The Ridge in Jerusalem over Which the Scapegoat was Sent
Leviticus 16
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

Creation to Ruth
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

Chapter 1

Genesis

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning, God...”

Introduction: The Dawning of a New Day

Nowhere does the Bible ever try to prove the existence of God. The reason for this is simple. Whatever evidence would be offered, as confirmation of the Divine presence, would be of greater value than God Himself. This point is presented in part by the Lord's appearance to Moses when the reluctant leader asked for a sign to prove to others that the Lord had spoken to him. “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:14). God appealed to His own essence and to His own self-existence as the greatest evidence of Divine reality.

It has been said that, if a person can believe the first four words of Genesis, all the rest of the Bible will be easy to receive: “In the beginning, God...” The author of Hebrews (11:6) declares that fundamental faith in the actuality of God is the basis for all Divine fellowship. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

One way that God rewards those who believe in Him and seek after Him is by declaring the way of salvation. In the Bible we have the revelation of God to man, and the responsibility of man to God. In the Bible we have the Divine plan of human redemption, and the establishment of God's kingdom upon the earth. The kingdom of God, embodied most fully in the spiritual seed of Abram, was ordained to survive in the midst of other nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Phoenicia, Syria, Arabia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. That it did survive is the great story of Bible History.

The Eleven Commandments of Creation

Having decided according to the good pleasure of His own sovereign will to create mankind (Ephesians 1:11), it was necessary that the Lord establish a habitation for man to dwell within. And so we read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). While skeptics mock the simplicity of the Divine narrative, no philosopher or scientist has ever provided a logical alternative to the wonderful truth that God created the heaven and the earth. God spoke and by His omnipotent power the world sprang into existence. At least eleven times we read, “and God said” and it was done. (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29)
This biblical revelation of creation stands in opposition to materialism, which argues that matter is eternal. No, the heaven and the earth and the matter out of which they were formed were created. As materialism is refuted by creationism so is evolution. The sun, moon, and stars, the plants and animals, and finally man himself did not come into existence by time plus space plus chance. There was no fortuitous concourse of atoms arranging and re-arranging themselves by some cosmic accident. But there was God who, “In the beginning” created all things. And notice there were not many gods but only the one true God who created all things. In this manner polytheism is discredited, as is dualism (two gods). There is no god of Light and god of Darkness. There is only God. Monotheism is established.

Creation and Cosmology (World View)

One vital point which gives validity to the Genesis account of creation is the way in which the story is told. The Bible reveals that Moses was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). Moses was familiar with the popular mythologies and cosmologies of his day and still he wrote the words he did to form the simplicity of the Scriptures. Later, David expressed his belief in the Mosaic account of creation (Psalm 33:6-9), as did Paul (Hebrews 11:3), and Christ Himself (Matthew 19:4 cf. Genesis 1:27). For conservative Christians, the Lord's endorsement of the Genesis narrative settles all discussion concerning the ultimate origin of the universe.

The Creation of Man

The crowning act of creation was man who was made in the image of God. “In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27). This final work of God was very good (Genesis 1:31) for man was made upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29). It was not in the Lord's exact image that man was made for there are some attributes of God that cannot be communicated to anyone: sovereignty (ultimate power), omniscience (all knowing), omnipotence (unlimited power), and omnipresence (Universality). The image of man was limited to those Divine attributes that can be communicated: intellectual power (to reason and discern), natural affections (love, joy, happiness, grace, and mercy), and moral freedom to choose (1 Corinthians 11:7; 15:49).

The honor that God has bestowed upon the creation of man is best expressed in the incarnation of Christ (Hebrews 5:7) and in His resurrection. The Lord has promised that all who follow Him shall share in resurrected glory (1 Corinthians 15 cf. John 14:1-4; Romans 8:18-19). Therefore, the essential glory of man according to original creation, Divine redemption, and ultimate restoration, should not be diminished by belief in superior aliens in other parts of the universe. It is true that man is not alone in the universe. There are angels, and the souls of those who have died dwell in heaven. It is also true that man is the crowning act of creation for he has been made in the image of God.
Is Evolution an Alternative to Creationism?

As the Biblical account is read in Genesis 1 and 2, the free flow of the narrative indicates that God's initial creative acts were accomplished in one literal week of seven days. It is to be noted that while Chapter 1 provides a general and chronological account of creation, Chapter 2 records a specific and topical narrative.

Summary of the Creation Week

- Day One Light was divided from darkness 1:2-5
- Day Two An expanse of the heavens was formed separating the waters 1:6-8
- Day Three Dry land was separated from the water and there was the creation of plant life 1:9-13
- Day Four The sun, moon, and stars were made as they are now and adjusted to the earth to measure time 1:14-19
- Day Five The creation of fish and fowl 1:20-23
- Day Six The creation of land creatures and man 1:24-31
- Day Seven The day of rest 2:2

The Hebrew word for day is “yom” and refers to a literal 24 hour period. The numerical adjective used with the word day also indicates a definite period of time. Additional support for a literal 24-hour period is found in the Law (Exodus 20:11; 31:17). It would have been nonsensical for God to appeal to the creation week for a day of rest on the Sabbath if there were great expanses of time between the “days”. It is enough to say that vast eons of time are not in view in Genesis 1 nor in Genesis 2. Until the nineteenth century, the Judeo-Christian community was satisfied that in seven literal days God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them (Genesis 2:1). In 1859 everything changed. In that year Charles Darwin challenged the Christian faith by suggesting that man might have a common ancestor with the animal kingdom. His radical theories on the origin of the species led to the conclusion that evolution, not God, could be the true explanation for the cause of all that is upon the earth.

Bowing towards the altar of science and philosophy many Christians tried to compromise between the “scientific” evidence that was being offered and the Scriptures. A new concept of creation was considered in the Church and then embraced. It was called Theistic Evolution. This belief purported to teach that God used the evolutionary process to form all plants and animals including man. Following the Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tennessee in 1925, Biblical Creationism was quietly but systematically set aside in public education in favor of a new system of knowledge, Evolutionary Creation (note Colossians 2:8). In the name of science the world turned from the Creator to the creation (Romans 1:21-25).

The Gap Theory

To complicate matters and confuse the Christian community even more, another sensational teaching arose at the turn of the century called The Gap Theory. According to this view, there is a “gap” between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. In this gap the alleged geological ages of the past and pre-historic man found a resting-place. Then, it was argued, what the verses following Genesis 1:2 really teach is a reconstruction of the earth, not the initial acts of creation.
What happened to pre-historic man? What happened to the pre-Adamic race? The answer came: “It was destroyed and the earth was judged so that it became without form, and void.” Advocates of the Gap Theory or the Reconstruction Theory contended for the following points.

- The word “replenish” in Genesis 1:28 suggests a prior inhabited world than the present one.

  **Response.** This word does not indicate that the world was previously occupied with anything, let alone cave men and dinosaurs. The Hebrew word, *ma-lee*, means simply “to fill” (Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 18:33; Psalm 107:9).

- The Bible says that there was “darkness upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2). Darkness speaks of judgment.

  **Response.** This word does not mean a judicial judgment. Darkness is simply used in this text for the absence of light. Sometimes darkness is good (Psalm 104:20, 24).

- There is a difference between the words “created” (Hebrews *bara*) and “made” (Hebrews *asah*).

  **Response.** These words are used interchangeably. “And God created (*bara*) the great sea monsters...” (1:21). “And God made (*asah*) the beast of the Earth...” (1:15). “Let us make (*asah*) man in our image...” (Genesis 1:26). “So God created (*bara*) man in his own image” (1:27).

- Genesis 1:2 could be translated to read that the earth “became without form, and void”.

  **Response.** The verb “was” is correctly and consistently translated in the Authorized Version from the Hebrew word *hayetha* (was). Of the 264 times *hayetha* is found in the Pentateuch, it is translated “was” 258 times.

- The phrase “without form and void” indicates that something terrible must have happened to the original creation because God cannot make anything less than that which is perfect.

  **Response.** While it is true that God cannot make anything less than that which is good when He begins to work, He and He alone decides how He will work. In the creative week the Lord worked in stages. The phrase “without form, and void” simply refers to the lifelessness of the Earth and the emptiness of space before God began to shape it according to Divine design (Job 26:7; Deuteronomy 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24; Psalm 107:40). There is no need to believe in a “gap” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. There is no need to teach about a pre-Adamic race or a Reconstruction Theory of creation. There is no purpose for any generation to try and accommodate the Bible to contemporary science, for one thing is certain, science will change but the Word of God lives and abides forever (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 5:18). In six literal days God made heaven and earth and all that is in them. And on the sixth day God made man.
Going to the Garden

Having been made in the image of God, the whole nature of man was adequately provided for: body, soul, and spirit. The Bible says that the Lord took the first man, Adam (Hebrews reddish tint), and placed him in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). Created outside this special place of Paradise, Adam was put where there was work for his body, creative wisdom to use in his labors, and spiritual sensitivity to the sovereign Lord. In all of this his purpose for existing was established. Man was to know God and enjoy him forever.

A Marriage Made by the Master

To enhance Adam’s capacity for life in Eden, the Lord graciously created a helper that was “meet” or suited for him. Causing a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, the Lord took (lit. ripped or seized) a rib from his side and formed a woman called Eve (living). When presented to Adam she was perfect in every way and immediately loved. Matthew Henry observed that “the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

A River Runs Wide

Despite a very specific reference to a river that “went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads” (Genesis 2:10), the location of the Garden of Eden (Hebrew, “a delight”) has mystified Biblical students for centuries. “The great rivers of Europe, Asia, and Africa have in turn done service as the Pison and Gihon of Scripture, and there remains nothing but the New World wherein the next adventurous theorist may bewilder himself in the mazes of this most difficult question” (Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible, article, Eden).

Among the many places suggested for the site of the Garden of Eden, one particular general location holds special interest. In the highland of Armenia the Euphrates and the Tigris rise along with two other great rivers: the Kizil-Ermak [largest river of Asia Minor, 715 miles long] and the turbulent Araks [60 miles long]. The Kizil-Ermak flows into the Black Sea not far from an ancient region known as Colchis. Colchis was well known for its rich gold deposits. Also, onyx and bdellium [pearl, or beryl] and other precious stones have been found in abundance in Colchis (Genesis 2:11-12).

There is something else. The Biblical reference to “the land of Ethiopia” (Genesis 2:13) encompassed by Gihon is better-translated “the land of Cush.” Cush was a grandson of Ham. His descendants scattered to populate vast regions of the earth including the area of Colchis (Genesis 10:8-10). There was much attraction to this area for it is full of beautiful valleys and fertile plains yielding lush crops of grapes, apples, peaches, oranges and other fruits. The climate is moderate and the sky clear and bright. Mt. Ararat (Turkey), where the ark built by Noah came to rest, is nearby.
A Choice Between Two Trees

While the search for the exact site of Eden continues, the Scriptural narrative speaks of two special trees that the Lord planted in the garden. There was “The Tree Of Life in the midst of the garden” and there was “The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (Genesis 2:9). Concerning the Tree Of Life, Dr. David Livingston thought it might be a fig tree. “It is a sacred tree,” he wrote, “all over Africa and India; and the tender roots which drop down toward the ground are used as medicine—a universal remedy. Can it be a tradition of its being like the Tree of Life.” (Livingston’s Last Journals in Central Africa, Vol. 1). No one can be certain. Of the two trees, the fruit of “The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” was forbidden. The design of this divine prohibition was to investigate the obedience of man. Though created in positive holiness, this original state was subject to negative change or positive confirmation. What would man do with the command of the Creator? Time and testing would tell.

The Serpent is Satan: The Entrance of Evil

The lovely creation account and the establishment of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is suddenly given over in the Biblical narrative to the entrance of evil into Paradise. Evil already existed in the universe and was alluded to by the naming of a special tree, “The Tree Of The Knowledge of Good And Evil.” Adam might have wondered about the meaning of evil for he had no intimate knowledge of it. Any experiential acquaintance with evil would have to come with a personal act of sin. The opportunity to sin was being arranged. According to Divine permission Adam and Eve would be tempted in a subtle way by the Devil who would appear in the form of a serpent. The serpent was the chosen instrument of Satan whose mysterious personage suddenly emerged in the garden. There are several things to remember about Satan.

- Satan was once an exalted and majestic angel in heaven (Ezekiel 28:12-19).
- Satan rebelled against the Lord (Isaiah 14:12-15).
- Satan is the author of intellectual and religious sins (John 8:44). Sensual sins are said by Christ to issue forth from the heart of man (Matthew 15:19).
- The devices of Satan can be known (2 Corinthians 2:11). When leading Adam and Eve into sin, Satan operated according to a specific plan.
- Satan placed the Divine prohibition in a negative light as he cast doubt upon the Word of God. “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1)
- Satan contradicted the truth and substituted his own words. “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:5)
- Satan insinuated that God was jealous and therefore He was not good. If only Adam and Eve would eat of the forbidden fruit, they would be as God because they would know good and evil. It would be to their personal advantage to do what God has said not to do. Genesis 3:5 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.
Being deceived by the religious rhetoric (1 Timothy 2:14) Eve reached forth her hand to eat of the forbidden fruit. She did not fully understand the implications of her actions, but Adam did (1 Timothy 2:14) which is why the Scriptures declare, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). In a moment of time, all of creation was suddenly changed. Death became the new heritage. The body became subject to decay. The soul lost its desire and capacity to enjoy communion with God. It died spiritually. There was an immediate separation of spiritual life from God. Instead of running to meet the Lord in the cool of the evening (Genesis 3:8), man would run from God. The fall from Divine delight to the depths of darkness and depravity was great.

**The Grace of the Gospel**

Because God is righteous and just, Divine discipline had to be administered. In accordance with His holiness and integrity the Lord decided that Adam and Eve would be driven from the garden and a cherub would wield a flaming sword to guard the Tree of Life. There would be sorrow in childbirth for the woman. The serpent would crawl upon its belly forever. The earth would be cursed. All of nature would be bathed in blood, tooth and claw. Thorns and thistles would grow among the lovely flowers. All of creation had come under the curse. And yet, in the midst of this intense judgment, God remembered to have mercy. Divine love and grace found a way to offer hope to the hopeless and light to the blind. The Seducer of the souls of men, the serpent, would be crushed by a wounded Saviour. A promise was made. “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” (Genesis 3:15). “Heaven, did you hear that? Man shall rise again. Fallen angels come close and listen. One day, My crowning act of creation will judge you. I will see to that for I will send My Son to crush the life out of this cosmic rebellion instigated by Satan. The battle will be intense but I shall be victorious! One day man will re-enter Paradise (Luke 23:43). The story of redemption is just beginning!”

**East of Eden**

Though Adam and Eve would know the grace of God, and the provision of a Divine covering for their nakedness (Genesis 3:21), they would still be banished from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Reluctant to leave Paradise, the guilty couple had to be driven from the Garden of the King. To guard a re-entrance into Eden, the Lord placed cherubims near the main entrance, one of which wielded a flaming sword. In this manner the Tree of Life was guarded to stop anyone from eating of the fruit and living forever in a fallen state. While the Tree of Life was no longer available, the Lord had not completely withdrawn all of His favors or His presence. There was a special place appointed for worship of which the children of Adam and Eve would become aware (Genesis 4:14). At this sanctuary, offerings were presented.
The Birth of two Boys

Following the expulsion from the Garden, the Bible says that Adam “knew” his wife Eve in an intimate way. In due time, a child was born named Cain (lit. possessed, acquired). He became a tiller of the ground (Genesis 4:2) which means he became a farmer. His brother Abel (lit. vapor, weakness, breath) became a shepherd. As there was a difference in their occupations so there was a difference in their hearts reflected in the sacrifices they brought before the Lord. Abel made a sacrifice on the basis of faith (Hebrews 11:4). He relied upon the promises of God (Hebrews 12:24) which indicates that he had an apprehension, if not a full comprehension, of the truth that “without shedding of blood, there is no remission” of sin. Because of his faith, the sacrifice of Abel was received by the Lord (Genesis 4:4) while the offering made by Cain was rejected.

A Moment of Murder

Realizing that God (Genesis 4:5) was not accepting him, and moved by Satan, Cain killed his brother in a religious jealous rage. One dark day while alone in the fields with Abel, Cain rose up with furious rage and took the life of another. Perhaps Cain picked up a stone and crushed the skull of his brother. Perhaps he took a sacrificial knife and slew Abel by slicing his throat [Study 1 John 3:12. The word for “slew” is sphazo which means to butcher, especially an animal for food in sacrifice.] What is certain is that while the blood of Abel soaked into the ground (Matthew 25:35 cf. Hebrews 11:4), Cain callously continued to work until his conscience was arrested by the holy God of heaven. “Cain, where is Abel thy brother?” the Lord asked. God was not looking for information, as He was insisting upon personal accountability. Cain was not to go unpunished. No sin or sinner shall ever go unpunished.

The Curse of Cain

With his sin ever before the eyes of the Living Lord, Cain was cursed for his cruelty. He would be driven from the visible presence of the Lord, and he would be forced to leave the fellowship of society manifested in his other brothers and sisters. They were no longer safe in his presence. [Note Genesis 5:4. There is an eastern tradition that credits thirty-three sons and twenty-seven daughters to Adam and Eve.] Cain's life would be spared but he would never again know happiness or peace. So it was that “Cain went from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the East of Eden” (Genesis 4:16). In the land of Nod, Cain established a city that he called Enoch (lit. destruction). There is an old myth among the Jews that teaches Cain went insane near the end of his life so that he roamed the land like a wild beast until the day he died.

A Son named Seth

To replace the godly line of Abel, when Adam was one hundred and thirty years old, the Lord gave him another son named Seth. In the generations to come, the descendants of the Father of the Human Race would gravitate to either Cain or Seth. Like two great branches of a tree, the lines of each would develop, but in opposite directions. Cain would produce an ungodly seed, while Seth would raise up a holy seed unto the Lord.
The Secular and the Sacred

With their hearts close to this world, the descendants of Cain developed the arts, and produced products that were very practical. Jabal, for example, introduced the tent, allowing mobility for men to follow cattle as they grazed. This freedom of movement permitted great herds to be raised. The long lonely nights of watching herds of animals were broken by the entertainment which Jubal, the brother of Jabal, could provide. Jubal was skilled in musical instruments. He is to be honored as the Father of the Art of Music (Genesis 4:21). Tubal-Cain (tu'-bal-cain; iron smith), the half-brother of Jabal and Jubal, was also a gifted man in crafts. He was able to hammer all kinds of cutting things in brass and iron (Genesis 4:22). Jewish tradition says that Naamah, the sister of Tubal-Cain, conceived the concept of placing ornaments on women's apparel.

In contrast, the line of Seth is not credited with any worldly inventions. Godliness received the pre-eminent attention. Holiness of life was revealed in such men as Enoch, who walked with God and then was translated before he died (Hebrews 11:5). Then there was Noah, whose faith would be manifested by the building of an Ark in obedience to the revealed will of the Lord.

The Progress of Primitive Societies

One of the most prevailing myths of modern education is that the human race emerged from a state of barbarism to a highly complex civilization. The biblical narrative of skilled craftsmen and musicians indicates otherwise. The Word of God challenges the concept that mankind passed from a Flint Age, to a Bronze Age, and then on to an Iron Age. There are two main thoughts to consider by way of response, the first of which is that if the Bible teaches anything, it teaches a form of “devolution”, not evolution. Man came from the hand of God full of intelligence and creative genius. Sin entered into the heart of man to touch every facet of his soul in a downward direction. Affected by the Fall, the will of man no longer chooses that which is holy, just, and good. The intelligence of man is not what it once was. He does not think clearly. The emotions of man have been perverted. Sin has given him the capacity to hate, grow bitter, express anger, jealousy, and envy. In short, sin has made the soul of man totally depraved. “By this we mean, on the one hand, the lack of original righteousness or of holy affection toward God, and on the other hand, the corruption of the moral nature, or bias toward evil.” (A. H. Strong) [Study John 5:42; 2 Timothy 3:4; Malachi 1:6; 2 Timothy 3:2; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 4:18; Titus 1:5; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 7:18].

In addition to teaching the devolution of man, the Bible also reveals that civilization has not always been in a state of forward progress. Nations rise and fall. Cultures ascend and are destroyed. Speaking in a technological sense, America, in the year 1998. In contrast, in some parts of Russia the technological year is 1945. In many African nations, the year is much earlier. Therefore, to find fossil remains suggesting a primitive civilization in one part of the globe does not mean that all men everywhere on earth at that time were in the same state of advancement. “There is really nothing in the true history of civilization to impair, but much to confirm, the Scripture account that man was made in a state of simple civilization, with the whole world of invention and discovery lying before him; and that while some fell, and fell deeply, others rose in the knowledge both of nature and of the arts” (William Garden Blaikie, February 5, 1820-June 11, 1899; a Scottish divine, writer, biographer, and temperance reformer).
The Longevity of Life

One of the more interesting facts of the biblical account of early man is the longevity of life attributed to him. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years. Methuselah, the longest age recorded, died at nine hundred and sixty nine years. While much could be said on this subject, the first century historian Josephus makes an interesting comment when he writes, “Let no one, on comparing the lives of the patriarchs with our lives and with the few years that we now live, think that what we have said of them is false; for those ancients being beloved of God, and made recently by God himself, and because their food was then fitter for the prolongation of life, might well live so great a number of years: and besides, God afforded them a longer time of life on account of their virtue, and the good use they made of it in astronomical and geometrical discoveries, which would not have afforded the time of foretelling unless they had lived six hundred years, for the great year is completed in that interval. Now I have witnesses to what I have said all those that have written Antiquities, among both the Greeks and the barbarians.” (Antiquities of the Jews, I. iii. 9)

For students of the ancient world, the remarkable thing is not how long the Bible says men lived, but how short their life span is said to be. The Babylonians, Egyptians, and Chinese exaggerated the longevity of life and declared it be into thousands of years. The Greeks and the Romans were more circumspect and limited life between eight hundred and one thousand years.

Scientifically, there is hope that the time will come when individuals can live longer than the present average age. Advances are being made in reading the genetic code, and controlling, or eliminating, diseases that lead to premature deaths. The success of modern medicine is reflected in the fact that 10 percent of the American population is over 65 years of age.

It should be remembered that originally the body was not designed to be subject to death. And even after the Fall, the power of decay was not swift. The bloodline was still free from the pollution of hereditary diseases and other causes that shorten life. In addition, the food was better and the harmful rays of the sun probably did not penetrate the atmosphere as they do now. One day, the saints of God will enjoy a glorified resurrection body in a restored Paradise where death and diseases and the agonies of aging will be no more (1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 22).

The World that Perished

Despite the grace of God in allowing long life to those who lived in the ancient world, the time was not used wisely. The goodness of God was designed to lead men to repent. Instead, wickedness prevailed. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, predicted a coming judgment (Jude 1:14-15), only to be ignored. People laughed. They were secure in their knowledge and civilization. And so, there was no “power to purify the heart, or to preserve society from corruption” (Blaike). Every imagination of the heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). Lamech, a descendant of Cain, introduced the practice of polygamy (Genesis 4:19). In social intercourse the godly line of Seth succumbed to the ungodly line of Cain with the result that interfaith marriages took place (Genesis 6:1-2). In the absence of spiritual standards and social accountability, all of society became a polluted fountain spewing forth moral corruption while spreading structural chaos. Death stalked the land as violence erupted among self-centered individuals. Murder was common. Blood flowed freely. Men boasted of their exploits (Genesis 6:4) while forgetting God.
Finally, the Lord had enough. He was sorry that He had even created man (Genesis 6:6). His heart was grieved and His holiness was outraged. There was only one just thing to do. The world must be destroyed. The world must perish in judgment.

The Nobility of Noah

As the Lord prepared His creation for Divine justice, there was one man the Lord noticed. His name was Noah (lit. rest). The Bible declares that, “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked before God” (Genesis 6:9). Noah, the son of Lamech, was one of three people mentioned in Scripture as walking before the Lord [see Enoch, Genesis 5:22; David, 1 Kings 9:4; and Hezekiah, Isaiah 38:3]

At birth, his godly father Lamech had predicted that Noah would be a source of comfort. Six hundred years later that prophecy was to be fulfilled for Noah was chosen to be the Second Father of Mankind. He would be saved from the wrath to come. Moved by faith (Hebrews 11: 7), the Bible says that Noah prepared an Ark designed by God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Prominent Persons</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abram</td>
<td>11-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>17-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>25-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Majestic Vessel

When Noah was four hundred and eighty years old, God told him that He was determined to destroy the earth within one hundred and twenty years if people did not repent and reform. Therefore, to preserve himself, his family, and many animals, Noah was to build an Ark. The length of the Ark was to be four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty five feet high. Within this Ark, Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their wives were to dwell with all the different species of beasts and fowls and creeping things, seven of each of the clean species, and two of the unclean (Genesis 6:19-20). Enough food was to be stored for all.

One Dark Day

When the Ark was completed and the animals had been gathered aboard, when the food was stored, and the last gospel appeal was made (note 2 Peter 2:5), the Bible says that God Himself shut Noah in (Genesis 7:16). People outside the Ark smiled in mirth at the old man and his family with all the animals inside the wooden box. But they stopped smiling when suddenly the familiar blue skies turned dark. Many came outside to see this strange happening in the heavens. With faces upturned, hearts began to pound when wet drops hit their faces. The heavens were dripping with water! Before anyone could consider a proper understanding of the water from the skies, there was a tremor under the earth. The ground moved. Buildings began to collapse.
Then the world came apart. The ground opened up and from deep subterranean passages water gushed forth everywhere. One dark day all the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened (Genesis 7:11). Women screamed. Children cried. Grown men ran in terror. People fled to higher ground while water was rushing at their feet determined to suck them into a watery grave. Those who fled to rooftops, those who scampered up the sides of mountains found that there was no hiding place. God had come to judge the earth.

The world that would not repent found that it could not repent. As the water crashed against the side of the Ark, people caught up in the swirling water beat on the side of the Ark. “Noah! Open the door!” “Noah! Help us!” But there was to be no help. Not from man and not from God. Those who had ignored the witness of nature (Romans 1:19, 20) now found that nature was a witness against them. Those who had hardened their conscience (Romans 2:14, 15) realized that their conscience had grown cold and callous. They should have called upon the name of the Lord in the day of Divine visitation through His gospel ministers (2 Peter 2:8). Those who had shown no respect to the promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15), and who had failed to offer acceptable sacrifices (Genesis 4:4), those who paid no attention to the words of warning of Enoch (Jude 1:14, 15) were destined to perish. It is a terrible thing to resist the strivings of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 6:3). And so it was to be: the world would perish.

A New Beginning

The Flood that began in November (Genesis 7:11) in the six hundredth year of Noah’s life would not abate until judgment was complete. For forty days and forty nights the winds howled, the rain fell, and the waters of the deep churned. There was universal death by drowning as souls were crushed, the earth was cleansed, and the principle was established that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (2 Peter 3:3-7). In time the rains did end and the waters began to subside. Finally, after three hundred and seventy one days, Noah opened the door of the Ark and looked upon a new world.

**Genesis: A Book of Beginnings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>1:26, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath</td>
<td>2:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>2:21-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>3:1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>3:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>t4:16-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>9:1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilizations</td>
<td>10:1-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>11:1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Israel</td>
<td>12:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Covenant to Keep

Seven months after Noah entered the Ark, the vessel landed on Mt. Ararat [in modern day Turkey]. Several more months passed before there was evidence that the waters had subsided and it was safe to leave the Ark. Finally, the day of departure from the safety of the Ark came and Noah stepped out on dry land. After surveying the scene around him, Noah built an altar and made a sacrifice unto the Lord. “He took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar” (Genesis 8:20). Being pleased with this action, the Lord entered into a new covenant with Noah. There were specific provisions.

- Never again was the earth to be destroyed by a universal flood. To confirm this part of the covenant, the Lord appointed the rainbow to be a reminder that there was a covenant to keep (Genesis 8:21). The Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) has tried to capture that magical moment.

  “When o’er the green undeluged earth
  Heaven’s covenant Thou didst shine,
  How came the world’s gray fathers forth
  To watch thy sacred sign!

  And when its yellow luster smiled
  O’er mountains yet untrod,
  Each mother held aloft her child,
  To bless the brow of God.”

- Mankind was to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1, 7).

- All of the animal kingdom was to be subject to the will of man (Genesis 9:2).

- For the first time the flesh of animals could be eaten provided no blood was consumed (Genesis 9:3-4).

- Capital punishment was to be visited upon a known murderer (Genesis 9:5-6).

In this manner, according to the terms of this new covenant with Noah, the blessing of God rested. There was to be a fresh start. There was to be Divine protection. There was to be the actuality of daily provisions, and there was to be protection of personal existence through the strong act of retributive justice.
The Dispersion: From the Flood
to the Birth of Abram

Genesis 9 - 11

Drinking and Drunkenness

It is a tragic truth that the best of saints are altogether subject to moral failure. Noah, who knew so much about the goodness and grace of God, found himself one sad day in a drunken condition. It is unlikely that Noah was not familiar with the effects of fermentation. The Antediluvian world was destroyed because of heinous transgressions, including drunkenness. Noah must not be viewed as an innocent victim. He planted the vineyard, he cultivated the fruit, and he produced the product that would leave him inebriated.

It has been argued that whether or not a Christian drinks intoxicating beverages is a matter of culture and conscience (Romans 14:1-13). That is true. It is also true that the Christian has a responsibility not to cause anyone else to stumble in their Christian faith (Romans 14:21). Since the first drink has never been taken by anyone with the idea of becoming a confirmed drunkard, wisdom would counsel abstinence lest sin take advantage of the situation (Study: Proverbs 31:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:23; Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23; John 2:9-10 cf. Daniel 1:5, 8, 16; Judges 13:4-5; Proverbs 31:4; Deuteronomy 29:6; Genesis 19:32; 1 Samuel 25:36; 2 Samuel 13:28-29). The deliberate drinking of Noah that led to his drunkenness forever changed the world. Like all sins, the behavior of Noah had far reaching consequences for sin is like an octopus with long tentacles; they reach out in many directions to touch others with tragic results.

A Curse on Canaan

Lying in a drunken condition, Noah lost all self-control and self-respect with the result being that he was “uncovered in his tent” (Genesis 9:21). When Ham, Noah’s second son (Genesis 5:32), discovered his father in his helpless and shameful condition, he called his two brothers to come and witness the sad spectacle. Ham thought it was humorous. Shem and Japheth were not amused. They were embarrassed. Graciously they took a garment and, walking backwards, they covered the nakedness of their father (Genesis 9:23).

Later, when Noah awoke from his drunken stupor, the Bible indicates that a spirit of prophecy came upon him. In an instant Noah knew what had been “done” to him and immediately assigned to his three sons and their descendants a just judgment for their deeds. Shem and Japheth were given great rewards. In particular, it was declared that the descendants of Shem would prosper materially and spiritually. God would dwell in their tents (Genesis 9:26), and the Canaanites would be their servants. Fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the fact that Abram, Isaac, and Jacob descended from Shem and ultimately Christ.

In like manner, the descendants of Japheth were to enjoy prosperity as they spread over the face of the earth. In October of the year 538 BC the greatest fulfillment of this prophecy began to be realized. It was then that Cyrus the Great of Persia, a descendant of Japheth, defeated Belshazzar, the leader of the Babylonian empire (Daniel5). The powerful Semitic capital fell and the Japhethic race ascended to a leadership role where it has been entrenched ever since in various countries of the world.
And Ham? His descendants would be cursed. “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” (Genesis 9:25). The question arises as to why a curse was placed, not directly on Ham, but on his son Canaan. One solution that has been suggested is that the phrase “his younger son” is better-translated “his youngest one,” thus referring to Noah's youngest grandson, which was Canaan. Confirmation for this concept might be found in Genesis 5:32 where Japheth is listed as Noah’s youngest son, and not Ham.

Still, the mystery remains. “Why was Canaan cursed when it was Ham who laughed at his father?” “What was the horrible sin which prompted a curse?” The answer may be that two sins are in view here. The sin of disrespect by Ham to his father and another sin committed by Canaan. The Bible says that Noah awoke from his sleep and knew that something had been “done” unto him. “What had been done unto Noah?” Some students of the Bible believe the crime involved here was the heinous sin of homosexuality. The basis for this belief is found in the fact that in Leviticus 18 and 20 the phrase “nakedness of his father” is identified with sexual immorality (Genesis 9:22). Also, Canaan, as the son of Ham, became the progenitor of the Canaanite people who were notorious for their sexual indiscretions (Study Genesis 10:19; Genesis 19:1-11; 1 Kin. 14:24; and Romans 1:24-27). While these points are not conclusive, it does seem that something very serious was “done” unto Noah that provoked a prophetic judgment.
The Table of Nations

Genesis 10

The Descendants of the Sons of Noah

The Sons of Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth

The Sons of Japheth who was a Son of Noah
- Gomer
- Magog
- Madai
- Javan
- Tubal
- Meshech
- Tiras

The Sons of Gomer who was a Son of Japheth
- Ashkenaz
- Riphath
- Togarmah

The Sons of Javan who was a Son Japheth
- Elishah
- Tarshish
- Kittim
- Dodanim

Special Note

By these descendants from the line of Japheth were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

The Sons of Ham who was a Son of Noah
- Cush
- Mizraim
- Phut
- Canaan
The Sons of Cush who was a Son of Ham

- Seba
- Havilah
- Sabtah
- Raamah
- Sabtecha
- Nimrod

Special Note

Nimrod began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was:

- Babel
- Erech
- Accad
- Calneh

in the land of Shinar (modern Iraq). And out of that land of Shinar went forth Asshur and builded

- Nineveh
- Rehoboth
- Calah
- Resen (which was located between Nineveh and Calah). The same, Resen, is a great city.

The Sons of Raamah a Son of Cush who was from the Line of Ham

- Sheba
- Dedan

The Sons of Mizraim who was a Son of Ham

- Ludim
- Anamim
- Lehabim
- Naphtuhim
- Pathrusim
- Caphtorim
- Casluhim (out of whom came Philistim)

The Sons of Canaan who was a Son of Ham

- Sidon (the firstborn)
- Heth
Special Note

The descendants of these sons of Canaan formed the following tribal families.

- The Jebusite
- The Amorite
- The Girgasite
- The Hivite
- The Arkite
- The Sinite
- The Arvadite
- The Zemarite
- The Hamathite

Special Note

After these tribal nations were established the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. Specific borders were established. The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

The Sons of Shem who was a Son of Noah

Special Note

Shem was the father of all the children of Eber. As a son of Noah, his elder brother was Japheth. With that in mind, observe that these are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

The Sons of Shem

- Elam
- Asshur
- Arphaxad
- Lud
- Aram

The Sons of Aram who was a Son of Shem

- Uz
- Hul
- Gether
- Mash
The Son of Arphaxad who was a Son of Shem
  • Salah

The Son of Salah who was the Son of Arphaxad from the Line of Shem
  • Eber

The Sons of Eber who was the Son of Salah from the Line of Shem
  • Peleg

Special Note

In his days was the earth divided.

  • Joktan

The Sons of Joktan who was a Son of Eber from the Line of Shem
  • Almodad
  • Sheleph
  • Hazar-maveth
  • Jerah
  • Hadoram
  • Uzal
  • Diklah
  • Obal
  • Abimael
  • Sheba
  • Ophir
  • Havilah
  • Jobab

Special Note

The descendants of Joktan, from the line of Shem, dwelt in the land from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a Mount of the east. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

Conclusion.

These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.
They Talked in Tongues

With the inhabitable earth orderly divided, an essential unity was enjoyed through a common language (Genesis 11:1). The unity was soon destroyed due to pride. In the Mesopotamian plain called Shinar, a wicked plot was conceived as men said to one another, “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4). The proposed project was probably a temple-tower or ziggurat with stairways leading from one level to the next. Houses for habitation would be constructed at its base to create a city of culture and commerce.

The sin involved in this situation was not the building of a large super-structure, but rebellion against the known will of God which was to replenish or fill the earth (Genesis 9:1). Rather than continue to move in ever expanding concentric circles in a concerted effort to please God, a conscious decision was made to contain the family and national units.

After coming down, “to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded,” (Genesis 11:5) the Lord decided to frustrate this fantastic human effort to avoid following His Divine design. The Lord decided that He would cause individuals to speak various languages thereby causing social unrest and forcing separation of people along linguistic lines. “So the Lord scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore, the name of it is called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9-10).

Two Ancient Civilizations

Having scattered the people “abroad upon the face of the earth,” two early empires emerged. The Chaldeans grew strong on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, while the Egyptians prospered in the plain on the banks of the Nile. The founder of the Chaldean Empire may be traced to Nimrod, a descendant of Ham who excelled as a hunter. Reigning from Babel, the cities he founded included Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. The history of the Egyptians is more difficult to trace for much is shrouded in myth and mystery. Part of the ancient tradition is that first the “gods” ruled over Egypt and then came a dynasty of demi-gods. More accurately is the history of Egypt, written about 250 BC by Manetho, an Egyptian priest. Most of his work perished but the reliable Jewish historian Josephus has preserved some fragments. Manetho recorded that thirty dynasties of kings’ sovereignty reigned over Egypt in succession.

From the first, the Egyptians were a great people. They were able to construct large buildings and colossal super-structures such as the pyramids. In war they were fierce and without mercy as reflected in their recorded exploits on monuments. In time, the history of Israel and the history of Egypt would be forever bound together. Unfortunately, neither the Chaldeans nor the Egyptians retained a pure form of worship. The creature began to be worshipped rather than the Creator. The sun, moon, and stars became objects of wonder and adoration. The Chaldeans bowed before Anu, lord of the heavens; Bel, lord of the visible world; and Hea, lord of the sea and the regions beyond the dead. In Egypt, the cat and crocodile and other animals were honored. Other nations emerged to pay homage to many gods. Only one kept faith with the Creator and that was the nation of Israel.
The Hebrew Fathers: The Appearance of Abram

In Genesis 11:10-32, a genealogy of Shem, the first son of Noah, is given. Special attention is focused upon Terah and his three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran (Genesis 11:26) and the place they all lived, Ur of the Chaldeans. The cultured and prosperous city of Ur was given over to the worship of the moon god that was also called by the same name. This particular deity was viewed as being masculine in contrast to the sun god, Shamas, which was presented by the Babylonians as being feminine. In the plains close to the idolatrous city, two thousand years before Christ was born, Terah, the eighth generation from Noah, watched over his flocks with his sons. Then, tragedy struck the family for Haran died. No longer did Terah want to stay where he was. He would move elsewhere. Terah had heard of a place called Canaan. Perhaps it would be better there. The journey began with Terah, his son Abram and his wife Sarai, and an orphaned grandson named Lot. The journey progressed as far as Haran and then sadness sought out the nomadic family once more. Terah died being two hundred and five years of age.

