

Jewish History

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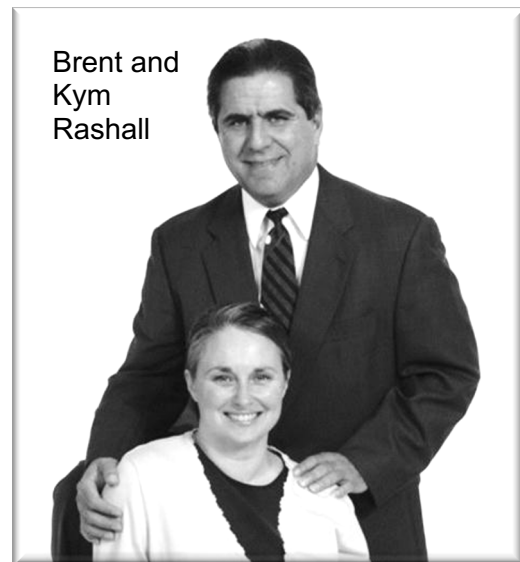
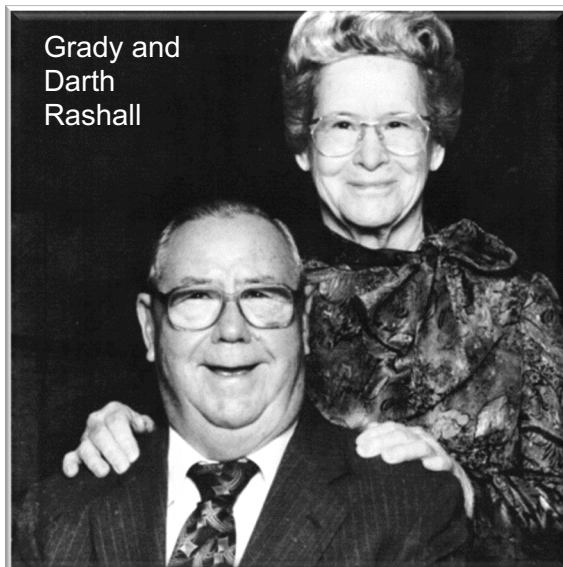
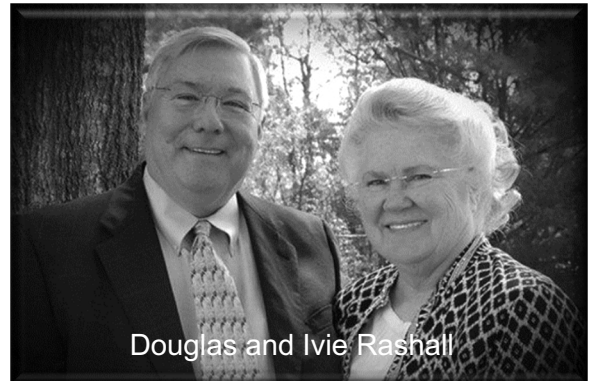
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Dedicated in memory of our pastor and founder, Douglas R. Rashall, and the four generations of Pentecostal preachers of his family and their love for Apostolic truth.



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PART I:

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM



4004 BC-2000 BC

Genesis 1:1-12:1

The history of the human race began with God's creation of Adam, but most of the Old Testament is concerned with the history of the Israelites, who later came to be called Jews. The history of Israel began with Abraham. But as a background for the history of Israel, we will give a brief outline of the history of the human race from Adam to Abraham.

God created Adam from the dust of the earth and took a rib from Adam's side to create Eve as a helpmeet to him. He put one forbidden tree in the beautiful garden He had prepared for the first man and woman. He told them they would die if they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Eve yielded to Satan's temptation to eat of the fruit and influenced Adam to eat of it. By this first act of disobedience, their fellowship with God was broken, and God banished them from the Garden of Eden, the place of the Tree of Life, into the place where sin, sorrow, sickness, and death reigned. And since the whole human race descended from Adam and Eve, the whole race has inherited their fallen nature of bondage to sin with its penalty of death (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6).

As the earth began to be populated, men continuously became more wicked (Genesis 6:1-7). God created Adam in His image, but after Adam's fall, his descendants were begotten in his fallen image (Genesis 5:1- 5).

