and ships. Phoenician glass covered roofs to make them “*a crystal palace*”. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of the wealth of Tyre, and its great pride. Into Tyre came the wealth of the nations: silver, iron, and lead came from Tarshish (Spain). From the mine of Cornwall came tin. Horses were sent from Armenia. Arabia supplied horns and ivory, cassia and calamus, lambs and goats. Syria provided beautiful precious stones, fine linen and brodered work. Israel gave wheat and honey, oil and the balm of Gilead. Damascus sent wine, the drink of the gods, and unwrought wool. From the ancient kingdom of Sheba, the queen gave spices, precious stones and gold. From Assyria could be seen uniforms and works of skilled brodered. And there were slaves in the market places too. Javan, Tubal and Meshech offered slaves for sale. In the clamor of the market place the voice of the prophet was drowned out condemning the greed and pride that undergird the activity. Who would have believed the words of the prophet who said, “*Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin*” (Ezekiel 27:27).

### **The Nation of Carthage**

Then came Carthage. Founded c. 880 BC, about the time Jezebel introduced the worship of Baal in the religious life of the Hebrew people the territories of Carthage gradually extended. Through a system of colonization, most of the islands and seacoasts in the west of Europe came under her control. With commercial success and freedom of religious expression, a great empire emerged.

## **The Nation of Greece**

For many years following the destruction of Trojan (c. 1180 BC), Greece remained an unsettled state. In the rebuilding of society, the monarch was abolished and republican constitutions were introduced. Two states rose to compete for top leadership position—Sparta and Athens. Sparta, located in the peninsula of Peeloponnesus, became known for producing rugged individuals through an austere lifestyle. It had a great and legendary lawgiver named Lycurgus, c. 880 BC who was a contemporary of Elijah and Jehoshaphat. Athens, the capital of Attica, one of the states north of the Peeloponnesus, became known for its cultural and intellectual developments. The greatest lawgiver of Athens was Solon (c. 638 BC–558 BC). He was a contemporary of Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. With the rise of Greek thought and influence came Greek literature. One of the most important writers was Homer, who gave the world the *Iliad* circa 900 BC. This was the same time period when Elijah and Elisha insisted on the worship of the one true God in Israel, and when Jehoshaphat was standing for God in Judah. Singing these verses in the seventh century before Christ were the Greeks, Hesiod, Tyrtaeus, Alceus, and Sappho. Aesop (620-560 BC) may have published his fables at Athens, while Jeremiah the prophet denounced the sins of Jerusalem.

## **The Nation of Rome**

In the south of Europe a new nation began to emerge. Strong of body and will, men of Rome went forth to conquer. Their rod was a rod of iron to match their determination they should rule the world. Rome is said to have been founded in the year 752 BC, about the time when the king of Assyria was marching against the kingdom of Israel. Though the history of Rome is filled with myth and legend, in the providence of God, and according to prophecy, Rome was destined to rule the world – and one day be the instrument in putting to death the Son of the Living God.

**The Bible as History**

**A Survey of the Old Testament**

## **The Bible as History**

### **A Survey of the Old Testament**

#### **Chapter 19**

#### **The Captivity**

##### **The Scattering of the Nation**

The experiment in righteousness had gone astray. The nation of Israel had sinned so much, over so long a period of time divine judgment fell. First the nation was divided into two kingdoms, and then each one was further judged. The seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob began to be dispersed to other countries. Assyria, Media, Chaldea and Egypt became the home away from home in Palestine. In three successive waves the northern kingdom fell prey to the Assyrians.

<b>Assyrian king</b>	<b>Year BC</b>	<b>King of Israel</b>	<b>King of Judah</b>
Pul	771	Menahem	Uzziah
Tiglath-pileser	740	Pekah	Ahaz
Shalmaneser	721	Hoshea	Hezekiah

The deportation of the Hebrew people seemed like a victory for the god of the Assyrians, whose name was Assarac. On Assyrian monuments this god is given the honor and glory for the military victories. Since Assarac was without mercy, the treatment of the captives was harsh.

Women were raped or torn apart. Children were dashed to pieces. The Hebrews were for a long time without hope in a foreign land. In order to encourage themselves myths arose such as the story of Tobit.

### **The Tale of Tobit**

According to the narrative, Tobit, a spiritual man of great wealth became a captive. He rose in the royal court to stand before Shalmaneser and then his nephew Achiacharus as a cupbearer. When Sennacherib returned in defeat and humiliation from attempting to conquer Hezekiah at Jerusalem, he took his anger out upon the Jews. Taking compassion on the bodies of the slain, Tobit buried the bodies at night when possible. The removal of the bodies caused his own life to be in jeopardy and so he fled from Nineveh. In time Sennacherib was murdered by two of his sons while he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch (Assarac).

### **In the Land of Media**

While some of the Hebrew captives remained in Nineveh, most were transported to the land of Media that lay to the east of Assyria. They were placed in Halah, and Habor, by the river of Gozan and Hara (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11; 1 Chronicles 5:26). This harsh and mountainous country was in contrast to the flat plains of Assyria and Mesopotamia.

The mountains that spread out on either side from Ararat formed the northern boundary. The Hebrews were brought back to the origin of the human race, where the Garden of Eden was located and where Noah descended from the ark of safety. In matchless grace God uses the rod of correction to bring His children back to their original beginnings in order to remind them not only who they are but also to whom they belong.