For a while, Abram, now the leader of the family unit stayed in Haran. Then, one day the word of the Lord came again to him. The God of the universe condescended to come down and speak to a shepherd-farmer whom he had already blessed with tremendous resources. “Abram, “ said the Lord. “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Genesis 12:1). There was good reason for Abram to leave his father's house. Terah himself was among those who worshipped idols (Joshua 24:2, 14).

Abram must leave the place of idolatry. He must go to a new land. If Abram obeyed the voice of the Lord, specific promises would be realized. “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3).

Leaving all for the Lord

By faith (Hebrews 11:8-10) Abram departed, “as the Lord had spoken unto him” (Genesis 12:4). He would leave Haran at age seventy-five with, “Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls [slaves] that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (Genesis 12:5).

The Journey of Abram: Coming into Canaan

As Abram had left Ur of the Chaldees, so he left Haran in obedience to the known will of the Lord. It was not an easy move for many factors were involved. There were thousands of sheep and goats, oxen and asses, hundreds of camels, a number of servants, tents and furnishings. All of these things and more had to be carried across the hot burning Syrian Desert that took its toll on human endurance. Still, Abram “went forth, not knowing whither he went.” “And, into the land of Canaan they came” (Genesis 12:5).
If a traditional trade route of antiquity was traveled, Abram and his large caravan of faithful followers passed through the luscious green orchards of Damascus after reaching the northern frontier of Palestine [lit. *Land of the Philistines*, a Greek sea faring people]. After pausing to water his livestock at the river Pharpar or Abana, Abram would have traveled to a section of Mt. Hermon towards the hope of his heart. From the lofty heights on Mt. Hermon, Abram's eyes would have viewed for the first time The Land of Milk and Honey which the gracious God of the universe had promised would be the inheritance of his descendants.

The soul of Abram swelled with gratitude as his panoramic view continued. The sight of the land fulfilled his greatest imaginations. On the right, was the mighty mountain range of Lebanon, standing as a natural fortress against enemy forces. On the left, were the pleasant pastures of Gilead leading into the emerald green forests of Bashan. Abram knew that domesticated animals would grow fat in this grazing area. In front of his view Abram would have seen the deep blue waters of the Sea of Galilee from which flowed the Jordan, winding its serpentine way through plains reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Beyond the Jordan lay “The Great Sea”, the Mediterranean. All of this was much different than the level land leading to the banks of the Euphrates, which Abram left behind.

**Lord of the Land**

Abram continued to journey southward until he came to a place called Shechem in the midst of the land. Here, in the plain of Moreh, Abram built his first altar unto the Lord and worshipped. Here, in the fertile vale, Abram received the promise that the land all around him would be the inheritance of his seed.

“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.” (Genesis 12:7). From Shechem, Abram continued to travel southward towards the Negev, a dry region of 4,500 sq. miles, from Beersheba to the high lands of Sinai.

**The Testing of Faith by Famine**

Though Palestine was in many ways a pleasant place, it was subject to changes in weather patterns. There came the time when there was a famine in the land (Genesis 12:10). Faced with hunger, Abram “went down into Egypt to sojourn there.” By moving out of the geographical will of God, Abram exposed himself and others to needless spiritual temptations. While in Egypt, he led his wife to lie about their relationship. Sarai was to tell others that she was Abram’s sister and not his wife. Abram feared that his lovely wife (Genesis 12:14), at age 65 (she would die at age 127), would be coveted by the Egyptians. Abram was afraid that he would be killed so that others could take Sarai. The fears of Abram were not without reason. The British Museum contains one of the oldest writings in existence. The papyrus comes from Egypt and tells the “Story of Two Brothers.” According to the narrative, the Pharaoh of the land sends his soldiers to bring beautiful women to the court by murdering their husbands. While the narrative is that of a novel romance, it does indicate Abram had good reason for concern. Nevertheless, Abram had no right to mislead anyone and so, in the providence of the Lord, the lie was exposed. No retribution came to Abram other than he was asked to withdraw from the area, which he gladly did (Genesis 12:14-20). There is a spiritual lesson to be observed. The Christian who “goes down to Egypt” – a symbol of the world – exposes himself and others to sin, all the while bringing dishonor to the Lord. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (James 5:17, 18).
The Departure of Lot

After being expelled from Egypt, Abram returned to Canaan where he settled at Bethel (Genesis 13:1-3). Unfortunately, the pasture area was too small to contain the domestic prosperity that had come to Abram and through him to his nephew Lot. When the herdsmen of the two almost came into open civil conflict, a godly solution was settled upon (James 3:17-18). The families would separate and Lot would be given first choice as to where he wanted to go. Surveying the land between Bethel and Ai, Lot chose to move towards the well-watered plains of the Jordan near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Time alone would reveal that this secular decision would lead to Lot’s spiritual downfall. From looking towards a physical area saturated with moral filth of the flesh (Genesis 13:10-11), Lot lodged near the evil savors of sin (Genesis 13:12-13), until he finally succumbed to living in the midst of human depravity (Genesis 19:1). By degrees Lot compromised his convictions though internally challenged by a troubled conscience (2 Peter 2:7).

A Covenant Re-affirmed

Following Abram’s separation from Lot, the Lord appeared again to Abram. His attention was directed once more to take a panoramic view of all that he saw below him from the heights of Bethel. “Abram,” said the Lord, “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art north-ward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and west-ward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee” (Genesis 13:14-17).

At Home at Last

Following the gracious visitation of God at Bethel, Abram journeyed back to Hebron. The remainder of his life would be spent here or at Beer-sheba just a few miles away to the southwest. Shepherds valued Beer-sheba for the gentle slopes of its well-watered green pastures. Historically, Hebron is one of the oldest cities of the world, “seven years older than Zaan in Egypt” (Num. 13:22). Mizraim, a son of Ham, once lived in here before resettling southward where he establish Zaan, the earliest capital of Egypt. The attractions for Mizraim and many others were the rich fields on the banks of the Nile River. Each year the Nile would overflow its banks to leave behind a rich soil deposit suitable for farming. Long ago it was noted that Egypt should be called, “The Gift of the Nile”.

Returning to Hebron, it should be noted that the Cave of Machpelah is located nearby. Abram purchased this particular cave from the Hittites to be a family burial vault. Today, a Turkish mosque covers the place wherein lies the dusty remains of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. It does not matter. While Hebron and Beer-sheba remain honored tourist attractions for people of different faiths, the Bible is careful to remind the Church that Abram, Isaac and Jacob were at home at last in another city, “that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16).
Fighting for the Family

While dwelling under the oak of Mamre, Abram received word that a tragedy had occurred. His nephew Lot had been taken as a captive of tribal conflict. The king of Sodom and the cities nearby had been attacked and defeated by the powerful forces of Chedorlaomer and a confederacy of kings from the plains of Mesopotamia.

A four nation confederation from Mesopotamian consisting of

| King of Elam  | Chedorlaomer |
| King of Shinar | Amraphel |
| King of Ellasar | Arioch |
| King of nations | Tidal |

made war with

| King of Sodom | Bera |
| King of Gomorrah | Birsha |
| King of Admah | Shinab |
| King of Zoboim | Shemeber |
| King of Bela (Zoar) | Unknown |

in the Vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea

Bera, Birsha, Shinab, and Shemeber were defeated by the Mesopotamia coalition and were forced to pay tribute for twelve years to the leader of the alliance, Chedorlaomer (Genesis 14:4a). After years of servitude Bera and his allies decided to revolt against the tyranny (Genesis 14:4b). It was a grave political mistake. Within a year, Chedorlaomer moved to consolidate and expand his power, first, by making war against a new six nation confederation in the area, and second by putting down the revolt of his longtime subjects (Genesis 14:5).

The Six-Nation Confederation

| in Ashteroth Karnaim | Rephaeims |
| in Ham (Egypt) | Zuzims |
| in Shaveh Kiriathaim | Emims |
| in Mount Seir | Horites |
| in En-mishpat (Kadesh) | Amalekites |
| in Haz-e-zon-ta-mar | Amorites |

was no match for Chedorlaomer

The battle was short, their conquest was certain. Victorious over this united opposition, Chedorlaomer turned his attention back to the revolt of his longtime subjects.
History repeated itself (Genesis 14:3). Once more a battle was fought in the Valley of Siddim (Genesis 14:8) with disastrous results for the rebels. Once more Chedorlaomer easily defeated the five-nation coalition. A brief description of the people and places involved in the battle may be helpful.

- Admah (ad'-mah; red earth; fort) was located in the vale of Siddim (Genesis 10:19). Its king was Shinab. The town was eventually destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24; Deuteronomy 29:23).

- Amraphel (am'-raf-el; keeper of the gods) was a Hamite king of Shinar, who with other kings took the nephew of Abraham prisoner.

- Arioch (air'-ih-ock), was the king of Ellasar, a city probably located in Southern Babylon. He became an ally of Chedorlaomer in his attempt to control the rebellious kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Belah (Genesis 14:1-9).

- Bela (be'-lah), Belah, was another name for the city of Zoar.

- Bera (be'rah; son of evil), was a king of Sodom when the five kings of the area, led by Chedorlaomer, invaded.

- Birsha (bur'-shah; with wickedness), was a king of Gomorrah who ruled during the time of Abraham, c. 2050 BC

- Canaan (ca'-na-an; merchant or trader), refers to a region along the Mediterranean Sea. During the time of the invasion of the Israelites Canaan was occupied by the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, who were known collectively as the Canaanites.

- Chedorlaomer (servant of Lagamar; Lagamar being one of the main gods of the Elamites), was the king of Elam which territory was probably part of Persia and Media.

- Egypt (e'-jipt; black), a country in the NE of Africa. The common name in the Bible is “Mizraim.”

- Elam (Susiana) refers to the region beyond the Tigris, E of Babylon.

- Ellasar (el-lay'-sar; revolting from God), was a Mesopotamian country mentioned in association with Abraham. The king of Ellasar was Arioch.
• Gomorrah (guh-mor'-ruh; submersion), was one of the five “cities of the plain” located in the Valley of Siddim (Salt Sea or Dead Sea). The other cities were Sodom, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar (Genesis 14:2-3).

• Hebron (hee'bruhn; alliance), refers to a city located 19 miles southwest of Jerusalem on the road to Beersheba.

• Jordan (jor' dun; descending, flowing river), Plain of, refers to the lovely valley of the Jordan which is a rift more than one hundred and sixty miles long. In this area Lot dwelt (Genesis 13:10).

• Lot (veil), was the son of Haran and nephew of Abraham.

• Mamre (mam'-re), is the plain near Hebron where Abraham dwelt and where he was promised a son (Genesis 18:1, 10, 14).

• Perizzite (per'-iz-zite), refers to a tribe in the Land of Promise west of the Jordan (Genesis 34:30; Exodus 33:2).

• Sheneber (lofty flight), was the king of Zeboim in the days of Abraham. He was an ally of the king of Sodom when attacked by the NE coalition under Chedorlaomer, c. 2050 BC

• Shinab (shi'-nab), was the king of Admah. He lived in the days of Abraham.

• Shinar (shi'-nar; country of the two rivers), refers to the alluvial plains of Chaldea and Babylon (Genesis 10:10; 11:2; Daniel 1:2). It is the Jewish name which Abraham brought with him to Canaan.

• Siddim (sid'-dim). The Vale of Siddim refers to a valley in the region of the Dead Sea.

• Sodom (vineyard, burning), was one of the five major cities of the Plain of Jordan (Genesis 13:10). Lot settled here. The city was to be destroyed by divine judgment (Genesis 19:1-29). The ruins of Sodom lie beneath the S part of the Dead Sea.

• Tidal (ti'-dal), was a king under Chedorlaomer, and called “a king of nations”.

• Zeboim (ze-bo'-im), was one of five cities of the plain or circle of the Jordan. Shemeber was the king. The general cite of these cities was around Sodom.

• Zoar (zo'-ar; little, smallness), was located south of the Dead Sea.

In addition to winning all of the strategic and tactical military victories, Chedorlaomer and his forces were able to capture others who happened to be in the area of conflict, such as Lot (Genesis 14:12). When word reached Abram concerning the fate of his nephew (Genesis 14:14), he did not hesitate. Abram moved out to fight for his family.
Arming 318 servants of his household, Abram crossed the Jordan River to pursue the eastern coalition of kings up the stream of water. In the vicinity of Dan, Abram was able to surprise and scatter the forces of Chedorlaomer. With the enemy fleeing in panic, Abram pressed his advantage as far as Damascus where he took from them the spoils of war. Lot could be rescued as well as his companions (Genesis 14:10-16).

The Majesty of Melchizedek

Returning home after the magnificent military victory, Abram was met by Melchizedek [lit. King of Righteousness], King of Salem [lit. King of Peace] and priest of the most high God. Because Melchizedek had no recorded parentage he becomes a wonderful representative of Jesus Christ who is also the King of All Righteousness and the Prince of Peace. Compelled by grace to honor Melchizedek, Abram gave to this unusual personage “tithes of all” (study Hebrews 7:1-17).

Believing God

Soon after returning from the slaughter on the field of battle and the spiritual encounter with Melchizedek, Abram received another Divine visitation (Genesis 15:1-21). Once more God came to make a covenant with Abram. The promise was made that Abram would have a son, a seed, and a stately possession of land. If Abram could count the stars in the heavens he could then count the number of descendants he would have. And “Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6 cf. Galatians 3:6). Abram did not hesitate to accept by faith all that the Lord impressed upon his heart. Because of this faith, “righteousness was imputed [charged] to him” (Romans 4:22).

Sealed with a Sacrifice

To confirm this renewed promise, a great sacrifice was offered which included an heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a pigeon (Genesis 15:9). To protect the sacrifice until it was consumed, Abram drove away the fowls of the air (Genesis 15:11). Finally, exhausted with his efforts, Abram fell asleep. While he slept, the Lord shared with him that his seed must suffer for four hundred years until the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Genesis 15:16 cf. Matthew 23:32). In a Divine confirmation of the covenant, the Lord caused to pass through the sacrificial pieces, “a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp” (Genesis 15:17). The furnace and burning lamp symbolized the two leading facets of the history of the future of the descendants of Abram (note: the furnace in Jeremiah 11:3,4ff; the burning lamp in 2 Samuel 22:29; Psalm 119:105; and Isaiah 62:1). The furnace of affliction was still in the future when Abram awoke from his sleep. For the present, there were immediate tribal enemies to contend with (Genesis 15:19-20).

- Amorites (am'-o-rite; mountaineers; the high one). At the time of Abraham, the Amorites dwelt on the W shore of the Dead Sea (Genesis 14:7, 13). They expanded their conquest to the E of the Jordan (Num. 21:26-30) and took possession of the land from the Arnon river and wadi to Mount Hermon, and from the wilderness to the Jordan (Deuteronomy 3:8; 4:48; Joshua 2:10; 9:10; Judges 11:22).
• Canaanites (ca’-na-an; merchant or trader), was the son of Ham and the grandson of Noah. His descendants formed distinctive tribes, such as the Jebusites and the Zemarites which became known collectively in later years as the Canaanites. They settled in the region along the Mediterranean Sea occupied by the Canaanites before it was taken and settled by the Jewish people (Genesis 11:31; Joshua 5:12).

• Gergashites (ghur’-gash-ite), refers to a member of an ancient tribe that dwelt in Canaan prior to the Hebrews (Joshua 3:10). The Gergashites may be the same as the Gadarenes.

• Hittites (hit’-tites), were the descendants of Heth (Genesis 15:20), which dwelt near Hebron on the plateau of Anatolia between 1900 and 1200 BC. The name Hittite comes from Hatti, which is another name for Anatolia, the capital of which was Hattushash. Esau married Hittite wives (Genesis 26:34-35). After rising to become a great civilization, sometime between 1250-1150 BC, the Hittite empire began to decline. The Philistines overthrew the Hittites.

• Jebusites (jeb’-u-sites), refers to the descendants of Ham by his son Canaan. From the first, they controlled the city of Jerusalem until the days of David (Genesis 10:10; 15:21). When the Israelites invaded Palestine under the leadership of Joshua, the Jebusites were ruled by Adoni-Zedek (Joshua 10:1,3), one of five Amorite kings who resisted the Hebrew conquest. These five kings were defeated and slain by Joshua (Joshua 10:16-27). But the Jebusites were not driven out of Jebus (Jerusalem).

• Kadmonites (kad’-mo-nites; men of the East), is a reference to a tribe mentioned only once as a nation conquered by Israel (Genesis 15:19).

• Kenezzite (ken’-e-zite), was one of the tribes in or near Canaan during the days of Abraham (Genesis 15:19). The chief of the tribe was known as Kenaz (Genesis 36:11, 15, 40-42). Gerharashim was one of the descendants of Kenaz (1 Chronicles 4:14), suggests that the Kenizzites lived in the Valley of Smiths, which may be the same as the Wadi el-'Arabah. Individuals of the tribe married with the sons of Jacob. Jephunneh the Kenizzite married a woman of the tribe of Judah, and Othniel, the Kenizzite, became the first judge of Israel after the Hebrew invasion.

• Kenites refers to a people who dwelt east of the Dead Sea, and extended into Arabia Petraea (Judges 1:16).

• Perizzite (per’-iz-zite), refers to a tribe in the land of Promise west of the Jordan which the Hebrews encountered when they entered into the land. Abraham and Lot settled in the land where the Perizzite dwelt (Genesis 13:7; 34:30; Exodus 33:2; Deuteronomy 20:17; Judges 1:5; Nehemiah 9:8).

• Rephaims (re-fa’-im; strong), refers to a people living in Palestine before Abraham, considered by some to be giants (Genesis 14:5; Deuteronomy 2:11, 20; 3:11; Joshua 17:15).
The Issue of Ishmael

Despite being called, “The Father of the Faithful”, there came a time when Abram violated the fundamental principle of faith by not waiting on the Lord to honor His promises. The day came when Abram listened to the voice of his wife Sarai who encouraged him to take as a second “wife” (Genesis 16:3) Hagar, an Egyptian bondmaid. There were only tragic results from the illicit relationship that ensued as Sarai came to despise Hagar (Genesis 16:4) for her ability to conceive. The hatred of Sarai for Hagar led to attempt murder as Sarai tried to destroy the object of her wrath by driving the woman into the desert who was greatly pregnant with child.

It was a terrible thing which Sarai did. Sin was added unto sin until it was all subdued by the Sovereign Saviour (Genesis 16:10-11). The Lord came to give some specific instructions for Hagar who had fallen by a fountain of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur (Genesis 16:7). Hagar must return to Abram. She must be submissive to Sarai. But, Hagar does not have to return alone. She can go back with a Divine promise and the promise is this. Hagar, you shall bear a son, “and shalt call his name Ishmael [lit. God heareth]; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction” (Genesis 16:11). There was more. Ishmael was to be a wild man, “his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” (Genesis 16:12).

The foolish counsel of Sarai to Abram, the more foolish consent of Abram to the counsel, the hatred of Sarai for Hagar, and the innate hostility that was produced in the descendants of each continues to the present hour. There is blood in the sand of the Middle East. It flows from the fact that long ago, for a brief time, Abram violated his convictions. What might the story of civilization have been if Abram had not broken the perfect law of the Lord (Genesis 2:24)?

The Sign and Seal of the Covenant

Fourteen years passed following the birth of Ishmael to Hagar and Abram. These were long years of waiting and watching for the promise of God for Sarai and Abram. Then, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, God came to visit once more and said unto him, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly” (Genesis 17:1-2). As on previous occasions, the conditions of the covenant were reviewed. Abram was to have a son, a seed, and a stately land possession. But then, something else was added. Abram (Lit. Father of high places) was to change his name to Abraham (lit. father of a multitude) (Genesis 17:5). Moreover, he was to receive in his body the physical sign and seal of the covenant. Abraham was to be circumcised.
**Doctrine of Circumcision**

1. In Genesis 17:11 God established the ritual of male circumcision with Abraham as a sign of the covenant.

2. Circumcision was to take place on the eighth day after birth (Genesis 17:12).

3. Abraham was to circumcise: his own children, descendants, any purchased slaves, and any proselytes (Genesis 17:13).

4. The uncircumcised were to be considered as being “cut off” from the covenant of spiritual blessings.

5. Provisions were made for all that wanted to be part of a covenant relationship with God in that the poor, and those outside the racial distinctive of the Hebrew race, could be included. However, God had to be met according to His terms and His terms included: blood suffering, humility, and a sacrifice of self (Genesis 17:27).

6. In the Old Testament the circumcision of the body was symbolic of the need for a special circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6). The image is that the heart has become surrounded with the disease called sin. As a surgeon must cut away fatty tissue or unnatural growth, so the heart must be spiritually circumcised. In particular greed must be cut away, idolatry must be cut away, anger must be cut away, and hatred must be cut away.

7. The physical tool used to circumcise the body was a sharp knife. The spiritual tool used to circumcise the heart is the *Word of God* as per Hebrews 4:12. “For the Word of God is quick [alive] and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

8. While human responsibility is involved (Jeremiah 4:4), the spiritual circumcising of the heart requires a Divine ability. God must circumcise the heart (Deuteronomy 30:6).

9. When the Lord circumcises the heart of His elect people there will flow a natural love for God and new spiritual life (Deuteronomy 30:6).

10. God never intended for man to forget that the physical act of circumcision was only a ritual to represent the spiritual circumcision of the heart.

11. The obedience of Abraham (Genesis 17:11), Moses (Exodus 4:25), and Joshua (Joshua 5:2, 4) to perform the bloody ritual of physical circumcision, reflected a spiritual heart of obedience, love, and devotion.

12. With the passing of time, people paid less attention to the spiritual dimensions of the act of circumcision and gloried only in the physical mark, which led Paul to argue against placing confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:1-9).
13. In John 7:22 Jesus argued from the act of physical circumcision that it was right to perform miracles on the Sabbath. The point the Lord made was simple and powerful. If the Law allowed the cutting of the flesh on the Sabbath to symbolize the keeping of the covenant and minister to the soul, why should anyone become angry when someone was healed or made whole on the Sabbath?

14. With the resurrection of Christ the ceremonial ritual of circumcision could be abolished and emphasis focused exclusively upon the circumcision of the heart.

15. Not everyone understood the transition that had taken place from the physical to the spiritual (Acts 15:5).

16. Even the apostle Paul found the transition difficult, reflected in the situation recorded in Acts 21:21.

17. As time passed as Paul ministered more and more to the Gentiles, as the apostle understood the gospel more clearly, circumcision of the flesh gave way to the true spiritual circumcision of the heart whereby Paul affirmed that the church consists of those who are of the true circumcision. We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3).

The Language of Laughter

As Abraham received a change of name, so did Sarai. She was to be called Sarah (Lit. Princess) for the Lord was determined to bless her. “I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her” (Genesis 17:17). While the waiting on the Lord to fulfill His promises continued, the time drew near for Sarah to conceive and bear a child. The practical spiritual problem was that Sarah no longer believed that it was possible for her to give birth to a baby. One day, the Lord of Glory concealed Himself in order to appear to Abraham, “in the plains of Mamre as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day “(Genesis 18:1). By means of theophany [a personal manifestation of God] Christ came to Abraham (note John 8:56). When the Divine Guest announced to Abraham that within a year Sarah would conceive and bear a baby (Genesis 18:10), she laughed. Sarah, listening to the conversation behind the curtains of the tent laughed in unbelief at what was being said (Genesis 18:12-15).

Now Abraham also laughed at the idea of bearing a child in old age (Genesis 17:17), but his was the laughter of faith (study Romans 4:20), and a lesson is learned: there is a difference in the language of laughter. Laughter may be the language of faith or faithlessness when the promises of God are in view.

The Sins of Two Cities

Departing from the presence of Abraham (Genesis 18:19), the Lord announced His determination to depart in order to evaluate and destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, “because their sin is very grievous” (Genesis 18:20). The particular sin of these dens of iniquity was that of homosexuality. The Word of God is very harsh in condemning this sin of the human soul.
FIFTEEN TERMS FOR THE SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY

1. Sodomy Genesis 19:4-10; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:11, 12; Deuteronomy 23:17, 18
2. Abomination Leviticus 18:22; Deuteronomy 22:5
3. Vile affections Romans 1:26, 27
4. Burning with lust Romans 1:27
5. Dishonoring the body Romans 1:24
7. Against nature Romans 1:26
8. Shameful Romans 1:27
9. Going after strange flesh Jude 1:7
10. Filthy dreamers Jude 1:7, 8
11. Abusers of themselves 1 Corinthians 6:9
12. Effeminate 1 Corinthians 6:9
13. Defilers of themselves 1 Timothy 1:10
14. Inordinate affections Colossians 3:5, 6
15. Reprobate Romans 1:28

The terrible power of sexual sins over the soul is manifested in that it destroys all vestige of righteousness to the point that intercessory prayer is no longer effective (Jam. 5:16 cf. Genesis 18:23-33). Moreover, even after the judging fire of heaven falls and is clearly witnessed, sensual sins continues (Genesis 19:1-29 cf. 19:30-38).

The Fear of God

Following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham journeyed to a city of the Philistines near Beersheba called Gerar. Faced once more with the temptation to lie, Abraham committed another offence against truth as he had violated it in Egypt (Genesis 20:1-2 cf. 12:11-20). When confronted with his transgression, Abraham gave an unusual answer as to his motive. “And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? 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 20:10-11).
Exhortations to fear God

1. The exhortation to learn to fear God comes from the greatest of saints. David said, “O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him” (Psalm 34:9). It is said of Obadiah that he “feared the Lord greatly.”

2. Every true saint does fear the Lord but not every saint fears the Lord in the same degree.

3. Those who fear God the most are properly motivated to do so. The motives that cause the Christian to fear the Lord are many.

- Is not the reason why you are saved and have a confidence of going to heaven is because of sovereign grace? God has declared, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy” (Romans 9:15). What would be your fate if God had not decided to show special love to you? Does that not make your heart tremble?

- The many privileges that are bestowed upon those who know the fear of God should motivate the heart to grow in the grace of fear. Time Magazine once asked Billy Graham why he was so successful. “I will have to ask the Lord that when I get to heaven,” he responded. Part of the answer is this: the man fears God as did John Calvin, Martin Luther, and countless others.

- The person that grows in the grace of fear will escape many difficulties that come upon other people. Joseph suffered fewer hardships in prison than others with him because he feared God and did what was right. With eternity in view it can be said that part of the New Covenant is that God's people will be kept from final apostasy. Jeremiah 32:40: “I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.”

- To grow in the grace of fear is the way to be kept in a conscientious performance of Christian duties. Sometimes a watch is perfect in structure but does not keep time well because the main spring is damaged. Sometimes a Christian does not act properly. The proper motive of fearing God has been lost. Fear of God will repair the mainspring.

- Growing in the grace of fear is the spiritual way to be wise. Proverbs 14:16 says that, “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil.” Biblical wisdom is knowing how to act in a given situation. Is it not wise to flee from attitudes and actions that lead to death and destruction? It will be possible to do that when God is feared.

- The desire to honor the Lord is also a proper motive to grow in the grace of fear. Children who fear their parents honor them. So people who fear the Sovereign of the universe honor Him.

- To fear God is to bring honor to oneself. Hose 13:1 declares that, When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel.” Proverbs 31:30 teaches that, “A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” The Lord promises in 1 Samuel 2:30, “Them that honor me, I will honor.” To advance in the grace of fear is to be entrusted with more responsibilities. Joseph was made a master in Egypt.
Obadiah became a steward of Ahab’s house. Daniel, Mordecai, and the three children of Israel were made rulers over the province of Babylon. God looks to discover, not who has natural ability, but who fears Him.

- Growing in the grace of fear allows for a perfecting of the faith. 2 Corinthians 7:1 commands, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” What is perfecting holiness if it is not growing in faith, hope, love, and the fear of God? As our faith and love should be greater with the passing of time, so should our fear of God.

- Growing in the grace of fear provides great boldness with God and man. Job feared God and boldly spoke to Him. He wanted to find the Lord so that he could argue his case as a man to a man. Nehemiah prayed, “O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name” (1:11).

- Learning to fear the Lord stimulates the desire to have spiritual labors blessed to the saving of the souls of others. It was said of Levi that he feared the Lord. “The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Malachi 2:6). Wives can win their unbelieving husbands to the Lord by exercising godly fear according to the apostle Peter: “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1 Peter 3:1-2).

- The fear of the Lord will give occasion to be delivered by God from many dangers in life. The midwives feared God and did not kill the Hebrew babies according to Exodus 1:17. The Lord honored such fear and gave them houses. “And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses” (Exodus 1:21).

- The longing to be free from embracing false doctrines is a motive for learning to fear God. One of the judgments of God against a people is to withdraw His word and to leave people in their ignorance and spiritual darkness. The continents of Africa and Asia testify to the horrible consequences of people who do not fear God. Those who fear the Lord will be allowed to know more about Him even to the salvation of the soul. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant (Christ), that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

- To be owned of God is a great motive to learn to fear Him. Malachi 3:16, 17 says that, “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” (The Doctrine of Fear is extracted in part from the teachings of Al Martin)
The Child of the Covenant

In the fullness of time, according to Divine promise, “the Lord visited Sarah as he had said,” (Genesis 21:1) and a child of the covenant was born. He was called “Isaac” which means “laughter.” Each day of his life Isaac was a living reminder to Sarah that she must never laugh at God’s promise but believe at all times (Genesis 21:1-8).

Between Rhetoric and Reality

As might be expected, Ishmael became jealous of Isaac and expressed his cruelty when the opportunity arose (Genesis 21:9). Moved by a mother’s protective instinct, Sarah persuaded Abraham that he must send Hagar and her son away (Genesis 21:10). The rhetoric of sin is manifested in this maternal but selfish demand. Once Sarah was determined to consider Ishmael her son (Genesis16:1-2). Now, she calls him, “the son of this bondwomen.” Once Sarah had schemed to have her way. When she had what her wicked imagination devised (Proverbs 6:18), it was detested. A way had to be found to cover her foolishness. The evidence had to be put out of sight. The actions of Sarah reflect that there is always a large gap between the rhetoric of sin and the reality of the consequences it brings. Always a weak man in the matter of women, Abraham listened to Sarah and sent the son he loved (Genesis 17:18) and his mother into the wilderness, perhaps to die with little provisions (Genesis 21:14). By an act of sovereign grace (Genesis 21:15-21) neither Ishmael nor Hagar perished in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. The child grew to manhood, settled in the extreme south of Arabia, and became the progenitor or father of the Arabians.

The Sacrifice of a Son

The Bible says that, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). By typology, the temporal life of Abraham anticipated this display of Divine love for Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son according to the will of the Lord. God came to His servant and said, “Abraham…Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:1-2 cf. Galatians 3:8)

Without any argument, “Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place which God had told him” (Genesis 22:3). After three days of travel Abraham and Isaac came to a place of burnt offering on Mount Moriah where, many Bible scholars believe, the Temple of Solomon was to be built.

Preparations were made for a sacrifice. Then, the moment came when Father Abraham raised his hand against his only beloved son in whom he was well pleased. The hand of the father was raised, not in anger, nor in judgment, for the son had done no wrong. Rather the son was to be smitten in an act of gospel obedience. He was to be a picture of future spiritual realities.
Like the Christ he portrayed, Isaac was innocent of any known sin. Like Christ, Isaac was a willing sacrifice. Josephus says that he was now twenty-five years old when this event took place. In the strength of his youth Isaac could have resisted his father but, like Christ, he submitted himself to the terrible ordeal trusting that everything would be as it should in the end. Augustine said that as Isaac’s life had been supernaturally given, it would be supernaturally restored if taken (Genesis 22:5 cf. Hebrews 11:17-19).

At the last moment, the Angel of the Lord stopped the hand of Abraham from harming the one in whom so much hope and promise had been placed. The eyes of Abraham were directed to “a ram caught in a thicket by the horns” (Genesis 22:13). The ram was to be offered instead of Isaac for the supreme love of Abraham for God was now fully manifested. He who had given up home and country, he who had given up family members and foolish, fleshly plans, was also very willing to give up his own son when asked. It was enough. Abraham was indeed “The Friend Of God.” When the Lord said, “Give me thine heart” (note Proverbs 23:26), Abraham said, “My heart is thine.” Fanny J. Crosby wrote,

“I am Thine, O Lord,
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith;
And be closer drawn to Thee.

Draw me near-er, near-er, blessed Lord,
To the Cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me near-er, near-er, near-er blessed Lord,
To Thy precious blessed bleeding side.”

The Passing of a Princess

As Abraham knew the triumph of faith, he also knew the agony of personal tragedy, for there was the passing of his Princess. At age one hundred and twenty seven Sarah died in Kirjath-arba (Hebron). After he had purchased a place of burial from the Hittites, Abraham laid to rest--until the resurrection--his beloved wife. He would join her later, as would other family members. J. D. Burns has written about this Cave of Machpelah where the bodies of Old Testament saints are buried and the sand has become a sacred spot.

“The Eden of their earth lay all around
Machpelah: there God came down, in the cool
Of even to walk with them, and all the ground
Was therefore holy—therefore beautiful;
And their free spirits panted for the time
When they should soar to an unwithering clime.
To them it ceased to be a place of death;  
It was the porch within whose solemn glooms  
They stood till the temple opened; the sweet breath  
Of heaven here soothed their hearts; the lovely blooms  
Of that fair land refreshed their drooping eyes;  
And glimpses came to them from other skies.”

Vision of Prophecy, and other Poems

The Making of a Remarkable Marriage

As Abraham honored the Lord, so he honored his own son by providing godly counsel. Isaac must not marry any of the daughters of Canaan (Genesis 24:3). He must find a woman of faith who would help to preserve the purity of family life through religious rituals and devotion to God. With that purpose in mind, Abraham called for his most trusted servant (24:2). Eliezer must go to Padan-aram in Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac. Eliezer was not confident that the mission of the master would succeed, but Abraham was. Abraham believed that God would direct in a providential manner the making of a marriage (Genesis 24:7). He was right. In a wonderful way the Lord guided and directed the path of Eliezer towards a lovely young damsel named Rebekah. She would return with him to be the bride of the son of his master (24:10-61). When the eyes of Isaac and Rebekah initially met, there was love at first sight (24:63-66). “And Isaac brought her [Rebekah] into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death” (Genesis 24:67).

The Death of a Saint and a Sinner

Having provided for the emotional needs of Isaac, Abraham himself married again (Genesis 25:1). Six sons were born to him by his new wife, Keturah (lit. incense). His six sons in turn produced many grandchildren (Genesis 25:3-4). There were other sons of Abraham by his concubines which were not recognized but were given gifts and sent away (Genesis 25:6).

THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hagar (concubine)</th>
<th>Sarah (wife)</th>
<th>Keturah (wife)</th>
<th>Concubines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ishmael</td>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Zimram</td>
<td>many sons</td>
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<td>Shuah</td>
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After reaching the mature age of one hundred and seventy five, Abraham “was gathered to his people” (Genesis 25:8). His two sons, Isaac and Ishmael came together to bury their father beside Sarah, in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 25:9). The virtues of Abraham, as well as his audacious vice of maintaining intimate relations with various concubines, forces the heart to remember the goodness of God who is longsuffering to those who are nothing but sinners, saved by grace. The final word in the Divine narrative at this time says that, “Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years” (Genesis 25:8). He had traversed the land but never settled it permanently for he looked for a city whose maker was God. Such was the journey of faith. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalm 116:15).

The Sins of the Parents

While the life of Isaac is not as dramatic or as detailed as that of his father, several distinct incidents do emerge because of the similarities that exist between Abraham and his son. For example, both Abraham and Isaac knew the ravages of famine (Genesis 12:10 cf. Genesis 26:1). Both were tempted to go down into Egypt to find relief (Genesis 12:10 cf. 26:2). However, while Abraham moved from The Land of Promise to the Land of Bondage, Isaac did not (Genesis 26:6). Both Abraham and Isaac encountered a ruler named Abimelech whom they feared and lied to concerning their wives. Abraham said that Sarah was his sister and the sin of the parent was visited upon the child for Isaac said that Rebekah was his sister (Genesis 26:7). As the lie of Abraham was exposed, so the deceit of Isaac was discovered when Abimelech looked out a window one day and saw Isaac and Rebekah engaged in sensual passion (Genesis 26:9). When confronted with his lie, Isaac, like his father immediately confessed and was sent away (Genesis 26:10).

A Passion for Peace

Unlike Abraham, Isaac was not a warrior. While possessing his father’s reverence and respect for the Lord (Genesis 26:23-25), Isaac did not inherit Abraham’s energy and dynamic personality for action. When a dispute arose over the wells of Gerar, Isaac immediately conceded the territory and moved to another location (Genesis 26:17-22). In the end, it turned out well as the Philistines sought Isaac out in friendship (Genesis 26:26-33). One of the characteristics of a spiritual leader is that he must be gentle (Titus 3:2) and not a brawler (1 Timothy 3:3).

Parental Disrespect

Like other godly parents Isaac and Rebekah had a wayward son in Esau. As a mature man of forty, Esau deliberately disregarded the counsel of his parents to marry two daughters of the Hittites thereby uniting with the pagan practices of idolatry and polygamy, both of which was common among the tribal-nations of Canaan (Genesis 26:34,35).
A Family Feud

With the passing of years, Isaac grew older and his eyesight dimmed. The time came when he thought he was going to die. Actually, he would live for thirty more years (Genesis 35:27-29), but there was a moment when Isaac thought he was going to die. Therefore, he acted accordingly and turned once more to embrace his favored son Esau (Genesis 27:1-4). Despite the profaneness of past actions, Isaac still wanted Esau to receive the family blessing, but Rebekah did not. After discerning what her husband intended, Rebekah moved to frustrate his plans for Rebekah favored Jacob. Desperate to exalt her beloved son at the expense of another son, Rebekah conceived of a plan to deceive her blinded husband. Though Jacob was fearful of being exposed in this whole matter (Genesis 27:11-12), Rebekah was not to be denied. Sin has strength and a power of its own. Upon herself Rebekah was willing to receive any curse of judgment if the fateful plot failed (Genesis 27:13). Reluctantly, Jacob agreed to the circumstances and the daring deception took place as planned (Genesis 27:14-29).

The Disaster of Deceit

Just as Jacob feared, things did not go well in that Esau was enraged after discovering that his twin brother had tricked him once more out of something valuable. Vowing to avenge himself after the death of their father (Genesis 27:30-42), Jacob felt forced to flee. But where could he go to be safe? Rebekah knew. Jacob was to go to her brother Laban who lived in Padan-aram. Twenty years would pass before Jacob would be able to return home. Twenty years would pass before Jacob would be able to look upon the face of Esau again. Kissing his mother goodbye, probably for the last time, Jacob set out upon the journey of a lifetime (Genesis 27:43-28:7).