In the course of about seventeen hundred years, men became so wicked that God destroyed them by a great flood. However, one man and his family found favor with God. Noah built an ark according to God's instructions and he, his family, and a pair of all the living creatures were saved by the ark. God saved this preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5) to preserve the race.

ABRAHAM

A natural assumption would have been that the descendants of Noah should have continued in righteousness, but this did not happen. Within about

two hundred years after the Flood, men became as wicked as they had been before. But again, there was one man of faith who found favor with God.

Abram, according to his ancestry (Genesis 11:10-26), was born about three hundred ten years after the Flood, and about one hundred twenty years after God scattered the people when they attempted to build the Tower of Babel.

God called Abram of Ur of the Chaldees to separate himself from his countrymen (Genesis 12:1-3). He left Ur with his father Terah, his wife Sarai, his brother Nahor and his wife, and his nephew Lot, whose father Haran had died in Ur. They journeyed up the Euphrates River to a place in upper Mesopotamia that they probably named Haran in honor of the brother who had died in Ur. Abram remained in Haran with his family until the death of his father Terah. God then again called him to leave his family and go into the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 7:2-4). He was seventy-five years old when, with his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, he left Haran to go into Canaan (Genesis 12:4-6).

As Abram passed through the land, the Lord appeared to him, promising He would give all this land to his seed. Abram then built an altar to the Lord and worshiped. He moved to a mountain east of Bethel and built another altar (Genesis 12:6-9).

Later, because of a famine in the land, he went into Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20). Sarai was very fair (beautiful) and, in fear that Pharaoh might kill him and take his wife, he introduced her as his sister. Pharaoh took Sarai into his house. God chastised Abram and dealt with Pharaoh concerning this, causing Pharaoh to send them back to Canaan (Genesis 12:14-20).

Sometime later it became necessary for Abram to separate from Lot (Genesis 13:5-13). There was strife between their herdsmen and Abram gave Lot his choice of location. Lot chose the well-watered plains west of the Jordan River; Abram remained in the hill country. God again promised Abram and his seed all the land of Canaan and told him his seed would become as the dust of the earth for multitude (Genesis 13:14-18).

After Lot had settled in Sodom, four kings of the east invaded the plains of Jordan and plundered Sodom and Gomorrah. They took Lot and the people, their goods and food and traveled north on the way to Damascus.

When Abraham heard that Lot had been taken captive, he armed his trained servants and pursued the kings by way of Dan to Hobah. He rescued Lot and the people and brought them back with their goods (Genesis 14:1-16).

It was on this occasion that Melchisedec, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the most high God, brought bread and wine and blessed Abram. And Abram paid tithes to him (Genesis 14:17-24; Hebrews 7:1-2).

The king of Sodom wanted to reward Abram, but he refused the reward. He wanted only God's reward and God did reward him with the promise of an heir. He made a covenant to give to his seed all the land of Canaan and described the boundaries of the land they should inherit (Genesis 14:21-24).

God's first covenant promise to Abram was that He would make of him a great nation, make his name great, and make him a blessing. But most important, He promised that in him all families of the earth should be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). Abram believed with simple faith all that God promised, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:1-6).

However, neither he nor Sarai could understand how they could have a child in their old age. Sarai, having been barren all her life, suggested that Abram take her Egyptian maid Hagar for a concubine so that her child might become Sarai's child. But their human reasoning did not fit God's plan, and upon Hagar's conception, Sarai and her maid became enemies. Hagar then fled from the wrath of Sarai to the desert where God looked after Hagar for Abram's sake. Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born (Genesis 16:1-16).

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him, telling him he should no longer be called Abram but Abraham since he was to become the father of many nations. The name Abram means "high father," but the name Abraham means "father of a great multitude" (Genesis 17:1-8). At this time God gave Abraham the covenant sign of circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14). God then promised that Sarai should have a son and that her name should no longer be Sarai but Sarah, for she would become a mother of nations.

It was almost too much for Abraham to believe that he, at ninety-nine years, and Sarah, at ninety years, should have a son. He said to God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Genesis 17:18). God said He would establish His covenant only with Sarah's son and with his seed. However, He promised to bless Ishmael and make of him a nation also (Genesis 17:19-22).