### **The Linking of a Future**

While the ten tribes were in captivity their fate became that of the land in which they dwelt. During the reign of Sennacherib the people of Media successfully revolted from Assyria and chose as their king Deioces (called Arphaxad in the Book of Judith). He made Ecbatana his capital. Under the Medes, the Hebrews found more freedom and personal prosperity. Under the leadership of Darius, the Mede, the empire expanded to become the Medo-Persian Empire, strong enough to conquer Babylon and the Assyrians. In this way the Hebrews residing within the borders of the Medians, Assyrians and Chaldeans, became subject to one king. God was preserving His people in as far as the spiritual legacy was at stake. As far as the physical, what ultimately became of the ten tribes is one of the great mysteries of the ancient world. Some think their descendants are to be found in the Nestorian Christians of Turkey, in Asia. Others believe the Afghans of India are the lost tribes, while still others are convinced that Britain became the final home of the displaced Jews.

**Note.** Nestorius (*d circa* 451) was the patriarch of Constantinople (428-431) who preached the doctrine that the divine and human natures of Christ were one in action but not one in person. After much bitter debate, and the calling of three church councils, he was finally deposed for heresy, but the doctrine he taught spread widely in Asia.

## **The Captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah**

Like the northern kingdom of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah was dispersed in three detachments.

Year BC	King of Judah	The Conquerors	People taken Captive
607	Jehoiakim	Nebuchadnezzar acting for Nabopolassar	Daniel and other nobility
599	Jehoiachin	Nebuchadnezzar	10,000 chief people
588	Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar	Nearly all the people

With the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, a small remnant of Jews were left in the land of Palestine under the authority of Gedaliah, though Ishmael massacred many of these. Others were taken to Babylon, one of the great cities of the ancient world. The walls of the city formed a square, each side being fifteen miles long. Twenty-five streets ran in one direction and twenty-five across them at right angles coming together in a hundred gates, and dividing the city into six hundred square miles.

The middle of each square was decorated in gardens. Splendid palaces and temples adorned the city with the hanging gardens being the focus of attention. These large terraces placed one on top of the other reached a height equal to that of the city walls. They are believed to have been constructed to please the wife of Nebuchadnezzar, Amyitis, his Media queen.

### **A Dreamer of Dreams**

It was to the magnificent city of Babylon that Daniel and his companions were brought in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (c. 605 BC), the eighteenth king of Judah. The purpose of their deportation was to educate them in the knowledge and language of the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans liked to boast of their knowledge of astrology. Their Magi were held in the highest esteem, for the Magi gave themselves to tracing the movements of the heavenly bodies. They studied the qualities of metals and minerals and made predictions of the future. They explained dreams. They became the priests of the Chaldean nation, teaching the worship of the sun, moon, stars and planets. While acknowledging one Supreme Being, they embraced many lesser gods, such as Bel, or Belus. In Babylon, Bel was worshipped with great pomp and ceremony. Exposed to all of this was Daniel and his companions. By the grace of God they managed to stand against Babylonian luxury and superstition. And when given the opportunity, Daniel correctly interpreted a disturbing dream for the king.

The dream showed a great image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. Each metal represented a succeeding empire, and each empire was destroyed. The final one fell as a Great Stone that smashed its feet of clay. History records that the empire of gold was the Babylonian empire, representing Nebuchadnezzar himself. The empire did fall to the Medes and Persians, that in turn was taken captive by the Greeks, who were subdued by the Romans. The Roman Empire was destroyed by the Kingdom of Christ – a Stone cut out of the Mountain being distinct and separate from the kingdoms of this world (Daniel 2).

## **The Fourth Man in the Fire**

Perhaps in response to the dream and its interpretation did Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image on the plain of Dura, and demanded worship at the point of death for failure to do so. Daniel and his friends determined they would not bend, they would not bow, and if need be, they would burn rather than to violate their consciences, or worship anyone other than the one true God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood for God, and God stood with them in the midst of the fire. *“He [the servant of Nebuchadnezzar] answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God”* (Dan 3:25). The dream and its interpretation, along with Daniel being delivered from the fiery furnace, made a deep impression upon Nebuchadnezzar, so that for a while he decreed that all men give the highest honor to the God of Israel. But a deep impression was not a lasting impression, for within twelve years Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem and destroyed the holy city, and the temple of God. Later, during the reign of Darius 521 BC - 486 BC, Daniel would be tested in a den of lions for his faith (Daniel 6:1-24).

## **The Second Detachment**

About eight years after the arrival of Daniel and his companions in Babylon, a second detachment of Jews arrived. In this company was a young man ordained to be another prophet. His name was Ezekiel. By the river Chebar they were settled. Chebar is a tributary of the Euphrates that flows into it about three hundred miles above Babylon. Here they were, near the famous fortress of Carchemish where many battles had been fought among the Egyptians, Assyrians and Hittites. Here also false prophets among the Hebrews suddenly emerged to promise the people a quick return from captivity. On hearing this, Jeremiah, who had remained in Jerusalem, wrote a letter to inform the captives that such hopes were vain. The captivity would last for seventy years, for God was determined to extract from His people the time that was owed to Him in violation of the land.

- *Jeremiah 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.*
- *2 Chronicles 36:20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21 To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years.*

Christians are to redeem the time through proper acts of worship, not violate it.

- *Exodus 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor*

*thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

- *Ephesians 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

### **By the Rivers of Babylon**

It was during this period that Psalm 137 was composed, which gives a heart-wrenching picture of the sadness of the saints in exile.

- *Psalms 137 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. 4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. 6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. 7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. 8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. 9 Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

### **The Emergence of Ezekiel**

In the fifth year of the reign of Zedekiah, and therefore the fifth year following the second deportation from Jerusalem, prophetic visions came to Ezekiel (c. 592 BC). Covering a wide time period Ezekiel saw the future. In particular he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. In addition, the Egyptians would treacherously betray the people of Judah. Against Pharaoh-Hophra the prophet spoke predicting the desolation of Egypt. Tyre also which had become a bitter enemy of the Jews was doomed to sudden destruction. But the later visions of Ezekiel were filled with mercy and peace and hope. The valley of dry bones would live again (Ezekiel 37:3). The people would be restored to the land. The Messiah would come with healing in His wings. Jew and Gentile would enjoy the Golden Scepter of the Reign of Righteousness.