When Heaven Came Down

Weary with his hasty travel, Jacob laid down to rest when he dreamed a dream. There was a ladder reaching from heaven to earth with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. The New Testament interprets the vision of the ladder as being Christ Himself (John 1:51). Jesus is, “the One who spanned the infinite gulf which separated heaven from earth, and who has in His own person provided a Way whereby we may draw near to God. That the ‘ladder’ reached from earth to heaven told of the complete provision which Divine grace has made for sinners. Right down to where the fugitive lay, the ladder came, and right up to God Himself the ‘ladder’ reached!” (A.W. Pink)

Deceiving the Deceiver

During his twenty years in Haran, Jacob was married to Leah by trickery (Genesis 29:1-25) and to Rachel by love (Genesis 29:26-28). He who had deceived another was himself the object of deception by a devious father-in-law. Nevertheless, the Lord was gracious and Jacob prospered. As his material wealth increased, so did his family. Twelve sons and one daughter were born to The Supplanter (Genesis 29:31-31:16).
Covenant with a Careful Man

As God had called Abraham to go to Canaan, so the Lord spoke to Jacob calling him back to the Land Of Promise (Genesis 31:1,2). Not wanting to create undue concern with an emotional man such as Laban, Jacob gathered up all of his possession and departed in silence (Genesis 31:17). One possession that was taken which should have been left behind was the teraphims or household idols (Genesis 31:30). When Laban discovered that Jacob was gone he was annoyed. When it was told that the teraphims were also gone, Laban was enraged and pursued his son-in-law in order to retrieve the treasures of his heart—the teraphims.

Overtaking Jacob and company at Mount Gilead in the eastern part of Palestine, Laban demanded an explanation for his sudden departure and the return of the teraphim (Genesis 31:25-31). While Jacob was able to share the reason for his secrecy (Genesis 31:31), he had no knowledge of the idols (Genesis 31:32, 33). But Rachel did (Genesis 31:34, 35). It was Rachel who concealed the tarnished treasures from her own father.

After protesting the integrity of his possessions and having it upheld in the presence of many witnesses, Jacob turned in righteous indignation upon Laban who perceived the immediate danger he was now in (Genesis 31:36-42). Accusing a man without proof was a serious offense. And to make matters worse, the meek and mild Jacob was for the first time in twenty years showing a measure of manly courage in the presence of his family. Surprised and alarmed Laban slyly decided that a covenant should be made to bring calmness to the situation. Laban would save a measure of self-respect as best he could and let Jacob go (Genesis 31:43-55).

Is the Enemy Esau?

Having successfully avoided a violent confrontation with Laban, Jacob still faced a potential foe in the person of Esau who was now dwelling in Mount Seir, in the land of Edom, located in the south (Genesis 31:3). One hundred miles away on the banks of the Jabbok, close to the Jordan River, Jacob pondered what to do next. He could cross the Jordan and encamp at Shechem or at Bethel and risk the chance of his brother not finding out. Or, Jacob could send news to Mount Seir of his return to Canaan. Jacob chose to send messengers of his arrival. Soon, the word came back. Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men! (Genesis32:6) The heart of Jacob leaped with fear. Was it possible that an absence of twenty years had not pacified the passions of Esau? Was he still an enemy? Ever the schemer, Jacob decided to discourage his brother from doing bodily harm by placing a series of buffers between himself and the advancing forces of Esau (Genesis 32:7, 8). Next, Jacob began to pray (Genesis 32:9-12) after which he returned to plotting his own safety (Genesis 32:13-21). As the moments passed and the approach of Esau drew near, fear swelled inside the soul of Jacob. Sending his family away so that he could flee in haste if necessary, Jacob was left alone (Genesis 32:24).

A Stranger in the Night

In the stillness of the midnight hour, the straining ears of Jacob heard something move. Desperate with nervous energy Jacob attacked the first person that came his way and began to wrestle until the breaking of the day.
Finally, enough was enough. “Let me go, for the day breaketh,” said the Stranger in the night. And Jacob answered, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” In some way, Jacob had begun to perceive that the Personage he held in his arms was Someone special. Jacob was right for he held God in his arms (Genesis 32:30). Wounded by grace, Jacob lost his fear of man after the midnight battle. His faith grew as he walked in the future leaning on the Lord (Genesis 32:31, 32).

**Brother to Brother**

As so often happens in life, the fears of Jacob were without any real foundation. When the two brothers met after twenty years of separation, compliments and gifts were exchanged. After the moment of reconciliation, Esau returned to Mount Seir while Jacob paused at Succoth before crossing the Jordan River and settling at Shakem in the vale of Schechem (Genesis 33:1-2).

**The Slaughter of the Shechemites**

Jacob’s stay at Shechem was suddenly ended when two of his sons, Simeon and Levi, avenged through treachery the improper conduct of Shechem, prince of the city, towards their only sister Dinah (Genesis 34:1-31). Jacob felt compelled to relocate and so he moved back to Bethel (Genesis 35:1) where the Lord had previously appeared to him with great and glorious promises.

**Travel and Tragedy**

From Bethel, Jacob traveled southward, past the sloping hills of Jerusalem (Genesis 35:2-15). Coming close to Bethlehem, tragedy struck. First, there was the death of the faithful nurse Deborah (Genesis 35:8). Then, laboring in child birth, Rachel died as Benjamin was born (Genesis 35:16-20). There was more mental and emotional anguish for Jacob when his eldest son Reuben brought disgrace to the family by sleeping with his father’s concubine, Bilhah (Genesis 35:21-22). Shame and sorrow came to the soul of the Schemer saved by sovereign grace.

**THIRTEEN CHILDREN OF JACOB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAH</th>
<th>RACHEL</th>
<th>BILHAH</th>
<th>ZIPAH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Concubine</td>
<td>Concubine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. REUBEN  
2. SIMEON  
3. LEVI  
4. JUDAH  
9. ISSACHAR  
10. ZEBULUN  
11. DINAH  
12. JOSEPH  
13. BENJAMIN  
5. BILHAH  
6. NAPHTALI  
7. GAD  
8. ASHER

*The number indicates the order of birth*
There was to be more tragedy in life for Jacob as Isaac was finally gathered to his fathers at the advanced age of one hundred and eighty years; “and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” (Genesis 35:28-29). “Poor Jacob! Sorrows came upon him thick and fast, but the hand of Divine chastisement is soon to fall still heavier. Jacob is touched now in his tenderest spot—Joseph, his favorite son, is taken from him, and mourned as for dead.” (A.W. Pink) Though all of his sons and daughters tried to comfort Jacob, he vowed that he would go down into the grave mourning for his son (Genesis 37:34-35).

**The Strange Journey of Joseph**

In the providence of the Lord, the son for whom Jacob mourned was not dead. His brothers had sold him into slavery out of jealousy. When Joseph shared with them the dreams he had of the day that would come when they would bow down before him (Genesis 37:5-11), the brothers rose up in wrath and plotted first his destruction (Genesis 37:18-22) and then settled upon his departure from their presence by selling him into slavery (Genesis 37:23-36). Though their treatment was harsh, God was going to use the sin of the sons of Jacob to sustain His seventeen-year-old servant. Joseph would be brought by the traveling Midianites (or Ishmaelites) to Egypt and resold as a slave. In Egypt, Joseph would be trusted by Potiphar, an officer in the army (Genesis 39:1-4). A faithless wife would tempt him (Genesis 39:5-19). He would be treated cruelly though innocent (Genesis 39:20) of wrongdoing until the day of his Divine deliverance (Genesis 39:21-41:38). In the day of vindication, Joseph was exalted over all others until he became the ruler of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh (Genesis 41:39-45). In just thirteen short years, Joseph went from the pit to the palace for he was, “thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Genesis 41:46).

**Famine and a Family Reunion**

When famine came to Palestine relief was sought by many in the land of Egypt. Having anticipated the situation according to Divine revelation, adequate provisions were made to help the multitudes. Among those who came to Egypt for assistance were the brothers of Joseph. No longer did they recognize him, but he recognized them and, according to prophecy saw them bow down in his presence (Genesis 42:1-43:26). It was then that Joseph was in a position to help those who could no longer help themselves, and he did (Genesis 43:26-44: 48:22). In all of his life, his trials and triumphs, Joseph illustrates the living Lord of whom he was a type. Some of the similarities are worthy of consideration.

**The Death of Joseph**

The death of Joseph brings an end to Genesis. It is a tragic ending symbolically. The record of the origin of all life is also the record of death. With the death of Joseph the Hebrew people faced a harsh and uncertain future. They would be faced with many challenges not the least of which was to have faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Competing for their religious affection and devotion was the religion of their captors, the Egyptians.
The Religion of Egypt

According to Herodotus, a Greek historian, the Egyptians were “religious to excess, far beyond any other race of men.” The priests taught the people there was one supreme God. However, this doctrinal belief was diminished by the practice of deifying the individual attributes or qualities of God, such as His creative power and His wisdom. The result was giving divine honor to plants and animals. The cat, the crocodile, and the ibis were worshipped. This in turn led to the acceptance of the belief of lesser gods of three ranks or orders.

- **First Order**
  - Amun, the great god of Thebes. He was equivalent to the Greek god Jupiter.
  - Pthah, the father or maker of gods, equivalent to Vulcan.
  - Khem, the god of nature, equivalent to Pan.

- **Second Order**
  - Ra (Phrah), the Sun god.
  - Thoth, the intellectual god and equivalent to Mercury among the Greeks.

- **Third Order**
  - Osiris. According to legend Osiris was originally a king of Egypt. Though he was a magnanimous ruler. His brother Typhon, who cut his body in pieces and threw them into the Nile River, murdered him.
  - Isis. The wife of Osiris was Isis. After discovering the body of her murdered husband she joined her son to exact revenge on Typhon and reclaim control of the throne. Herodotus notes that Osiris and Iris were the only gods worshipped by all the Egyptians.
  - Seth (Typhon).

In the cities of Egypt there was one main deity who was the object of worship and who served as the guardian of the people in that place. But each city also had local triad or a cluster of three gods, of whom the third proceeded from the other two.

Trying to be Blessed by a Bull

Because the Egyptians deified plants and animals the worship of Apis was able to arise. Apis was the sacred bull of Memphis. This animal, under whose form Osiris was worshipped, was distinct. Herodotus says that his hair was black, on his forehead was a white triangular spot, on his back an eagle, under his tongue was a beetle, and the hair of his tail was double. A magnificent temple was built to Apis with worship services regulated by priests. When “Apis” died his body was embalmed and was carried in a royal divine procession. The priest wore clothes made from the skins of leopards. The body of the bull was carried to a tomb cut out of a rock where it was laid in a splendid marble coffin.
Egyptian Temples and Worship

The temples which the Egyptians reared to their gods were magnificent and strong enough to endure the ravages of the centuries. The priesthood was a large, educated, wealthy, and privileged class with the king at the head of the order. The sacred rituals were full of color, ceremony, and sights that appealed to the senses of those who worshipped. One prevalent doctrine in the theology of the Egyptians was future retribution. The concept of reward or punishment in the world to come served to check improper impulses that would destroy society.

Egyptian Customs

While in Egypt the Jews would be exposed to many foreign customs reflected in the Biblical narrative.

- Men carrying baskets on their heads Genesis 40:16
- Men shaving their beards Genesis 41:14
- Prophesying with the cup Genesis 44:5
- Embalming the dead and placing them in a sarcophagus Genesis 41:1,2,3,26
- Making baskets from papyrus covered with asphalt Exodus 2:3
- Favorite foods of Egypt Numbers 11:5
- The mode of watering Deuteronomy 11:10-11
- The mode of whipping Deuteronomy 25:2,3

The Land of Goshen

Once in the land of Egypt the descendants of Abraham dwelt in the land called Goshen along the Nile. Goshen was a fertile district able to support many flocks and herds. Fishing was prosperous. Later the children of Israel would miss the delicacies they enjoyed in the land of Goshen.

- *Numbers 11:5* We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

- *Numbers 20:5* And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

Peace and Prosperity

For almost 50 years after settling in Egypt the Hebrews enjoyed domestic tranquility. During this period they prospered greatly. The population of the people increased along with the number of livestock. Their fields waved with full crops blessed by God. Their gardens were lovely with flowers. Their government was their own. Communities were ruled over by elders, like other nations for the Egyptians had elders (Genesis 50:7) as did the Midianites (Num. 22:4,7), and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:11).
Small Skirmishes

At times the tranquilly of the Hebrews was broken when raiding parties took cattle (cf. Exodus 13:17). But for the most part the Israelites were left to themselves. Certain families specialized in linen or pottery. Others cultivated plants and hedges (cf. 1 Chron. 4:21, 23). In time to come, in a different time and place, one of the Hebrew men married Bithia, a daughter of the king and by her had a large family (1 Chron 4:18).

Eyewitness to History

By staying four hundred and fifty years in the land of Egypt the Hebrews became witness to and part of many monumental historical events. They witnessed for example the rise and fall of the Hyksos, the shepherd kings who challenged the authority of Egypt and established the XV-XVIII dynasties. They were a northwestern Semitic (Canaanite or Amorite) people who entered Egypt sometime between 1720 and 1710 BC and subdued the pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom. They used Avaris-Tanis in the Nile delta as their capital rather than the Egyptian capital of Thebes. Under their dominion, which lasted over a century, the Hyksos established a powerful kingdom that included what became Syria and Palestine. They maintained peace and prosperity in their territories. They introduced the horse-drawn chariot and the composite bow, and their successful conquests were furthered by a type of rectangular fortification of beaten earth used as a fortress. Archaeologists have uncovered examples of these mounds at Jericho, Shechem, and Lachish.

The most important contribution of the Hyksos was the introduction into Egypt of Canaanite deities and Asian artifacts, which were instrumental in destroying the despotism and isolationism of the Old and Middle kingdoms. The Hyksos were crushed by Amasis I at the battle of Tanis in 1550 BC.
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

Chapter 2

Exodus

A King who Knew not Joseph

While being eyewitness to exciting men and movements in history the Hebrews did not forget to keep covenant with God. To ensure their loyalty and dependency on Him God allowed the hearts of Egyptian rulers to enact a policy that would enslave the Hebrews. The Bible says there arose a king “who knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1:8) and so felt free to turn against the Israelite.

Persecution of a Peaceful People

Several reasons might be noted for a different treatment of the Hebrews.

- The Pharaoh wanted his people to be racially pure.
- The Pharaoh needed a cheap slave labor supply to build his temples, but not the pyramids for they had been built long before Abraham visited Egypt.
- The Pharaoh had no knowledge of the God of Joseph’s father and thus no respect for religious freedom.
- The Pharaoh may have felt his rule was being threatened by the presence of foreigners.

A Ruler Named Rameses II

The identity of the ruler “who knew not Joseph” is uncertain. It is possible that this new Pharaoh was Rameses II. He might have been the Pharaoh of the oppression, and the father of the unnamed princess who found baby Moses floating in the bulrushes on the bank of the rivers.

- Rameses II (19th dynasty), son of Seti I, was around thirty years old when he became king of Egypt - and then reigned for 67 years. He had many wives, among them some of his own near relatives, and was the father of about 111 sons and 51 daughters.
- As was usual in those days, the threat of foreign aggression against Egypt was always at its greatest on the ascension of a new Pharaoh. Subject kings no doubt saw it as their duty to test the resolve of a new king in Egypt. Likewise, it was incumbent on the new Pharaoh to make a display of force if he was to keep the peace during his reign. Therefore, in his fourth year as pharaoh, Rameses was fighting in Syria in a series of campaigns against the Hittites and their allies. The Hittites, however, were a very strong foe and the war lasted for twenty years.
On the second campaign, Rameses found himself in some difficulties when attacking “the deceitful city of Kadesh”. This action nearly cost him his life. He had divided his army into four sections: the Amon, Ra, Ptah and Setekh divisions. Rameses himself was in the vanguard, leading the Amon division with the Ra division about a mile and a half behind.

He had decided to camp outside the city - but unknown to him, the Hittite army was hidden and waiting. They attacked and routed the Ra division as it was crossing a ford. With the chariots of the Hittites in pursuit, Ra fled in disorder - spreading panic as they went. They ran straight into the unsuspecting Amon division. With half his army in flight, Rameses found himself alone. With only his bodyguard to assist him, he was surrounded by two thousand five hundred Hittite chariots.

The king, realizing his desperate position, charged the enemy with his small band of men. He cut his way through, slaying large numbers as he escaped. “I was,” said Rameses, “by myself, for my soldiers and my horsemen had forsaken me, and not one of them was bold enough to come to my aid.”

At this point, the Hittites stopped to plunder the Egyptian camp - giving the Egyptians time to regroup with their other two divisions. They then fought for four hours, at the end of which time both sides were exhausted and Rameses was able to withdraw his troops.

In the end neither side was victorious. And finally - after many years of war - Rameses was obliged to make a treaty with the prince of the Hittites. It was agreed that Egypt was not to invade Hittite territory, and likewise the Hittites were not to invade Egyptian territory. They also agreed on a defense alliance to deter common enemies, mutual help in suppressing rebellions in Syria, and an extradition treaty.

Thirteen years after the conclusion of this treaty in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, Rameses married the daughter of the Hittite prince. Her Egyptian name was Ueret-ma-aneferu-Ra: meaning “Great One who sees the Beauties of Ra”.

Note. It is important to observe that not all Bible students agree Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression and his daughter discovered Moses. There is another possibility.

Who is the Surrogate Mother of Moses?

Recent scholarship has identified the famous Hatshepsut (1504-1384) as the daughter of Pharaoh who discovered Moses who was born c. 1525 BC.). The father of Hatshepsut was Thutmose I (1525-1508). Hatshepsut was the only daughter of Thutmose. She became queen after his death and married a half-brother Thutmose II (1508-1504 BC). After his death she ruled Egypt for nearly 20 years. In time her stepson Thutmose III (1504-1450 BC) was allowed to reign.
The Life of Moses in Miniature

Moses was the son of Jochebed, wife of Amram, of the family of Levi. He was delivered from the royal Egyptian edict for the midwives to destroy the Hebrew male infants by the resourcefulness of his mother and the protecting watchful care of his sister Miriam. Placed in a basket not many days after his birth Moses was discovered by the daughter of the Pharaoh who took and reared him as a royal son. Trained in the “wisdom of the Egyptians” and a gifted orator “mighty in words” (Acts 7:22) Moses came to maturity. After committing a murder in defense of another Hebrew, Moses felt compelled to flee to the land of Midian in the Sinai peninsula (Exodus 2:15) being about 150 miles at its greatest breadth, and 200 miles in length. The northern part of the peninsula is hilly, rather than mountainous; but the mountains rise precipitously in the southern section to staggering heights of 9,000 feet.

While in the land of the Midians Moses married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro (Reuel). After forty years in exile Moses met God at the burning bush on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:1-12). The Lord instructed him to return to Egypt to lead the Hebrews out of the Land of Bondage and into the Land of Promise. With divine authority to perform miracles, Moses would compel Pharaoh to allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt. Once in the desert God met again with Moses in the wilderness of Sinai where the Law was given. In the Law instructions were provided for the building of the Tabernacle, the institution of feasts and offerings, and the moral code of conduct. After guiding the nation for 40 years Moses viewed the land from Mount Nebo and then died. He was buried by God in the land of Moab at age 120 (Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:1-8). Moses died as the great Lawgiver, Prophet, and author of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

The Ten Plagues

When Moses returned to the court of the Pharaoh after a 40-year absence he discovered the Hebrew people to be ambivalent towards him. As a whole they were inclined to trust him but at the slightest setback there was a general outcry of despair. They were ready to turn against Moses calling him an enemy and a traitor. Nevertheless, Moses continued on his divine commission to tell Pharaoh the God of the Universe commanded him to let the children of Israel go. When Pharaoh was reluctant to comply with the mandate ten plagues covered the land. While the two court magicians Jannes and Jambres (cf. 2 Timothy 3:8) were able to counterfeit some of the miracles the presence of the Lord was established.

- The water of the Nile River was turned to blood
- Frogs invaded the land
- Lice or gnats became a great pestilence
- Flies or beetles were found crawling everywhere
- Murrain broke out as a disease upon the livestock
- Boils covered bodies
- Hail fell from heaven
- Locust sprang up from the ground to torment everyone
- Darkness covered the land in a terrifying way
- The first born of all the children of Egypt died in a single night
The Purpose of the Plague

The purpose of the ten plagues upon Egypt served several purposes.

- The plagues upon the Egyptians manifested the power of God while bringing the people to a place of repentance and reliance upon Him. This was true of the Exodus generation and it would be true of later generations as well.

  Deuteronomy 26:8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: 9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. 10 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:

  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. 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thy 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.

- The plagues upon the Egyptians inspired confidence in the Lord. Young people were to be told the story of the Exodus in order to magnify the sovereignty of God.

  Exodus 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? That thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: 15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. 16 And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

- The plagues upon the Egyptians manifested the supremacy of the God of the Hebrews over all the false gods of the land illustrated by Nilus and Apis.

  - The god of the Nile. Nilus was the sacred god of the great river. Worship of Nilus rivaled the worship of the true God of heaven for it was said he watered the land without cloud or rain.

  - The god Apis. Representing the livestock of Egypt was the sacred bull of Memphis. God’s view of the veneration of animals was diminished when the livestock were afflicted with murrain and boils. Note. Murrain may refer to an epizootic, whose germs were carried by flies causing a fever and the cattle to die.
The Night of the Passover

As terrible as the first nine plagues were, the tenth judgment of God which fell upon the land of Egypt was worse because the firstborn in Egypt died in a single night. In contrast the Hebrew children did not die because the Israelites responded in a positive manner to the way of salvation provided. On the night before they left their state of slavery in Egypt the Hebrew people made a sacrifice. The blood of an innocent lamb was smeared on the doorposts of their homes. In the middle of the night a Death Angel came. But when he saw the blood he passed over the dwelling places and the firstborn was protected. The night of the Passover anticipated the death of the Messiah. Mary’s first-born Son would die at a place called Calvary. Her Son would become the great Lamb of God “that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). When the blood of Christ is applied to the door of the heart by faith the Eternal Death Angel passes over. John G. Foote invites the Church to sing of this redemption.

“Christ our Redeemer died on the cross,
Died for the sinner, paid all his due.
All who receive Him need never fear,
Yes, He will pass, will pass over you.

When I see the blood,
when I see the blood,
When I see the blood,
I will pass, I will pass over you.

Chiefest of sinners, Jesus can save;
As He has promised, that He will do.
Oh sinner, hear Him, trust in His word,
Then He will pass, will pass over you.

Judgment is coming, all will be there,
Who have rejected, who have refused?
Oh, sinner, hasten, let Jesus in,
Then God will pass, will pass over you.

O great compassion! O boundless love!
Jesus hath power, Jesus is true;
All who believe are safe from the storm.
Oh, He will pass, will pass over you”.

A Divine Rescue at the Red Sea

With cries of agony upon their hearts for the death of their children the people of Egypt were anxious to see the Israelites leave their land. As fast as they could they gave treasures to the departing foreigners hoping that the God of the Hebrews would be placated and future judgment would be averted. Laden with newfound wealth and amazed at the power of God the Israelites left the land of Bondage.
To guide them in their wilderness journeys the Lord prepared a pillar of cloud to guide them by day and a pillar of fire to guide them by night. All the people had to do was to follow the Lord and all would be right. From Rameses to Succoth and then to Etham on the edge of the dessert the people moved and then on to Ph-hahiroth, near the shore of the Red Sea.

**Faith and Fear**

Following the initial decision to let the Hebrew people leave the land Pharaoh had a change of heart. He decided to bring the Israelites back into bondage and send his army to force the people to return. What a terrifying experience the Hebrews faced. With the Red Sea before them, mountains around them, and Pharaoh’s army in pursuit they were placed in a hopeless and helpless situation. And suddenly God could be God. Slowly and majestically the pillar of cloud and fire that had gone before them moved as a protective screen between them and the hostile army. During the night a Divine east wind blew causing the waters of the Red Sea to part. A path was made through the waters which divided north and south. By faith people put their feet on the path God had provided. Step by step they moved. “Faster. Faster still. Hurry people. Hurry.”

**The Destruction of the Damned**

When Pharaoh realized that the children of Israel were escaping he immediately pursued the same path. But the unrighteous cannot follow the same path God’s people follow. Suddenly the waters that had parted came crashing down. Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the floodwaters of divine judgment (Exodus 14:21-31). Six hundred Egyptian chariots were destroyed. To celebrate this miraculous deliverance a song was composed and sung.

**The Song of Moses**

**Exodus 15**

“I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.

The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.”
Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: 
thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
And in the greatness of thine excellency
Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee:
thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,
the floods stood upright as an heap,
and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, “I will pursue,
I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;
my lust shall be satisfied upon them;
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.”

Thou didst blow with thy wind,
the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Thou stretchedst out thy right hand,
the earth swallowed them.
Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people
which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided
them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

The people shall hear, and be afraid:
sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine.
Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed;
the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them;
all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

Fear and dread shall fall upon them;
by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone;
till thy people pass over,
O LORD, till the people pass over,
which thou hast purchased.

Thou shalt bring them in,
and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance,
in the place, O LORD,
which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary,
O Lord, which Thy hands have established.
The LORD shall reign forever and ever.
For the horse of Pharaoh went in with His chariots and with His horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.”

Safe on the Shores of Sinai the people worshipped the Lord.

A Great Multitude

When the Lord made His covenant with Abraham he promised him that his family would be multiplied. When the children of Israel first arrived in the Land of Promise the number of males was about seventy. Following the years of Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12:40; Acts 7:6 cf. Galatians 2:17) the Hebrews returning to Palestine numbered six hundred thousand who were able to bear arms.

The Problem of the Heart

As challenging as it was to get Israel out of Egypt it was not easy to get Egypt out of Israel. In many ways the Hebrews had become corrupted by the religion and worldly character of the people they had been with for so long. Initially the Hebrew people upon entering Egypt had kept the faith. At the dwelling place of each chief of a tribe there would have been an altar consecrated to the Lord. Each seventh day the families would have assembled around the altar; the burnt-offering would be led out; the tribal leader would have killed the animal and poured out its blood before the Lord. On the altar the animal parts would have been placed to be burned. Devout parents would have instructed their children in the great events of world history. The old stories would have been told—of the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and the call of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The children would learn to look for a Messiah and most of all to love God who had said to Abraham, “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee”.

The Simplicity of the Saints

Unlike the formal religion of the Egyptians, the worship of the Israelites was simple. There were no temples, only plain altars. There were no elaborate dresses, no images, and no imposing processions. However, with the passing of time, the religious ideas and practices of the Egyptians found their way into the hearts of the children of Israel. This would become painfully clear during the wilderness journey with their readiness to worship a golden calf, reminiscent of the honor paid to Apis.

The Wisdom of Egypt

While the sojourn in Egypt would lead to temptation to forsake the Lord for a corrupt form of worship the lessons learned in other areas would serve the Hebrew people well. Many of the arts and sciences and cultural systems including various forms of government would be incorporated in the daily life of the Israelites.
The Golden Calf

The cultural influence of Egypt upon the Israelites is reflected in the event involving the golden calf. According to Exodus 32 Moses went to commune with God. When he was gone for forty days a change took place in the hearts of the people. A desire of their hearts was revealed. The people wanted to go back to Egypt. As if to prepare them mentally, emotionally and spiritually for a return journey they took action to institute a form of worship familiar to the Egyptians (Acts 7:39). In particular the Egyptians worshipped the Apis, or black bull at Memphis. Appealing to Aaron to approve their actions the people gave up their golden earrings and ornaments, which had been given to them when they left Egypt. After melting these toys of time a golden calf was produced. The bull was designed to represent certain powers (strength and endurance) of the Egyptian god Osiris who was the god of the dead. Fashioning the image in the form of a young ox, denoting strength, and made from gold, signifying richness and splendor the Israelites found spiritual comfort in a physical object.

The Jealousy of Jehovah

So angry was the Lord with the attitude and actions of the people He was determined to destroy the nation in the wilderness.

- Exodus 32:9-10) “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

In a wonderful display of magnificent priestly intercession Moses appealed to the Lord not to destroy the people. Of particular concern to Moses was that the integrity of the Lord would be brought into question if the Hebrews were destroyed.

- Exodus 32:11-13 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

The voice of reason in the voice of Moses was honored.

- Exodus 32:14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.
The Story of Strange Fire

After disciplining the people by grinding the calf into powder and pouring it into the water the Israelites had to drink (Exodus 32:20), Moses moved to root out all rebellious people. Before the day of divine judgment had ended three thousand souls died the sin unto death (Exodus 32:28). At another time and on another occasion other souls would have to die as a consequence of defying divine authority. In Numbers 3:4 the story is told of two men who offered “strange fire” before the Lord. Disregarding the divine order two of the sons of Aaron received the ultimate form of divine discipline, premature death. “And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest’s office in the sight of Aaron their father”.

A Dialogue with the Divine

With divine judgment behind them and divine guidance just ahead the Israelites were given a second chance by the Lord to receive His law. Moses was instructed to take two tables of stone like unto the first so that the Law could be recorded once more by the finger of God (Exodus 34:1). In the conversation that followed Moses pleaded with the Lord to walk in the midst of the people while forgiving sin (Exodus 34:9). The Lord was pleased with this request and made great and wonderful promises of what He would accomplish on behalf of His chosen people (Exodus 34:10,11). But the Hebrews had to do something as well. The people were not to enter into any alliance with the people of Palestine (Exodus 34:12). In addition the Israelites were to destroy every idol they found (Exodus 34:13) lest the children become corrupt with various forms of false worship (Exodus 34:14-17). After providing additional information concerning His will in specific areas (Exodus 34:18-35) Moses was dismissed from the presence of the Lord. But as he made his way back to the people it was obvious to all that Moses had been face to face with the Lord for his own countenance took on the glory of God (Exodus 34:35).

A Place for Worship

Despite their moments of faithlessness the Lord remained faithful to His people. In matchless grace He provided a place for worship where they could meet with Him. The commandment for the construction of a sacred Tabernacle had been given prior to the Golden Calf incident. Now the Tabernacle would be built according to divine instruction. The resources for the Tabernacle would come from the free-will offerings of the people. Entrusted with the pattern (Exodus 35-40) was Bezaleel who was to be its chief builder (Exodus 31:2; 35:30). The Tabernacle was to have an outer courtyard and an inner sanctuary comprised of two parts. There was to be a Holy Place and an innermost sanctuary called the Most Holy Place. An Ark of the Covenant was to be placed in the Holy of Holies containing the Tablets of the Law. Above the Ark of the Covenant was a Mercy Seat, on which, once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sprinkle blood. On the Mercy Seat knelt, face to face and wing tips touching, two golden cherubim. The Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat on which blood would be sprinkled spoke of divine propitiation for sins so that fellowship between God and man could take place.
Rich Symbolism

In the outer sanctuary or Holy Place, separated from the Holy of Holies by a curtain, were various pieces of furniture: the Altar of Incense, the Table of Shewbread, and the Golden Candlestick. It was here in the Holy Place the priest came to offer incense with the daily sacrifices. In the Courtyard outside the Tabernacle stood the Altar of Burnt Offering on which the daily sacrifices were presented in the sight of the people who had gathered for worship. There was also the Laver of Brass containing water for the sacred rituals of washings. The Tabernacle was covered with costly curtains of rare beauty. It was a simple structure the Lord told His people to build. It was unlike the ornate temples in Egypt and so a principle is established. The Lord is seeking individuals to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). Simplicity and spirituality are acceptable qualities in worship for they speak of Christ who became flesh to “tabernacle” among men (John 1:14).
The Subsequent History of Sinai

The Israelites had been encamped at Mount Sinai for about a year, so that the Law might be received and the Tabernacle constructed. But then one day the Pillar of Cloud began to move again. It was moving away from Sinai in Arabia to go in the direction of the Promised Land. When the Lord departed from the area of Sinai and Horeb it was not His intention to return in any significant manner. In fact, only once more in Bible history is Horeb mentioned and that was during the days of Elijah (1 Kings 19). As far as Sinai, Paul in Galatians 4 uses it in a negative way as part of an allegory (Galatians 4:24-25). In the centuries to come the Jews did not seem to care to visit Sinai but early Christians did. Sinai became a hiding place for persecuted believers in Christ. According to legend, angels carried Catherine of Alexandria, who suffered martyrdom, to the top of the mountain that now bears her name in the form of a monastery. It was in this convent that Professor Tischendorf, in 1859, discovered the manuscript of the Greek New Testament now known as the Codex Sinaiticus, one of the oldest manuscripts in existence.

Following the Cloud

When the Israelites left Sinai they followed the Pillar of Cloud until they came to a place called Kadesh-barnea in the land of Edom. While there is no consensus it is possible that Kadesh-barnea is located about twenty-five miles north-west of Petra. It was while they were at Kadesh-barnea that the children of Israel began to collectively crave animal food. They had grown weary of the manna. By means of a flight of birds called quails the people got what they wanted. But instead of having their hunger satisfied the nation became ill (Num. 11:31-35). Sometimes what we lust after and crave the most will make us the sickest we have ever been.

Revolt against Established Authority

Soon after the quail incident Miriam, the sister of Moses, along with Aaron spoke against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman (Num. 12:1). Of course, this surface cause of their anger was a cover for the real issue which was a personal lust for unauthorized power. “And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it” (Num. 12:2). The Lord heard what was said and was not pleased at this revolt against His established authority. As a measure of divine discipline Miriam was smitten with leprosy (Num. 12:9-10). Only through the intercessory prayers of Moses was she cured (Num. 12:11-16).
Loss of Faith in the Face of Fear

While still at Kadesh God commanded that twelve men, one man from each of the tribes of Israel, go into the Land of Promise to survey it. The purpose of the survey was to bring back a positive report on the lay of the land, the products of the same, and the people who inhabited it. Moving in a northward direction the spies went as far as Rehob at the foot of Mount Lebanon and returned by the way of Hebron. From Eschol a bunch of grapes were brought back to the main camp being carried on a stave between two men (Numbers 13:23). One of the spies named Caleb was excited about what he had seen in the land and wanted to go up at once and possess what God had promised (Numbers 13:30). Only Joshua concurred for ten of the spies opposed Caleb's counsel and began to instill apprehension in the hearts of God's people to the point they began begging to die in the dessert. There was loss of faith in the presence of fear and the end result was divine judgment. Those twenty years of age and over would not be allowed to enter into the Land of Promise. They were to perish in unbelief in the dessert (Numbers 14:26-40).

Presumptuous Sinning

When the judgment of God against the people was pronounced there was an immediate change of attitude. Suddenly the Israelites wanted to repent but even their repentance needed to be repented of. God was through with the Exodus Generation. Nevertheless, in a presumptuous attempt to force their way into the Land of Promise war was waged against the Canaanites and Amalekites. The Israelites were put to flight at Hormah, near the southern border of the land (Num. 14:40-45). There is a great principle here, which is that the God of grace is also the God of judgment. Once the Lord turns against a people no one can successfully go against His will.

Drudgery in the Dessert

Finally convinced they would not be allowed to enter the Land of Promise the Hebrews turned back to a life of drudgery in the dessert. The wages of sin was to be death (Romans 6:23). Instead of entering to enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey the Israelites faced a future that was almost destitute of flowers, trees, animals, and natural beauty. If there was any relief from the oppression of monotony it was to be found in fellowship with the Lord. Despite their being under divine discipline the Lord would still fellowship with His people. They would learn patience and the next generation would learn what was expected of them (Num. 15:1-31). The people would also learn to seriously keep the law even to the point of not picking up sticks on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36). As a visual object of the need for gospel obedience fringes were to be made on the borders of garments with a strand of blue. Every time a Hebrew saw the cord of blue it was a reminder to remember and keep all the commandments of the Lord (Num. 15:37-41).

Running by the Red Sea

Perhaps the only moment of relief from the dessert wanderings came when the nation camped by the Red Sea (Num. 14:25). The part of the sea the nation encamped by was the Gulf of Akabah on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. Around the head of the Gulf of Akabah is a place called Ezion-geber. In the centuries to come Ezion-geber would be known as a flourishing sea port in the time of Solomon and after him during the days of Jehoshaphat.
There was a navy, which traded to Ophir and Tarshish (Spain) according to 1 Kings 9:26 (cf. 22:48). The Gulf of Akabah was rich with shells and coral. It is not hard to imagine the children running in delight by the Red Sea.

**Rebellion against Righteousness**

One of the constant dangers of leaders is to have the people revolt against reason and undermine authority. Three men united together to rebel against Moses. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram wanted to deprive Moses and Aaron of their leadership role (Numbers 16:1-2). Tragically, two hundred and fifty “princes of the congregation” united with them against Moses. In a miraculous manner the Lord established the position of Moses and Aaron as leaders by causing the ground to open up to swallow Dathan and Abiram and their families. Fire consumed the two hundred and fifty princes including Korah. Fourteen thousand seven hundred more people died by a plague because of their participation in this great sin (Numbers 16:49).

**The Budding of Aaron’s Rod**

To visibly signify the place of Moses and Aaron the Lord caused a miracle to take place. Twelve rods were laid in the tabernacle of the congregation, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The next morning it was discovered that only the rod of Aaron had budded and brought forth blossoms to produce almonds. The divine appointment of the family of Aaron to function as priests was once more beyond doubt (Numbers 17: 1-13).

**Back to the Future**

After thirty-eight years the people returned to Kadesh, on the borders of Edom, where they had been when the twelve brought back their report. Three events took place here. First, Miriam died and was buried (Numbers 20:1). Second, Moses brought forth water from the rock after the people complained (Numbers 20:2-11). Tragically, the anger of Moses overwhelmed him to the point that he struck the rock in anger. For this great sin God disciplined Moses. He would not be allowed to go into the Land of Promise with the people (Numbers 20:12). The New Testament explains why the anger of Moses in striking the rock was so wrong. The rock was a picture of Jesus. “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). It is interesting to note that Moses did eventually get into the Land of Promise but not in the flesh. The story of Moses in Palestine is told in Matthew 17: 1-3. “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.” Third, the people were instructed to ask permission of the king of Edom to pass peacefully through his borders on the way to Palestine. Despite their reasonable request permission was refused. The Israelites were forced to make a weary circuit in order to reach their own land without passing through Edom. The Lord would not forget this insult to His people.
The Land of Edom (Idumea)

The land of Edom or Idumea stretches along the sides of a rocky ridge called Mount Seir, which extends from the Gulf of Akabah almost to the Dead Sea. In the center of the ridge Mount Hor rises in majesty not far from Petra, or Sela, the capital of the kingdom. Esau had moved to this area after his brother Jacob ran away to Padan-aran. The descendants of Esau inhabited the land but they lived in bitterness against the descendants of Jacob. Though David subdued the Edomites the people survived to become a powerful nation during the days of Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC. The Romans subdued the Edomites and treated the people as part of Judea. The prophets had predicted that Edom would one day be utterly destroyed. A once populous and productive kingdom was reduced by Divine decree to shifting sands and rocky mountains and barren highways (read Obadiah 1:1-21).