The Lord next appeared to Abraham as one of three travelers. Abraham very hospitably invited them to stop for rest while he and Sarah prepared food. One of the three proved to be the angel of God's presence, who again promised that Sarah should have a son. Sarah, from inside the tent, heard it and laughed. And God asked, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Genesis 18:14).

After the men (angels) had partaken of Abraham's hospitality, they traveled on toward Sodom. Abraham walked with them a short distance. Since God knew Abraham as His friend, He told him of His purpose to destroy Sodom. Sodom and Gomorrah's cup of iniquity was full. It was time to visit judgment on them, but first He would give Abraham the opportunity to pray for them for the sake of Lot. God finally promised to spare Sodom if ten righteous people could be found there. There were not ten righteous in Sodom. Nevertheless, God promised to deliver Lot and his family (Genesis 18:16-33).

The two angels sent to deliver Lot came to him as he sat in the gate of Sodom. That night there was a demonstration of the wickedness of the city. Lot and his visitors were spared only when the angels smote the men with blindness. Lot's sons-in-law were among the wicked.

When it was morning the angels forcibly led Lot and his wife and two unmarried daughters out of the city. The angels saved one small city in the area so Lot and his family might escape into it. Nevertheless, Lot's wife looked back (with longing for her place in Sodom) and turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Jesus used this incident to warn all of God's final judgment of sin (Luke 17:28-37).

Abraham journeyed south and came to dwell in the city of Gerar. Here he again introduced Sarah as his sister. Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Sarah, intending to make her his wife. But God intervened and saved the situation for Abraham and Sarah a second time (Genesis 20:1-18).

Abraham has been called "the friend of God" and "the father of the faithful." (See Genesis 13:14-17; 18:17-19; John 15:12-15; James 2:23; Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:6-9.) He was human and occasionally made mistakes and was sometimes slow to find the perfect plan of God. But in spite of his mistakes, he was a man of great faith and his greatest desire was to obey God in all things.

I like to think of Abraham's faith as a long-range faith. He lived in tents, moving from place to place in the land of Canaan. The only bit of land he ever

owned was a field with a cave, in the vicinity of Hebron, that he bought for a burial ground. Yet, he never doubted that God would fulfill all that He had promised. He even looked beyond the promised inheritance in the land of Canaan to that eternal city (Hebrews 11:8-10).

Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety when Isaac, the promised son, was born (Genesis 21:1-5). Ishmael, who was fourteen, was unhappy to have another son in the family. Sarah became unhappy when she saw Ishmael mocking her son Isaac. She told Abraham to cast out Hagar and her son so Ishmael could not be an heir with her son Isaac. Abraham was grieved to do this, but God told him to obey Sarah's wish. God had ordained that the seed who was to bless all nations (Galatians 3:16) should come through Abraham's true heir, Isaac (Genesis 15:4; 17:19-21; 21:12).

Isaac was probably a lad when God called Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain in the land of Moriah (Genesis 22:1-2). The place of the sacrifice was Mount Moriah, the same as the threshing floor of Ornan, the site that David had prepared for the temple in Jerusalem (II Chronicles 3:1-2).

Abraham fully obeyed the Lord, never doubting that God would fulfill all He had promised concerning Isaac (Hebrews 11:17-19). He bound his son on the altar and raised his hand with the knife to take his life, but the Lord held his hand and showed him a ram caught in a thicket. This was God's supreme test of Abraham's obedient faith. He said, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12).

Following this demonstration of Abraham's obedient faith, God repeated His promise of Genesis 12:1-3 and emphasized its surety by an oath. He said, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Genesis 22:18). The Seed of Abraham through whom all nations are blessed is the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). Because God could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself to give absolute assurance to all the heirs of His promise (Hebrews 6:13-18). What blessed assurance we have in the two immutable things: God's promise and God's oath.

Sarah died at the age of one hundred twenty-seven years and was buried in the cave of Machpelah that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite (Genesis 23:1-20).

Since the great nation that would produce the Christ should come through Isaac, it was most important that Isaac should not take a wife from among the

Canaanite tribes. The line of Abraham must be kept pure through the succeeding generations. So Abraham sent his faithful and most trusted servant back to Haran to find a bride for Isaac.