“Do you see the Hebrew captive kneeling,  
At morning, noon and night, to pray?  
In his chamber he remembers Zion,  
Though in exile far away.

Are your windows open toward Jerusalem,  
Though as captives here, a “little while” we stay?  
For the coming of the King in His glory  
Are you watching day by day?

Do not fear to tread the fiery furnace,  
Nor shrink the lion’s den to share;

For the God of Daniel will deliver,  
He will send His angel there.

Children of the living God, take courage,  
Your great deliverance sweetly sing.  
Set your faces toward the hill of Zion,  
Thence to hail your coming King”.

Refrain

Philip Bliss

### **The Messiah in Prophecy**

While the prophets spoke of contemporary events their collective concern was to keep hope in the Messiah alive. To that end Jesus was spoken of time and again. Some of the prophecies concerning Christ are noted in order to enhance an appreciation for the *Bible* as the Word of the Living God who knows the past, the present, and the future, for He ordains all that comes to pass.

1. Messiah would be born of the seed of woman.

- *Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

2. Messiah would be the son of Isaac.

- *Genesis 21:12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

3. Messiah would be the seed of Abraham.

- *Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

4. Messiah would be the son of Jacob.

- *Genesis 35:10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. 11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; 12 And the land which I*

*gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.*

5. Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah.

- *Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

6. Messiah was to have a star appear over Israel at His birth.

- *Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

7. Messiah was to be called from Egypt.

- *Numbers 24:8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.*

8. Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses.

- *Deuteronomy 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.*

9. Messiah was to be a king.

- *Psalms 2:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*

10. Messiah would be called the Son of God.

- *Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

11. Messiah was to be praised by little children.

- *Psalms 8:2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

12. Messiah would be resurrected.

- *Psalms 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

- *Psalms 30:3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*
- *Psalms 41:10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.*
- *Psalms 118:17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.*

13. Messiah was to cry out a forsaken cry on the cross.

- *Psalms 22:1 To the chief Musician upon Ai'-je-leth Sha'-har, A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

14. Messiah was to be surrounded and ridiculed by his enemies.

- *Psalms 22:7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

15. Messiah was to be mocked.

- *Psalms 22:7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

16. Messiah would have his heart broken.

- *Psalms 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

17. Messiah was to suffer thirst.

- *Psalms 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*
- *Psalms 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

18. Messiah was to have his hands and feet pierced.

- *Psalms 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

19. Messiah was to be stared upon.

- *Psalms 22:17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

20. Messiah was to have his garments parted and gambled for.

- *Psalms 22:18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

21. Messiah would commit His spirit unto God.

- *Psalms 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.*

22. Messiah would not have any of His bones broken.

- *Psalms 34:20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

23. Messiah was to be accused by false witnesses.

- *Psalms 35:11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*

24. Messiah was to have His friends stay afar off.

- *Psalms 38:11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*

25. Messiah was to be betrayed by his best friend.

- *Psalms 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*
- *Psalms 55:12-14 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: 13 But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. 14 We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.*

26. Messiah would ascend into heaven.

- *Psalms 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*

27. Messiah was to be hated without a cause.

- *Psalms 69:4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.*

28. Messiah was to be zealous for God.

- *Psalms 69:9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

29. Messiah was to have gall and vinegar offered to Him.

- *Psalms 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

30. Messiah was to fall under the cross.

- *Psalms 109:24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. 25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.*

31. Messiah was to be given gifts by wise men at His birth.

- *Psalms 72:10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*

32. Messiah was to be a teacher of parables.

- *Psalms 78:2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:*

33. Messiah was to have people shake their heads.

- *Psalms 109:25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.*

34. Messiah was to be called Lord.

- *Psalms 110:1 A Psalm of David The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

35. Messiah was to be an eternal priest.

- *Psalms 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

36. Messiah would be seated at the right hand of God.

- *Psalms 110:1 A Psalm of David the LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength*

*out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

37. Messiah was to be a “stone of stumbling” to the Jews.

- *Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*

38. Messiah would be born of a virgin.

- *Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

39. Messiah was to be called Emmanuel--God with us.

- *Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

40. Messiah was to be a minister in Galilee.

- *Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.*

41. Messiah would be a unique person in that He would have pre-existed.

- *Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*
- *Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, **from everlasting**.*

42. Messiah would come from the family line of Jesse.

- *Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

43. Messiah was to be called a Nazarene.

- *Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

44. Messiah was to be anointed of the Holy Spirit.

- *Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

45. Messiah was to be a judge.

- *Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.*

46. Messiah was to be a healer of the blind, deaf, lame, and dumb.

- *Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

47. Messiah was to be preceded by a messenger.

- *Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*
- *Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