- Genesis 27:39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him [Esau], Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

- Jeremiah 49:10 But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not.

The Death of Aaron

Before the children of Israel left Edom, the Lord called Aaron to his heavenly home. Instructed to go to the top of Mount Hor along with his third son Eleazar and Moses, the priestly robes were placed on Eleazar and then Aaron died (Numbers 20:28, c 1452). A Muslim chapel has been built on the spot where tradition says Aaron died. But he died in faith believing the promises of God would be fulfilled. Great faith would be needed for Mount Hor is as bleak and desolate as Sinai. It is without grass, trees, or shrubbery. As Aaron looked out over the land there was nothing that he could see by sight to be impressed with. But the land had been promised and so it would be possessed.

Freedom through Military Victory

With a heavy heart Moses left the body of his brother Aaron and descended Mount Hor. The work of the ministry must go on. It was his intention to take the people of Israel around the southern border of Mount Seir and advance eastward in order to reach the east of Palestine without passing through the land of Edom. However, before that could be done the trumpet of war sounded. Arad, a king in the south of Canaan, moved his forces against the Israelites. By the grace of God and the power of a strong military defense Arad was defeated in battle (Num. 21:1-3).

The Journey Continues

The movement of the Israelites would now lay southward through the Wady el Arabah, a dry valley of sandy hills but with excellent pasturage. While the Edomites looked down on them in scorn from their black mountains, the Hebrews trudged on. But the people were tired and in their weariness they began to complain.
They complained about leaving Egypt for the hardships of the dessert. They complained about the food they had to eat. They complained against Moses as a leader. They complained about the constant quest for water (Numbers 21:1-5). Finally, the Lord had enough and sent fiery serpents to discipline the people (Numbers 21:6-10). When the people repented of their sin of murmuring the Lord provided a divine remedy for their affliction.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Numbers 21:8-9). Turning to the New Testament the means of cure miraculously provided in the brazen serpent is presented as a wonderful illustration of salvation from sin's deadly poison in the soul. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:” (John 3:14).

A Well without Water

Soon after the incident of the fiery serpents the Israelites were again destitute of water. Once more the people were faced with utter dependence upon the Lord to test their faith. This time they did not fail. Gathering at Beer where water had been promised, the people broke forth in a song, “Spring up, O well!” (Numbers 21:16-18). The princes dug the wells and water sprang forth! A lifetime of training in the dessert had not been in vain.

The Slaughter of the King of Sihon

Having traveled by way of the Red Sea (Numbers 21:14) the Israelites advanced along the eastern side of Mount Seir. There was no opposition to their advancement until they reached the brook Arnon where the Amorites under their king, Sihon, opposed them. As they requested peaceful passage through Edom so they once more requested a peaceful passage (Numbers 21:23). “And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz [modern El Belka], and fought against Israel” (Numbers 21:23).

The Amorites were a warrior people. They had successfully taken the lush area of Jazer from giants (Deuteronomy 2:20). In addition the Amorites had driven the Moabites and the Ammonites from the territories now occupied by them. Why should the Amorites not defeat these Hebrews? But things were different now. The Amorites were not making war only upon the Israelites but upon their God—and so their defeat was certain. Encouraging the hearts of His people the Israelites boldly attacked a formidable enemy and won the military victory. Sihon himself was killed in action. The victory was so complete that all the land that had belonged to Sihon between the Arnon and the Jabbok, with Heshbon its capital, Aroer, and all its other cities now fell under the dominion of the Israelites (Judges 11:12-27 cf. Psalm 135:11).
An Ominous King Named Og

The military victory over Sihon brought the Hebrews into contact with a more formidable foe in the person of Og, king of Bashan. Og ruled over a vast territory extending north and then east of the Amorites. The territory was populated with sixty cities and a people trained in warfare. The king himself was of gigantic stature for his iron bed was no less than nine cubits long and four cubits wide. Og may have been close to 13 feet tall! Nevertheless, when the battle was fought at Edrei the Israelites won the victory. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land” (Num 21:34-35).

Amazing Sights to Behold

The initial part of Bashan of which the Hebrews possessed was the district of Argob [modern Lejah]. What a sight the territory was to behold after being in the dessert for forty years. Black basaltic rock met their gaze. It seemed as if a dreadful fire had at one time raged through the area. Perhaps Moses was influenced by Argob when he described the divine wrath in the closing days of his prophetic ministry. “For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains” (Deuteronomy 32:22). Even more remarkable to the nomadic Hebrews might have been the houses in the cities of Argob for they were constructed of massive blocks of black basalt, in some instances four feet thick. Stone rafters were also made of black basalt and stone doors consisting of thick slabs. They swung upon pivots fixed into sockets and fastened by great iron bars. Truly, it seemed, only giants could have built such homes. And yet the Israelites had defeated the strongholds of their most severe enemy but only because the Lord was on their side.

“A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing; Our helper He amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing; For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and pow’r are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal

Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing; Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing; Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabboth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.”

Martin Luther

The Greatness of Gilead

To the east of Argob [Lejah] is a range of mountains which stretches north and south. It is called today the Jebel Hauran. An Oak Forest, for which Bashan was famous, grows in this region. One of the mountains of this range [Shekwet-el-Khdur] rises upward five thousand feet. (Psalms 68:15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.) To the west of Argob are the fertile plains of the East in Hauran, which has been called “the granary of Damascus.” The beauty of the land seems to have inspired Moses in his farewell song and prophecy. From the land of Bashan Moses gathered his images for he saw Israel “riding on the high places of the earth,” even “the high hill of Bashan”; “eating the increase of the fields” of the Haurin all the while “sucking honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock” [the black basalt of Lejah] “butter of kine [cow], and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat” (Deuteronomy 32:13,14).

A Time to Remember

The ancient Hebrews regarded the conquest of the kingdoms of Sihon and Og as a tremendous accomplishment equal to the destruction of the army of Pharaoh during the days of the Exodus. Sihon and Og were not small kings or chieftains but were “mighty kings,” “great kings,” “famous kings,” ruling over great wealth and armies (cf. Psalm 135, 136). Nevertheless, they were not equal to the outstretched hand of God that protected His people and gave them great victories. The conquest of the Sihon and Og was not soon forgotten in Hebrew history.

The Mountains of Moab

After defeating Og, king of Bashan, the Israelites moved into the territory of Moab which consisted of three parts.

- The first part called the “country of Moab” (Ruth 1:1-2), refers to an area enclosed by natural fortifications. On the N there is the chasm of the Arnon while on the west there are rocky cliffs that rise almost perpendicularly from the shore of the Dead Sea. Looking toward the south and east there is a semicircle of hills which open up for the Arnon River (lit. rushing torrent). This body of water rises in the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, and reaching the Dead Sea through a stony and precipitous chasm of red and yellow sandstone (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).

- The second part called “land of Moab” refers to the more open country from the Arnon north to the hills of Gilead.
• The so-called “plains of Moab” (Num 22:1) is a sunken district in the tropical depths of the Jordan Valley.

The king of the Amorites had taken over most of the territory traditionally occupied by the Moabites and had confined them to the mountainous part south of the Arnon and east of the Dead Sea. This conquest along with the Israelites defeat of Sihon and Og left the people of Moab in a weakened condition. They could no longer vigorously oppose by themselves the advance of the Hebrews into the Land of Promise. What the people could and did do was to unite with the Midianites or Ishmaelites in an attempt to destroy the Israelites.

The Bad Union of Balak and Balaam

Not believing the promise of God that the nation and people of Moab would not be destroyed or not believing the Hebrews would spare them according to the known will of God (Deuteronomy 2:18,19) Balak, king of Moab enlisted the services of a prophet named Balaam. Balaam was a Chaldean (Babylonian) wise man with a renowned reputation. His curses and blessings were reported to produce extraordinary results. The thought came to Balak to secure Balaam's prophetic gifts in order to do irreparable damage to the Israelites. (see Doctrine of Balaam).

The End of the Moabites and the Ammonites

Because they were descendants of Abraham's family through his nephew Lot God had determined to show mercy to the Moabites and the Ammonites. In Deuteronomy 2:18-19 God told Moses, “Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: 19 And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.” But the people of Moab did not appreciate the mercy of God and embraced the idolatry that had its universal headquarters in Babylon and Nineveh. They worshipped Baal-peor and so were sentenced to utter destruction. Following the Babylonian captivity the people disappeared from history. They were completely absorbed by the Arabs.

Moses and the Midianites

Having dealt with the Israelites for their sins the Lord moved against the Midianites. The divine command came to make war against them for their part in enticing the Israelites to sin. Numbers 25:16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them: 18 For they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake. Selecting a thousand men from each tribe of Israel Moses waged war against the Midianites and completely destroyed them. Caught up in the conflict was Balak (Numbers 24:25) who was killed with them on the field of battle (Numbers 31:8).
The Spoils of Victory

Having neutralized their enemies the Israelites were free to occupy the lands of Sihon and Og in the will of the Lord. Because the land was suited for pasturing animals and because the tribes of Rueben and Gad had large flocks permission was asked to remain on the east side of the river and settle the land along with the half tribe of Manasseh (Numbers 32:1-19). Permission was granted provided the men of war crossed the Jordan to help in the conquest of the land (Numbers 32:20-42; Deuteronomy 3:1-13 cf. 1 Chron. 12:37). Once the Land of Promise was conquered the citizen-soldiers would be free to return to settle on the green slopes of Gilead and on the plains in the forests of Bashan.

The Cities of Refuge

While he was still in the land of Moab God instructed Moses to provide six cities of refuge, three on one side of the Jordan and three on the other side. Into these cities of refuge individuals could flee who had unintentionally killed someone. Numbers 35:9-15 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. 12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge. 14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them; that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither. The purpose for providing these cities of refuge was to establish justice and to make a distinction between murder and accidents that would invite unjustified retaliation. God would have His people do right by all.

The Movement of Moses to the Master

After the destruction of the Midianites, the great work of leading the nation of Israel was almost done for Moses (Numbers 31:1-2). Having been directed to appoint Joshua as his successor, Moses prepared for his own departure. He was going to move from earth to heaven. He was going home to the Master he has served so well. While not permitted to enter the Land of Promise in the flesh Moses would one day get there in the spirit (cf. Matthew 17:3). Going to the top of Mount Pisgah Moses was given a final view of the place to which he had been privileged to lead the people to. After giving a public charge to Joshua and a lengthy address to the people below him on the plain of Moab Moses was buried by God. His final words constitute the book of Deuteronomy. “These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab (Deuteronomy 1:1).
A Battle for the Body

Where the Lord put the body of Moses has never been determined. What is interesting is that there was an angelic battle for the corpse. Apparently Lucifer wanted to take the body of Moses, energize it and return to the camp of Israel as the Devil incarnate. What havoc the Evil One would have performed had he been allowed to do this. But the Lord sent Michael to protect the body of Moses and to resist the devil. In his resistance Michael did not rely upon his own powers but rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord. “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).
The Final Message of Moses

As the people camped on the plains of Moab the elders and princes assembled to listen to the final message of Moses so that they in turn could go and tell the people what the great leader of the Lord had said. Soon Moses was going to die. He was not going to be allowed to go in the Land of Promise. And so the people gazed upon Moses with great intensity to preserve whatever memory they could in their minds. From generation to generation the great moments of his life would be retold. Children would hear afresh how his mother Jochebed placed him with loving but trembling hands in the ark of the bulrushes during the dark days of living in Egypt. The story would be retold how he killed an Egyptian when he came of age in order to protect his people. Then there would be the narrative of his flight from the face of the Pharaoh and forty years later his return to tell the ruler of the land, “Let my people go!” He who had been chosen by God to form the nation of Israel and led it through the wilderness had seen the face of God. He had been found a faithful leader and now he was about to die. So the people gathered to listen to his last message, a message about God.

Summary of a Long Sermon

At great length Moses told the people how they were to live. He provided for them a Social Law of Conduct, a Ceremonial Law of religious worship, and a Moral Law to guide their relationship to God. Moses reminded the people of all that God had commanded in detail and all that God had done for the nation according to His providential care. He pointed the people to the Great Prophet [i.e., the Messiah] that was to arise among them. Deuteronomy 18:15 “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” The people were to listen to the Prophet and all the lesser prophets as well. They were to keep the law of God or face fearful consequences. Those who listened to God and kept His commandments would know great blessings. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

The Last Look

When his farewell address was ended Moses moved to take a last look upon the Land of Promise. On the east side of the Dead Sea is a range of mountains that form a dark wall that rises at some point to three thousand feet. From somewhere on Mount Pisgah Moses stood and looked to where the Israelites were to live. As he looked out eastward he would see the hills and plains of Judah in which area lay Hebron, the cave of Machpelah, and the stronghold of Jerusalem.
Turning his eyes northward Moses would have seen the Jordan, winding like a serpent through the tropical plain. In the extreme northern border which the tribe of Naphtali would inhabit are the snow clad peaks of Hermon and Lebanon. In the area between are the fertile plains and sheltered ravines. As Moses looked, the covenant promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be upon his mind. Closing his eyes in death, angels came to escort his soul to heaven while unseen hands laid his body in an unknown tomb.

On the Verge of a Great Inheritance

Because they had been wandering in the desert the Israelites could not have been a highly developed people in the arts of building, weaving, pottery, painting, or poetry. The life of a nomad in the desert is difficult. With some exceptions such as the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture by such men as Aholiab and Bezaleel and the making of robes for the priests and sacred garments the highest skills of craftsmanship were not needed. In some respect this was good for the cultural influence of the Egyptians was diminished. The day would come when time and attention could be given to art and literature and culture especially during the days of David and Solomon.

A Written Law

During the days of dwelling in the wilderness there was one great change that took place in that the Word of God was committed to writing. An oral tradition gave way to a written tradition. Furthermore, the family of Aaron was set apart for the priesthood. Best of all, in types and symbols the Lord Jesus Christ was set forth in the minds and hearts of the people. To what extent the Hebrews understood the shadows of the Savior is hard to determine but the New Testament reveals that every event in the history of the nation spoke of Christ. A few illustrations can be noted.

- The manna or bread, which the Israelites enjoyed, was a type of Christ the true Bread from heaven.

John 6:47-51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

- The rock that Moses struck to get water was a type of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

- The high priest and all the various bloody sacrifices were types of Christ.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.
John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

In many visual ways God the Father prepared the people to receive His Son and the Saviour of the world. But spiritual darkness descended over the people so that it would be said when the Messiah appeared “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:16-17).

The Character of the Second Generation

It is not often that a succeeding generation is more righteous than the one that preceded it but there are exceptions. Pride, impatience, unbelief, and constant rebellion characterized the Exodus Generation, which was also prone to idolatry. Stephen says “they took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan” (Acts 7:43). As a result the people were severely disciplined. The punishment was effective for despite the idolatry of surrounding nations the Second Generation was not given to idolatry. The bones of their fathers served to remind them that the way of the transgressor is hard. And now the journey of a lifetime was about to begin. God was going to keep His covenant promises.
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

Chapter 5

Joshua

Second in Command

The death of Moses placed Joshua in command of the nation of Israel. Exhorted to study the Book of the Law (Joshua 1:8) in order to have spiritual success Joshua prepared his heart and mind to serve the Lord. With great faith he encouraged the people to go into the land to possess it. The people would cross the Jordan near Gilgal.

Names of the Country

The place to which God had led the Hebrews is known by a variety of names. To the Egyptians it was called the land of Ruthen, or Rutenna. The Bible calls it the land of Canaan before it was inhabited by the Hebrews and the land of Israel after that (cf. Genesis 11:31; 1 Samuel 13:19). The Greeks and Latin referred to this section of earth as Palestine or “land of the Philistines”. The Philistines were Greek sea faring people who had settled part of the coast. “The Holy Land” is used only once in the Bible (Zechariah 2:12) but the popularity of the name has stood the test of time.

The Boundaries of the Land of Promise

In Acts 17:26 the declaration is made that God is the one who determines the boundaries of the nations. “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.” For those who have been taught to fear the future of a one-world government this passage should be of great comfort. It was the will of God to give to Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan with boundaries stretching from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. 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.” Later the specific place marking the northern boundary would be identified as being beyond Lebanon at “the entering in of Hamath.” Joshua 13:5 “And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.”

A Promise Kept

There have been many debates whether or not God gave the totality of the land to the people or whether the Jews shall one day possess the land with the ancient boundaries during a millennial reign of Christ. The following passages indicate that Israel did receive the land they were promised.
Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Joshua 21:41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs. 42 These cities were everyone with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities. 43 And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. 44 And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

Joshua 23:13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. 14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. 15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. 16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

Nehemiah 9:8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

Nehemiah 9:21 Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. 22 Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. 24 So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25 And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and olive yards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.
1 Kings 4:21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

1 Kings 8:56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

The Provision for Keeping the Land of Promise

Long ago a condition was placed upon the Jews getting the land and being able to stay in it. That condition was repentance and gospel obedience. Notice the language of Deuteronomy 4:27-28, 30-31.

Deuteronomy 4:27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

Deuteronomy 4:30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; 31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Judgment upon Jericho

The first city the Hebrews had to conquer after crossing the east bank of the Jordan where they were encamped was the city of Jericho. The city was strategically located and so had to be taken by conquest. Two spies were sent to examine the fortifications (Joshua 2:1). Though their presence was detected by the king they were not captured for a prostitute named Rahab, moved by faith in God, and concealed their identity. In the New Testament Rahab is honored in two ways. First, she is listed in the genealogy of Christ. Matthew 1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse. To have any woman listed in a Jewish genealogy was remarkable. To have a prostitute is matchless grace. Second, the faith of Rahab and not her sin is remembered in Hebrews 11:31. “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” Rabbinical tradition teaches that Rahab was one of the four most beautiful women in the world and was the ancestor of eight prophets, including Jeremiah and the prophetess Huldah.

Crossing the Jordan

In the process of crossing the Jordan the children of Israel witnessed a miracle for the bed of the river dried up. The descending waters gathered at Adam, beside Zaretan, several miles to the north, while the waters below were carried down to the Dead Sea (Joshua 3:16). In a solemn process the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant to the middle of the river and remained with the Ark until the people had crossed the Jordan.
The people were once more comforted that God was in their midst and would do great things on their behalf. A memorial of stones was established as a visible reminder of the faithfulness of God to His people (Joshua 4:19-24).

Legal Obedience

Coming up out of the water on the tenth day of the first month the people camped at Gilgal (lit. rolling, or winding) where the ritual of circumcision was administered to the males. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant made with Abraham and his descendants. While the Exodus Generation had been circumcised, their descendants had not been given the sign of the covenant. This legal obedience had been neglected for forty years during the wilderness journey. Now the deed would be done and the reproach “rolled away” (Joshua 5:9). It was also here at Gilgal the children of Israel kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month (Joshua 5:10).

A Study of the Rite of Circumcision

1. God established the ritual of male circumcision with Abraham as a sign of the covenant.

   - Genesis 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

2. Circumcision was to take place on the eight day after birth.

   - Acts 7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

3. Abraham was to circumcise: his own children, descendants, any purchased slaves, and any proselytes.

4. The uncircumcised were to be considered as being “cut off” from the covenant of spiritual blessings.

5. Provisions were made for all who wanted to be part of a covenant relationship with God in that the poor and those outside the racial distinctive could be included. However, God had to be met according to His terms and His terms included: blood-suffering-humility-a sacrifice of self.

6. In the Old Testament the circumcision of the body was symbolic of the need for a special circumcision of the heart. The image is that the heart has become surrounded with the disease called sin. As a surgeon must cut away fatty tissue or unnatural growth so the heart must be spiritually circumcised. In particular greed must be cut away, idolatry must be cut away, anger must be cut away and hatred must be cut away.

   - Deuteronomy 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.
7. The physical tool used to circumcise the body is a sharp knife. The spiritual tool used to circumcise the heart is the Word of God.

- Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

8. While human responsibility is involved (Jeremiah 4:4) the spiritual circumcising of the heart requires a Divine ability. God must circumcise the heart (Deuteronomy 30:6).

- Jeremiah 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

9. When the Lord circumcises the heart of His elect people there will flow a natural love for God and new spiritual life.

- Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumsice thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

10. God never intended for man to forget that the physical act of circumcision was only a ritual to represent the spiritual circumcision of the heart.

11. The obedience of Abraham (Genesis 17:11), Moses (Exodus 4:25), and Joshua (Joshua 5:2,4) to perform the bloody ritual of physical circumcision, reflected a spiritual heart of obedience, love, and devotion.

12. With the passing of time, people paid less attention to the spiritual dimensions of the act of circumcision and gloried only in the physical mark which led Paul to argue against placing confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:1-9).

- Philippians 3:1-9 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

13. In John 7:22 Jesus argued from the act of physical circumcision that it was right to perform miracles on the Sabbath. The point the Lord made was simple and powerful. If the Law allowed the cutting of the flesh on the Sabbath to symbolize the keeping of the covenant and minister to the soul, why should anyone become angry when someone was healed or made whole on the Sabbath?

- John 7:22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers ;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man.

14. With the resurrection of Christ the ceremonial ritual of circumcision could be abolished and emphasis focused exclusively upon the circumcision of the heart.

15. Not everyone understood the transition that had taken place from the physical to the spiritual.

- Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

16. Even the apostle Paul found the transition difficult to implement.

- Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

17. As time passed as Paul ministered more and more to the Gentiles, as the apostle understood the gospel more clearly, circumcision of the flesh gave way to the true spiritual circumcision of the heart whereby Paul affirmed that the church consists of those who are of the true circumcision.

- Philippians 3:3 We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
The Angel of Jericho

Having completed the legal duties of circumcising the males and keeping the Passover the nation of Israel was posed to begin the conquest of the land. It was at this moment that the Angel of the Covenant appeared to Joshua in military dress as the Captain of the Lord's Host (Joshua 5:14). Theologically this is known as a theophany or a personal manifestation of God. The worship offered by Joshua and his willingness to comply with the command to take off his shoes for he was on holy ground indicates that this was a most sacred Person.

And the Walls Came Down

With the Captain of the Host in the midst of the people an unusual march was made around the city. The Ark of the Covenant was carried around the walls of the city for six consecutive days. On the seventh day the wall of Jericho collapsed when the people gave a great shout of victory (Joshua 6:1-16). All the citizens of Jericho were put to death with the exception of Rahab and her family (Joshua 6:17). The city was razed to the ground and a curse was pronounced on any one who would venture to rebuild it. “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. 27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country” (Joshua 6:26-27). The prophetic curse found fulfillment during the days of King Ahab, the seventh king of Israel in the 9th century BC for we read that “In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in [the death of] Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in [the death of] his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun” (1 Kings 16:34).

Insightful Military Strategy

Having destroyed Jericho, Joshua moved to secure the whole country on the west. This could be more easily done because the land had been cut in two. An initial central or middle campaign prevented the northern tribes of Canaan from uniting with the southern tribes. By establishing his presence in the middle, Joshua compelled his enemies to fight in a defensive manner.

Advance to Ai

Having taken Jericho by the power of God, Joshua was ready to move against Ai. A select body of men was sent to secure his stronghold but to their surprise the first assault by the Israelites was repulsed. The question was why? It was discovered there was sin among the saints. A single act of disobedience had led to military defeat. A man named Achan had hidden stolen spoils of war taken from Jericho despite the divine commandment not to. When the offender was executed the authority of God was once more established and His righteousness satisfied. Soon thereafter Ai was taken and the valley of Achor opened up to the Israelites as a door of hope for a brighter future. Hosea 2:15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.
A Commandment to Keep

Following the victory at Ai, Joshua took the military campaign of conquest twenty miles north to Mount Ebal, close to Shechem, which was the first residing place of Abraham in the land. Here the Friend of God received a promise of God. Here Abraham constructed the first altar to the Lord. In this fertile plain Jacob had also settled. A well, which bore Jacob’s name, had been dug and the parcel of ground he had given to his son Joseph was here.

The purpose of Joshua in going to Shechem where the bones of Joseph were buried was to fulfill the solemn command of Moses that, as soon as they should come into the land, the blessings of the Law were to be proclaimed from Mount Gerizim, and the curses of the Law were to be sounded from Mount Ebal before the whole congregation of Israel. “And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal” (Deuteronomy 11:29).

The Mountains of Law and Grace

The two hills of Shechem, Gerizim on the south and Ebal on the north, rise to about six hundred feet each and are separated by a valley. Six of the tribes gathered on the side of one hill, and six on the other side; the priests and Levites stood in the valley below to read the words of the Law. The tribes on Gerizim shouted “Amen” to the blessings while those on Ebal shouted an “Amen” to the curses. In the midst of spiritual leadership in the valley was the Ark of the Covenant for God must have the focal point in life, not in theory but in visual and practical application. Surrounding the Ark of the Covenant were the elders, officers, and judges with Joshua at the head of the procession. The banners of the tribes blew in the wind marking their different position as God had appointed them. When the people of the Lord shouted, “Amen”— men, women and children—the sound shook the rocks and trees swelling the earth with majestic praise unto the Lord God of heaven.

A Desperate Deceit

Having kept the command of Moses to read the Law of the Lord, the children of Israel prepared to move out for more military conquests. Their next target would have been Gibeon, a powerful tribe of Hivites whose fortification stood on the top of a small hill surrounded by a rich plain in central Palestine. In time Gibeon would be the place where Abner would be defeated and Amasa killed, in the days of David (2 Samuel 2 and 20). Here too Solomon would ask for wisdom from the Lord (1 Kings 3). For the moment, Gibeon became infamous by the desperate but clever deceit of its leading citizens who tricked Joshua into sparing them from destruction.

“And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? 23 Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. 24 And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.
25 And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. 26 And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. 27 And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose” (Joshua 9:22-27)

Conquering the Capitals of the South

Having defeated the citizens of Jericho and Ai and having absorbed the Gibeonites into the cultural life of the nation, Joshua turned his attention to the capital cities of the south that had formed an alliance. Led by Ad-on-i-ze-dec (lit. just lord) five kings gathered their forces at Gibeon. The respective warriors represented Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. Though it was a formidable force that gathered to oppose the Israelites, Joshua was not afraid. He believed in God and he was committed to the conquest of the land. Spiritually, every believer should be committed to the conquest of the enemies within the soul of which Canaan is symbolic.

There should be no doubt of spiritual victory against a great enemy for the Lord has given His promise of a certain conquest provided individuals be faithful soldiers. In spiritual warfare patience is needed to conquer the enemies of the soul just as it took time and patience to subdue the land of Palestine. “Canaan was not to be conquered in a day. God had said that by little and little he would drive out the Canaanites, Exodus 23:30. He that believeth will not make haste, or conclude that the promise will never be performed because it is not performed so soon as he expected” (Matthew Henry). In addition to time and patience, both spiritual and natural warfare demands courage and movement. Joshua had the courage to move out against his enemies. So the believer must engage the enemies of the soul and Savior.

An Advance in Faith

Marching his troops under the cover of darkness from Gilgal, Joshua attacked unexpectedly the forces of Adonizedec, king of Jerusalem, Hoham, king of Hebron, Piram, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, king of Lachish and Debir, king of Eglon. There was a tremendous slaughter as Joshua marched his army by night from Gilgal. The engagement took place on the green plain of Gibeon. The soldiers from the confederation of five cities were driven over the summit of the plateau and down the western of Beth-horon into the valley that stretched out before them. In order to be able to complete his victory the sun and moon were arrested in their natural courses.

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:12-14). In the valley of Ajalon, Joshua had his great victory.
Utter Death to the Enemies of God

From that conquest Joshua led Israel to the various cities of his enemies.

- Makkedah Joshua 10:28-30
- Libnah Joshua 10:31-32
- Lachish Joshua 10:33
- Eglon Joshua 10:34
- Hebron Joshua 10:36-37

The strongholds were taken and the inhabitants utterly and ruthlessly destroyed. The Israelites took possession of the whole southern portion of Palestine (Joshua 10:28-43). Spiritually, if Christians are to deal effectively with sin in the soul then the enemy has to be pursued and no prisoners taken for the good of the heart and for the glory of God.

Divine Mercy for Israel at Merom

Having subdued the southern and central part of the land attention was turned to the northern or Galilean district. It would not be easy to conquer the powerful confederacy of native tribes that had united to stop the advance of the army of Israel. Jabin, king of Hazor, led the coalition. The various tribal leaders whose sphere of influence was around the Sea of Chinneroth (Lake of Galilee) and the Mountains of Lebanon came together to defend their land and their way of life. But they could not escape the judgment of God. A pitched battle was fought near the water of Merom and the northern coalition was utterly defeated. The conquest of the various cities and territories was afterwards certain. “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war” (Joshua 11:23).

Dividing the Land

Having subdued the land according to divine promise, Joshua divided the territory among the twelve tribes of Israel after the sons of Jacob with the assistance of the high priest Eleazar and the tribal chiefs. “Now the sons of Jacob were twelve” (Genesis 35:22-26).

The sons of Leah

- Reuben
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Issachar
- Zebulon
The sons of Zilpah  
Leah's handmaid  
Gad  
Asher  

The sons of Rachel  
Joseph  
Benjamin  

The sons of Bilhah  
Rachel's handmaid  
Dan  
Naphtali  

The Southern Tribes  

The Tribe of Judah  

The tribe of Judah was the first to be assigned a land. The area allotted to this tribe extended westward from the Dead Sea and then northward from the southern wilderness. Out of this division, on the northwest, a section was given for Simeon with Dan on the north. The districts allotted to Simeon and Dan included the territories inhabited by the Philistines who would make war with these tribes for centuries until the time of David. The larger Philistine cities were Ekron, Gath, Ashdod, Askelon and Gaza.  

The Tribe of Benjamin  

The territory assigned to Benjamin was immediately north of Judah. Though the region was not as large as that given to Judah many important events took place within its borders.  

• The tribe of Benjamin would give Israel its first royal ruler in the person of King Saul. As king Saul made Gibeah his capital.  

• In the territory assigned to Benjamin was Beth-el from whose lofty heights Abraham initially gazed upon the Land of Promise and where Jacob dreamed a dream.  

• Jericho and Gilgal were also in this region but so was Ramah, where great weeping would one day be heard for the time would come when Ramah would serve as a deportation center for Jews going into exile.  

• Bethany was in the territory where the Lord Jesus would spend many peaceful hours.  

• There is more history associated with the tribe. In one of the deep passes, on the east side of Benjamin’s territory, Joshua engaged in a great battle for Ai.
• At Beth-Horon, in the valley of Ajalon, on the western side of the plateau, while the sun and the moon lingered in the heavens, Joshua finished defeating a coalition of kings.

• The Assyrian king Sennacherib would one day pass through Michmash, a well-known town in the tribe of Benjamin.

• During the days of the Maccabees, Judas Maccabeus gained his first victory at Beth-boron. Fifteen hundred years after the days of Joshua, the Roman legions were defeated and driven down the pass of Beth-horon just as the confederate kings had been.

• Almost a thousand years after the death of Christ the Crusaders tried to reach Jerusalem by the pass of Beth-horon. The English king Richard the Lionhearted was defeated in the Valley of Ajalon.

• The Mount of Olives was located in the tribe of Benjamin. Many of the scenes in the ministry of the Lord took place in the tribe of Benjamin.

• Though Benjamin was little among the tribes of Israel in spiritual matters it rivaled them all. Out of Benjamin came the great apostle to the Gentiles, Paul who was an “Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Philippians 3:5).

The Central Tribes

The Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh

Laying to the north of Benjamin the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh enjoyed a terrain with wider plains and fertile land. For a long period of Hebrew history Ephraim was the main tribe.

Important Cities of Ephraim

• Shechem. Shechem served as the civil capital of the country in the time of Joshua having become famous in the days of Abraham and Jacob.

• Shiloh. One day, Shiloh would serve as the first ecclesiastical center of Israel where the ark was kept.

• Samaria. Under Omri, the seventh king of Israel, Samaria would become the capital of the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Important People of Ephraim

• Joshua. The second leader of Israel was from the tribe of Ephraim while Gideon with his seventy priestly brothers came from the adjacent tribe of Manasseh.

• Deborah. Though she was from a northern tribe Deborah dwelt in Ephraim.

• Samuel. The last judge of the nation was from Ramathaim-zophim of Mount Ephraim.
Cultural Impact of Ephraim

Because of its importance, during the days of Gideon and again in the days of Jephthah the men of Ephraim were very jealous when they believed they had been neglected or placed in an inferior position (Judges 8:1 cf. 12:1ff). Later the people of Ephraim were humiliated when David, from the tribe of Judah, was appointed as king. The revolt of Ephraim with allied tribes during the days of Rehoboam reflects the wounded jealousy. The rugged mountainous terrain of Ephraim served as the rallying place for the nation in times of crisis or conflict. Along the sea coast of this tribe lay Joppa which served for many years as the sea port of Palestine. Later, under the Romans, Caesarea would become the capital of the country.

The Tribe of Issachar and the Valley of Megiddo

The hills that fix the boundary for Manasseh on the north incline downward to a most famous plain called in Scripture Jezreel (Joshua 17:6) or Megiddo (2 Chronicles 35:22). Today it is known as the Plain of Esdraelon. The plain is located in the tribe of Issachar. The New Testament district of Galilee begins here. The plain is twelve miles abroad. The southern boundary length is fixed between the hills of Central Palestine and the mountains of Lebanon on the north. The width of the plain spreads from the valley of the Jordan on the Southeast to the Great Sea (Mediterranean) on the Northwest. The ancient Kishon River waters the plain.

People and Places Associated with the Tribe of Issachar

- King Ahab built a palace in Jezreel.
- In Shunem the prophet Elisha restored a boy to life.
- King Saul consulted with the witch of Endor.
- The bodies of King Saul and his sons were nailed to the wall of Beth-shan.
- King Josiah was killed on the plains of Megiddo.
- On the top of Mt. Carmel the prophet Elijah contested the gods of Baal.
- Early Church tradition held that Jesus was transformed on Mt. Tabor though it might have been Mt. Hermon at the beginning of the Jordan Valley.

Famous Battles at Armageddon

On the plains of Megiddo some of the greatest battles in history have been fought. Jezreel has been the great battlefield of Palestine. Jewish and Gentile soldiers, Saracens, Crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, Arabs and French warriors from every nation under heaven have tramped upon the plain of Esdraelon and unfurled their banners.

- Pharaoh Thotmes III defeated the Khita prior to the Hebrews entering the land.
- Barak defeated the Canaanites in a battle in the valley of Jezreel.
- Gideon put to flight the Amalekites and the Midianites in the valley of Megiddo.
- During the days of Eli the Philistines defeated the Israelites and took the ark of the Lord from them.
King Saul was killed in a battle at Armageddon along with his sons on the mountains of Gilboa.

King Josiah was also killed in a great battle at Armageddon fighting the Egyptians.

It is not surprising that the tribe of Issachar is overshadowed by the great battles that were fought on a small piece of land in the territory. The prophetic words of “The strong ass, couching between two burdens” (Genesis 49:14) pales into insignificance in the midst of a scene of some of the greatest military conflicts on record.

The Northern Tribes

The Tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali

The tribes of Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali were located north of Issachar. Because of their isolated position these tribes avoided much involvement in the conflicts of the nation.

Zebulun. The tenth of Jacob’s twelve sons, Zebulun was the sixth and last son of Leah (Genesis 30:19-20; 35:23; 1 Chronicles 2:1). Zebulun was the father of Sered, Elon, and Jahleel (Genesis 46:14; Numbers 26:26-27). The land allowed to Zebulun following the conquest of Canaan was bounded by Issachar and Manasseh on the south, by Asher on the west, and by Naphtali on the north and east (Joshua 19:10-16, 27, 34). The territory was fertile reflected in the northwest corner of the fertile Plain of Esdraelon, better known as the Valley of Jezreel.

Asher. In poetic language it had been foretold that Asher was to be blessed. He would “dip his foot in oil” or be abundant with olive groves. His feet would be “shod with iron and brass” from the mines in Lebanon (Deuteronomy 32:24, 25).

Naphtali. Naphtali was to be “like a hind let loose” (Genesis 49:21). “Though we find not this prediction so fully answered in the event as some of the rest, yet, no doubt, it proved true that those of this tribe were, 1. As the loving hind (for that is her epithet, Proverbs 5:19), friendly and obliging to one another and to other tribes; their converse remarkably kind and endearing. 2. As the loosened hind, zealous for their liberty. 3. As the swift hind (Psalm 18:33), quick in dispatch of business; and perhaps, 4. As the trembling hind, timorous in times of public danger. It is rare that those that are most amiable to their friends are most formidable to their enemies. 5. That they should be affable and courteous, their language refined, and they complaisant, giving kindly words” (Matthew Henry). In the New Testament Naphtali was visited by an angel who told Mary of Nazareth about the birth of Christ. The larger part of the Lord’s earthly life was spent in Naphtali. Despite this honor Christ pronounced woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum and other cities in which His great works were accomplished. These cities were located in Naphtali.
The Tribe of Dan

The area allotted to Dan included the towns of Aijalon, Ekron, Eltekeh, and Zorah in the west central part of Canaan (Josh 19:40-46; 21:5, 23-24). In the town of Dan Jeroboam set up a calf to be worshiped and later in Caesarea Philippi, Philip the tetrarch built a palace. It was near Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked His disciples “Whom say men that I am?” (Luke 9:18). Somewhere in this region, on some part of the northeast, on Mt. Hermon or Sirion, Christ was transfigured. After resting in this area Jesus set His face with determination to go up to Jerusalem to die (Luke 9:51).

Phoenicia: Tyre and Sidon

To the northwest of the tribe of Asher stretches the narrow and rocky strip of land of Phoenicia with the “coasts of Tyre and Sidon” (Matthew 15:21). Unlike the other inhabitants of the land of Canaan the Sidonians were not specifically destined for extermination. For the most part the Israelites were able to dwell with them in peace and enjoyed commercial exchange of goods and services. The region knew the grace of God. It was to Zarephath, a Phoenician town that Elijah was sent in days of a famine to minister to a needy widow (1 Kings 17:9ff).

Syria

A few miles north of Tyre is the land of Syria characterized by a fertile plain. Before the conquering armies of Joshua the Canaanites fled to this region. After growing in number, during the days of Deborah and Barak the Canaanites in this region moved southward to recapture the land. They terrified the Israelites with their use of chariots and iron (Joshua 17:16). In this plain stood Riblah, a town with sad memories for the Jews as it became a departure point prior to the Babylonian exile. Here Jehoahaz, king of Judah was put in chains by the king of Egypt (Jeremiah 23:33). Later, his brother Zedekiah had his eyes put out by the king of Babylon but not before he was forced to watch his children being murdered (2 Kings 25:7).