48. Messiah was to be tender.

- *Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

49. Messiah was to be meek.

- *Isaiah 42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.*

50. Messiah was to be compassionate.

- *Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

51. Messiah was to be smitten and spit upon.

- *Isaiah 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*

- *Micah 5:1 Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.*

52. Messiah was to have Israel disbelieve in His miracles.

- *Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

53. Messiah was to be a man of sorrows.

- *Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

54. Messiah was to be rejected by His own people.

- *Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

55. Messiah was to be wounded and bruised for our sins.

- *Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

56. Messiah was to be dumb before His accusers.

- *Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

57. Messiah would be buried in a rich man's tomb.

- *Isaiah 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

58. Messiah was to pray for his persecutors.

- *Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

59. Messiah was to be crucified with thieves.

- *Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

60. Messiah was to be a light to the Gentiles.

- *Isaiah 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

61. Messiah was to teach in a synagogue of Nazareth.

- *Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

62. Messiah was to write names in the dust.

- *Jeremiah 17:13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.*

63. Messiah would come from the house of David.

- *Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*

64. Messiah was to be born before Herod massacred the innocent children.

- *Jeremiah 31:15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.*

65. Messiah was to enter Jerusalem exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem.

- *Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

66. Messiah was to have darkness over the land at His death.

- *Amos 8:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.*

67. Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

- *Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

68. Messiah was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey.

- *Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

69. Messiah was to be sold for 30 pieces of silver.

- *Zechariah 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.*

70. Messiah was to have his betrayer throw the money into the temple.

- *Zechariah 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.*

71. Messiah was to have the betrayal money used to buy a potter's field.

- *Zechariah 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.*

72. Messiah would have His side pierced.

- *Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

73. Messiah was to be forsaken by His disciples.

- *Zechariah 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*

74. Messiah was to enter the temple.

- *Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

## **Concerning Cyrus the Persian**

As the prophets spoke of the coming Messiah so the Hebrew prophets spoke of more contemporary people and events illustrated in the person of Cyrus, founder of the Medo-Persian Empire. Xenophon (b. 444 BC), a Greek general and historian, has given to the world an account of the education of Cyrus. The future king is presented as a model of wisdom and virtue. In reality Cyrus was a ruthless warrior being the son of Cambyses, a Persian noble and of Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. As a warring king, Cyrus captured the prized possession of the ancient world, Babylon. This conquest had been foretold by Daniel the prophet (Daniel 7). In a vision Daniel saw four beasts representing the four great empires – the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. Daniel foresaw the collapse of these empires and the rise and triumph of the kingdom of Christ.

## **Not an Easy Conquest**

Though a divine certainty, the conquest of Babylon was not easy from a human perspective. It was the policy of the monarch of Babylon to enter into political and military alliances with other nations. One important ally was Croesus, king of Lydia, a country in west Asia. The capital of Croesus was Sardis. The people of this country were civilized and prosperous. The king himself was reported to be the richest of all men. Unfortunately, the small nation could not withstand the army of Cyrus. Sardis was sacked, and Croesus was condemned to be burned to death.

## **Delivered from Death**

According to legend, as the king stood before the funeral pyre, he cried out with a deep sigh, “*O Solon, Solon, Solon!*” Cyrus became curious at this unusual remark and asked what was meant by it. Croesus explained that Solon was a wise man of Athens who visited Sardis. When shown the wealth of the people and the king, Solon was not impressed. Solon announced he could pronounce no man happy as long as he lived, because no one could foresee what might happen to him before he died. Standing before a burning pyre, with the wealth of the world now meaningless, Croesus could not help but reflect on the remarks of Solon, and cried out his name as if to say, “*Solon, you were right!*” When the whole matter was reported to King Cyrus, he spared the life of Croesus, and made him a friend of the royal court.

## **The Writing on the Wall**

The conquest of Cyrus gave him dominion over more people and land than had ever been under the authority of one man. His empire extended from the Indus valley to the Nile. But for a long time Babylon remained independent. Surrounded by walls of incredible height and strength, and with stored provisions for twenty years against a seize, it seemed to be secure. However God has a way to humble the proud, and bring down the mighty. The fall of Babylon happened when Nabonadius was absent from the royal city and Belshazzar was in charge. While giving a great banquet, a great act of religious disrespect took place. Belshazzar used the sacred vessels of Jerusalem for selfish pleasures and crude conduct.

Suddenly, while the guests were drinking to excess and laughing, a sobering sight was seen. A mysterious hand was witnessed on the palace wall. Letters were formed which the Babylonians

could not read. The queen mother, Nitocris, remembered the wisdom of Daniel, now an elderly man in captivity. He was promised an exalted place as the third ruler of the empire if he could interpret what was written. *“And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians”* (Dan 5:25-28). At the same time Daniel was interpreting the writing on the wall, King Cyrus was diverting the waters of the Euphrates, which ran through Babylon, thereby finding a way to breach the city walls. Soon he was in the palace killing Belshazzar. In one majestic and miraculous move he had become the undisputed ruler of the city.

### **The Judgment of God**

Concerning the judgment of God on Babylon the following observations are noted.

- The judgment of God is real. A large component of sin is rooted in unbelief. When Adam and Eve stopped believing the warning of God that they would die, they ate of the forbidden fruit. Justice delayed is not justice denied. God is merciful. God is long suffering but He keeps His word. *“He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”* (Proverbs 29:1). Repetitive sins involving murder, lust, greed, covetousness, anger, and evil conversations are engaged in because the mercy of God, designed to lead the soul to repentance is abused. The heart is so hardened that repentance is impossible, the strength of sin grows and all feeling vanishes. There is no fear of God in the mind. There is no turning from evil. There is no sorrow for sin. And suddenly, God moves in a just judgment to avenge His honor and discipline those who need it.
- The judgment of God is severe. Babylon was not just turned over to a new political ruler in a smooth act of political transition. There was a bloodbath as Belshazzar was slaughtered. His blood mingled with the wine he drank. Women screamed. Children ran into the night in terror. All over the city many people awoke in the middle of the night to fear, chaos and confusion. Daniel had tried to teach people about the wrath of God. *“For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment”* (Deuteronomy 10:17-18).
- The judgment of God is measured. Few people in time ever get what they fully deserve or there would be no life left. Realizing how terrible God can be the Psalmist pleaded, *“O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure”* (Psalm 38:1).

### **The Spiritual Work of a Wise Person**

Lest the wrath of God fall, the wise person living in sin would do the following.

- Believe God has said what He means and means what He said. If the thought of divine wrath does not frighten the heart it should because *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”* (Proverbs 1:7).
- Pray, no plead for the gift of repentance. Only God has the power and authority to give this gift of grace (Acts 11:18). Let the repentance be as deep as the sin.
- Pray also for the gift of the Holy Spirit. *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”* (Luke 11:13).
- Remove every provision for evil. Destroy the golden calf of lust, anger, greed, jealousy, bitterness, lying, adultery, fornication, covetousness and malice. While national Israel repented of their sin of idolatry during the wilderness journey, Moses recorded what he did with the golden calf. *“And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount”* (Deuteronomy 9:21).
- Engage the mind to become serious about dealing with sin. The command is not to seek to mortify or put sin to death but to kill it, and to live in righteousness as a proper child of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

*“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him”* (Colossians 3:5-10).

- Depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit for spiritual victory. The divine remedy for sin is saving faith in the Savior and the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”* (Romans 8:13-17). The Christian life is lived in and through the Spirit. Any dependency upon the flesh will fail.
- Stop listening to the inner voice luring the soul into temptation and then evil. There are many voices in existence. As the world and the flesh have access to the mind so do the demons. *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12). In the world of the spirit a voice is heard suggesting that a darling sin be

visited, “*Just for the moment. Nothing has to be done but see how the sin is doing.*” Eve lingered when she should have fled from the face of evil.

- Put on the whole armour of God. The divine armor includes truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, and the word of God. “*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints*” (Ephesians 6:13-18).
- Reaffirm love for God and His Son. “*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him*” (Psalm 2:12).

### **Daniel in the Lion’s Den**

While Cyrus took Babylon captive, a surrogate named Cyaxares ruled the city. This king of the Medes was the uncle and father-in-law of Cyrus. He is called in the Bible, Darius the Mede (Daniel 11:1). He and Cyrus divided the empire into 120 provinces ruled over by three princes of whom Daniel was the first. While Cyrus went out to fight a war, the enemies of Daniel accused him before Darius of not showing proper respect to the king. His punishment was to be cast into a den of lions. But God was with Daniel, protected him from the jaws of the lion. In the end Daniel was promoted to a position of the highest order (Daniel 6:1-28).

### **Hope in the Heart**

As a student of the Scriptures, Daniel came to believe that the Jewish captivity would come to an end according to prophecy. This discovery was made during the first year of the reign of Darius (c. 521 BC). Engaging in prayer Daniel confessed the sins of the people, as he used various principles of prayer.

### **Principles of Prayer**

1. There are many ways to learn how to pray more effectively.
  - Listening to others pray is a way of learning to pray well. Children naturally repeat and incorporate into their soul the speech and manners of their parents.

- Asking to be taught by a religious person is effective. John taught his disciples to pray, and the disciples of Christ asked Him to teach them to pray.
- Studying the *Scriptures* to learn what the *Bible* teaches on the subject of prayer can enhance the prayer life, for there are principles of prayer.

2. Prayer is to be made to God who is to be feared and trusted.

- *Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.*

Though God is to be feared, when we pray we can remember the love of God that wants the best for us, the wisdom of God that knows what is best for us, and the power of God that can accomplish it.

3. Prayer involves confession of specific sins. Some of the sins, which Daniel confessed included: rebellion and neglect of the prophets who had been maligned, mocked and murdered (2 Chronicles 36:16) Confession must be the language of our own conviction. The exceeding sinfulness of sin must be realized.

- *Daniel 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.*
- *Daniel 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*

4. Prayer includes praise.

- *Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.*

5. Prayer is based upon a covenant relationship.

- *Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.*

6. Prayer acknowledges the justice of God.

- *Daniel 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.*

7. Prayer appeals to the Divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness.

- *Daniel 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;*

8. Prayer reminds God of the desperation of a given situation.

- *Daniel 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*

9. In prayer Scripture is remembered.

- *Daniel 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*

10. Prayer perceives the hardness of the heart.

- *Daniel 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.*

11. In prayer it is remembered that there is a consequence to sin.

- *Daniel 9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.*

12. In the act of prayer hope is found for Divine Deliverance.

- *Daniel 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.*

13. Prayer pleads for grace and reminds God of His honor before others.

- *Daniel 9:16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our*

*sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.*

14. Prayer longs for peace so that face-to-face fellowship can be restored.

- *Daniel 9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.*

15. True prayer is characterized by passion.

- *Daniel 9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*

### **A Prophetic Calendar: Daniel 9:24-27**

*“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”*

### **Introduction**

1. In order to appreciate prophecy, it must be kept in mind that the prophets did not express their own personal views.
2. The *Bible* states plainly that the prophets told what God the Holy Spirit instructed them to tell.
  - *“For the prophecy came not in old time by will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21).*