Damascus

Between the eastern side of Hermon and the northern territory of Bashan were several city nations that are associated with Hebrew history. There was the small kingdom of Geshur, where Absalom was banished from Jerusalem by David (2 Samuel 13:38). Absalom’s mother was from Geshur (2 Samuel 3:3). The most important kingdom in this area was that whose capital was Damascus, a very ancient city. Abraham’s servant Eliezer was from Damascus (Genesis 15:2). It has been called a “pearl in the midst of emeralds.”

The Eastern Tribes

In the district east of the Jordan the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh settled.
The Tribe of Reuben

Reuben occupied the most southern part, which was extensive. However, “unstable as water” he did not excel (Genesis 49:4). Among the towns in this district was Ashdoth-pisgah in the area of Mt. Pisgah where Moses looked upon the Land of Promise (Deuteronomy 3:27); Bezer, one of the six cities of refuge (Joshua 20:1-8); Heshbon, famous for its fish pools (Song of Solomon 7:4); and Jahaz where Sihon was defeated by Moses (Numbers 21:23-24). During the days of the New Testament this district was the scene of the preaching of John (John 1:28) and where Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove.

The Tribe of Gad

To the north of Reuben settled Gad which included Mahanaim where the angels met Jacob (Genesis 32:2). Here Ishboseth, a son of Saul, resided; and here David fled from the face of Absalom. The region also included Peniel where Jacob wrestled with the Angel. There was Ramoth-gilead where Jacob and Jehoshaphat went to make war with the Syrians. Here Ahab was slain, and later his son Joram was wounded. Jehu, by the command of Elisha was anointed king of Israel.

The Ammonites

To the east of Gad were the territories of the Ammonites with the capital of Rabbah or Rabbath-ammon, later called Philadelphia (Joshua 13:25; Revelation 1:11). Philadelphia was built on both sides of a stream (2 Samuel 12:27).

The Half Tribe of Manasseh

The half tribe of Manasseh absorbed the ancient kingdom of Og. Among its many cities was Jabesh-Gilead whose citizens were killed for refusing to join the war against Benjamin (Judges 21:8). King Saul defeated the Ammonites in battle and saved the inhabitants from captivity (1 Samuel11). The Lord is believed to have retired “to the desert place” in this region in order to spend whole nights in prayer (Mark 6:31). The tribe includes the cities of Gadara and Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee.

The Tribe of Levi

The only tribe that was not allotted a territorial land was Levi. This tribe was to be devoted to the offices associated with the priesthood. Its inhabitants were to be supported by the tithes and offerings of a grateful people. The Levites were to reside in designated cities within the other tribes. Of special note were the six cities of refuge where persons could flee if they had accidentally taken the life of someone. The main cities were Hebron in Judah, and Shechem in central Palestine, in the valley between mounts Ebal and Gerizim, 34 miles north of Jerusalem and 7 miles southeast of Samaria.
A Sanctuary at Shiloh

As the Lord appointed the location of the various tribes so He appointed a resting place for the Ark of the Tabernacle. The Ark would reside in Shiloh, a town in the tribe of Ephraim, located in the hills to the north of Beth-el. For many years the people of Israel made their way to Shiloh to celebrate the Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. There are many precious Biblical scenes associated at Shiloh. It was here that Hannah prayed for a son. Through the narrow valley Eli, with trembling lips and a fearful heart saw the Ark carried out one fatal day on the shoulders of his sons Hophni and Phinehas. God's judgment fell upon Israel through the Philistines. Both sons of Eli were killed, and the ark was captured. And finally, it was at Shiloh that a broken hearted mother died and left the name of Ichabod for the infant that opened his eyes only to see the glory of God departing from Israel.

The Church Gathered

When the saints gathered yearly in Shiloh during the days of Joshua, they did so to celebrate the glory and goodness of God. At each gathering a spiritual legacy was remembered, friendships were renewed and stories would be told to strengthen the faith of all. The divine summary of these events is stated. “There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel and it came to pass” (Joshua 21:45).

Danger with the Disruption of Fellowship

The unity of the Twelve Tribes was jeopardized once during the lifetime of Joshua when it seemed that a rival altar was going to be established on the eastern bank of the Jordan by the tribes that had remained there. The majority of Israelites feared that a rival establishment to worship in Shiloh was being offered, but that was not the case. The report was returned that the new altar was simply a memorial to God’s great goodness to the eastern tribes as God had been faithful to the rest of the nation. When the explanation was given and accepted, harmony was restored (Joshua 22:11-30).

The Death of Joshua

When Joshua knew he was going to die he called for the leaders of all the tribes at Shechem and delivered unto them a final message (Joshua 23:1-2). Knowing that he was going “the way of all the earth” (Joshua 23:14) Joshua pleaded with the people to be faithful to the Lord and never forsake Him. Such an appeal was needed because Joshua knew how emotional and unstable the Israelites were. He wanted them to make a vow and keep it. To help the people remember their vow a great stone was set up under an oak as a perpetual witness of an oath. Then with his work being done, the Conqueror of Palestine died at the age of one hundred and ten (Joshua 24:29). He was buried with his fathers in Mount Ephraim.
Joshua and Jesus

In the person of Joshua is a type of Christ. His name in Hebrew is equivalent to Jesus in Greek. *Hebrews 4:8* “For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he [God] not afterward have spoken of another day.” Joshua was a mixture of courage and gentleness. He was bold as a lion and yet gentle as a lamb. Christ is both the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) and the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:36). It was the honor of Joshua to guide his people to a place of rest and thus foreshadow Christ who guides His people to that rest which remaineth to the people of God (Hebrews 4:9).

The Vindication of Divine Justice

The taking of the land from the Canaanites and giving it to the Hebrews was done in a severe manner but the judgment of God was just. The Amorites had saturated themselves with sin so that their iniquity was full (Genesis 15:16). There is a principle which individuals and nations must learn from history which is this: in the divine economy sin has a saturation point. The mercy of God is designed to lead to repentance (Romans 2:4).

However, if the goodness of God is spurned the judgment of God will come. The ensuing judgment will be justified. The Hebrews were simply God’s instruments in executing judgment just as the waters of the flood and the fire and brimstone which rained from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah had been justified.
A Vacuum of Vital Leadership

With the death of Joshua the children of Israel experienced a period of uncertainty with regard to national security. People wanted to know who was to lead the fight against the Canaanites. Wisely did they inquire of the Lord what His will might be in the matter. Judges 1:1 1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? The divine promise is that if anyone lacks wisdom he can ask of God who will give divine direction. James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The Rise of Judah

It was the will of God that the tribe of Judah take the leadership position in the matter of national security and go forth to battle the Canaanites. Obedient to the known will of the Lord the men of Judah did not shrink from performing their duty nor did they feel they had to bear the burden of military leadership alone. Appealing to the tribe of Simeon this band of brothers went forth to victory over the Canaanites and the Perizzites. God gave them the victory as they slew in the town of Bezek ten thousand men (Judges 1:4). It was a great victory indeed marred momentarily by the escaping from the sword of justice the leader of the opposing army, Adoni-bezek.

A Great Undergirding Principle

When Adoni-bezek fled he was pursued and captured. In being captured Bezek was tortured. His thumbs and great toes were cut off. While it was painful it was also just as Adoni-bezek admitted. Judges 1:7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings [70 kings], having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. In the moral universe which God has ordained one of the great under girding principles is that what is sown is reaped. Proverbs 22:8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail. Galatians 6:7-8 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
A War and a Wedding

Having fought successfully against the Canaanites the children of the tribe of Judah set forth on another military campaign against their enemies that dwelt in Hebron where they slew Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai (Judges 1:10). From there the battle scene moved to the city of Debir, formerly known as Kirjath-sepher. It was at Debir the old warrior Caleb promised one of his daughters in marriage to any brave soldier who could lead in the conquest of the city. A capable soldier named Othniel took up the challenge and sought the reward. In his endeavor he was successful. The fortress Debir fell and Achsah was given to Othniel in marriage.

No Ordinary Woman

It was no ordinary woman whom Othniel received in marriage for Achsah had tremendous business acumen. Achsah compelled Othniel to ask of her father a piece of real estate (Judges 1:14). Caleb honored the request and he gave to her “the upper springs and the nether springs” (Judges 1:15). He gave to his daughter springs of living water. In like manner God the Father will give good gifts to His children. He will give the Spring of Living Water to all that are thirsty.

On the March

From the city of Debir the military marched on to destroy the Canaanite fortress of Hormah. It was a terrible time of death, blood and human carnage. But the dark deed needed to be done so that other victories could follow as the army marched on to take Gaza (Judges 1:18), Askelon and Ekron. Spiritually, the Christian must move against each and every enemy of the soul and destroy it without mercy. Then the divine conquest of the soul must march on until every darling Canaanite stronghold of the soul is conquered and every soldier of sin is slain – anger, lust, greed, bitterness and hatred.

A Difficult Place to Conquer

In only one area did the children of Israel not fully defeat their enemy. The inhabitants of a particular valley were not defeated because they had “chariots of iron” (Judges 1:19). The chariots of iron are a fitting description of the enemies of the soul which are hard to conquer in the heart of the Christian. Despite many spiritual victories elsewhere there are chariots of iron that seem unconquerable. The temptation comes to simply let them live. Let those sins as strong as chariots of iron live unchallenged and undefeated by learning to co-exist with them. That is the temptation.

The Counter Attack

But the problem is the inhabitants with the chariots of iron will launch a counter-offensive to reclaim lost territory and drive the foreign invaders away. The conflict will be unto death. If unmortified the counter attack of the enemy will grow in strength as new allies of evil are found. Those in the valley who had chariots of iron were not defeated nor did the children of Benjamin drive out the Jebusites (Judges 1:21).
Lesser Conquests Equals More Enemies

When the tide of battle turns in the heart of the Christian so that one sin after another is not battled and conquered the enemy finds it has a stronghold which can be exploited. From this vantage point new conquests can be made. In the body life of the children of Israel one spiritual victory after another gave way to one spiritual defeat after another. First Judah failed to conquer the valley because of the chariots. Then the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites from the city of Jerusalem. Next, the tribe of Joseph failed to destroy all within the city of Bethel. “Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land” (Judges 1:27).

An Opportunity Lost Forever

“And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out “(Judges 1:28). The children of Israel could have been more than conquerors through Christ but they failed to destroy their enemies. One tribe after another made either a political alliance with the enemy, showed unfounded mercy to the inhabitants or simply failed to engage the enemy. Before long the Canaanites had not just a stronghold but the force of strength to dictate and determine the behavior of the Hebrews (Judges 1:34). In like manner sin can reconquer the soul to such an extent it forces the Christian to obey. In John 8:34 Jesus told His disciples, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” The tribes of Israel committed sin in not destroying the inhabitants of the land and so they became the servants of the same.

Breaking the Bands of Bondage

No matter how often the Lord gives a message it seems that He has to repeat it time and again. Going from Gilgal to Bochim the Angel of the Lord reminded the people of Israel of His covenant promise which He vowed never to break (Judges 2:1). God is more faithful to His people than they are to Him. One reason why people are not faithful to God is they fail to defeat His enemies. They disobey His voice and known will without excuse and enter into a league with the inhabitants of the land (Judges 1:2). As a form of divine discipline the Lord refused to deliver His people from the bondage they were in for a long period of time. “Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you” (Judges 2:3). Sometimes Christians wonder why they do not find spiritual freedom. The answer in part is a divine judgment has been passed. The very bondage and life of defeat is designed to produce repentance. “And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim [weepers]: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD” (Judges 2:4-5).
Living for the Lord

After a period of bondage gospel obedience is longed for and when the chance is given to be better, when the opportunity comes to enjoy a victorious Christian life and defeat one’s enemies, the experience is more glorious. Judges 2:6-7 “And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.” Pray for spiritual victory.

The Death of a Saint

Having been faithful to God in the midst of an unbelieving generation, having been a warrior for a just cause, having won great victories and having defeated his enemies and the enemies of the Lord, Joshua, “the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old” (Judges 2:8). There is great comfort in old age provided that a life has been lived righteously. The objective is to live a life of no regrets.

The Next Generation

With the death of Joshua it seemed that a gospel light went out in Israel for “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal [lit. lord, possessor] and Ashtaroth [lit. to be fertile]” (Judges 2:11-13). When individuals do not know God they will turn to the false gods of this world, the gods of fleshly lusts and illicit passions. Licentious worship was conducted in honor of Ashtaroth.

Signs of Sovereign Judgment

In holy anger God judges individuals by delivering them into the hands of their spoilers (Judges 2:14). In spiritual terms this means that the lustful person will become addicted to pornography, the drinking individual will become an alcoholic and the eating person who eats to excess will become a glutton. In the book of the Revelation we read of God’s final judgment. Revelation 22:11 “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” One facet of hell is to be abandoned by God to indulge forever a particular sin with no satisfaction. A second form of divine judgment upon sin is spiritual helplessness in overcoming it.

Mercy in the Midst of Misery

Though the way of the transgressor is hard God has been pleased to deliver His people from their oppressors as per Judges 2:16 “Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.”
Here is great mercy in the midst of great misery. The hearts of the people are encouraged. Every Christian who struggles with besetting sin can still hope that God will send a Righteous Judge and divine Deliverer to rescue the soul from the depths of sin.

The Strength of Sin

Unfortunately the strength of sin can bind a soul so that despite some spiritual victories there is a return to evil. “And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way” ( Judges 2:19). The return to evil brought forth the anger of the Lord. The Lord allowed Israel’s traditional enemies to torment the nation in order to test the hearts of the people (Judges 2:22). Sometimes Christians wonder why God allows compelling sins to be endured in the heart. And the Biblical answer is that the Lord is testing His people. The answer of ultimate longing and loyalty will come when the last self-help book is read, the last preacher is heard, the last human counsel is followed, the last promise of self-reform is made and the last lie of Satan is believed. Then and only then will the heart be in a position to cry out in sincerity, “Lord, save me! I perish!” Only when self is saturated with sin and wants to be different and wants God to make that difference can the heart be tested for approval.

Sensual Sins of the Saints

One way Satan has found to do much harm to the church is through sexual sins. The eyes can become full of lust and the body can give itself to expressions of unbridled passions. In times of such passion nothing else in the world matters but the moment of pleasure. Those who believe they cannot be tempted with sensual passions should be especially careful lest they be the first to fall. In Judges 3 the story is told how the Enemy of the Church introduced the Hebrews to the daughters of the world of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Judges 3:6 “And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.” The results were predictable. God was soon forgotten. The sexual freedom associated with Baalism was embraced (Judges 3:7).

Othniel, Nephew of Caleb

When the sexual sins of the saints were manifested God moved once more to judge His people. They were taken captive by the king of Mesopotamia (Judges 3:8) until they got weary of their bondage and cried unto the Lord. Because the grace of God cannot be exhausted and because His mercy endures forever the Lord raised up Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. With the Spirit of the Lord upon him Othniel went to war on behalf of God’s people (Judges 3:10) and won the victory. When spiritual victories are won there is peace.

A Lost Peace

If spiritual victories are not protected the peace of the soul will be lost. After forty years Israel stopped guarding their hearts. A new generation arose that was willing to do evil in the sight of the Lord and to receive the punishment of the same. As in previous times the Lord delivered His people into the hands of their enemies.
“So the children of Israel served Eglon the King of Moab eighteen years” (Judges 3:14). Eighteen years is a long time to be in spiritual bondage. Some have been in spiritual bondage for many years beyond that especially when that bondage is needless. It is instructive to notice that as soon as God’s people sincerely cry out to Him for deliverance from a state of bondage He always moves to deliver them. “But when the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer” (Judges 3:15). God is faithful. He will find a way to bring His people from bondage.

A Determined Deliverer

In the person of Ehud, the son of Gera, a left-handed Benjamite (Judges 3:15) God was pleased to deliver the children of Israel. While there are some disturbing elements to the narrative of how Ehud murdered Eglon, the king of the oppressive Moabites, the principle is established that evil must be dealt with in a ruthless manner (Judges 3:16-30). Spiritually, not only must Sin as a ruling principle personified be slain like Eglon but the offspring of evil must be put to death as well. Sin produces militant children of vile corruptions which must also be slain (Judges 3:29). Slay them the people of God must so that none escapes to reproduce. When Sin and the offspring of Sin are slain there will be rest for a great period of time. After the death of Eglon Israel enjoyed peace for sixty years (Judges 3:30).

Evil Revitalized

Only in eternity in heaven will the people of God enjoy an eternal rest. In time the Enemy of the soul may depart for a season as he did following the temptation of Christ but then he returns. Despite having peace for sixty years, Israel needed, and found, a new deliverer in the person of “Shamgar the son of Anath who slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad” (Judges 3:31). After Shamgar the people turned to “Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth” and Barak (Judges 4:1-9). Together these two waged war on Sisera, the captain of a king named Jabin who possessed chariots and a large standing army. But all that did not matter to the eye of faith that saw the promises of God (Judges 4:7). Though the Enemy comes to the Christian with a multitude of temptations to take the heart captive the believer has a triune defense in the Person of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. As Sisera met his match on the bloody field of battle (Judges 4: so Satan met his match at the bloody cross of Calvary. As a simple woman took a tent peg and drove it through the head of Sisera so the weakest Christian can resist the devil and make him flee (James 4:7). Such is the surprising victory over evil.

Sing a Song of Praise

When the Lord gives victory over the Enemy there should be a song of praise for every believer is commanded to be “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). When Deborah and Barak knew they had conquered Sisera they praised the Lord for avenging His people and invited others to the grand celebration (Judges 5:1-2). In singing praise to the Lord both Deborah and Barak were careful that He received the glory for the great conquest. “Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. 5. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel” (Judges 4:5). “To God be the glory”
Spiritual Defeat Yet Again

When Jesus taught Peter to forgive seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22) He was establishing a principle of showing extensive grace reflecting the heart of God the Father. Seven times it is said in the book of the Judges, “the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord” (Judges 2:11; 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). Each time God’s grace was extended to His people. While grace is not cheap it is extensive lest all men be consumed in a moment of divine justice and wrath. In his wrath God remembers to show grace and so we read that after the Midianites had spoiled the Israelites (Judges 6:1-7) God moved to avenge His people. The unlikely instrument of divine deliverance would be a man named Gideon.

The Making of a Champion

To emphasize His own involvement in the process of delivering the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites God called into service a humble man of a poor family in the tribe of Manasseh. The importance of this call to service is that the promotion came from the Lord. There is a great principle to observe: Christian, if the Lord does not promote you, you are not promoted. If God has set His seal of approval upon your advancement then He will move heaven and earth to accomplish His will through His chosen vessel. Gideon was a chosen vessel (Judges 6:14).

Fleshly Faith

Unfortunately Gideon needed fleshly convincing that God had called him to lead the nation of Israel to victory and so he asked for a sign (Judges 6:17). A sign was given by the Angel of the Lord who touched with the tip of His staff a meal offering and consumed it in a moment and then vanished out of sight (Judges 6:21-22). Suddenly Gideon knew he had been in the presence of the Lord and built an altar and called it Jehovah-shalom, the LORD is peace. Peace comes to the heart that believes in God. Peace comes to the mind that is stayed upon Jehovah. Peace comes when there is sweet communion with the Lord.

Sanctification of the Soul

When a person begins to walk with God they will be commanded to do some things which are difficult but important. Gideon was told to tear down the altar of Baal. He was to destroy not just any altar but the altar that his father had built. While young people are commanded to be obedient to their parents and to honor them, grown children have a responsibility to obey the Lord even to the point of challenging the wickedness of other family members including mother and father. Jesus taught that a man’s enemies would be of his own household. “And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt 10:36-39). In gospel obedience Gideon “took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him” (Judges 6:27). Though he was afraid Gideon obeyed the Lord.
Consequences of Gospel Obedience

When a person begins to obey the Lord there are always consequences. Some of the consequences are good while others are more challenging. The results of Gideon’s destruction of the altar of Babel was to bring repentance to his father and a hostile reaction from the men of Ophrah. When the men of the city realized their religious images had been destroyed under the cover of darkness they were furious. Going to the home of Joash, the father of Gideon they demanded his son with the intent to kill him. But Joash, now in fellowship with God defended the actions of Gideon with a series of penetrating questions designed to arrest the conscious while mocking Baal (Judges 6:31).

The Courage of Conviction

It is a simple truth that success encourages the heart. Having met the Lord face to face, having engaged in gospel obedience the heart of Gideon was encouraged to blow a trumpet calling the men of Israel to battle. While warfare may be intrinsically evil God is sovereign over that too and so we read “the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon” (Judges 6:34). When a man is Spirit filled and divinely directed there will be a positive response from the people and so we read the men of the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali “came up to meet him” (Judges 6:35).

The Fleece and Faith

Though fortified with a large standing army and ready for battle the faith of Gideon suddenly failed. Clothing his concerns with religious rhetoric Gideon asked the Lord for yet another sign that he would save Israel by his hand. Putting a fleece out Gideon asked the Lord to work a miracle. He wanted God to make the fleece wet and the ground around it dry. The request was granted. But instead of producing great faith it only served to increase Gideon’s doubt to the point he asked for another miracle. The fleece was to be dry in the morning and the ground was to be wet. “And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground” (Judges 6:40).

A Legitimate Inquiry

Should Christians, in the spirit of Gideon, lay out fleeces before the Lord? Some Christian teachers feel strongly that Gideon did not live by faith but by sight and so should be condemned in his attitude and actions. In defense of Gideon and this practice consider the following.

- The request of Gideon does not seem to have displeased the Lord. The Lord honored both requests for a sign without a word of reproach.

- Sometimes the Lord commands a person to ask for a sign and is angry when there is no response. Such was the situation with King Ahaz, the 12th king of Israel (735-715 BC).
“Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 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” (Isaiah 7:10-14).

- When a sign is demanded in unbelief in order to prove the veracity of God then such a demand is evil and wicked. Jesus said to people of this persuasion, “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 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” (Matthew 12:38, 39).

- The Lord knows that His children are weak. God knows the heart is fearful and needs constant reassurance just as children need to be told often they are loved and wanted. Therefore, it is not always wrong to lay out the fleece.

- The laying of a fleece should not be a trivial matter for selfish entertainment. But there are great moments in life when the heart needs to be reassured the will of God is about to be done. Gideon’s actions were rooted in faith for twice he reminds God of His promise, “As thou has said” (Judges 6:36, 37). The Bible teaches “without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Hebrews 11:6).

- When laying out his fleece Gideon did not ask God for something easy but for something hard. This too is according to divine invitation. “I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” (Psalm 81:10).

The Singleness of God’s Glory

With assurance of victory well established according to promise Gideon was now willing to march against the Midianites. But before military action could be taken God intervened to tell Gideon his army was much too large. Men would have to be released from their commitment to combat duty lest the coming victory be seen as a victory of the flesh and not of God. In great mercy but also to protect His glory the Lord told Gideon to dismiss anyone who was afraid and did not want to go into battle. Such people could return home without shame and without loss of honor. Twenty-two thousand people took advantage of this divine amnesty (Judges 7:3). Ten thousand soldiers remained.

Prepared for Battle

But again that was too many. More soldiers had to be eliminated and so Gideon was told to take the army down to the water. He was to observe those who cupped their hand into the water and drank from their hands as opposed to those who got down on their knees to drink (Judges 7:5-7). By this simple observation the best warriors were recognized because the ones who cupped the water to their lips were alert. They were not as vulnerable as those who laid down to drink thereby exposing themselves to grave danger and not being able to use their weapons quickly or effectively.
The Dream of a Dreamer

Surrounded with only three hundred men of an initial force of thirty two thousand the heart of Gideon grew fearful again. Such is human experience that Christians sometimes show great faith and sometimes the flesh takes over and we walk by sight again and so need reassurance. To comfort Gideon’s heart God sent him to walk in the camp of the enemy in order to overhear the dream of a dreamer. “And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. 14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host” (Judges 7:13-14).

A Great Victory

Encouraged by what he heard Gideon was ready to move immediately and attack the enemy. On a given single three hundred men holding clay pots, waved their lamps in the darkness and uttered a shout which created terror and then panic among their foes. The Arab host was filled with panic and in their confusion began to kill one another. In the morning mist the remaining Midianites fled toward the Jordan trying to escape to their own country on the other side. But that was not going to happen for Gideon had told the men of the tribe of Ephraim to seize the fords of the river and cut off the retreat.

Death to the Enemy

Caught between two forces the Midianites were slaughtered at a second battle at the ford of Beth-barah, when Oreb and Zeeb, “the Raven” and “the Wolf”, two minor warlords of the Midianites were killed. Their heads were cut off and brought to Gideon (Judges 7: 24-25). The two greater warlords, Zebah and Zalmunna, did manage to cross the river with fifteen thousand men but escape from God’s judgment they could not. Fainting yet pursuing, Gideon and his small army chased the larger Midian force. With dauntless courage and abiding bravery the Three Hundred Champions of Grace penetrated far into the territory of the enemy. In time they were able to locate and attack the Midianites and won the victory as they slew the fugitive warlords (Judges 8:21).

The Administration of Justice

In the course of pursuing the Midianites Gideon and his small band of brothers had been refused aid by their own countrymen as they passed through Succoth and Penuel, towns of Gilead. No doubt the citizens of the towns believed if they aided Gideon the Midianites would return and punish them. The people never expected Gideon to accomplish what he did. Now they were to be the objects of a just judgment. Keeping his promise Gideon destroyed the tower of Penuel (Judges 8:9, 17) and humiliated the princes of Succoth by beating them with thorny branches of the acacia groves of their valley (Judges 8:7, 16).
Memories of Mighty Men

The “day of Midian” became a day of memory in the history of Israel. Centuries passed but the people of God never forgot what the Lord did on behalf of His own during the dark days of the judges. David spoke of the Midianites as did Isaiah the prophet.

- **Psalms 83:9** Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: 10 Which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth. 11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna:

- **Isaiah 9:4** For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

- **Isaiah 10:26** And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

Wanting to reward Gideon for his leadership the people of Israel invited him to be their king but he wisely refused (Judges 8:22, 23). God alone should be the King of His people. Nevertheless, he would for forty years act as a judge over them.

The Sin of a Saint

Despite his great faith and great victories on behalf of Israel, Gideon did succumb to sin in that he accepted gold from the defeated Midians with which he made an ephod or priestly robe that he placed in his house. This intrusion into a holy office unauthorized became a snare to him and to the nation and ultimately brought the chastisement of God. There were other sins that Gideon committed such as the multiplication of wives that gave him seventy sons (Judges 8:30). As if this large family was not enough Gideon also had a concubine or mistress that was in Shechem who bore him a son named Abimelech.

The Death of Gideon

When he died Gideon was buried in the sepulcher of Joash his father, in Ophrah [i.e. Ephraim] of the Abi-ezrites a reference to Abiezer (father of help) the second son of Hammoleketh, sister of Gilead and granddaughter of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 7:17-18). He was the founder of the family to which Gideon belonged, and which bore his name (Joshua 17:2; Judges 6:34); before 1170 BC He is elsewhere called Iezer, and his descendants Iezerites (Numbers 26:30). Without the leadership of Gideon and his commanding presence the children of Israel soon turned from the Lord to worship once more after Baalim and made Baal-berith their god. Soon forgotten was the mercy of God in delivering the nation from the hands of their enemy on every side. Soon forgotten was the memory of Gideon and the good he had done for Israel.
The Ambition of Abimelech

Following the death of Gideon, Abimelech, a son by his concubine of the tribe of Ephraim determined to appoint himself king of Israel. Willing to murder sixty nine of his seventy brothers who were of the tribe of Manasseh (Judges 9:5) Abimelech persuaded the men of Shechem to proclaim him king beside the pillar where Joshua had made the people swear they would serve the Lord (Judges 9:6). Only the half-brother Jotham escaped the family massacre. There is no evidence that the Lord approved of the unholy ambition of Abimelech and the results were tragic. At the end of three years civil war broke out between Abimelech and the people of Shechem led by Gaal, the son of Ebed (Judges 9:26). During the civil conflict that followed Abimelech was mortally wounded by a woman who threw a piece of a mill-stone on his head as he was setting fire to the tower of Thebez. Rather than die at the hands of a woman in battle Abimelech demanded his young armourbearer to slay him with the sword “that men say not of me, A woman slew him” (Judges 9:54). The legacy of Abimelech is the story of an unprincipled man who promoted idolatry and so did much harm to himself and his nation. His death was clearly the retribution of a holy Providence for the slaughter of his brothers (Judges 9:56).

Invasion from the East

In the half-century following the death of Abimelech the nation of Israel was again in need of a military deliverer and found one in the person of Tola, the son of Puah from the tribe of Issachar (Judges 10:1). For twenty-three years he judged Israel and then died. He was buried in Shamir.

The Judge Named Jair

Following the death of Tola the nation looked to Jair from Gilead. He judged Israel for twenty-two years. The only distinguishing feature associated with Jair was that he had thirty sons that rode thirty colts. When he died Jair was buried in Camon located on the Plain of Jezreel.

Repetitive Sin

For the sixth out of seven times in the book of the Judges it is recorded the children of Israel “did evil again in the sight of the Lord and served” false gods, the gods Baalim and Ashtaroth along with the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon and the Philistines (Judges 10:6). There is a principle associated with sin. It becomes more and more expansive. The jaws of death and hell open wider to receive all the new souls that are swept up in apostasy. Because God is holy His anger does burn against all unrighteousness and is intensified against the goodness He extends which is designed to lead men to repentance.

Roman 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Those who will not value and embrace the goodness of God will eventually know His hot anger.
Five Phases of Divine Discipline

As a unique nation entrusted with the dissemination of the gospel, Israel was held to a high level of accountability. Because grace always precedes judgment God warned Israel what her fate would be if she failed to live righteously and communicate the gospel to others. Israel would endure Five Phases of discipline, the final one moving her towards total disintegration as a nation.

- The First Phase of Divine Discipline Leviticus 26:14-15 serves as the introduction to the five cycles of discipline. “14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you”. Failure to obey the laws of God due to a fundamental attitude of disrespect brought forth the holy and “hot anger” of the Lord. The First Phase of Divine discipline was to be manifested in five forms.

- Discipline in the form of illness and disease. Consumptive diseases such as cancer, tuberculosis and AIDS are diseases that bring sudden terror at the mere mention of their name when a person is diagnosed with one. Others diseases such as a fever that wastes the eyes drains away the desire to live.

- Discipline in the form of crop destruction.

- Discipline in the form of defeat on the battlefield. Poor leadership, immorality, and cowardice undermine the effectiveness of any military organization leading to defeat in battle to the point that soldiers flee where none pursue.

- Discipline in the form of disrespect for personal dignity. Those in national authority will hold the citizens of the nation in contempt as being inferior individuals. Instead of serving the nation, the leadership will serve itself, and use government resources to benefit themselves as political power is solidified.

- Discipline in the form of sublimation. In the military when the heart is not prepared to fight there is a tendency to run in the day of battle. Outside the military individuals can run away – from reality. Without emotional stability, without a commitment to keep the commandments of the Lord there is a running away in the day of spiritual conflict. A high divorce rate, lack of harmony in the home, church, and work force along with a high drug problem testifies to this flight from reality.
The Second Phase of Divine Discipline. Leviticus 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. This phase is a multiplication of the first phase but intensified sevenfold. In this phase of divine discipline the main economic livelihood of the nation is destroyed.

The Third Phase of Divine Discipline Leviticus 26:21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate. The Third Phase of Divine Discipline multiplies the effects of the second phases by a factor of seven. The Third Phase begins the predominance of the animal kingdom not being able to be subdued or by way of modern analogy the criminal element in society, as the wild animal is a metaphor for crime. In this phase there is a great deal of violence done against children, and against business. Because of the predominance of crime, the roads are deserted, which means there is virtually no commerce.

The Fourth Phase of Divine Discipline Leviticus 26:23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, 24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. This phase multiplies the effects of The Third Phase of Divine Discipline by a factor of seven. This is the phase of civil war or perhaps border wars but not yet final defeat. The revolt of the anti-establishment element in society will enslave the rest of the people of the nation. In the ancient world, a civil war would often begin in the countryside. Outraged citizens would then surround the city or town where the rulers of the nation lived. A siege would ensue and food became scarce. Trapped in close quarters the potential for widespread disease became great. God said all of this would happen. Divine judgment produces desperate times.

The Fifth Phase of Divine Discipline Leviticus 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. 31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. 34 Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths.
As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

This final phase of divine discipline multiplies the effects of the fourth phase by a factor of seven leading to the total destruction of the nation by foreign enemies. In the process of destruction there was to be cannibalism because of food shortages, even cannibalism within the family. There was to be widespread death as people perished at the hands of foreign enemies while participating in their idolatry. Private property would be destroyed along with public projects. The people were told they would be enslaved and deported to foreign countries as slaves. Fear would reside in the hearts of those left behind. For the generation that was the object of this “hot anger” of God there would be no room to repent. It would be too late. A spiritual law is that those who do not repent will find one day they cannot repent. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God who is angry.

A Return to Repentance

Until the Lord administered the Fifth Phase of Divine discipline Israel always had a chance to repent and until 721 BC, did repent in part or as a whole. The nation was not destroyed or fragmented as it would be in 586 BC and in AD 70. The words of Judges 10:15 become almost tender to the heart. “And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.” After years of being stubborn in sin and willful in their ways the people of Israel grew weary with the wages of their sin and they wanted to be different. They had served other gods. Time after time God had delivered them from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines (Judges 10:11) to no avail. The Israelites turned to serve other gods. Finally, despite token acts of repentance the Lord said, “I will deliver you no more. You can stay in your state of bondage. Let your false gods supply your needs, give you comfort and enter into fellowship with you” (Judges 10:13, 14). Suddenly the children of Israel realized they had gone too far. They had provoked the Holy One of Israel not only to wrath but to abandon them. Their hearts had become so calloused and gospel hardened that the goodness of God designed to lead them to repentance only confirmed them in evil. Nevertheless, the people of Israel were wise enough not to stop pleading. Once more they confessed they had sinned. Beyond that Israel moved to put away the strange gods while entering into a state of gospel obedience. The desired effect was achieved. The God of great mercy was moved “and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel” (Judges 10:16).
The Second Confession

By way of personal application within the church of the New Testament era are individuals who have acted like Israel of old. Their hearts have turned from the living and true God time after time. They have served other gods—the god of money, the god of greed, the god of power, the god of foolish pleasure, the god of sexual passion. Not liking the consequences of their actions—physical exhaustion, indebtedness, ruined friendships, wasted hours and bondage to sensual temptation followed by a guilty conscience, dulled emotions, and a hardness of heart—the soul begins to call upon God only to discover the heavens are as brass and there is no spiritual commune that is sweet or intimate. In such a state some souls try to draw near to God but they know, and He knows, their hearts are far from Him. Is there any hope? Have they been given over to a reprobate mind? Has the judgment of God passed so that it is said, "I will deliver you no more." If so, what can be done? The pattern is found in Israel of old.

First, there must be a second confession acknowledging afresh all that the Lord charges is true.

Second, there must be total surrender to the just judgment of God.

Third, there must be a renewed pleading that whatever form of judgment God’s anger takes, the Arch Enemy will not be victorious.

Finally, there can be new acts of gospel obedience whereby the gods are destroyed that have been loved and worshipped. God will eventually destroy His rivals, but He will first destroy those who turned to His rivals. When these steps are taken it may be that God will yet have mercy and remember the misery of His people. Misery is a good word to describe the Christian who struggles with secret sins of a repetitive nature. Spiritual vitality flees and the soul is left in a cold dark state of emotional deadness and mental exhaustion.

The Judge Jephthah

From the tribe of Manasseh and the family of Gilead a man arose to judge Israel (c. 1105 – 1099 BC) named Jephthah. Though deemed illegitimate in the eyes of the world (Judges 11:1-2) he was highly esteemed in the eyes of God. Because Jephthah was a man of courage and faith his name became listed in Faith’s Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11:32). Like Gideon, Jephthah had to endure the petty criticism from the tribe of Ephraim whose warriors were offended for not having been called forth for battle against the children of Ammon (Judges 12:1).

Making Rash Vows

Having justified making war with the citizens of Ammon (Judges 11:12-27) Jephthah made a very foolish vow unto the Lord. It was a vow of offering a human sacrifice. “And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering” (Judges 11:30-31). As tragic as the vow was, even more horrific is the strong implication that he carried out his vow and offered his own daughter as a burnt offering (Judges 11:34-40; see Doctrine of the Vow).
Brother against Brother

Despite the success of Jephthah against the Ammonites civil war broke out among the Israelites because the men of Ephraim felt they had been shamed by not being invited to take part in the battle. When individuals feel publicly humiliated there is deep seated resentment which turns into anger and then is translated into vindictiveness. With the passing of time this deep hostility must find an expression and does in lashing out at the source of perceived injustice. Jephthah found himself in a civil war with the men of Ephraim even though the accusations against him were false. He had indeed invited the men of Ephraim to join in the great cause but they refused him ( Judges 11:2). When Jephthah unilaterally defended himself and his family the Lord gave the victory ( Judges 11:3). Why should the men of Ephraim be unhappy with that? The accusations and the attacks on Jephthah were unjustified.

Jephthah and Jesus

By being the object of unjust accusation and unnecessary hostility whereby people wanted to destroy his comfort and take his life ( Judges 11:1) Jephthah is like Jesus. The Lord was also accused falsely and treated shamelessly, as shall every Christian if they are to be like the Master. Jesus said, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” ( Matt 5:11-12).

A Tangled Tongue

Unable to stop people from trying to hurt him Jephthah went to battle with the men of Ephraim. He had as his ally the men of Gilead who proved to be effective warriors. Taking control of the Jordan the men of Gilead cut off the escape route of the Ephraimites. The enemy could be detected by their inability to pronounce the word Shibboleth [lit. stream] saying only, “Sibboleth”. Before the civil war ended forty two thousand people had died needlessly. Tragedy always results when bitterness in the heart is unresolved. Following the final battle Jephthah judged Israel for six years before he died.

Many Children for Ibzan

Following Jephthah’s death one of his sons name Ibzan arose to judge Israel for seven years. In his memorial it was noted that he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, which was a record of sorts even among ancient tribal families of large numbers. Ibzan was buried in Bethlehem ( Judges 12:8-10).

Obscure Judges of Israel

The history of Israel moves rapidly over the next few years. After the death of Ibzan came Elon, a Zebulonite who judged Israel for ten years. Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite (lit. height, summit located in the land of Ephraim, on the mountains of the Amalekites) in turn followed him. Abdon was distinguished in that he owned 70 ass colts which were rode by his forty sons and thirty nephews. He judged Israel for eight years.
Invasion from the Southwest

As the Israelites knew invasion from the north and the east, so they knew trouble from the southwest for the Philistines came to oppress the people. The Philistines came because the way of transgression is hard. God will judge His people. He will cause them to cry out for forgiveness and mercy. When the Philistines found themselves in a position of power they deprived the people of warlike weapons. Even a forge for sharpening farm tools was not allowed. Nevertheless, the Lord knows how to deliver His people from their bondage. A man named Shamgar arose to lead the people to a great victory. He personally killed six hundred of the enemy with nothing more than an ox-goad (Judges 5:6).