3. All the prophecies concerning Christ were fulfilled, including those given by Daniel.
  - *Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*
4. In Daniel's vision of seventy weeks, the weeks stand for years, to total four hundred and ninety (490) years.
5. The first sixty-nine (69) weeks measure a period of four hundred and eighty three (483) years followed by the seventieth (70th) week of year, or seven (7) years, for a total of four hundred and ninety (490) years.
6. Since the first sixty-nine (69) weeks were literally fulfilled by the return of the Jews from Babylon to Israel to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, there is no compelling reason to believe that the final week is not also fulfilled, and that it naturally followed the 69<sup>th</sup> week in chronological order. There is no time gap indicated in the Scriptural narrative.
7. There is a theory that a time gap exists. (A theory, according to Webster's dictionary, is an unproven assumption, or a hypothesis accepted for the sake of argument).
8. It has been suggested that a "*Prophetic Time Clock*" stopped at the end of the sixty-ninth (69th) week of years, or after 483 years.
9. The purpose of this time stoppage, according to the theory, is so that national Israel can, in the future, experience the seventieth (70th) week in the form of a great tribulation.
10. It is argued that one day Israel (and the whole world) shall suffer for seven (7) years while being deceived by the Anti-Christ who will lead the world into the greatest battle of human history called Armageddon. Of course none of these events are mentioned in the text.
11. The basic question of concern is this: "*Did the 70th week follow the 69th week?*" If the seventieth (70th) week did follow the sixty-ninth (69th) week, then the "*Postponement Theory*" and the "*Prophetic Clock*" concept and all the rest can be exchanged for the simplicity of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.
12. It is significant to note that Christendom did not know these theories until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In contrast to these recently developed spectacular theories is God's specific ancient wording to Daniel, which was that "*seventy weeks are determined.*"
13. This divine decree, in context, does not allow the separation of one week from the initial sixty-nine (69) weeks by a long period of time.
14. A comparison of this passage can be made with other time passages in scripture.

- *Item.* When the prophecy of Christ was made that He was to be buried and rise again on the third day, there was no other day that the Lord could have risen and still fulfilled prophecy.
  - *Item.* When Joseph prophesied of seven fat years followed by seven years of famine, there was no indeterminate time between fulfillments.
  - *Item.* When Jeremiah prophesied of seventy years captivity in Babylon it all happened on schedule with one year following the next for seventy years. The seventieth year did not find fulfillment hundreds of years later.
15. God keeps His appointments on schedule. A break, or long postponement in prophecy does not make a fulfillment possible.
- *Deuteronomy 18:22 says, When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not [no postponement permitted] nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.*
16. Jesus Himself said that the *Scriptures* cannot be broken.
- *John 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken.*
17. A careful examination of Daniel 9:24-27 reveals that the prophet wrote about the consummation of Jewry, not its exaltation and eventual restoration.
18. To be specific, Daniel was told of many things that would happen to the Jews and to the Holy City following the Babylonian Captivity.
19. It was decreed that Jerusalem was to be restored (9:25) *“for the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.”*
20. The account of this work of rebuilding Jerusalem is given in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.
21. Following the seventy years of Babylonian Captivity, God was determined to restore Israel back to her land for at least four hundred and ninety more years as reflected in the prophecy.
- *Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*
22. The weeks of years principle can be found in other passages.
- *Numbers 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.*

- *Ezekiel 4:4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.*

23. In that four hundred and ninety year period several things would happen in the history of national Israel. Some would be good, some would be bad.

24. First, it was determined that Israel “*would finish the transgression.*”

The transgression of Israel had for a long time been the focus of the messages from God's prophets.

It was for their transgressions that the Jews had gone into captivity in 721 BC under the Assyrians and then in 586 BC under the Babylonians.

It was for their transgressions that the land of Palestine had been made desolation for seventy years.

Daniel himself had confessed this by saying: “*Yea, all have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore, the curse is poured upon us.*”

As sad as this was, the angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel the distressing news that as badly as Israel had behaved in the past, she would yet sin again to an even greater extent.

Yes, Israel would be restored to her land following the seventy years in Babylon. Yes, the Holy Temple would be rebuilt.

Yes, the wall of the holy city Jerusalem would be made secure once more, but only so that the full measure of Israel's transgression might be made complete, for it was to be the fate of the nation that the Messiah would come only to be killed by a mindless Jewish mob.

Turning to the *New Testament*, we read that the Messiah did come to Israel. Jesus knew what Daniel had said and the other prophets. After bringing a railing accusation against the Jewish leaders, the Lord said, *Fill ye up the measure of your fathers... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth (Matthew 23:32-35).*

With these words Jesus declared that the hour had come in His day for Israel to “*finish the transgression*” of rejecting all the words of warning, all of the prophets, all the means of grace, even to that which was offered by the Messiah.

There would be a terrible price to pay by Israel for the transgression. Jesus predicted an awful doom upon the beloved city and its people. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall

come upon THIS generation. *Matthew 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*

Again, the Lord said, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* When the transgression of the Jewish nation was finished as predicted by Daniel, then was brought to pass the words spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost concerning Christ. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (Acts 2:33).*

Paul confirms that the crucifixion of Christ was the crowning sin of Israel, adding that the wrath of God would come upon Israel to the uttermost.

*1 Thessalonians 2:15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*

The wrath of God did come.

The year was AD 70. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Holy Temple was laid waste.

The blood sacrifices were made to cease, and the Jewish people were scattered throughout the nations of the earth.

Israel had broken her covenant vow. Israel had tried to kill her Husband. Israel had committed spiritual fornication.

Finally, the transgression completed, the Lord gave the true kingdom covenant blessing to a nation bringing forth the fruits of Christ (Matthew 21:43) which 1 Peter 2:9 declares to be the true Israel of God, the CHURCH of the living God.

*Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

*1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

25. Second, returning to Daniel 9:24 the prophecy says again, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...to make an end of sins.*

The things that happened in Israel during the four hundred and ninety—(490) year period brought an end to sins.

How was this possible? The answer is the Cross. The wrath of man manifested against Christ (Psalm 76:10) at the Cross-became the means that God used to put away the sins of the elect and to make an end of sins. On the Cross, the Lord Jesus offered the one sacrifice for sins

forever (Hebrews 10:2). The Lord did not die in vain. He died in order to purge His people from all their sins (Hebrews 1:3).

- *Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*
- *Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

26. The third expression in Daniel 9:24 is also instructive. The prophet was told that, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city ...to make reconciliation for iniquity.*

Reconciliation signifies the bringing back together those who were rebels and enemies.

Man has been a rebel against God by nature and by choice since the fall of Adam.

In his heart man has been disloyal and non-submissive to God. In His justice and righteousness God has had to punish this revolt against Divine authority.

Yet the character of God also enjoys displaying grace and mercy.

The only way for grace and mercy to be freely expressed without compromising justice and righteousness is for the sin issue to be dealt with. Sin must be punished before there is a basis for reconciliation.

Selecting the nation Israel to work through, God the Father decreed a plan of salvation to be expressed in time with the end result being the making of reconciliation for iniquity.

It happened at the Cross. As a result of the death of Christ, those who have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins are reconciled.

- *Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet*

*now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:*

27. The fourth thing Daniel was told by the angel Gabriel is that, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...to bring in everlasting righteousness.* Jeremiah had prophesied of this bringing in of righteousness. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in earth...and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:6).*

Within the four hundred and ninety (490) year time frame it was determined by God that through the nation Israel and in the Holy City of Jerusalem something would happen to bring in everlasting righteousness. Something did happen within the specified time.

The Messiah came to Israel and established the kingdom of God in His righteousness through Jesus Christ.

- *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
- *Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

History records that a work of righteousness was done in Israel on a Cross outside the Holy City. Christ was made unto us righteousness.

- *1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

For God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

- *2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

28. The fifth truth the angel told Daniel was that, *Seventy years are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city in order to...seal up the vision and prophecy.*

In order to fully appreciate the meaning of these words it must be kept in mind that the whole vision that Daniel was allowed to see, set forth the goodness and the severity of God.

The severity of God is manifested in that He allowed Israel to continue their rebellion against Himself by abusing the prophets and by killing the Messiah.

The severity of God is manifested in that He was determined to seal up the vision and the prophecy for where there is no vision the people will perish. God can be very severe.

- *Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
- *Isaiah 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
- *Isaiah 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

The conclusion of the matter is that the spiritual blindness of national Israel was complete when the Messiah arrived within the designated time frame.

Though the Jewish leaders read the scriptures daily, they heard not the ancient voices and so they fulfilled them in condemning Christ.

- *Acts 13:26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*
- *Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

Twice in the New Testament our Lord applied the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 to the Jews of Israel (Matthew 13:11-13).

- *Isaiah 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
- *Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

By appealing to the prophet Isaiah, the Lord taught that He Himself was sealing up the visions and the prophecies so that the Jews of His day would have no more light from God because their transgression against God was fulfilled.

The racial Jew was to know the severity of God. Only the regenerate Jew, only those who had the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, only the elect of God would see and hear and understand.

- *Matthew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*
- *John 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*
- *Acts 28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

*Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

29. Returning to Daniel 9:24 there is a sixth thing that the angel shared with the prophet. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...to anoint the Most High. The Most High is the Lord Jesus Christ.* Of Himself the Lord said, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).*

For three and one half (3 1/2) years the Lord Jesus did all of this before He was “*cut off for His people*” (Daniel 9:26).

All of the four gospels describe in detail how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: “*who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him*” (Acts 10:38).

The ultimate anointing of the Most Holy person of Christ came with His resurrection as Hebrews 1:9 explains. *He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.* Paul declares that, *God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in*

*earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).*

30. In Daniel 9:25ff the certainty of all the prophetic utterances being fulfilled is reinforced by further details being given concerning the time frame. Daniel is instructed to know certain things.
31. The prophet of God is to know that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.
32. Within the four hundred and eighty three (483) years [7 weeks of 7 years = 49 years + 62 weeks of 7 years = 434 years or 49 + 434 = 483 years] from the issuing of the royal decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah did appear.
33. When He came there were souls who recognized Him (John 1:41) because He was expected (Luke 2:25-35).
  - *John 1:41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*
  - *Luke 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*
34. The heart of Daniel must have shuddered at the next statement of the holy angel for it was revealed that, "...after threescore and two weeks [i.e. after the 483 years] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself."
35. The time period is plain. Within the first seven weeks or forty-nine (49) years Jerusalem was to rebuild following the Babylonian Captivity. Then, after four hundred and thirty four (434) more years the Messiah was to appear. Next would come the final one week of seven (7) years.

36. Two questions are raised.
- Did the final, seventieth (70th), week follow the sixty ninth week?
  - At what point in the Messiah's ministry did the prophecy occur which would mark the beginning of the final week?
37. The key to understanding the answer is in the name "*Messiah*." After four hundred and eighty three (483) years Messiah was to appear.
38. After four hundred and eighty three (483) years Messiah did appear to Israel at the river Jordan in the person of Jesus Christ.
39. Peter bore witness to this fact when he said that, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.
40. The baptism of Jesus marked precisely when the seventieth (70th) week began. In this seven (7) year period of one prophetic week the six predicted features of Daniel 9:24 came to fulfillment as well as the features of Daniel 9:27. .... *He [the Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...*
41. The pronoun reference "*He*" in 9:27 can only refer to the Messiah of 9:26 and no one else.
42. This is true from a grammatical point for the antecedent of a pronoun reference cannot be the object of a modifying clause.
43. Therefore, the "*prince*" of Daniel 9:26 is not in view or the "*people*" of the same verse for that word is plural in number and the pronoun is singular.
44. The only alternative in Daniel 9:26 is "*Messiah*." The Messiah was to confirm the covenant with many for one week.
45. The word for confirm means "*to ratify*." Since it is not possible to confirm or ratify something unless it is in existence the covenant that the Messiah ratified must have been in existence.
46. Theologians refer to this existing covenant as the Covenant of Work which was first made with Adam.
47. The provision of the Covenant was that obedience brought life and disobedience brought judgment and death.
48. The First Adam failed to keep the provision of obedience thereby breaking the Covenant of Works.