The Story of Samson

Nevertheless, despite the goodness of God, by degrees the hearts of the children of Israel moved away from the Lord once more, which resulted in divine discipline. But at last the prospect of still another deliverer emerged in the person of Samson. His story is compelling. Born of pious parents living in Zorah in the tribe of Dan, Samson was a unique child. For one thing he was a Nazarite, which means he had been separated unto God. Second, he had unusual strength (Judges 13:2-7). The strength of Samson became legendary in his own time. It was the source of great admiration but also terror as he tore a young lion to pieces, killed thirty men of Askelon, used three hundred foxes to set fire to the corn of the Philistines, slew a thousand men at Enhakkore with the jawbone of an ass and carried the gates of Gaza up to a hill near Hebron. In the end the strength of Samson brought his death when he pulled down the temple housing the lords of the Philistines (Judges 15:1-16:31).

Passion without Purity

While Samson is presented as a symbol of the Hebrew nation and a type of the great Deliverer who would give his life for his people he is also presented unlike Christ as a great sinner in need of divine grace and mercy. In particular Samson allowed his great sexual passion to overrule his spiritual judgment. In his youth he married a daughter of the Philistines and after her death another Philistine woman captured his heart and ruined his soul, not for eternity but for useful service in time (Judges 16:6-20). Following his conversion the apostle Paul said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor 9:27). Job wrote, “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1). Had Samson kept his body sexually pure, had he made a covenant with his eyes, had he prayed and buffeted his body to bring it under control then perhaps his story might have ended differently. His tragic end is just another example to the saints in general and to young people in particular to be very careful with natural passions “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim 4:12).
Life without Law

In the final chapters of Judges (17-21), there is a recurring theme of life without law. Judges 17:6 says, “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (cf. Judges 21:25). Government is designed by God to be a source of blessing and bring stability to a nation. Therefore, prayers and intercessions and the giving of thanks should be made for kings and all in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2). “Nothing contributes more, under God, to the support of religion in the world, than the due administration of those two great ordinances, magistracy and ministry” (Matthew Henry).

Because there was no centralized authority a spirit of lawlessness abounded. A man from Ephraim whose name was Micah, stole money from his mother and took it upon himself to make an ephod, a holy garment and a molten image of God in violation of the second commandment while consecrating one of his sons, who became a priest (Judges 17:1-6). To his credit Micah did restore the money to his mother after he heard she had cursed the one who stole it. Matthew Henry notes, “It is best not to do evil, but it is next best, when it is done, to undo it again by repentance, confession, and restitution. Let children be afraid of having the prayers of their parents against them; for, though the curse causeless shall not come, yet that which is justly deserved may be justly feared, even though it was passionately and indecently uttered.”

The Languishing Levite

An interesting story is told in connection with Micah. It is the story of the languishing Levite. As the narrative unfolds, a young man from Bethlehem-Judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite (Judges 17:7) came to Mount Ephraim and to the house of Micah. The Levite was displaced, for the cities the law gave to the priests of God had not been protected. As a result the ministers of the gospel were forced to relocate and wander from place to place. “Israel's forsaking God began with forsaking the Levites, which therefore they are warned against, Deuteronomy 12:19. It is a sign religion is going to decay when good ministers are neglected and at a loss for a livelihood” (Matthew Henry).

The Selling of One’s Soul

While good ministers are worthy of support, some will sell their soul for personal security. This the Languishing Levite did. Promised a small salary, but with food, housing and clothing the Levite accepted the terms and stayed in the home of Micah (Judges 17:10). Now that he was duly bought and paid for Micah took it upon himself to consecrate the Levite, though he had no biblical warrant to do so. The Levite would prove to be nothing but trouble. As soon as the presence of the Levite and word of the riches Micah had obtained spread, a movement was made by men from the tribe of Dan to capture both. The Levite was more than willing to help rob Micah (Judges 18:1-21).
Because there was no King

A second event to crystallize the lawless condition of the Hebrews during this time of their history was the Levite who took a concubine out of Bethlehem-Judah (Judges 19:1). Dedicated to a life of holiness the Levite had no business with a concubine. The divine design is one man for one woman. Genesis 2:24 says, Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 1 Corinthians 7:2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife [not wives], and let every woman have her own husband.

The Concept of the Concubine

1. During the Old Testament economy a concubine was a female slave or mistress with whom a man was socially and lawfully permitted to have sexual intercourse.

2. The Mosaic Law protected concubines, so they could not be sold if they were no longer pleasing to the man. The Law of Moses also recognized the rights of concubines and guarded them from various forms of abuse and injustice.

   - Exodus 21:7-11 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. 8 If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. 11 And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

   - Deuteronomy 21:10-14 When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, 11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; 12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

3. The first mention of a concubine occurs in Genesis 22:24 where Reumah is described as the concubine of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

   - Genesis 22:24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

4. To their eternal shame and temporal regret many of the saints in the Old Testament had female slaves.
Abraham. Genesis 25:6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

Jacob. Genesis 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Eliphaz. Genesis 36:12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

Gideon. Judges 8:31 And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Saul. 2 Samuel 3:7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

5. On the basis of these saints having concubines Joseph Smith (1805-1844) instituted the practice of polygamy among the Mormons basing the wicked institution on the doctrine of celestial marriages.

Special Note.

While a Mormon would be excommunicated for practicing polygamy today, the command to engage in plural marriage is still included in modern editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 132:4 declares: “For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.”

According to the introduction to volume 5 of the Documentary History of the Church (DHC), the revelation was written down in order to convince Smith's wife, Emma, of its authenticity. When exactly this “revelation” came to Joseph Smith is somewhat confusing. According to the same volume (5:501), Joseph Smith was given this revelation on July 12, 1843. However, the heading of section 132 states it was only recorded on that date for, “this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831.” It would seem that the latter would be more correct since D&C 132:52 records a warning to Smith's wife, Emma, to “receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph.”

Emma never liked the idea of polygamy, and despite a warning in verse 54 saying she would be destroyed if she did “not abide this commandment,” she lived a full life. Her husband, on the other hand, would be dead within a year.
6. Following the social practice of her day, Sarai gave Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, to Abram as a concubine so he could father children by her (Genesis 16:2-3). This was not in accord to the known will of God (cf. Genesis 12:7). The consequences of this sinful act are still reverberating down through the centuries to the present hour in the form of the Israeli and Arab conflict.

7. By the time of the monarchy in Israel, the practice of keeping concubines apparently was reserved for the kings only. Solomon is especially remembered for his many concubines. 1 Kings 11:3 And he [Solomon] had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

8. Many of the concubines were foreign women. They successfully led Solomon to his spiritual downfall, because they brought their pagan religions, which introduced idolatry into the land.

- 1 Kings 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. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11 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.
The Slaughter of a Sinful Woman

Having taken a concubine, the Levite was determined to love her faithfully and make her a better woman. So great was the love of the Levite that even when the woman played the harlot and then left for her own home she was pursued. There is a type of love that can overlook many transgressions (Judges 19:1-3). But human love cannot conquer all forms of defilement for when the concubine was thoroughly soiled (Judges 19:5-29) the Levite took her home and slaughtered her by cutting her into twelve pieces, and then sent her remains throughout Israel (Judges 19:29-30).

Consideration of a Great Crime

The last sentence of Judges 19:29 invites the reader to “consider of it, take advice and speak your minds.” Accepting this word of exhortation, Matthew Henry observes that the judgment upon the woman by the sons of Belial though harsh was just. “Her punishment answered her sin. Lust was her sin, and lust was her punishment. By the Law of Moses she was to have been put to death for her adultery. She escaped that punishment from men, yet vengeance pursued her; for, if there was no king in Israel, yet there was a God in Israel, a God that judgeth in the earth. We must not think it enough to make our peace with men, whom by our sins we have wronged, but are concerned, by repentance and faith, to make our peace with God, who sees not as men see, nor makes so light of sin as men often do. The justice of God in this matter does not at all extenuate the horrid wickedness of these men of Gibeah, than which nothing could be more barbarous and inhuman.”

Days of Vengeance

Angered at what had been done to the Levite’s wife and alarmed at the implication the cutting of the body-entailed, civil war came to the Israelites. The men of Benjamin were forced to fight all the other tribes of Israel (Judges 20:12). The battles raged. The blood flowed. The slaughter became great. In the end 26,600 Benjamites died (Judges 20:46-48) and forty thousand from the other tribes.

A Just War

Was it right for the nation of Israel to avenge the death of the unfaithful concubine? When should a nation go to war or engage in a civil conflict? Is it ever right for a Christian to take part in the destruction of property and lives? These are not easy questions to answer and should be considered carefully (Doctrine of War).

A Practical Problem

There is no question but warfare brings violence and death to a nation. Warfare in its rawest form is not glorious but gruesome. Warfare leaves behind a ravaged economy and disrupts society. Children are left without parents. Home and property is destroyed. And there are fewer marriages to take place. Sometimes there is deep regret for all the hostility and passion spent (Judges 21:1-3, 6). Sometimes vows made in emotional madness are grieved over. Such was the situation in Israel following the civil war.
The men of Israel had vowed they would not marry anyone from the tribe of Benjamin. But then events changed. The hearts of individuals softened and the vow that had been made was wept over. But what could be done?

The Dance of Delight

An unknown voice spoke and an idea was acted upon as to how to obtain wives. In the end 400 virgins not slaughtered at Jabesh-gilead were found to be able to marry the 200 Benjamites that were left. At the Feast of the Tabernacles held yearly at Shiloh, when the virgins came out to dance a liturgical dance unto the Lord they were swept away by Benjamite men lying in wait. “And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them” (Judges 21:23).
Difficult Days

The story of Ruth is one of the great stories in human history. The drama begins with a famine in the land of Palestine. No matter how hard the people worked, the parched earth would not yield enough food to feed the hungry. During this difficult period, a Bethlehem citizen named Elimelech (God is my King), his wife Naomi (the sweet one), and their two sons Mahlon (sickly) and Chilion (pinning) decided to leave the land and find refuge in Moab, (lit. from father) located in the territory east of the Dead Sea. Sharply rising hills comprise some of its rugged terrain. From Mt. Nebo in the Abarim range of Moab, Moses was permitted to view the Promised Land that he had been forbidden to enter because of his sin. Elimelech thought there would be work and food in the land of Moab.

Sorrow upon Sorrow

However, once in the land, more tragedy struck. Elimelech died suddenly and without warning. Naomi was left with her two sons and a depressing future (Ruth 1:1-5). For a little while, life returned to normal for the two sons came of age and married. Naomi was able to find some female companionship in her two daughters in laws, Orpah and Ruth. Then great tragedy came again. Mahlon and Chilion also died. It is possible that these men were never in the best of health as their names indicate. They left behind weeping wives and a distraught mother. Those who have been to the graveside of a loved one know the sorrow that grips the soul. Life does not seem to be worth living. And yet, somehow, in some wonderful way, Naomi found the inner strength needed to make some basic decision about the future. She would leave Moab. She would return to Bethlehem. She would go home. The basis for these decisions was practical. Naomi had heard how the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread (Ruth 1: 6). Herein are some wonderful truths.

Spiritual Lessons about Divine Sovereignty

First, the Lord is ultimately in control of nature. While there are Laws of Nature, the Laws are simply the manifestation of Divine faithfulness. God can and does sovereignly supply, or withholds, the forces that govern the affairs of man. Agricultural prosperity should be attributed to the blessing of God.
Second, the Lord will visit His people. And God has a “people.” It is a humbling truth, but from the sea of humanity, God has a chosen people that He calls His own. It is not a racial people but a regenerated people consisting of all who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour because of electing love. The doctrine of election is one of the great truths of Scripture. The Baptist Confession of 1689 teaches “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ.”

- 1 Timothy 5:21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

- Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

The purpose of electing souls to salvation is “to the praise of His glorious grace.”

- Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Third, the gifts of grace are designed to draw individuals back to the Lord. Naomi wants to go home because she has heard how the Lord has visited His people.

The Day of Departure

Initially, both Orpah and Ruth decided to go with Naomi (Ruth 1:10). However, as the journey progressed, Orpah had a change of heart. The thought of leaving her extended family and friends was too much. She would remain behind. Besides, as Naomi reminded her, it was not practical (Ruth 1:11-13). So Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and departed. But not Ruth. Ruth had grown especially close to Naomi and was determined not to leave her.

No Turning Back

Ruth's decision has given rise to one of the greatest expressions of friendship love in the world (Ruth 1:16-17). And Ruth said, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.” When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to remain with her, the journey continued. It was a long journey of 100 miles, on foot, over barren treacherous land. Some of the mountains that had to be crossed were over a mile high. Finally, the journey ended. Bethlehem was in sight. But the spirit of Naomi did not rejoice. Her heart had grown hard with the difficulties of life. Disillusioned and distressed, Naomi instructed her former neighbors to call her Mara, which means bitter (Ruth 1:20-22).
Bitterness or Blessing

A spirit of bitterness now saturated Naomi’s heart. She no longer found faith in God. She was a very angry woman reflected in the words she spoke and the change in her name. In light of this consider the Doctrine of Bitterness. In contrast to the bitterness of Naomi is the blessed response of Ruth to the adversities of life. There is no record that she became bitter but she did become a source of blessing to her mother-in-law by sharing in her life. Ruth was not just a daughter in law, she was a friend. “A friend is one who helps you bridge the gaps between loneliness and fellowship, frustration and confidence, despair and hope, setbacks and success.” Ruth was a friend. She was a blessing to others.

From Ruin to Redemption

Though Naomi returned to Israel in financial ruin, broken in spirit and depressed she would soon rejoice in the redemption of her situation for there was a near kinsman redeemer who came to look after her interests through his love of Ruth. The man’s name was Boaz. Spiritually he becomes a type of Christ while Ruth becomes a picture of the church. The analogies between Boaz and Ruth and Christ and the church are full of spiritual lessons.

Boaz and Ruth Picturing Christ and the Church

1. The name Ruth appears at least 12 times in the Bible.

   - First Reference. The marriage of Ruth to Chilion [pining]. Ruth 1:4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

   - Second Reference. The faithfulness of Ruth to Naomi. Ruth 1:16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

   - Third Reference. The journey of Ruth to Bethlehem. Ruth 1:22So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

   - Fourth Reference. The willingness of Ruth to labor for herself and for another. Ruth 2:2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

   - Fifth Reference. The first words Ruth heard from Boaz. Ruth 2:8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

   - Sixth Reference. The report of Ruth to Naomi. Ruth 2:21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.
• Seventh Reference. A word of exhortation given to Ruth. *Ruth 2:22* And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.*

• Eighth Reference. The boldness of Ruth towards Boaz. *Ruth 3:9* And he said, *Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.*

• Ninth Reference. The cleverness of Boaz on behalf of Ruth. *Ruth 4:5* Then said Boaz, *What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.*

• Tenth Reference. The marriage of Ruth to Boaz. *Ruth 4:10* Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

• Eleventh Reference. The birth of a son to Boaz and Ruth. *Ruth 4:13* So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

• Twelfth Reference. Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus. *Matthew 1:5* And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

2. The name Ruth means, “friend.” Initially Ruth was a friend of the world as a Moabitess until she became the friend of a godly young man from Israel and then she became the Friend of God. In like manner those who make up the church were once a friend of this world until they met the Master.

• *Ephesians 2:1* And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

3. In the providence of God it seemed Ruth was left helpless and hopeless in a hostile world as the church sometimes feels herself helpless and hopeless in a hostile world (Ruth 1:4-5). Her only hope was in the Lord.

• *Psalm 142:4* 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.
4. In her darkest hour God was still looking after Ruth and guiding her. “*Behind a frowning providence smiles the face of God.*” The Lord Jesus will never leave the church especially in her darkest hour.

- **Hebrews 13:5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

- **Acts 23:11** One desperate night the Lord stood by Paul and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

5. Ruth heard from her mother-in-law Naomi how that the Lord had visited His people, the Jews, in giving them bread in Bethlehem. The church should listen for, and believe in, the word of the Lord. The Lord will visit His people (Ruth 1:6).

- **Hebrews 13:5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6. The heart of Ruth was encouraged by the word of the Lord as the heart of the church should be encouraged in the word of the same.

- **Psalm 119:103** How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

- **Psalm 118:9** It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

7. Ruth was willing to go and be geographically where she thought the Lord was; the church should be willing to move in the direction they believe the Lord would have it to go to meet with Him (Ruth 1:7).

8. Ruth was discouraged from going to Israel but could not be dissuaded. The church is sometimes encouraged to go in a different direction then it should. The church should be steadfast, tenacious, and resolute like Christ who set His face like a flint towards Jerusalem and Calvary (Ruth 1:16-18).

9. Once Ruth embraced the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, once Ruth embraced the rules and regulations of Judaism, once Ruth accepted the hope of the Messiah she was loyal to the end. The church should be loyal to Christ.

10. When she was geographically in the will of the Lord, and in the Land of Promise, Ruth was willing to work (Ruth 2:2). The Church should be willing to labor knowing the time will come when that will not be possible. Jesus said, “*the night cometh when no man can work*” (John 9:4).

11. Ruth did not fully comprehend that all which would “hap” (*happen*, Ruth 2:3) to her was rooted in the sovereignty of God. All that happens to the church is rooted in the One who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11).
12. In the providence of God, Ruth was in the service of the One who would find her first, see her, love her, provide and redeem her (Ruth 2:4ff). The church is seen and loved, provided for and redeemed by Christ (Revelation 1:4).

13. All the words of Ruth were reported to Boaz (Ruth 2:7). All the words of the Church are reported to the Lord and of them the church will be held accountable to be condemned or praised (Matthew 12:36).

14. The character of Ruth emerges to be one of great humility in both words and deeds (Ruth 2:7). The conversation or manner of life of the believer is to be characterized by humility. The words of the church are to be seasoned with grace.

- *Philippians 2:3* Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

- *Colossians 4:6* Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

15. When he first meets Ruth the words of Boaz are designed to show his concern for her safety (Ruth 2:8). When Christ first comes to speak to the soul of the church it is about her safety, “*Repent!*” (Matthew 5:17).

16. Boaz plainly tells Ruth he has already undertaken to make great provisions on her behalf (Ruth 2:9). Christ has told the church He has already undertaken great provisions on her behalf (John 14:1ff).

17. The men in the world were prevented from touching Ruth in an inappropriate way (Ruth 2:9). No one and nothing can touch the church apart from the will of the Lord (Revelation 3:10).

18. The heart of Ruth towards Boaz was one of complete submission reflected in an attitude of gratitude and worship (Ruth 2:10). Knowing how easy it is to forget the goodness and grace shown, the Lord has commanded the church to remember His death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

19. Ruth obeyed Boaz in every particular instruction he gave. The church must strive to obey the Lord in every particular instruction He gives.

- *Luke 6:46* And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

20. Boaz provided for every need Ruth had. He anticipated her needs and made provision for them. Christ has provided for every need of His bride. He has anticipated all that will make her happy.

- *Philippians 4:19* But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
21. Ruth was astonished that Boaz would notice her (Ruth 2:10). The church should be astonished that Christ would notice her, for by birth, and by choice, she was once a stranger to him.

- Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

22. There were many maidens that worked for Boaz but his special love and affection was set upon Ruth (Ruth 2:5; 2:8ff). There is a special love that Christ has for the church.

- 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.

- Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

23. In the normal activity of living out her life Ruth gained a godly reputation (Ruth 2:11). In the normal activity of living out the Christian life the church will gain a reputation.

- Romans 1:7-8 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

24. Boaz a type of Christ, was submissive to the Father and understood that all of creation is also under His “wings” (Ruth 2:12). The church rejoices in this truth.

- Psalms 36:7 How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

25. Humility of mind characterized Ruth (2:13). The church is to cultivate a mindset of lowliness.

- Philippians 2:1-3 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

26. Not only did Ruth have the resources of grace at her disposal but she used them and enjoyed them (Ruth 2:17). The church must not just be surrounded with the gifts of God’s grace but must use the provisions of God to advance His kingdom.

- Luke 12:48 …For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.
27. When Ruth returned home Naomi was curious as to how she did in the field that day (Ruth 2:18-19). The church must remember that others are watching her.

- 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

28. The spiritual prosperity of one part of the church can spill over to others. There is a principle of blessing by association (Ruth 2:20). Christ would have His people to look after others and be a source of blessing to them.

- Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

29. Material prosperity flows from gospel obedience. Christ taught the church this truth in the Sermon on the Mount.

- Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

30. Boaz as a type of Christ was a near kinsman to Naomi. In like manner Christ was made flesh in order to be a kinsmen for His bride the church.

- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

31. As Ruth remembered in every detail the words of Boaz (Ruth 2:21) so the church should remember the words of the Lord.

- John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

32. Naomi reinforced the wise counsel of Boaz (Ruth 2:22). The church should always reaffirm and reinforce the instructions of Christ to one another. In principle it is not wrong to exhort others to do what they were going to do already, or exhort them not to do something they had no intention of doing. Ruth was not going to move contrary to the wishes of Boaz, yet Naomi says to her, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed” (NIV). Ruth needed no convincing on that point. She had heard the same words from Boaz himself (Ruth 2:8, 9). Words of exhortation may be irritating and they may even be worded badly but the concept of exhortation is biblical.

- Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
33. Ruth worked hard in the fields of Boaz for herself and for another while being obedient to the
wishes of her master. In all matters she was satisfied with divine providence. The church is
reminded to give thanks, to be content with the providence of God and to labor to help
others.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus
  concerning you.

- Matthew 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn
  not thou away.

- Eph 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his
  hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

34. As Boaz knew Ruth, so Naomi knew Boaz (Ruth 3:2). The church should give herself to
finding out where the Lord is and what He is doing.

35. Having the best interest of Ruth in her heart, Naomi gave some wise counsel in accordance
with social customs (Ruth 3:4). The church is wise to seek counsel of others and to listen to
that counsel (study Acts 15).

- Proverbs 15:22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of
counselors they are established.

36. As Ruth obeyed Boaz, so she obeyed the counsel of Naomi (Ruth 3:6). Those who comprise
the church are commanded to be in submission to one another.

- 1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be
  subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and
giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God,
  that he may exalt you in due time.

37. By making herself available to Boaz (Ruth 3:9) Ruth pleased him. In like manner the Lord is
pleased when the church pursues Him with passion and devotion. Isaiah made himself
available to the Lord and was blessed.

- Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go
  for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

- Song of Sol 5:8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell
  him, that I am sick of love.

38. The heart of Ruth was pure. She was not consumed by inordinate lusts for she was a virtuous
woman (Ruth 3:10, 11). The Lord would have His bride to be virtuous.
1 Thessalonians 4:3 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.

39. Ruth was told to fear not, because Boaz would be faithful to her (Ruth 3:11). The Lord does not want His bride to worry.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

40. Ruth had power with Boaz because of her hard work, humility, virtue and willingness to love (Ruth 3:11). The Lord is pleased to do all that we ask as we meet gospel terms.

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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?

41. While Ruth rested at the feet of Boaz all through the night, he planned how he might be able to help her as a kinsmen redeemer (Ruth 3:12-14). While the bride of Christ rests she can be assured that her Kinsmen Redeemer is working on her behalf day and night.

Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Hebrews 6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

42. Boaz was always concerned about the reputation of Ruth (Ruth 3:14). Christ cleanses His church so that she will be without spot or wrinkle.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

43. Before the day’s work began Boaz poured out new mercies upon Ruth (Ruth 3:15). The mercies of Christ towards His bride the church are renewed each day.

Psalm 89:1 I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.
44. Ruth spoke well of the mercies of Boaz to Naomi (Ruth 3:16). The Church should be ready to praise the Lord and testify to what He has done on her behalf.

- **Psalms 107:2** Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

45. Ruth was not allowed to go home empty (Ruth 3:17). The church will never go away empty after being in the presence of Christ. The church shall never hunger or thirst.

- **John 6:56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.
  - **57** As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

46. Understanding the character of Boaz, Naomi gave counsel to Ruth to rest that day in the work of another (Ruth 3:18). The church is invited to rest in the finished work of Christ.

- **Matthew 11:28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- **Hebrews 4:11** Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

47. Having received the grace of God, Boaz was a man of grace, reflected in part by the words he spoke (Ruth 4:1). The church is reminded to be gracious like her Lord to others, especially in conversation.

- **Colossians 4:6** Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

48. In working on behalf of Ruth, Boaz proved to be wise and harmless (Ruth 4:1). Christ is wise and harmless, gentle as a lamb. The church is to reflect these virtues of the Savior.

- **Matthew 10:16** Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

49. Boaz wanted witness to the dialogue with the nearer kinsmen than he (Ruth 4:2). The Lord has cautioned his church to be careful in certain transactions.

- **Matthew 5:37** But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

50. With plain language and no deceit Boaz shared the situation as well as his intentions (Ruth 4:3-4). Christ would have His church live and speak with no deceit.

- **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.
51. While Boaz spoke plainly, honestly, and openly with his fellow citizen he was able to guide the situation through persuasive speech and a willingness to act (Ruth 4:5-6). Christ would have the church be a moral influence by persuasive words and a willingness to act.

- **Matthew 5:13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

52. Boaz made a legal transaction in order to obtain Naomi’s land and win the hand of Ruth (Ruth 4:7-10). In like manner Christ made a legal transaction to redeem His bride, the Church.

- **Acts 20:28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

- **Ephesians 1:13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

53. Boaz was determined that neither the seed of his kinsmen or his own seed be cut off from among the land of the living (Ruth 4:10; 4:13). Christ is determined that there be many descendants in glory.

- **Hebrews 2:10** For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

54. There were many witnesses to the righteous actions of Boaz (Ruth 4:11). A faithful cloud of witnesses surrounds the church when she acts righteously.

- **Hebrews 12:1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

55. Boaz received a blessing from those who witnessed the legal transaction of grace and mercy (Ruth 4:11-12). The church shall receive a blessing from her Lord when she shows grace and mercy.
Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

56. Boaz showed love and kindness to many men and women but he had a special intimate love for Ruth (Ruth 4:13). There is an intimate relationship that exists between Christ and the church.

Romans 8:28 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. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

57. The principle of blessing by association is established again in that Naomi had a much-loved grandson through Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:14-16). Christians are blessed by their association with Christ and then by association with others of like mind and faith. The church of Corinth benefited spiritually and financially because of the labors of Paul in their midst.

1 Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

58. Ruth became the great grandmother of David (Ruth 4:17). The spiritual legacy of the church has yet to be completely told.

59. The genealogy of Boaz is traced backwards and forwards. The genealogy of Christ is traced in the gospels backwards all the way to Adam but in the Epistles backwards and forwards to eternity. In like manner the church as the Bride of Christ shall enjoy the life of Christ which is eternal.

Hebrews 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

60. The Lord God of the Old Covenant is the Lord God of the New Covenant. As the Lord gave Ruth the ability to conceive to bear a son (Ruth 4:13) so every good and perfect gift comes down to the church from the Father above. We are born of God according to sovereign grace.
• James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

Chapter 8

The First Book of Samuel

The End of Eli

Though Samson was the last great military leader to bear the title of Judge he was not the exclusive leader of Israel. Contemporary with him and exercising ultimate authority over the tribes of Israel was the high priest Eli. God had intended for Israel to be a theocratic kingdom and not like the other nations of earth. But that was not to be in large part because of the spiritual failures of Eli. Unable to discipline his children God moved to discipline both them and Eli. Because he allowed great corruptions the priestly office would be removed from Eli and his house forever (1 Samuel 2:22-36). Judgment must begin at the house of God “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:17-18).

Away with the Ark of the Covenant

The fulfillment of God’s determination to judge the household of Eli came with the removal of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines after the Battle of Aphek in the Plain of Esdraelon (Armageddon). But the Ark of God had been missed, and was called for by the people of Shiloh whose citizen-warriors thought, if they carried the Ark into battle, it would bring a military victory. Instead, the people had mishandled the scared object, aroused the wrath of God and excited Him to opposition. The Ark of the Covenant was captured. Hophni and Phinehas, the immoral sons of Eli, were slain. When Eli heard the Ark had been taken he fell from his seat and was killed at the age of ninety-eight (1 Samuel 4: 1-18).

Tragedy upon Tragedy

When Eli’s daughter in law heard that he had been killed and the Ark had been taken she went into a premature delivery of her baby “And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel” (1 Samuel 4:21). The Philistines carried the Ark to their own country and in a show of triumph placed it at Ashdod, in the temple of their fish god Dagon. Outraged by this show of disrespect the Lord caused plagues to come upon the men of Ashdod, Gath and Ekron as the Ark was removed from place to place (1 Samuel 5:1-12). At last the Ark was placed in a cart and sent by unguided cattle that carried it to Beth-shemesh (1 Samuel 16:1-14). But the plague came there as well. Finally, the men of Kirjath-jearim came and carried the Ark to their city in the tribe of Judah where it remained until the days of David (1 Samuel 7:1-2). The death of Samson occurred about the time when the Philistines took the Ark in battle. Perhaps the thought of the great national humiliation motivated Samson to avenge himself upon the Philistines in a dying act of self-judgment.
The Spiritual Strength of Samuel

While death came to Samson and then to the house of Eli, though the glory of the Lord departed from Hophni and Phinehas, though the Ark of the Covenant was taken captive in battle and a baby was named Ichabod, God was not going to leave His people without hope nor was the Lord going to forsake His own. The life of Samuel reminds the church there is grace in judgment and an elect remnant. The father of Samuel was a member of the tribe of Levi who resided in Mount Ephraim. His mother was Hannah who knew the stinging taunts of Peninnah, Elkanah’s other wife. Going to the house of the Lord, Hannah pleaded for a son and in due time Samuel was born. The precious story is told in 1 Samuel 1: 1-28. Reared and educated to be a priest at Shiloh, the time came when Samuel, after the death of Eli, led the people to put away their images of Baal and Astoreth and return to the worship of the true God.

A Holy Convocation

Calling the people to Mizpeh in Benjamin, Samuel held a solemn convocation. Mizpeh is an important place in Hebrew history. It was here the people remembered the help of the Lord (1 Samuel 7:6-12) but then elected their first king being in a state of emotional revolt against divine authority (1 Samuel 10:17-24). In years to come, during the Babylonian captivity, the Chaldean governor Gedaliah would reside at Mizpeh only to be murdered by Ishmael (Jeremiah 41:1-2). When the Philistines heard of the great gathering they saw an opportunity to kill the Israelites in mass. However, due to Samuel’s intercessory prayer God sent a thunderstorm which made the Philistines an easy target for the Hebrews (1 Samuel 7:7-12). The weapon of choice Othniel used to deliver Israel was the spear. Ehud chose the dagger, Shamgar the ox-goad, Gideon the sword and Samson the jawbone of an ass. But the weapon of choice for Samuel was prayer. Like so many before him Samuel built an altar to God in Ramah. There in Ramah he performed the civil functions of a judge while serving as high priest.

Domestic Life in Hebrew History: The Working People of Palestine

Under the Mosaic Law a portion of the land for farming was assigned to each family ranging from twenty to fifty acres. While some families employed indentured servants or used the Gibeonites as hewers of wood and drawers of water (Joshua 9:21, 27), each family had to cultivate their own property. The land worked was mainly for three types of produce – grain, fruit and pasture. Grain consisted of wheat, millet and barley. Flax and cotton were also cultivated along with a variety of garden herbs such as anise, cumin, mint and rue. Jesus used the herb to denounce the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Orchards were planted for greater productivity of olives, sycamores, figs, pomegranates, grapes almond and apples. To work the land there were beasts of burden such as the ox, camel and ass. Sheep and goats provided milk, food and clothing.
Housing for the Hebrews

For the most part the houses of the Hebrew people were built close together for there was safety in numbers. If the town or city became significant a wall surrounded it. The wealth and resources of the family determined the style and size of the home. Many homes were constructed of brick, stone or made from mud. Some people lived in caves. A limestone cave could be cool in summer and made warm in the winter at low cost. Caves served as stables for livestock. According to tradition the stable in Bethlehem became the place of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Roof. The typical roof of houses in Palestine throughout the biblical period was made by laying logs or beams across the top of the walls. Once the beams were in place branches and thatch were laid on top, which were then covered by a layer of clay. It was easy for such a roof to be broken as some friends of a paralyzed man demonstrated in order to get to Jesus for healing (Luke 5:19). Since the roof was flat it became an important part of the house. By means of an outside staircase the roof could be easily reached. A low wall around the roof kept people from falling off. In a crowded city the roof provided a place to rest, dry fruit and grains, wash clothes, enjoy the cool evening breezes on hot nights and lodge strangers or guests for the night (2 Kings 4:8-11).

Doors and Windows. Doorways within the house usually were covered with curtains. The doorway on the outside usually had a wooden door that turned on two pivots that fitted into sockets. Glass windows were not known in Bible times. Most window openings were left alone with only a lattice or shutter to provide security and keep people from peeking in from the outside.

Floor. Packed clay formed the most common floors in houses during Bible times. While the homes were of simple construction they were comfortable and adequate.

Seasons of the Year

- April and May. The grain harvest in Palestine began in April and lasted for about two months.

- June and July. The summer months of June and July was the season for gathering the fruits of the garden.

- August and September, being warm gave way to sheep shearing. During these months there is little or no rainfall. It was not unusual for drought conditions to exist. The country became parched. The brooks and springs dried up. The pools and reservoirs might run dry.

- October and November becomes the seedtime. The “former rain” falls then with violence to fill the dry beds. Jesus spoke of this sudden rainfall in Matthew 7:25 “And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”

- December and January are the winter months when frost and snow are common.
February and March are also cold bringing “the latter rains”. Now, “the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; 13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Song of Solomon 2:11-13).

A Variety of Trees

The following trees grew in Palestine during biblical times.

- Acacia (Shittah) was found in dry areas

- Cedar. Strong and majestic the cedar became a symbol of strength, stability and beauty. Psalms 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

- Cypress

- Fir

- Mulberry

- Oak. Both the smooth and the prickly type grew in great abundance in Bashan, the territory that extended from Gilead in the south to Hermon on the N, and from the Jordan to Salecah.

- Pine Myrtle

Common Plants and Flowers in Bible Days

- Acacia
- Almond
- Aloe
- Apple
- Balm of Gilead
- Barley
- Bean
- Black cummin
- Blight or blasting (Various fungi)
- Bramble
- Broom
- Calamus
- Cane
- Caper
• Carob
• Cassia, cinnamon
• Cattail
• Cedar
• Coriander
• Cotton
• Cumin
• Cypress
• Dill
• Dove's dung
• Ebony
• Fig
• Flax
• Frankincense
• Galbanum
• Gall
• Garlic
• Gourd
• Grape
• Gum resin
• Gum tragacanth
• Henna
• Hyssop
• Ladanum (See Balm of Gilead)
• Laurel
• Leeks
• Lentil
• Lign aloes or aloe wood
• Lily of the field
• Mandrake
• Melon
• Millet
• Mildew
• Mint
• Mustard
• Myrrh
• Nettle
The Festivals of Faith

By command of the Mosaic Law, three times a year the males went up to Shiloh for the festivals of faith – Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Every seventh day was a holy sabbath (rest) to the Lord (Numbers 28:9-10). Time was to be devoted to worship and rest. At each new moon
there was also a holy day (Numbers 10:10). Every seventh year was a year of rest to allow the land to replenish itself (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:2-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-10; 31:10-13).

- **Feast of Passover.** The feast of the Passover was designed to remember the last of the plagues that fell upon the Egyptians prior to Israel's departure from the land. Warning that He would slay the firstborn in the houses of the Egyptians, God told the Israelites to kill a lamb and place its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. God said that when He saw the blood he would “pass over” the house and spare everyone inside. The blood of the lamb would cover them. When the Egyptians realized that their firstborn had been slain, Pharaoh released the people of Israel from their slavery. The people departed in such haste that they could not allow their bread to rise and so ate unleavened bread. The central element of the Passover celebration in generations to come was to eat a meal that included lamb and unleavened bread. The Passover took place in the spring. During the festival celebration people made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover celebration.

- **Feast of Pentecost.** Biblical references to the Feast of Weeks include Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Deut 16:9-12; and 2 Chron 8:13. The Feast of Pentecost was observed early in the third month on the 50th day after the offering of the barley sheaf at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It included a holy gathering of the people. There was to be no manual labor. Num 28:26-31 describes the number and nature of offerings. Deut 16:9-12 describes those who were to be invited to this feast. They include servants, sons and daughters, Levites, the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger. Israelites were to be reminded of their bondage in Egypt on that day. This feast was also known as the Feast of Harvest as well as Pentecost.

- **Feast of Tabernacle.** During the Feast of Tabernacles the people of Israel celebrated their deliverance from bondage, and their dwelling in tabernacles en route to the Promised Land (Leviticus 23:42,43).

**Education of the Elect**

The education of the children was the responsibility of the parents assisted by the Levites who were paid from the tithes. The children were to be taught they were a chosen people entrusted with the gospel message, which spoke of the Messiah to come. Spiritual education for all came in the form of national events. Wars, acts of ideology, flooding and seasons of prosperity became object lessons for learning spiritual truths.
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

The Golden Years of Hebrew History
The United Kingdom
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 soothe 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, recrossed 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 Nainoth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Nainoth 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.
Psalms 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.

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 Jacob. 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 devourcd: 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 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 true 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, kakopoioe (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-oce')] 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, despiteful, 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 \([kakologeo (kak-ol-og-eh'-o)]\) 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 \([badly, kakos (kak-oce')]\) 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, blasphemо (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 poneros (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 alway 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Nineteen Kings of Israel</th>
<th>The King Ruling in Judah at the same Time</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Length of Reign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jeroboam I</td>
<td>22 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Nadab</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<td>3. Baasha</td>
<td>24 years</td>
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<td>4. Elah</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<td>5. Zimri</td>
<td>7 days</td>
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<td>6. Omri</td>
<td>12 years</td>
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<td>7. Ahab</td>
<td>22 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ahaziah</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Jehoram</td>
<td>12 years</td>
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<td>10. Jehu</td>
<td>28 years</td>
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<td>11. Jehoahaz</td>
<td>17 years</td>
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<td>12. Joash</td>
<td>16 years</td>
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<td>13. Jeroboam II</td>
<td>41 years</td>
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<td>14. Zachariah</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Shallum</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Menahem</td>
<td>10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Pekahiah</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Pekah</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Hoshea</td>
<td>9 years</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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-zebub, 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.
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 hearest 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 sleeppeth 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. Psalm 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.
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 Tiphsah 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 Arieh, 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 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)  
   Son of Jehoshaphat;  
c. 850 – 843 BC
   husband of Athaliah

6. Ahaziah  
   Son of Jehoram and Athaliah  
c. 843 - 842 BC

7. Athaliah  
   Daughter of King Ahab of Israel  
c. 842 - 836 BC
   and Jezebel; wife of Jehoram; only queen to occupy the throne of Judah

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  Son of Josiah  c. 597-586 BC

He was overthrown by the Babylonians led be Nebuchadnezzar

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.