49. The Last Adam [the Messiah] did not fail to be obedient but fulfilled all the provisions of the Covenant of Works.
50. He was perfect. The Messiah kept all of the Law of Moses and then He did more.
51. The Messiah instituted a New Covenant of Grace based upon His substitutionary death at Calvary.
52. The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant. It was instituted during the last week of Daniel's prophetic vision but is destined to endure for eternity.
53. This New Covenant Of Grace is explained in detail in Hebrews 8 and 9. In Hebrews 8:8-13 and 10:15-17 the Holy Author of scripture declares that the New Covenant (cf. Matthew 26:28) is the fulfillment of the promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

- *Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*
- *Hebrews 10:15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*
- *Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*
- *Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

54. The New Covenant of Grace, confirmed by the Messiah, is said to be made with “many” according to Daniel 9:27.
55. Not all people shall be saved but many will be. The *New Testament* agrees. Matthew 1:21 declares that the Messiah was to, “*save His people from their sins.*”
56. In Matthew 26:28 Jesus said, *This is my blood of the New Covenant shed for many for the remissions of sins.*
- *Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*
  - *Luke 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.*
  - *Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.*
  - *Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
  - *Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*
57. While “*confirming the covenant*” in fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, the Messiah was able to, “*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*”.
58. With these words the prophecy was made that the Messiah would make an end to all the *Old Testament* sacrifices if not in literal practice at least as to their necessity.
59. Hebrews 8-10 sets forth in great detail and with great emphasis the abolishing of the demands of the Law of Moses with all the sacrifices and ritual. For the Christian community the sacrifices of bulls and goats have ceased. Hebrews 10:9 is the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27.
- *Hebrews 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*
  - *Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*
60. The reality of the death of Christ dispels the shadows forever.
61. The final important phrase of Daniel 9:27 is that which says the work of the Messiah would be such that the way would be paved, “*...for the overspreading of abominations; he shall*

*make it desolate, even until consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”*

62. The *Revised Standard Version* makes this passage a little easier to understand: “*and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolate.*”
63. The desolate was Israel who had killed the prophets of God. Israel had also rejected the Messiah. Israel had refused to repent.
64. Israel had crucified the Lord of Glory. God therefore decreed that Israel would be made desolate in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, and it was.
65. In all of its essential parts, the prophecy given to Daniel was fulfilled. There is only one other factor to consider and that is the reference by the Lord to “*the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the Holy Place*” (*Matthew 24:15*).
66. As the Lord was fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, He appealed to the prophet's previous prediction concerning Antiochus Epiphanes (IV) who was the ruler of Syria from 175-164 BC.
67. Antiochus was the “*little horn*” of Daniel 8:9.
  - *Daniel 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.*
68. In a vain attempt to influence the Jews with Greek culture, Antiochus performed an abomination of desolation when he offered a pig on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem to Zeus thereby desecrating the holy altar.
69. With that historical allusion in mind, Jesus, in Matthew 24:15 tells the Jews that the same type of thing will happen again in their generation. The Lord had in mind the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.
  - *Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :)*
70. The destruction of the Holy Temple would have happened soon after the death of Christ except for one fact. While He was on the Cross, Jesus prayed for the people, and God delayed the execution of His judgment until AD 70 (cf. Luke 19; 21; Matthew 23).
71. In AD 70, Israel was made even more desolate, for there did come one upon the wings of abominations in the person of the Roman general Titus.
72. In AD 70 Rome was weary of the Jewish revolts.
73. For three and one half (3 1/2) years Rome laid siege to Jerusalem and finally conquered the city completely.

74. The Holy Temple was destroyed, and the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 24:15, using a previous typology provided by Daniel, in the form of Antiochus, was finally fulfilled.

- *Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :)*

### **The Return of the Jews**

Following the death of Darius, Cyrus succeeded to the throne of the Medo-Persian Empire. Perhaps it was Daniel who first took the prophetic books and revealed to Cyrus that he was mentioned by name hundreds of years prior to his birth. It was foretold that Cyrus would be the Shepherd of the Lord's and that he would break in pieces the brazen gates of Babylon and receive from God the hidden riches of Croesus, and other wealthy monarchs.

- *Isaiah 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*
- *Isaiah 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.*

Responding in a positive way to the will and word of God, Cyrus issued a decree permitting the Jews to return and build the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

- *2 Chronicles 36 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.*
- *Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.*

While many Jews had grown accustomed to life in captivity, and some had even prospered, about eight thousand Jews eagerly began the long journey home. In the first company that returned there were two hundred singing men and woman.

- *Ezra 2:65 Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.*

### **Changed by the Captivity**

One of the practical blessings of the Babylonian captivity is that the experience cured the people of idolatry. Never again did the Jews show an inclination in the worship of idols. On the negative side, an inordinate sense of national pride took root in their hearts to the point many did not see the need for a Savior from sins. Being of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob they thought they were a chosen people to the point of false security. Christ would challenge this national pride in the Jews and in the Samaritans too, by saying to a woman at a well “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23-24). Nevertheless, it was good the Jews were going home from the Babylonian captivity, for many Psalms were to be added to the canon of Scripture along with the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel. The coming of the Messiah also shown more brightly due to the prophetic calendar given to Daniel. In 490 years the Desire of the Nations would come. Finally, the doctrine of the resurrection became more precious and pronounced.

- *Ezekiel 37:12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.*
- *Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*