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<tr>
<th>Period of First Spiritual Decline</th>
<th>Rehoboam</th>
<th>Prophets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shemaiah, Iddo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam (Abijah)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Azariah, Hanani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jehu, Jahazlel</td>
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Revival

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zechariah (of Jehoiada)</td>
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<td>Amaziah</td>
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Revival

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<td>Amon</td>
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<td>Zephaniah, Jeremiah</td>
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<td>Josiah</td>
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Revival

Period of Fourth Spiritual Decline

Jehoahaz
Jehoiakim
Jehoiachin  Prophet  Habakkuk
Zedekiah  Prophet  Obadiah

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 ofredeeming 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 tends 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 sawn 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.

Isaiah

- 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 sware 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 8:13For 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. “And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom... But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites: 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. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 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. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 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; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 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. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 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. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What savest thou, that thou hast done this thing [of lying to me]? 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. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 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. 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
- Seditious
- 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
Revolters
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 Cœle-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 thy anger 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 caulds, 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 vails.

- 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 3:5 Mortify 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**

“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 hearest 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

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

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.
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.

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.

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.

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 lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.
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.

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.

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 alway, even unto the end.

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.
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.

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.

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.

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assyrian king</th>
<th>Year BC</th>
<th>King of Israel</th>
<th>King of Judah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pul</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>Menahem</td>
<td>Uzziah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiglath-pileser</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>Pekah</td>
<td>Ahaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shalmaneser</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>Hoshea</td>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year BC</th>
<th>King of Judah</th>
<th>The Conquerors</th>
<th>People taken Captive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>607</td>
<td>Jehoiakim</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar acting for Nabopolassar</td>
<td>Daniel and other nobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599</td>
<td>Jehoiachin</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar</td>
<td>10,000 chief people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>588</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar</td>
<td>Nearly all the people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 conscious, 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 shaked 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 shaked 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 reproved 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 69th 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 speakest 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: “Ye, 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 unreproveable 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.


• 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 seize 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 degree 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.
The Bible as History

A Survey of the Old Testament

The Babylonian Captivity to the Restoration
The Bible as History
A Survey of the Old Testament
Chapter 20
The Restoration

Leaders of Men

In the story of the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem six individuals are prominent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jewish Leaders</th>
<th>Gentile Rulers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zerubbabel</td>
<td>Cyrus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>Darius Hystaspes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>Artaxerxes Longimanus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Zerubbabel left captivity for Jerusalem when Cyrus came to the throne c. BC 535. After an interval of twenty years he was able to finish the rebuilding of the temple in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

- Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylon about eighty years after Zerubbabel, c. BC 458, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. His major desire was to restore the Law in the life of the people. The story of Esther took place a few years before the time of Ezra.

- Nehemiah went up from Susa, located 150 miles east of the Tigris River, in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, c. BC 445. He helped to rebuild the walls of the holy city and set up the gates. After returning for a period to Susa, Nehemiah made a second visit to Jerusalem. Soon thereafter the prophet Malachi closed the canon of *Old Testament Scripture* with his prophetic utterances.

- Cyrus (about 576 BC - July, 529 BC) was a king of Persia, famous for his military prowess and mercy. He is considered to be the first significant king of Persia, and the founder of the vast Persian Empire.

- Darius Hystaspes was the son of Hystaspes, and Persian Emperor from 521 to 485 BC. The principal source for his history is his own inscriptions, especially the great inscription of Behistun, in which he relates how he gained the crown and put down the rebellions.

- Artaxerxes Longimanus was king of Persia from 464 BC to 424 BC. He belonged to the Achaemenid dynasty and was the successor of Xerxes I. He is mentioned in two books of the Bible, Ezra, and Nehemiah. He allowed the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. He was followed on the throne by his son Xerxes II.
Coming Home

As soon as Cyrus released the royal edict to go home, the responsibility for their safe return was entrusted to Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel, and therefore represented the royal family of Judah. Jeshua was the hereditary high priest. Together these men reflected what would be combined in the person of the Messiah, who while King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14), would also be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb 5:10). More than fifty thousand people came together to go home cured of their idolatry, never more to roam.

“I’ve wandered far away from God,  
Now I’m coming home;  
The paths of sin too long I’ve trod,  
Lord, I’m coming home.

Coming home, coming home,  
Nevermore to roam,  
Open wide Thine arms of love,  
Lord, I’m coming home.

I’ve wasted many precious years,  
Now I’m coming home;  
I now repent with bitter tears,  
Lord, I’m coming home.

I’m tired of sin and straying, Lord,  
Now I’m coming home;  
I’ll trust Thy love, believe Thy Word,  
Lord, I’m coming home.

My soul is sick, my heart is sore,  
Now I’m coming home;  
My strength renew, my hope restore,  
Lord, I’m coming home.

My only hope, my only plea,  
Now I’m coming home;  
That Jesus died, and died for me.  
Lord, I’m coming home.

I need His cleansing blood, I know,  
Now I’m coming home;  
O wash me whiter than the snow,  
Lord, I’m coming home”.

William Kirkpatrick
A New Name

Most of those who returned to Israel were from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. As a result, from this time forward the people would be known as the Jews because of the predominance of people from Judah. About eighty years later six thousand more people would return to Palestine while the larger portion carried into captivity remained in Chaldea, Persia and Media. In this way the “missionary era” of the Jews began. Like the Messiah, they became “a light to lighten the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32) and a witness of God to the ends of the earth. And so the journey began. Seven hundred miles from Babylon to Jerusalem would be covered in four long months under a hot burning sun. But they finally made it home. After resting, within a year work began on the rebuilding of the temple.

Opposition to a Holy Work

In the course of building the temple, the Samaritans offered to labor with the Jews in the sacred work. The Samaritans were the descendants of the Assyrian colony established by Shalmaneser in the district of Samaria. The request to help was refused. Angered by being rejected, the Samaritans began to oppose what they once wanted to support. Such is the sin of pride. Unless self is involved in a prominent way, what was once supported, is suddenly hated and opposed. When Daniel was the head of this opposition, in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, he held a solemn fast as recorded in chapter 10 of his work, and was given some amazing visions of coming events, as per Daniel 11-12.

The Reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis

While reconstruction of the temple continued, so did the opposition on it throughout the reigns of Cyrus and his successors, Cambyses, called Ahasuerus and Smerdis, called Artaxerxes. A man with a violent temper, Cambyses was not without a sense of humor, which he used to a strategic military advantage. Knowing of the inordinate worship of animals by the Egyptians, it is recorded that he gathered a large number of cats, dogs, sheep and other sacred animals and placed them in front of his army. The Egyptian soldiers would not use a single weapon with the possibility of hurting one of the animals, and so Cambyses won an easy victory. On another occasion when he came across an Egyptian celebration he asked what was the source of the joy. He was told that a god had revealed itself to the people. Asked to meet this god, Cambyses was taken to the bull, Apis. So enraged was Cambyses, he stabbed the brute beast, which was then carried back to its stable to die.

A Letter to Hurt

In the reign of Smerdis, called Artaxerxes, the successor of Cambyses, the enemies of the Jews wrote a letter to the king stating that Jerusalem had always been a rebellious city, and that it should not be allowed to be rebuilt. “Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort” (Ezra 4:8). Finding the substance of the letter to be valid in part, a formal order was issued stopping the work of restoration. The great drama can be reviewed in several Acts.
Act I The Writing of the Letter

Ezra 4:11 This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. 12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. 13 Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. 14 Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; 15 That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. 16 We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

Act II The King's Reply.

Ezra 4:18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. 19 And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. 20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. 21 Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me. 22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? 23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.


A few months later when Darius Hystaspes came to the Persian throne, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhorted their countrymen to go back to rebuilding the temple, if for no other reason than to remove the drought that was consuming the land. God was judging His people for building their own homes while allowing the temple to lie in ruin. While the work was in progress, Tatnai, the Persian governor of the district visited Jerusalem. When he learned that Cyrus had once passed an edict authorizing the work, he caused a search to be made for the official document. People looked in the archives at Babylon, and then in Achmetha, or Ecbatana, the capital of Media, where it was finally discovered. Brought before Darius, he gave new orders that the work should resume and there would be public funding to underwrite the project.

Ezra 6 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written. 3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4 With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house:
5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, everyone to his place, and place them in the house of God.

- Acts IV The Work is Resumed. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed. 13 Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. 14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia” (Ezra 6:12-14).

- Act V. The rebuilding of the temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius. “And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. 16 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, 17 And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses. 19 And the children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month (Ezra 6:15-19).

About twenty years had passed since the rebuilding of the temple had begun. Now a date for computing the termination of the captivity can be established. From the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, when young Daniel had been carried captive, to the issuing of the decree of Cyrus was seventy years. From the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the holy temple, to the rebuilding of the same was also seventy years. If there is a spiritual lesson, it is that what God gives, He takes away, but what He takes away He might be pleased to restore. Such is the nature of grace.

Two Post Exilic Prophets

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah took place during the days of Zerubbabel. They both exhorted the people to work, as they spoke of the coming Messiah. When people wept because the rebuilt temple was not as glorious as the one built by Solomon, Haggai announced that the Messiah would come to His holy temple. The personal presence of the Branch of Jesse would fill it with more glory than the first. “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-7).
The fulfillment of this prophecy is found on the day of Pentecost, following the ascension of Christ. “And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:7-11). In like manner the prophecies of Zechariah are full of promises that were fulfilled.

Vision one. In one of his visions Zechariah witnesses God the Father commanding a sword to be lifted against the Shepherd and His brethren “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” ((Zechariah 13:7).

Vision two. In another vision men look in agony on the Lord of Glory whom they have pierced. “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” (Zechariah 12:10).

Vision three. A third vision finds the Messiah riding into Jerusalem on an ass, but as a conqueror. “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” (Zechariah 9:9).

Vision four. In a fourth vision the whole earth worships the Messiah, and on the bells of the horses there is the inscription, “holiness unto the Lord.” “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowl's before the altar” (Zechariah 14:20).

By studying the Old Testament Scriptures the divine and human nature of the Messiah was revealed. Spiritual humility is needed by the New Testament church when it comes to assuming what the Old Testament saints did not know about the Messiah, for Jesus was able to take the Scriptures, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, “He expounded unto them [the two disciples on the Road to Emasus] in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Of Abraham, Jesus said to some Jewish leaders one day, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

A Word of Warning

Because communication was maintained between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jews in exile in Babylon, Jeremiah was able to give spiritual counsel. Issuing a word of warning Zechariah exhorted them to leave a city devoted to destruction without delay. Those who did not listen to the prophetic voice lived to regret it. In time the Persian army besieged Babylon. The people of Babylon suffered greatly from famine. An internal genocide began. Women and children were massacred.
Only a favorite wife and one female servant were spared for each man. The prophecy of Isaiah against Babylon was fulfilled. “Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: 9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments” (Isaiah 47:8-9).

Given to Pleasure

When a soul is given to the principle of pleasure, life is lived in a careless manner. Self-talk and self-deceit takes place in the mentality of the mind. The heart tells itself it is alone, for the presence of God is not felt, though God’s presence cannot be dismissed. To such foolish souls God has a word of warning. Judgment will come suddenly.

Doctrine of Pleasure

1. For some women having children is considered to be a great pleasure of life.
   
   - *Genesis 18:12* Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

2. The poor of Israel could eat with pleasure from the vineyard of a neighbor provided it was not to excess.
   
   - *Deuteronomy 23:24* When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.

3. God takes pleasure in the heart that is upright.
   
   - *1 Chron. 29:17* I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

4. Political rulers render decisions based on the good pleasure of their hearts.
   
   - *Ezra 5:17* Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

5. In times of spiritual revival, God’s people are exhorted to make a confession of their sins, discern the will of the Lord, and do what pleases God.
• **Ezra 10:11** Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

6. One form of divine judgment is enslavement, so that others rule with pleasure over God’s people.

• **Nehemiah 9:37** And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

7. Sometimes rulers provide an example of excessiveness, by allowing the principle of personal pleasure to guide behavior, even to the point of drunkenness and shame.

• **Esther 1:8** And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure.

8. The rich who die suddenly, will find no pleasure in his house and wealth.

• **Job 21:21** For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

9. When a person is ill in bitterness of soul, food is not enjoyed.

• **Job 21:25** And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

10. It is possible to have a false sense of security, and that one’s life of self-righteousness brings pleasure to God.

• **Job 22:3** Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?

11. God takes no pleasure in any act or thought of wickedness.

• **Psalms 5:4** For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

12. The principle of pleasure is associated with the righteous as well as the wicked. Those who practice doing wrong know only a fleeting moment of pleasure, while the righteous can shout for joy time and again, and be glad.

• **Psalms 35:27** Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.
13. Christians should pray that God would build His church, because it pleases Him to do so.

- *Psalms 51:18* Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

14. The heart of the Christian should take pleasure in everything associated with the church, including art and architecture, music and drama.

- *Psalms 102:14* For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15. Only those who please the Lord are properly entitled to worship and bless the Lord.

- *Psalms 103:21* Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

16. God sovereignly chooses whom He will bind to rule and teach.

- *Psalms 105:22* To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

17. The pleasure of serving God generates more pleasurable moments of service.

- *Psalms 111:2* The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

18. The Lord does not take pleasure in man for his outward appearance, but for a heart that fears Him, and hopes in His mercy.

- *Psalms 147:10* He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

- *Psalms 147:11* The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

19. With those He is pleased with, and has pleasure in, God will reward with salvation.

- *Psalms 149:4* For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

20. The love of pleasure leads to poverty of soul and resources.

- *Proverbs 21:17* He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

21. It is possible to embark on a frantic search for happiness to no avail.

- *Ecclesiastes 2:1* I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.
22. God calls men fools, who vow a vow that is not honored.

- *Ecclesiastes 5:4* When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

23. As the body wears down and the passions subside, the time will come when what once gave great pleasure holds none.

- *Ecclesiastes 12:1* Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

24. God knows how to turn pleasure into fear. There is the fear of disease. There is the fear of discovery. There is the fear of eternal damnation. There is the fear of an early death.

- *Isaiah 21:4* My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

25. The heart of the heathen, as ruthless as it may be, is still in the hand of the Lord to do His pleasure.

- *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.

26. In His sovereignty, God will do whatever pleases Him.

- *Isaiah 46:10* Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

27. The Messiah suffered at the pleasure of the Father. This divine pleasure was not rooted in a sadistic feeling, but in the accomplishments that it would accrue on the other side of Calvary.

- *Isaiah 53:10* Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

28. When a heart worships God in sincerity, pleasure will be found, even in the harsher demands of the religious life.

- *Isaiah 58:13* If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

29. A denial of self-pleasure for spiritual worship brings divine blessings.
Isaiah 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

30. The stain of sin is not something that can easily be washed off. To deny that the soul has done evil is foolish. In sexual sins, the heart becomes like a wild ass in heat, that smells the wind to find anything to mate with and will not be denied.

Jeremiah 2:22 For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD. 23 How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways; 24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? All they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.

31. It is possible to sin in such a matter that God puts a curse on the life, and declares He has no pleasure in a soul. Coniah was such a man.

Jeremiah 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

32. God knows how to shame those who engage in promiscuous behavior. One way is through public exposure of private parts.

Ezekiel 16:37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

33. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and in that truth lays the hope for a soul to repent of evil, and seek righteousness.

Ezekiel 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Ezekiel 18:32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

34. A covenant nation can become a divine disgrace.
- **Hosea 8:8** Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

35. God does take pleasure in the building of structures that honor Him.

- **Haggai 1:8** Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

36. When God loses His pleasure in a covenant people, He will not accept their worship.

- **Malachi 1:10** Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

37. There are many fears that Christians have. Jesus has come to take away fear from the heart, and reassure individuals they shall be given a place in His kingdom.

- **Luke 12:32** Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

38. In order to please the ungodly, and give them pleasure, secular ungodly rulers will hurt members of the church, as Felix hurt Paul.

- **Acts 24:27** But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

- **Acts 25:9** But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

39. An evil heart can know the judgment of God, agree with His justice, and still find pleasure in those who participate in evil with them.

- **Romans 1:32** 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.

40. Following his conversion, Paul said he actually delighted in suffering for Christ for when he was weak in the flesh, he became stronger in the spirit.

- **2 Corinthians 12:10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

41. The doctrine of election is based upon the pleasure of God, and not upon the merit of those who are the heirs of salvation.

- **Ephesians 1:5** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
42. It pleases the Lord to make known unto men some facets of the mystery of His will.

- Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

43. The life of a Christian becomes more acceptable, as far as circumstances and duties are concerned, when it is realized that it is God working in the heart to do His will.

- Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

44. Christians should pray that God would make others worthy of the divine calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith in the heart with power.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

45. When God moves to judge a soul, He allows the heart to believe lies in order that it might be damned, because it had pleasure in unrighteousness. One lie is the hopelessness of change.

- 2 Thessalonians 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

46. God warns women engaged in sexual sins they are dead while they live.

- 1 Timothy 5:6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

47. God has no pleasure with a works based righteousness.

- Hebrews 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

- Hebrews 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

48. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. God has no pleasure in any person who turns away from living the Christian life.

- Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

49. Divine discipline is different from human discipline, for divine judgment comes for the profit of the soul.
- **Hebrews 12:10** For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

50. When a person is not immediately judged for the evil that is done, a false sense of security is adopted. From a divine perspective, God is simply allowing the soul to eat of sin, to nourish it for the day of ultimate judgment.

- **James 5:5** Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

51. There is a reward for evil pleasure.

- **2 Peter 2:13** 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;

52. The only reason given in Scripture for creation is the pleasure of God.

- **Revelation 4:11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

**The Deceit of Darius**

In his conquest of Babylon, Darius might not have succeeded if it were not for an extreme act of self-sacrifice by one of his trusted officers. A man named Zopyrus had his nose cut off, and his ears and his body mangled, in order to present himself to the Babylonians as having been abused. The Babylonians believed his story and gave him command of their armies. Zopyrus then surrendered the city to Darius. The walls of the city were lowered, the many gates were removed, the houses were plundered, and more than three thousand individuals were impaled. At the time of these events, the holy temple in Jerusalem was being completed. A great shout of joy could be sounded in the throats of thoughtful Jews, “Babylon is fallen!” The city of Nebuchadnezzar never regained its former glory. Alexander the Great wanted to make it his capital, but that never happened. God had predicted the complete fall of the city, which has remained to this day.

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there” (Isaiah 13:19-21).
The War with Greece

Following his conquest of Babylon, Darius began a series of military adventures, which brought Asia and Europe into contact with each other, and changed the world. There was war between Persia and Greece. Having revolted against the rule of the Persians, Greek colonies were established on the shores of Asia Minor, often-called Ionians. Putting together a large force by land and sea, Darius marched to subdue the revolt. To his astonishment his fleet was wrecked at Mount Athos.

Another navy was built to patrol the Greek isles, while an army marched inland from Eubea to Attica. On the Plains of Marathon the Greeks and the Persians met. The Greeks were led by Miltiades, who won the great victory. Darius spent three years preparing for another campaign against the Greeks, but was prevented from further warfare against them by a revolt in Egypt, and an untimely death. His son Xerxes was his successor. Xerxes would try to accomplish what his father failed to do.

Like Father, Like Son

Xerxes, known to history as Darius Hystaspes, was one of the greatest of kings of the ancient world. As the ruler of Persia, he added to the Persian Empire – India, Thrace, Macedonia, and the islands of the Ionian Sea. At the time of his death, the Persian Empire stretched from the Indus valley to the Aegean Sea, and from the steppes of Scythia (Russia) to the cataracts of the Nile. Dividing his vast empire into twenty satrapies, or provinces, he appointed a satrap, or governor of each one. Large amounts of revenue poured into his coffers. There was wealth beyond belief.

Secular Religious Reform

It was during the reign of Darius that a famous religious reformer arose, named Zoroaster. He lived in the El-burz mountains from which, his followers claim, he was taken into heaven where the laws of God were revealed to him. To the Jews this belief sounded familiar, as indeed it was, for the original story was associated with Moses, the Lawgiver. At the core of the doctrinal position of Zoroaster was the belief in one eternal God. However, there were two principles, or angels in the universe, the one good and the other evil. The emblem of the good principle was light, called Ormuzd. The principle of darkness was called Ahriman. Between these contending principles a great battle was being fought, and would continue until the end of time, though good would eventually win. A day of judgment would follow. The devotees of each principle would be judged and separated forever, the one being rewarded and the other punished.

Ormuzd was always worshipped in the presence of fire, which was a cause of light, and especially the sun, which was believed to be the most perfect light in the universe. Darkness was feared, and hated, as the perfection of evil. The name of evil, Ahriman, was written backwards and upside down as a sign of disrespect. It is not hard to discern in this religion many elements from the Jewish faith, such as the unity of God, the doctrine of an evil spirit, the struggle between good and evil, the doctrine of the resurrection and last judgment, and the use of fire, or light, reflecting the Shekinah glory of God. Wherever Zoroastrian beliefs prevailed fire temples were constructed and temples with images were destroyed. When the Persians took Babylon, many of the image temples were destroyed, and prophecy was fulfilled.
Isaiah 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

Jeremiah 50:2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

Jeremiah 51:44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

Jeremiah 51:47 Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.

Jeremiah 51:52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan.

Doctrine of Satanic Counterfeit

1. To counterfeit means to imitate, or copy something closely, especially with intent to deceive. Satan is a master at religious counterfeiting. The close parallelism between the basic tenants of Zoroastrianism and Judaism reveals this truth.

2. The Bible in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 warns of Satan's counterfeit: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”

3. Consider what Satan has counterfeited.

   - Satan has a counterfeit Bible. The Book of Mormon, the New World Translation of the Scriptures, and every occult, and cultist bible, has its ultimate origin in the mind of Satan.
   
   - Satan has a counterfeit doctrine. Specific doctrines of demons include celibacy, and forbidding eating certain meats. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Timothy 4:1-5).
   
   - Satan has a counterfeit trinity.
The Unholy Father: Revelation 12:3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

The Unholy Son: The Beast out of the Sea: Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The Unholy Spirit: The False Prophet: Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

- Satan has a counterfeit temple. 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

- Satan has a counterfeit religion, or system of beliefs. It is recognized by casting doubt on the Word of God, followed by a denial of the simplicity of God’s word, and / or by misusing it. In the Garden of Eden, Satan cast doubt on God’s word before openly denying it. In the wilderness while tempting Christ, Satan twisted Scripture to make it mean something it was never intended to mean.

  Genesis 3:1 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:

  Matthew 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

- Satan has a counterfeit morality. For those with a bent towards lasciviousness, it is called hedonism, Epicureanism, or in modern terms, the Playboy philosophy. For those with an inclination to religious asceticism, it is called legalism, or Pharisaism. All forms of morality, not rooted in faith, with the glory of God as its objective, is sin. Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- Satan has a counterfeit objective, which is to be glorified as God. Isaiah 14:14 explains. Said Lucifer, “I will be like the most High.”
4. The Christian should not be surprised to find many Biblical concepts, and stories, embedded in the belief systems of other world religions, for Satan takes the truth to copy it before using it to deceive others. Nor should they embrace the other world religions simply because there is an element of truth in them. There is only one true truth, and that is Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The Spread of Zoroasterism

Darius accepted, and spread the beliefs of Zoroaster. The religion has found descendants in the people of Persia, called Parsees. It was in AD 936 that a group of Zoroastrians immigrated to Gujarat, in India, to escape the Muslim prosecution. In the 17th century, Parsees moved to Bombay, a port city in Western India. There they took part in shipbuilding, textile industry, as well as trade, and eventually prospered. The Parsees, both men and women, contributed a great deal to well-being of the Indian community. They built hospitals, orphanages, schools, factories, and fire temples.

One famous Parsee was Jehangir R.D. Tata, who established India's first air service, Tata Aviation, which later became Air India. The other was Sir Ness Wadia, who established the first wireless service connecting India and Britain. He was the first Indian Knighted by the British.

The Decline and Fall of Persia

Despite the religious overtones of Zoroasterism, there was no moral strength to purify the people. The royal court was characterized by excessive luxury and cruelty. The women of the court were known to be especially barbaric, and yet their influence was great. Because truth, and justice, and family values were not honored in society, the nation slowly declined, until it collapsed under the forces of the self-disciplined Greeks.

Then Came Xerxes

The successor of Darius was Xerxes, whose main objective was to establish his sovereignty over all his subjects. He is best known in history for his invasion of Greece. Herodotus, the Greek historian (b. BC 485), records that no less than five million Persians moved with him on his military expeditions. Josephus writes that the Jews were part of the body that marched. But it was to no avail. At Thermopyle, the Persians were opposed by Leonidas, one of the kings of Sparta, with only three hundred followers. Time and again the great masses of the Persian army was driven back, until twenty thousand were slain. The three hundred were finally betrayed and put to death. But then the Greek fleet at Salamis, under the extra-ordinary leader Themistocles, defeated the Persian fleet. Xerxes witnessed the battle from an elevated position on land.

“A king sat on the rocky brow
That looks on sea-born Salamis;
And men in nations lay below,
And ships in thousand; -- all were his.
He counted them at break of day;
And when the sun set, where were they?”
Xerxes left to return to Persia, fortunate to be alive. He left behind a trusted general, Mardonius, who fared no better than the king. In two separate battles, one on land the other on sea, one at Plateas in Boeotia, and by the sea at Mycale in Asia Minor. From this time on, no Persian army crossed the Hellespont. The son of Xerxes was Artaxerxes Longimanus who succeeded him. His reign lasted for forty-one years. The name Longimanus was given to him because of his hands. It is said when he stood they reached to his knees.

The Book of Esther

No survey of the Persian period would be complete without the story of Esther. It is widely believed among Bible scholars that the king of Persia, who married Esther, and made this Jewish lady queen, was Xerxes, called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. During the formation of the canon of Scripture, there was concern about including Esther, since the name of God is not mentioned. However the providential hand of God is evident in all details. As the narrative unfolds, the king of Persia is living in splendor in his palace at Shushan, or Susa, where many parties were given.

When Queen Vashti refused to appear at one of the banquets, a political crisis ensued. Suddenly men grew afraid that the queen’s defiance of the king’s order would lead to social unrest, as ordinary wives defied their husbands. “For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not” (Esther 1:17).

The defiance of the queen led to a rapid series of events to unfold, including – the selection of Esther to become the most favored concubine, and then queen, to Ahasuerus; the refusal of the Jew Mordecai, to do obeisance to Haman the Agagite, or Amalekite, and counsel to the king; the royal decree to exterminate the Jews; the exposure of the plot by Mordecai; the intervention by queen Esther on behalf of her people; the exposure of Haman and his execution, and the survival of the Jews. Had the attempt to kill the Jews been accomplished in this the original holocaust the history of the world would have been different. But God was present to watch over a Covenant People.

A Question of Situational Ethics

There is one facet to the story of Esther that is disturbing to thoughtful individuals, for it concerns an ethical question. The initial presentation of Esther to the king, was so that she might sleep with him for one night, and satisfy his sexual needs.

“For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not” (Esther 1:17).

Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name” (Esther 2:13-14).
For this one night with the king, every maiden in the court was given whatsoever she desired. As she had been prepared by her uncle, and as the custom of the day permitted, Esther went in as a virgin to sleep with the king. “So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign” (Esther 2:16).

The surprising turn in the story comes when the king falls in love with Esther, to the point he is willing to make her queen, and she in turn is discovered to be a Jewess, who is willing to intercede on behalf of her people, at great risk to her own safety. “And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti” (Esther 2:17).

It seems that the sexual sins of Esther’s fornication, and the king’s multiple acts of adultery, for he was still married officially to Vashti, became overshadowed by the attempted holocaust. But what is to be made of the sexual sins of the covenant child Esther? And what is to be about Mordecai for he is not innocent either? It was he who encouraged his niece to sleep with the king. It was Mordecai who brought Esther to the court’s attention (Esther 2:5-8).

The Scriptures and Sexual Sins

1. God takes sexual sins seriously especially for the believer, because the body is declared to be His dwelling place.

   - 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.

2. The apostle Paul made it very plain that sexual sins such as fornication, and adultery, are damnable sins worthy of the most severe judgment in time and eternity.

   - Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness … 21 of the which 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.

   - Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

   - 1 Corinthians 6:13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
3. The sexual misconduct of the man in the church of Corinth led to him being placed under the sentence of death.

- *1 Corinthians 5:1* 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.

4. The covenant people of God are to keep themselves from sexual sins, for such is the will of God.

- *1 Thessalonians 4:3* 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:

5. Apart from repentance, God’s judgment falls surely and severely upon those who engage in sexual misconduct, and lead others into sexual sins.

- *Revelation 2:12* And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. …16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

6. Despite the divine prohibitions, despite the fearful judgments of God, despite the shame associated with conduct that violates the conscience and the moral law of God, the covenant people of God struggle with sexual sins, or abandon themselves to the passions that rage in the heart.

- When Noah got drunk. His son Ham either took advantage of his situation and committed a homosexual act upon his person or mocked him in his drunken condition. The result was the Curse of Canaan. *Genesis 9:24-25* And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

- When Lot got drunk, his daughters lay with him in incest, to produce children. *Genesis 19:36* Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.
Lot was willing to give his two virgin daughters to be raped by the men of Sodom rather than let the homosexuals in the community violate by rape his guests. *Genesis 19:8 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.*

David lusted after Bathsheba, and then lay with her to produce a child, after which he had her husband Uriah killed, to cover up his deed. *2 Samuel 11:2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. … 17 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. 16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. 17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

The sexual appetite of Solomon was so great he needed 700 wives and 300 concubines to satisfy him. *1 Kings 11:3 And he [Solomon] 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.*

In the church of Corinth fornication was openly reported. *1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,*

7. Many more illustrations could be cited concerning the sexual sins of professing saints, but these are given to reflect, that across the centuries inappropriate sensuality has plagued the covenant people of God.

8. When Esther was invited to sleep with the king for one night, when she was encouraged to do so by her uncle Mordecai, when Esther conceded to the proposition, and prepared herself for a night of lost virginity albeit with a rich reward, she did not hesitate.

9. Only God can sort out the inner workings of the heart in this most difficult area. This much is certain from the story of Esther, and the teaching of Paul. God is sovereign over sin, and can make good come out of any form of evil. When Esther did become queen, and her relationship with the king was at least made legal she was able to do much good for her people, prompting Mordecai to ask “who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).
The apostle Paul said, “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” (Romans 8:28). In His sovereign will, God can make good come out of evil.

- The taking of Bath-sheba to bed, and then to wife, led to the birth of Solomon.
- The loss of her virginity to the king, led to a queen’s position for Esther.
- The murder of Christ led to the salvation of countless immortal souls.
- The sentence of death for the man in Corinth, led to his repentance.

God knows how to make good come out of evil. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound (Romans 5:20). God is sovereign over sin.

**Pastoral Counsel for Sexual Sins**

For those who find themselves addicted to sexual misconduct in particular, and any other addictive behavior in general, the following pastoral counsel is provided.

- Seek continually, on the other side of the acts of evil for divine deliverance. Remind God the Father of the promise of the angels who told the shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus that He “shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus said of Himself that He came to set the captives free. Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he 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. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him

- Seek for the practical wisdom needed to break the cycle of sin. James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

- Ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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?

- Make no provision for the flesh. Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. Stop putting yourself in the path of temptation, and stop setting aside time for evil.
• Become accountable to a trusted person. Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

• Remember that there is not a man or woman worth going to hell over. Romans 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

• Remember not only who you are, but to Whom you belong. 1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

• Put no confidence in the flesh to subdue or overcome sexual passions. Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision [converted], which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

• Do not merely rely on the Holy Spirit to slay sexual passion, yield wholly to His sovereign work. Romans 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. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

• Do not doubt the reality of salvation, but hope in God. Philippians l 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

• Believe there is a way of escape from temptation, and then use the simple solutions the Sovereign provides. 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. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. In Scripture covetousness is declared to be idolatry. One of the root causes of sexual sins is covetousness, or an inordinate desire to have more than we should or something we should not have.

• Run to the mercies of God as many times in a day as necessary, for God will forgive without limit the sincere repentant. Matthew 18:21 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. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
• Ask God to write His law upon your heart according to promise. Seek to have a principle within that will regulate attitude and actions. *Hebrews 8:10* 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.

“I want a principle within of watchful, godly fear,  
A sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.

I want the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire,  
To catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.

From Thee that I no more may stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,  
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make;  
Awake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.  
Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy power impart;  
The mountain from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.

O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,  
And drive me to that blood again, which makes the wounded whole.”

Charles Wesley

• Practice the presence of God. *Psalm 139:7* Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

• As time is taken to do evil, and give full expression to sexual passions, so give time to repentance. *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.

• Never call wrong right. Never justify what is being done, or the sins that have been committed. *Isaiah 5:20* Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

• Seek to bring every thought into captivity for Christ. *2 Corinthians 10:5* Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.
• Accept the consequences of your actions without comment. In as far as sexual sins are not easily overcome; the judgment of God will fall in some form upon the life. Receive the chastening of the Lord without comment. Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Hebrews 12:6 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

The Survival of the Jews

In matchless grace God preserved the covenant people. God can cause prosperity in the midst of adversity, as He can turn cursing into blessing. The Hebrew people, during this period, began to be called Jews (Esther 2:5), as they were dispersed through one hundred and twenty seven provinces of the Persian Empire, from the Indus to Ethiopia (Esther 3:8). They were allowed to retain their national laws and customs as a distinct people (Esther 3:8), though they were not without their personal enemies (Esther 9:1). So well did the Jews prosper, they were able to contribute a substantial sum to the royal court (Esther 3:9). Skilled in warfare, they were able to kill 800 of their enemies in two days, and another 75,000 throughout the empire in self-defense (Esther 9:6, 15, 16).

No doubt many Persians became proselytes to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Esther 8:17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Becoming a Jew

How does one become a Jew who is a Gentile? In the Scriptures a distinction can be made between a racial Jew, a religious Jew, and a regenerate Jew.

• A racial Jew is anyone who has the genes of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob in the bloodline. A genealogy helps to establish the racial Jew. The Jews became very proud of their racial heritage. John the Baptist warned the people of his day not to depend upon being a racial Jew for salvation, but to repent, and embrace by faith the Messiah. Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

• A religious Jew is someone who has embraced the faith of Judaism, with its ceremonial rules and regulations. In this sense many people became a Jew, such as those in the Persian Empire, or Ruth the Moabites, in an earlier time.
• A regenerate Jew is someone who has received Jesus Christ as personal savior, by believing that He is the Son of the Living God, and the Savior of the world. A regenerate Jew has nothing to do with racial heritage, or ceremonial ritualism, but everything to do with the Messiah. John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Even Gentiles are declared to be the children of Abraham by faith. Galatians 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

The Story of Ezra

In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra, a descendant of the high priest Seraiah, began his return to Jerusalem, accompanied by no more than seven thousand others. Eighty years had passed since Zerubbabel and his company had returned to Jerusalem, which means a new generation must now take over the spiritual work. The glories of another generation cannot be passed on to the next, only the responsibilities. Ezra took his holy responsibilities seriously. Of particular concern to him was the establishment of the Law in the life of the Hebrew community. Gathering the people at the river Ahava, on the Euphrates, east of Damascus, Ezra proclaimed a fast. With the people humbled, hungry, and spread before him, Ezra prayed for God’s protection on the journey home. It would take four months to cross the hot burning desert. The journey was not made any easier by the treasures the people carried to dedicate in the temple, gold and silver vessels (Ezra 5:14-15). What Nebuchadnezzar had stolen, God was taking back.

A Sorry Surprise

Arriving in Jerusalem, Ezra was surprised to discover how the Law had been disregarded. Inappropriate marriage had taken place with idolaters. Drastic sins called for a radical change of lifestyle. The men had to be separated from their wives of idolatry if the purity of the Law of Moses was to be regained. Following a public confession of sins (Ezra 10:1-14), the strange wives were sent away, and an offering was made to the Lord. Ezra 10:19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.

A Student of Scripture

In addition to leading the people in moral reforms, Ezra taught the people to study, and honor the Scriptures once more. When the law was read in public, the people stood in respect. Nehemiah 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people ;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up. But Ezra not only read the Law, he interpreted. He explained the meaning of the verses so the people had understanding. Nehemiah 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. As the people went away to their local communities’, synagogues would be constructed for the study of the Scriptures, and for proper worship, with understanding. Religion had returned to the hearts of the people.
Unfortunately, there was a downside to this. Gradually an idea emerged, that besides the written Law, there was an oral Law which God had communicated but which was not recorded. The oral Law could only be known by tradition. And so the “tradition of the elders” was bound to be honored—until the time of Christ, who first violated them, and then spoke against them in the strongest of terms.

Matthew 15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Despite the teachings of Christ against the traditions of men, they continued to be honored. In the middle of the second century after Christ, Rabbi Judah, the son of Simeon, a well-respected teacher, collected the oral sayings or traditions, and wrote them down in the Mishna. Commentaries on the Mishna came next, called the Gemara. The Gemara, and the Mishna together, form the Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud, compiled by the Babylonian Jews, consists of twelve volumes.

The Story of Nehemiah

Thirteen years after Ezra arrived at Jerusalem, a zealous helper arrived on a visit. His name was Nehemiah. His father has risen to wealth and prosperity under the kings of Persia. Now his son had become a cupbearer to the king, with honor and influence. Longing to visit the city of his father, Nehemiah was allowed to go home, by the permission of Artaxerxes. What Nehemiah saw when he arrived at Jerusalem shocked him. He found the walls in disrepair, and crumbling. Moved to action, he stirred the people to repair the walls within fifty-two days. Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. This remarkable achievement was accomplished despite Samaritan opposition by individuals such as Sanballat, the Horonite, Geshem, the Arabian, and Tobiah, the Ammonite. So great was the leadership of Nehemiah in calling the people to reformation, a national covenant was entered into. So gracious was the heart of Nehemiah, that he took no salary from the State while acting as governor. Having promised to return within twelve years to Persia, Nehemiah kept his word and resumed his duties at court.

- Nehemiah 2:1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.
Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

- Nehemiah 13:6 But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

A Return to Jerusalem

While Nehemiah went back to Persia, he was destined to return to Jerusalem on a second visit. During his absence, the people slid back to inappropriate behavior. Leading the way in open immorality was the high priest. He had proven to be unfaithful to his holy office, allowing Tobiah, the Ammonite, to have lodging in the chambers of the house of God. Nehemiah put an end to this practice, which led Manasseh, a grandson of the high priest, who had married the daughter of Sanballat, to go to Samaria where, on Mount Gerizim, he constructed a temple of rival worship. Nevertheless, Nehemiah continued to reform the people, even at the point of force. He was determined the Mosaic law would be enforced.

The Loss of Title, but Not Dignity

While the religious reforms continued, the royal families of Judah became more and more obscure. Genealogical records were carefully kept, but it was to no avail. The political power belonged to the strongest, and latest conqueror of the Middle East. The royal line declined, until at last its representative, and legitimate heirs, were found in the humble condition of a carpenter, in the obscure village of Nazareth.

The Last Word

Soon after the days of Nehemiah, God spoke one last time before a long silence shrouded the divine voice. The last prophet of the Old Testament era was named Malachi. Like so many others before him, Malachi rebuked the sins of the people, and called them to repentance. The priests in particular were preached against, for they had allowed the marriage covenant to be violated. Divorce was far too common. The people worshipped without heart, and were careless in the manner in which they approached God. Malachi reminded the people that God would move to discipline His people. But then in grace, He would restore them to favor. The Messiah would come, and before His coming there would be a forerunner in the spirit and power of Elijah. This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist. The Old Testament ends with the great promise of a redeemed people being realized. Mal 3:17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.
Supplemental Material

Basic Bible Doctrines
Doctrine of Fear

The New Testament Teaching

1. Personal standards, mixed with fear of social disapproval, may prohibit holy behavior. When Joseph discovered Mary was with child, he was fearful of taking her to wife.

- Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

2. When a Christian’s conduct is above reproach, and the motives are pure in the sight of God, there is no reason to fear the slanderous comments of others.

- Matthew 10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

3. Legitimate fear is a sanctified terror of the omnipotent God, who has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. God would have us fear Him, so there can be freedom to love and obey Him, with a clear conscience.

- Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

4. Illegitimate fear is emotion which produces daily apprehension because the mind says to itself that individuals are nothing more than an animal.

- Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows

5. Unexplained phenomena causes the heart to be fearful.

- Jesus walking on the water. Matthew 14:26 And when the disciples saw him [Jesus] walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

- Zacharias being able to talk. Luke 1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

- The healing of the sick. Luke 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.
The casting out of demons. Luke 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

6. God uses fear to help restrain many expressions of evil. The enemies of Christ were cautious in condemning His ministry, because they feared the reaction of the people if they gave an answer to a question Jesus had for them concerning John the Baptist. The Lord asked what was the origin of his ministry. The Pharisees thought about the matter, and decided they could not answer.

Matthew 21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

7. Holy angels can produce fear in the hearts of men.

- The unconverted. Matthew 28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
- The converted. Luke 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

8. Holy angels try to calm the fears of the saints, both men and women, by assuring them of their good intentions.

- Women comforted. Matthew 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

- Men comforted. Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

9. Those who learn to fear God will enjoy divine mercy.

- Divine mercy. Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

10. When a Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit and prays, God can be served without fear of men.

- Luke 1:67 And his [John’s] father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

11. Illegitimate fears are overcome, embracing the following facts of faith.

- Knowing the Lord has a geographical, and occupational will for every life. *Luke 5:10*
  And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

- Knowing the Lord will avenge His own. *Luke 18:2*
  There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night

- Remembering to Whom the believer belongs will help to calm fears. *Romans 8:15*
  For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba [Papa], Father.

12. Sometimes divine healing will come when fear is cast out, and permission is granted to have faith in a healing miracle.

- *Luke 8:50*
  But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

It must be kept in mind that permission must be granted for faith to be exercised, otherwise there is danger in developing faith in faith, which is a work of the flesh. A perfect example of this can be found in the life of Catherine Marshall. After suffering for several years with a case of tuberculosis, God gave Catherine permission to believe she would be healed. And so she was.

13. Remembering the promise of Jesus, minimizes fear of the future. He will give the kingdom to those who love Him.

- *Luke 12:32*
  Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

- *John 12:15*
  Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

- *Hebrews 12:28*
  Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:
14. Those who will not fear God by choice, might be forced to fear Him by circumstances. Jesus predicted a time when the hearts of men would fail “for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:26). In AD 70 this prophecy was literally fulfilled, and will be fulfilled again at the Second Advent.

15. If a conscious choice, and circumstances do not cause the heart to learn to fear God, the heart will become so adamant that even in death, God is cursed. When Jesus was placed on the Cross he was crucified with two other men. One man began to curse, and was rebuked for not fearing God. “But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?” (Luke 23:40) In Romans 3:18 the apostle Paul writes of hardened individuals saying, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

16. Though the heart of the Christian might know the emotion of fearing others, the Christian is still compelled to do what is noble and right, illustrated in the actions of Joseph of Arimathaea.

- John 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

17. When the heart is most afraid, Jesus will come to comfort His people. He always has. He always will.

- John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

18. If the question were asked, “How does a person learn to fear God?” the Scriptures provide an answer.

- The performance of miracles can cause the heart to learn to fear God. The miracles the apostles performed were designed to cause men to fear God. Miracles are not a form of mass entertainment, or to attract a crowd. Miracles are meant to induce a holy terror of the Almighty. Acts 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

- Divine discipline can cause the heart to learn to fear God. The premature demise of Ananias and his wife illustrates this point. Acts 5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

- Preaching the gospel can produce fear of God in the heart, though it does not always lead to a conversion. Acts 24:25 And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.
• Demonic activity, not handled properly, can cause the heart to fear God. Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 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. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

• Remembering the severity and justice of God can induce the heart to learn to fear God. Romans 11:20 Well; because of unbelief they \[national Israel\] were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

• Public accountability will produce a godly fear. 1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

19. When the church fears God, there are some wonderful results.

• There is peace in the congregation as spiritual growth takes place. Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

• Holiness is perfected. 2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

• Genuine repentance takes place. 2 Corinthians 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

• The capacity to receive a fallen brother is found. 2 Corinthians 7:15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

20. It is normal to be fearful due to the fall. Even the apostle Paul confessed to his personal fears.

• 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

21. Though natural fears are normal, they are to be minimized, and overcome by faith.

• Confidence that the will and work of the Lord are being done helps to overcome fears. 1 Corinthians 16:10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.
• Suffering for the sake of righteousness tends to eliminate fear. The apostle Paul noticed that his suffering caused other believers to become bolder in witnessing. Philippians 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

22. There are spiritual fears of concern that mark the sensitive and mature Christian’s heart.

• The loss of the simplicity in Christ should be feared. 2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

• A congregation marked by sins of the tongue and mind is something to fear. 2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

• Not receiving all the promises of God should be of spiritual concern. Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

23. The conclusion of the matter is that the Christian life is to be worked out in an atmosphere of fear and trembling, which means it is to be taken very seriously. Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

23. A godly fear is not the same as a fleshly fear or the fear produced by self-doubts, sin, Satan, or the world.

• 2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

26. Fleshly fear is characterized by the following.

• An inordinate terror of death. Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

• An inducement of terror in others, verbally, or physically. 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

27. Christ has come to deliver individuals from the fears induced by the Fall.

• Christ delivers believers from fleshly fears by His faithful work of redemption. Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
• Christ delivers believers from fleshly fears by encouraging them to pray and to affirm faith. *Hebrews 13:6* So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

28. Godly fear is visibly recognized.

• Godly fear is identified by gospel obedience. *Hebrews 11:7* By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

• Godly fear will produce a sense of the presence of God. *Hebrews 12:21* And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, *I exceedingly fear and quake :)*

• Godly fear is accompanied by a sense of humility. *1 Peter 3:15* But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

• Godly fear will move to save others. *Jude 23* And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.
Doctrine of Balaam

1. Balaam was an ungodly prophet who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia.
   - Deuteronomy 23:4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

2. Although he was identified with the Midianites, Balaam possessed some knowledge of the true God. Balaam gave honor to the Lord for his prophetic gifts but in the end he was absorbed with himself.
   - Numbers 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

3. In the year BC 1401, the Israelites encamped in the Plain of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, united with the Midianites to drive the Israelites away. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites for money.
   - Numbers 22:5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:

4. Despite his initial apprehensions over the lawfulness of cursing the Israelites, Balaam decided to speak whatever the Lord gave him. Balak agreed.

5. Seven altars were prepared, upon each of which Balak and Balaam offered a bullock and a ram. Three times Balaam started to speak against Israel, and three times his cursing was turned to words of blessing, and magnificent prophecies.
   - 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 Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

6. Realizing that he could not curse the Israelites, Balaam suggested that the Israelites be led into acts of sexual immorality (Numbers 31:16).
   - Numbers 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

7. Balaam's life came to an end when Balaam sided with the Midianites in a pitched battle against the Israelites.
- Numbers 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

8. The Word of God looks upon Balaam as an evil person full of evil deeds. Jude 11 warns about The Error of Balaam, which is trying to make merchandise out of God’s people.

- Jude 11 Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

9. The Way of Balaam is the great sin of simony, or commercializing the gifts of God.

- 2 Peter 2:15 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;

10. The Doctrine of Balaam is to abandon godly separation in favor of worldly conformity. Balaam taught Balak to corrupt people he could not curse by encouraging them to marry Moabite women, and so commit spiritual fornication.

- Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

- Numbers 31:15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

- Numbers 22:25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

- Numbers 23:8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?

11. The Tragedy of Balaam is reflected in that he was a man who could have been used in a positive way in the service of the Lord. His soul was sensitive to spiritual matters, and he had contact with God in a most unusual way, until the day greed was found in his heart.
Doctrine of the Vow

1. By definition, a vow is a strong verbal oath, taken in the sight of the Lord, that a certain action will, or will not be performed. There is usually a condition involved.

- *Genesis 28:20* And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

2. God remembers the vows that are made, and expects those who make them to keep them.

- *Genesis 31:13* I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.
- *Numbers 30:2* If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.
- *Deuteronomy 23:21* When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

3. When the Mosaic Law was established, provision was made for the offering of a voluntary offering, to visualize a vow.

- *Leviticus 7:16* But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten:

4. The sacrifice made in association with the vow had to be a pure offering, without blemish to indicate the sincerity, and purity of the heart.

- *Leviticus 22:21* And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

5. Either a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow, which caused them to be set apart from others for the service of God. The obligation was either for life, or for a defined time. The term “Nazarite vow” comes from the Hebrew word *nezer*, meaning to be separate.
6. During the course of keeping the Nazarite vow, there was to be the separation from strong drink, and the hair was not to be cut.

7. Sometimes a very foolish vow can be made, such as the vow of Jephthah.

8. Sometimes an honorable vow can be made, such as when Hannah dedicated her child Samuel to the service of the Lord.
9. Sometimes a religious vow can be used as a covering for treachery, as in the case of Absalom who plotted to take the kingdom from his father David.

- 2 Samuel 15:7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. 8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. 9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

10. As an act of genuine worship, making vows to God is an acceptable form.

- Psalms 65:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

- Psalms 76:11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

- Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

11. Only a fool would break a vow made to God.

- Ecclesiastes 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

12. It is far better not to ever make a vow to God, than to make one, and break it.

- Ecclesiastes 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

13. It is not wrong for a vow to be made to God. However, a vow should meet some criteria.

- A biblical vow should come from the heart.
- A biblical vow should be rooted in righteousness, whereby the glory of God is in view while others are blessed.
- A biblical vow should be thoughtful and obtainable.
- A biblical vow should be definite in scope and easy to be remembered.
- A biblical vow should be kept at all cost.
Doctrine of War

1. The symbol of war is a red horse.
   - Revelation 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

2. War between Satan, and his demons, and the angels of God, once took place in heaven.
   - Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

3. Though war is horrible, God has approved it on certain occasion.
   - 2 Samuel 22:35 He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.
   - Psalms 144:1 A Psalm of David. Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.

4. Civil war has always been part of the history of nations.
   - Judges 12:1-6
   - Judges 20
   - 2 Samuel 2:12-31
   - 2 Samuel 3:1
   - 2 Samuel 20
   - 1 Kings 14:30
   - 1 Kings 16:21
   - Isaiah 19:2

5. There are times when war is prohibited.
   - 2 Chronicles 11:4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

6. Sometimes war can be, and should be averted, as per Joshua 22:11-34.

7. In times of war much foolish boasting takes place.
   - 2 Kings 18:19-36
   - 2 Chronicles 13:4-12
8. War leads to terrible acts of violence, including the extermination of the enemy.

- Numbers 31:7-17
- Deuteronomy 2:33-34
- Deuteronomy 20:13-18
- Joshua 6:21,24
- Joshua 8:24-25
- Joshua 10:2-40
- 1 Samuel 15:3-9
- 1 Samuel 27:8-11

9. Some wars are considered by God to be justified.

- *Exodus 14:13* And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. 14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

- *Deuteronomy 3:21* And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. 22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

- *1 Samuel 17:45* Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

- *Psalms 18:34* He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

10. God will not hesitate to use war as a form of severe divine judgment against His enemies, and even against His own.

- *Exodus 23:24* Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

- *Leviticus 26:17* And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

11. War is repulsive to God. Because David was a violent man, he was not allowed to build the Holy Temple.
1 Chronicles 22:8-9 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

12. War brings fear and panic to a people.

- Exodus 15:14-16 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

13. Since all things are in the hands of our sovereign God, He is free to threaten defeat in war for the unrighteous.

- Deuteronomy 32:25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.

- 1 Samuel 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

- Isaiah 30:15-17 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.


16. War causes great agitation (Amos 2:2).

17. Many are killed, or neglected in times of war, including innocent women and children (Isaiah 14:19; 18:6).

18. The evils of war are numerous (2 Samuel 2:26; Psalms 46:8; Isaiah 3:25-26; 5:39-30; Jeremiah 4:19-31; Amos 6:9-10).
19. One day God will cause all wars to cease (Psalms 46:9; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).

20. Until Christ comes there will be wars and rumors of war (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9).

21. Warfare is used in a figurative way to speak of the spiritual conflicts of the saints.

22. Spiritual warfare is not after the flesh (2 Corinthians 10:3).

23. Christians are to wage a good spiritual warfare before God (1 Timothy 1:18-19).

24. Spiritual warfare is called “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12).

25. The believer fights against many things:

- the devil Gen. 3:15; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 1:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:17).
- the flesh (Romans 7:23; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).
- spiritual enemies (Psalms 38:19; 56:2; 59:3).
- the world (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5).
- death (1 Corinthians 15:26; Hebrews 2:14-15).

26. One part of the spiritual warfare of the believer is emotional in nature, as opposition arises from friends, or families (Micah 7:6; Matthew 10:35-36).

27. The spiritual war that the Christian engages in is carried on:

- under Christ, who is the Captain of the faith (Heb. 2:10).
- under the banner of the Lord (Psalms 60:4).
- with great faith (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
- with a pure conscience (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
- with a heart which is steadfast in the sphere of faith (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:9; Heb. 10:23).
- with sobriety (Jude 1:3).
- with due consideration (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8).
- with sobriety (1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8).
- with a mindset willing to endure hardness (2 Timothy 2:3, 10).
- with absolute confidence in God (Psalms 27:1-3).
- with earnest prayer (Psalms 35:1-3; Eph. 6:18).
- without earthly entanglements (2 Timothy 2:4).

28. Those who merely profess a Christian faith will not persevere in the hour of spiritual conflict (Isaiah 9:3).
29. Because every believer has been enlisted in the spiritual conflict of the ages he must engage the enemy and stand firm (Philippians 1:30; Ephesians 6:13-14)

30. The saints are exhorted to be zealous in war (1 Timothy 6:12; Judge 1:3).

31. In the hour of battle there is
   - comfort (Isaiah 4:11-12; 51:12; Micah 7:8; 2 Corinthians 7:5-6; 1 John 4:4).
   - divine help from the Father (Psalms 118:13; Isaiah 41:13-14).
   - divine protection (Psalms 40:7).
   - strength from God (Psalms 20:2; 27:14; Isaiah 41:10).
   - strength from Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 4:17).
   - divine deliverance (2 Timothy 4:18).

32. In all things there is to be thanksgiving (Romans 7:25; 1 Corinthians 15:57).

33. Spiritual war requires protective amour
   - The belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14).
   - The breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14).
   - The preparation of the gospel (Ephesians 6:15).
   - The shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16).
   - The helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8).
   - The sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
     - Called “the armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11).
     - Called “the armor of righteousness”
     - Called “the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).

34. The armor which the Christian wears is
   - not carnal (2 Corinthians 10:4).
   - mighty through God (2 Corinthians 4-5).
   - required (Ephesians 6:13).
   - to be put on. (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:4). To be on the right hand and left, an idiom meaning” to attack “and to defend” (2 Corinthians 6:7).

35. Strategic victory in spiritual war is from God (1 Corinthians15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14). Victories shall be won
   - through Christ (Romans 7:25; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Revelation 12:11);
   - by faith (Heb. 11:33-37; 1 John 5:4-5);
   - over the Devil (Romans 16:20; 1 John 2:14);
   - over the flesh (Romans 7:24; Romans 1:25; Galatians 5:24) and
   - over the world (1 John 5:4-5).
- over all that exalts itself (2 Corinthians 10:5).

34. Those who overcome in spiritual warfare will

- eat of the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17).
- eat from the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7).
- be clothed in white clothing (Revelation 3:5).
- be pillars in the temple of God (Revelation 3:12).
- sit with Christ on his throne (Revelation 3:21).
- have a white stone, and in it a new name written (Revelation 2:17).
- have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).
- have the name of God written upon them by Christ (Revelation 3:12).
- have God as their God (Revelation 21:7).
- have the Morning Star (Revelation 2:28).
- inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).
- be confessed by Christ in the presence of God the Father (Revelation 3:5).
- be sons of God (Revelation 21:7).
- not be hurt by the Second Death (Revelation 2:11).
- not have their names blotted out of the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).
The Crusade and Medieval Christianity

1. It was not until the eleventh century that the pacifism of the early church died out and the glorification of the fighting man, the knight, took its place.

2. A partial explanation for this change can be found in the influx of Germanic people with their martial spirit. The clearest example of the outlook which resulted from the fusion of the barbarian religion of war and the Christian belief in peace, was the crusade.

3. In 1095 Pope Urban II urged his listeners to undertake a holy war under the auspices of the church to free the Holy Land from pagan control. The appeal succeeded, and the First Crusade was launched.

4. This campaign resulted in the conquest of Jerusalem (AD 1099), and the establishment of European states in the Middle East. There were more crusades to bolster these outposts, but by 1291 the last of them had fallen to the Muslims.

5. The crusades were the most obvious example of the merger between violence and holiness which took place in the medieval church.

6. The liturgy was expanded to include the blessing of battle standards and weapons. Knights were consecrated in a sacral fashion through ceremonies based on old pagan customs.

7. There were new religious orders, such as the Knight’s Templars, founded for the purpose of first protecting pilgrims, and then fighting the enemies of God.

8. Western peoples came to look upon groups that professed another faith as enemies of the kingdom of God who should be destroyed, or converted. It was considered wrong to show mercy to these people, and the code of the just war could be suspended when fighting them.

9. A favorite text of the crusaders summed up this attitude: “Cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed” (Jeremiah 48:10).

10. The acceptance of violence by medieval Christians is demonstrated by the theologians of the time, who tended to believe that war was a necessary condition of society. Aside from minor sects there was little consideration of non-resistance.

11. Scholars such as Gratian, and Thomas Aquinas, expressed the just war teaching in a manner that made it useful for aggressive action. Perhaps their greatest weakness was not what they wrote, but what they did not write. They composed reams of material on the doctrine of angels, but few lines on the problem of violence. Consequently the discussion of war was left to those who looked on it favorably as an aspect of chivalry.

12. The “heroic” knight of the time became the basis of later glorification of war. Geoffrey Chaucer illustrates this point of view in the Canterbury Tales, where the knight is the natural leader of the pilgrims, and is endowed with all that is graceful and noble in an individual.
Renaissance and Reformation Developments

13. The technological and political changes of fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe created the conditions in which many Christians were forced to reconsider their attitudes toward war. The major technological change was the development of cannons. These were able to destroy medieval fortresses and, when adapted for field use, made the knight obsolete.

14. The Middle Ages saw not only new methods of warfare, but also the rise of larger dynastic monarchies. The territorial ambition of these states led to large-scale warfare.

15. Christian humanists, such as Thomas More, and Erasmus condemned the new violence. They pointed out that Christ did not advance his kingdom by force, but through love and kindness. Erasmus reminded his readers that once wars are accepted as just, they tend to become glorious.

16. The humanists accused the church of missing the true meaning of Scripture, and instead becoming the obedient servant of ambitious, bloodthirsty princes.

17. The early Protestant Reformers (Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin) did not add their voices to this protest, however. In fact, when religious fanaticism was added to the new munitions, the religious wars that followed the Reformation were some of the most violent in all of European history.

18. Only one group of Reformers, the Anabaptists, practiced nonresistance. They advocated a literal return to the Sermon on the Mount, and an imitation of the peacefulness of Christ.

Total War and the Modern World

19. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) settled the last major European religious war, and ushered in a period when dynastic monarchs, on the pattern of Louis XIV, gained great power.

20. The states, led by these kings suppressed local war bands, and organized standing armies. These actions threatened the nobles, because their traditional position was based upon military service, and now they were losing this function. In an effort to preserve their status they became the officers of the new forces, and thus became an interest group who encouraged a larger military establishment.

21. The most famous of these nobles were the Junkers, in Prussia. Such individuals continued the medieval notions of chivalry, honor, and martial virtues.

22. During the eighteenth century there was much criticism of war, but with the coming of the French Revolution, a new wave of violence swept over Europe.

23. Napoleon diverted the revolution into a campaign to build a vast empire. He formed an alliance between nationalism and democratic idealism. His idea of organizing the entire nation for the purpose of warfare was ominous for later times.
24. Although defeated, he wielded great influence through his example, and the humiliation he created among those he defeated.

25. Challenged by the Napoleonic victories, a Prussian military instructor, Karl von Clausewitz, articulated the theory of “total war.” He believed that it is necessary to push conflict to its “utmost bounds” in order to win.

26. At the time he expressed these ideas, the industrial revolution began increasing the power of armaments so that an enemy could be totally defeated in a manner never before possible.

27. Christians, in the nineteenth century, responded to the danger caused by new armaments by encouraging international cooperation, and humanitarian endeavors.

28. Despite a strong current of nationalism, these attempts led to international gatherings, including the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907.

29. These meetings produced a series of recommendations protecting the rights of prisoners of war, insisting on care for the sick and wounded, ensuring the rights of neutrals, and attempting in other ways to limit the cruelty of war.

30. The forces that worked toward harmony and peace failed however, and with World War I, Clausewitz’s view moved closer to reality.

31. The two sides used mines, machine guns, poison gas, submarines, and aerial bombardment, thus taking the conflict to land, sea, and air.

32. The churches supported the war. The rhetoric of leaders such as Woodrow Wilson, made them feel that they were involved in a crusade to help humankind.

33. But reality came home to these church people, when, after the Peace of Versailles, which ended the conflict, nothing seemed to go as planned.

34. Totalitarian regimes came to power in many countries, and the Great Depression spread among the liberal democracies of the West. The years between the global conflicts were characterized by a spirit of weariness, and pacifism, in the United States, and Western Europe.

35. The League of Nations, organized for the purpose of keeping peace, was unable to prevent another crisis, and the world was plunged into the maelstrom of another war.

36. The attitude of Christians toward World War II was closer to the just war theory.

37. The struggle differed from the First World War, because it was a clash between antagonistic social and political systems.
38. Fascism, with its bizarre biological racism, led many former Christian pacifists, including Reinhold Niebuhr, to urge believers to participate in the conflict. New technology produced weapons that made war more destructive than ever before.

39. The atomic bomb seemed to represent the ultimate in destructive capability.

40. When the war ended, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union continued to threaten world peace.

41. The United Nations has tried to keep peace, but the arms race has become a fact of life, and the production of weapons has been woven into the texture of modern technological society.

42. The situation is made even more difficult because of a decline in Christian influence in a more secular society.

**Christian Responses to War**

43. As history demonstrates, it is difficult to formulate the Christian position on war. The early church, certain Christian humanists, and the majority of Anabaptist have taken a nonresistant, or pacifist stance.

44. The majority however, have followed Augustine, and claimed that certain wars are just. Denominations, including the Church of the Brethren, Quakers, and Mennonites maintain a nonresistant position, but the larger groups such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Reformed, adhere to the just war interpretation.

45. In certain rare instances Christians have even supported crusades. The medieval popes urged such action against the Turks, and in the twentieth century some fundamentalist Protestants in the United States have supported such an attitude toward the Soviet Union.

46. One of the more interesting developments in recent times is the effect that the threat of global conflagration is having on Christian attitudes toward war.

47. Leaders in many denominations have come to realize that the use of nuclear bombs makes a mockery of the just war position, because they automatically result in the slaughter of noncombatants.

48. In the minds of these “nuclear pacifists”, such weapons invalidate war as a rational policy.
Doctrine of Bitterness

1. There are many matters to become bitter about. Money issues can be the root of great bitterness as people have different ideas of who should get what, and how money should be spent. When Esau discovered that his father had given the family blessing to Jacob, he screamed with a bitter cry over his loss.

   - Genesis 27:34 *And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.*

2. Social injustice leads to resentment and bitterness. The lives of the Jews in Egypt were made bitter with hard work.

   - Exodus 1:14 *And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.*

3. God is aware of those experiences in life that can leave the soul bitter. Often He is moved to show mercy.

   - 2 Kings 14:26 *For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.*

4. A bitter spirit will lead to bitter words. Sometimes, the innocent are the object of bitter words.

   - Job 13:26 *For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*
   - Psalm 64:3 *Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*

5. A bitter spirit will only lead to more bitter experience in life unless this emotional disorientation of the soul is brought into captivity for Christ. What a person sows they will reap. In the area of immorality, the writer of Proverbs saw the end of loose living for both men and women.

   - Proverbs 5:4 “*But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*
   - Eccl 7:26 *And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.*

6. Sin is essentially a very bitter experience. Sometimes people think God is punishing them in a personal way, when the reality is that the natural consequence of evil is punishment enough.
• Jeremiah 2:19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

• Jeremiah 4:18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

7. Christian husbands are warned not to become bitter with their wives.

• Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

8. The tongue is to be guarded so that it does not try and produce both sweet and bitter words, for that cannot be done.

• James 3:11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

The rhetorical question demands a negative answer. No matter how hard a person may try to be sweet, or silent, if there is bitterness in the heart over some issue it will surface, and find expression.

9. The person who has bitterness in the heart should not be proud of that fact.

• James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

10. All bitterness in the heart of the believer is to be put away, and not ventilated.

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

11. A person knows if there is bitterness in the heart.

• Proverbs 14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

12. If bitterness is allowed to remain in the heart, and is not arrested, and dismissed, it will spring up and defile many.

• Hebrews 12:15 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.

13. Ironically the word of truth can be very bitter.
Revelation 10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

The only way to make the Word of Truth sweet again, is to redirect the thoughts so they are godly thoughts, and consistent with the mind of Christ, and reflect the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness and meekness.
 Doctrine of Witchcraft and Demonism

1. When God established the nation of Israel as a theocracy He wanted no rivals. All false gods were to be destroyed, along with individuals who tried to lead people into the world of the occult.

   - Exodus 22:18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.
   - Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

2. Despite the divine prohibition, the art of speaking with the dead, and seeking out spirits from beyond the grave persisted in Israel, and periodically was encouraged.

   - Isaiah 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.

3. It is possible for a person to be energized by, and promoted by the demonic world.

   - Acts 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.

4. There is no basis for making a distinction between White Magic and Black Magic. God condemns it all. Nothing about Black Magic or White Magic is innocent.

5. Sorcery is associated with false prophecy, which is why those in the charismatic movement, and those involved in eastern mysticism should be especially cautious, for they open themselves to the spirit world in an unusual way by suspending their minds.

   - Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus.

6. Witchcraft, and all who are involved in the occult are enemies of the Cross, and hostile to the gospel.

   - Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

7. When the witch of Endor conjured up Samuel from among the dead (1 Samuel 28:15), it was a matter of God manifesting His absolute sovereignty over everyone and everything.
8. Samuel was allowed to appear to Saul to the surprise of the witch (1 Samuel 28:12), which indicates that normally, when the occult practitioner is in charge, nothing unusual will happen.

9. Though he was disturbed from his soul’s rest, Samuel was well informed of the situation, and of future events. How much those who are with the Lord know about the affairs of earth is a matter of interesting speculation. The Catholics go too far in saying some dead saints know a lot about the affairs of those on earth to the point they can change the outcome through prayer to themselves.

10. What is more certain is that some of the fallen angels, called principalities (Romans 8:38), have a vital interest in the gospel message. If Christ is the Son of God, if He has crushed the serpents head (Genesis 3:15), if the Christian message of salvation by grace through faith alone is true, then these principalities will be eternally damned, just as some are now reserved in chains of darkness.

- Jude 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

11. Demons are addressed in a number of different ways in the New Testament.

- They are called “unclean spirits”. Matthew 10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

- They are called “wicked (or evil) spirit”. 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. Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

- Paul calls them “deceiving spirits”. 1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

- John refers to “the spirit of error” and “spirits of demons”. 1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

- Revelation 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.
• Luke describes one demon as a “spirit of divination”’ Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

12. When a devil or demon possesses a soul, great harm is done to the body in the form of mental and physical illness. Christ has power to cast out the devil and bring healing.

• Matthew 17:14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

13. Surprisingly enough the enemies of Christ accused Him of being in alliance with Satan's kingdom, including his demons.

• Mark 3:22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

• John 8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

14. The charge of being in league with Satan was also made against John the Baptist.

• Matthew 11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

• Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

15. The works of Jesus, His personal goodness and righteousness showed the claims against him were not true. Christ will always be victorious over Satan and his kingdom.

• Matthew 12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.
• Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

16. The power Jesus had to cast out demons was invested in His disciples.

• Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

17. The power of God to cast out unclean spirits has not ceased. God is still sovereign over sin, Satan and sickness. However, superstition should not drive belief in the Divine Healer. God heals according to faith, and prayer, and His own good pleasure. When Paul was in need of healing God said “No” to his repeated requests.

• 2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.
**Doctrine of the Conscience**

1. It is possible to feel guilty about some matters where no guilt is present.
   - *1 Corinthians 10:25* Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

2. While others may give wrong meaning to social practices, there need be no sin in the soul if the same situation can be done to the glory of God.
   - *1 Corinthians 10:27* 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

3. If the participation in a specific event will violate the conscience of someone else, or give offense, it is better to demonstrate social grace, and refrain from giving offense.
   - *1 Corinthians 10:28* But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:
   - *1 Corinthians 10:29* Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?
   - *2 Corinthians 1:12* For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

4. Every believer is called upon to renounce secret sins, questionable practices, and a deceitful handling of Scripture that would justify the unthinkable. The purpose for such a renewed conduct is to be able to have a good conscience in the sight of God.
   - *2 Corinthians 4:2* But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully: but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

5. With a good conscience the heart will want to engage in good deeds towards others.
   - *1 Timothy 1:5* Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

6. It is not easy to hold onto a good conscience, for there are many enemies of the soul seeking its downfall and destruction.
   - *1 Timothy 1:19* Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:
7. One of the grand objectives in the Christian’s life is to have a pure conscience so that belief and behavior match.

- *1 Timothy 3:9* Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

8. It is possible for the conscience to become insensitive to the point it is likened to being seared with a hot iron. Nothing touches the conscience when it becomes this hardened.

- *1 Timothy 4:2* Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Neither fearful threats of exposure, nor faithful warnings of ultimate damnation, neither the tragic consequences of others, or the wretchedness of public shame, and exposure, will stop the soul from sinning when the conscience is seared, and the heart is hardened.

9. Paul was able to maintain a good conscience before God, following salvation.

- *2 Timothy 1:3* I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

10. Some of the most tragic words in the Bible are these: “and conscience is defiled.” The conscience is defiled because there is no longer anything considered holy or sacred.

- Unbelief defiles sacred time—it no longer exists
- Unbelief defiles sex—marriage is no longer the place for intimacy
- Unbelief defiles life—for life is easily destroyed almost before it begins
- Unbelief defiles the Moral Law—it is no longer binding (Romans 13:8,9).

- *Titus 1:15* Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

11. Because sin has defiled the conscience, redemption is necessary. But what can cleanse the conscience? Good works? Animal sacrifices? No. Only the blood of Christ, applied to the soul, by faith.

- *Hebrews 9:9* Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

- *Hebrews 9:14* How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

- *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.
12. God offers to give men full assurance of faith provided they have clean hearts.

- *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.

13. Believers must pray for one another to have a good conscience.

- *Hebrews 13:18* Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

14. It is commendable when a Christian endures wrong actions, and attitudes, because his conscience is turned towards God.

- *1 Peter 2:19* For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

14. By having a good conscience, sinners can be put to shame.

- *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.

15. Gospel obedience produces a good and clear conscience before God.

- *1 Peter 3:21* The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Doctrine of Repentance

1. The word “repent”, when used in a general sense, means literally ‘to change one's mind.’ The word is used this way of God.

   - Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

2. When used of man, true spiritual repentance speaks of a sense of personal ‘guilt’ with the hope of God's mercy. There is a sense of deep regret for the act of transgression committed.

   - Matthew 26:75 And he [Peter] went out and wept bitterly.

3. Repentance demands a deep sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it, to obey God. There is a fundamental change in one’s life.

   - Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (cf Luke 5:32)

4. In the Old Testament the classic case of repentance is that of King David, after Nathan the prophet accused him of killing Uriah the Hittite and committing adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. David's prayer of repentance for this sin is found in Psalm 51.

5. In the New Testament the keynote of John the Baptist's preaching was, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

6. To the multitudes, John declared, “Bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8). It is not enough to simply say you are sorry.

7. When Jesus began His ministry, He took up John's preaching of the message of repentance, expanding the message to include the good news of salvation: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel” (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15).

8. In the preaching of Jesus, the truth is revealed that repentance and faith cannot be separated. By repentance, a person turns away from sin; by faith, a person turns toward God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Such a twofold turning, or conversion, is necessary for entrance into the kingdom

   - Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

   - “Unless you repent,” said Jesus, “you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).
9. This is the negative, or judgmental side of Jesus' message. The positive, or merciful message is seen in these words in Luke 15:10. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”.

10. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, His disciples continued His work of preaching the necessity of repentance and faith.

- Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

11. Repentance has many facets, some of which have more to do with the will than the emotions. There is an old saying, “Actions speak louder than words.” Another saying declares, “I cannot hear what you are saying because I am too busy watching what you are doing.”

- Repentance is a turning from wickedness and dead works.

- Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

- Hebrew 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

- Repentance is a turning toward God and His glory.

- Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

12. Repentance will lead to eternal life.

- Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
13. When a person truly repents there is a new ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge of the truth.

- 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

14. Repentance is associated with

- prayer

- 1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

- belief

- Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

- baptism

- Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- and conversion

- Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

15. Repentance is accompanied by

- humility

- Matthew 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

16. Repentance is God's will and pleasure.

- Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

- 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

17. Repentance is God’s command.

- Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

- Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

18. Repentance is a gift of God’s sovereign love.

- Acts 5:31 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.

- Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

- Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

- 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

19. Apart from gospel repentance no one can be saved, sanctified, or have any peaceful assurance of salvation.

Doctrine of Jealousy

1. As an emotion, jealousy [Heb. qanna’ (kaw-naw), to envy, to have a zeal] is ascribed to God as a divine attribute, and so need not be a sinful emotion.

The Father is Jealous

- Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

- Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

- Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

- Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

- Deuteronomy 6:15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

The Apostle Paul was Jealous for Christ’s Sake

- 2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The Holy Spirit is Jealous

- James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? (Lusteth, epipotheo (ep-ee-poth-eh'-o); potheo (to yearn); to dote upon, i.e. intensely crave possession (lawfully or wrongfully):

2. It is possible to provoke the Lord to jealousy.

God can be provoked to jealousy through idolatry.

- Deuteronomy 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

- Deuteronomy 32:21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
God can be provoked to jealousy through sins of immorality.

- 1 Kings 14:22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

- Psalms 78:58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

3. Unsanctified jealousy can lead to irrational behavior with tragic consequences, such as public examination and shame.

- Numbers 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

- Numbers 5:30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.

4. In the Old Testament era Joshua warned the people of God of the consequences of presumptuous sin.

- Deuteronomy 29:20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

- Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

5. In the New Testament era the Church is not to provoke the Lord to jealousy.

- 1 Corinthians 10:22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

6. God is pleased when individuals are zealous, and thus jealous, for His holy name.

**Phinehas honored the name of the Lord among the people of His generation.**

- Numbers 25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

The prophet Elijah was jealous for the cause of the Lord in his generation, and so apposed the prophets of Baal.
• 1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (cf. 1 Kings 19:14).

7. God is jealous to protect His own character.

• Ezekiel 39:25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

8. As God is jealous to protect His name, so He will move to protect all that He uses for His own glory.

The Land of Palestine

• Joel 2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

• Zechariah 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

• Zechariah 8:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

The Nation of Israel Prior to AD 70

• Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

9. In order to bring many in the nation of Israel to repentance, God once provoked the people to jealousy, by showing special favor to the Gentiles.

• Romans 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

• Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

10. When individuals do not arrest the slightest outburst of unsanctified anger, or jealousy, the potential increases for self-destructive, and other destructive behavior.

• Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
11. There is an unforgiving element to jealousy, for a key component is anger.

- *Psalms 79:5* How long, LORD? Wilt thou be angry forever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

12. A jealous person is a mean person, in as far as they consider, and manifest their jealousy.

- *Song of Solomon 8:6* Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

13. Because jealousy is such a strong emotion, the Lord is presented as going forth with such passion to war against His enemies.

- *Isaiah 42:13* The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

- *Ezekiel 16:38* And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

- *Ezekiel 16:42* So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.

14. If God is gracious, He will show the believer that which arouses His jealous anger.

- *Ezekiel 8:3* And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy….8:5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

15. God first warned national Israel about His jealous rage, and then He demonstrated it through the Assyrians, in 721 BC, and then the Chaldeans, in 586 BC.

- *Ezekiel 23:25* And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.

- *Ezekiel 36:5* Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.
6 Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

- Ezekiel 38:19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

16. The jealousy of God is intense, and the destruction of His enemies complete.

- Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

- Zephaniah 3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

17. On a personal level, there are many examples in Scripture of the self-destructive nature, and other destructive consequences of jealousy.

- Cain was jealous of Abel’s offering before the Lord.

- Sarah was jealous that Hagar was able to bear children and she was not.

- The brothers of Joseph were jealous because God and man favored him.

- Saul was jealous of David because the women of Israel sang his praises.

- Joab, a captain of the army of Israel, was jealous of the position of Abner, and found an occasion to kill him.

- The Ephraimites were jealous of Gideon, and then of Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel.

- The elder son of the rich man was jealous of his younger brother’s favor with the father after returning home from a life of debauchery.

- Sectional jealousy existed between Israel and the tribe of Judah.