The servant prayed for direction and God led him to the well where Rebekah came for water. She was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife Milcah. When the servant asked her for water to drink, she gave him water and drew water for his ten camels, in answer to his prayer (Genesis 24:10-21). He was hospitably entertained and his camels were provided for in the home of Rebekah's parents. The servant told them of his mission, how he had prayed, and how Rebekah had answered his prayer. The family of Rebekah agreed that this was the will of the Lord. They left the decision up to her and she agreed to go with the servant immediately (Genesis 24:22-61).

Isaac was waiting in the field when they arrived back in the vicinity of Beer-sheba. He loved this beautiful girl, took her into his mother's tent, and she became his wife (Genesis 24:62-67).

Abraham died at the age of one hundred seventy-five years and Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 25:7-11).

Lesson in Review

Part 1. From Adam to Abraham

1. The period of time from Adam to Abraham covers approximately what years?

2. The history of the human race began with God's creation of Adam, but most of the Old Testament is concerned with what?

3. From what land did God call Abram from?

4. God's first covenant promise to Abram contained what four things?

5. What does the name Abram mean, and what does the name Abraham mean?

6. What were the ages of Abraham and Sarah when Isaac was born?

7. What was the name of the mountain where Abraham offered Isaac, and what would be later built on that site?

8. Who is the Seed of Abraham through whom all nations are blessed?

9. Where did Abraham send his servant to in order to find Isaac a bride?

10. Who became Isaac's wife, and who were her grandparents?

PART II:

THE PATRIARCHS



ESAU AND JACOB

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah. He was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to twin sons (Genesis 25:19-26). Esau, being the firstborn, was in line to inherit the birthright from his father Isaac. However, the Lord had told Rebekah that two nations would come from this birth, the elder serving the younger (Genesis 25:22-23).

When Esau and Jacob had grown to manhood, God's revelation to Rebekah began to be fulfilled. Esau became a cunning hunter, a man of the field, who cared more for the present than for the future. Jacob was said to be a plain man who dwelt in tents. He developed a faith in God's covenant promise to his grandfather Abraham and to his father Isaac, and he longed to possess the birthright that Esau did not value.

One day when Esau came from the field faint with hunger, Jacob took advantage of the opportunity and offered his brother pottage if he would forfeit his birthright. Esau sold his most precious inheritance for a mess of pottage, causing Scripture to state he "despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:27-34; Hebrews 12:16-17). The son who inherited a birthright from his father not only inherited a double portion of his father's wealth but also his position as head of the family with the responsibility to perpetuate the family name and traditions. The son who inherited the birthright from Isaac would inherit God's promise to make of the descendants of Abraham a great nation from which the Christ should come.

When Esau was forty years old he married two Hittite women, which sorely grieved Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 26:34-35). Isaac evidently did not know Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob. When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, he decided he should bestow on Esau the birthright blessing. He sent Esau to the field for venison to make savory meat for the occasion.

Rebekah knew Jacob had bought the birthright and should have the blessing, by which the birthright was bestowed. She planned and influenced Jacob to deceive his father. I think she must have remembered what God told her before Esau and Jacob were born (Genesis 25:22-23). She made savory meat of kid goats. She put hairy skins on Jacob's arms and neck and dressed him in Esau's clothes. Isaac ate the savory meat offered by Jacob and then bestowed the birthright blessing on him, thinking he was Esau.

When Esau returned and learned of the deception he was very grieved and angry. He threatened to kill Jacob after their father died. Rebekah learning of this, pleaded with Jacob to flee to her brother in Haran until Esau got over his anger. She then asked Isaac to send Jacob to Haran lest he should marry a wife of the daughters of Heth who were Hittites (Genesis 27:1-46).

Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him away to his uncle Laban in Haran (Genesis 28:1-9). On the first night of his journey, Jacob slept in a lonely place north of Jerusalem, using a stone for his pillow. However, this became a hallowed place, for God visited him in a dream that night. He saw a ladder that reached from earth to Heaven with angels of God ascending and descending on it.

The Lord stood at the top and confirmed to Jacob the covenant He had made with Abraham and with Isaac. He told Jacob the same thing He had told Abraham and Isaac, that "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14). He told Jacob He would keep him in Haran, bring him again into Canaan, and fulfill all that He had promised. Jacob awakened and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not" (Genesis 28:16).

He thought, "This must be the house of God and the gate of heaven," and called it Bethel (the house of God). He made a memorial pillar of the stone he had used for a pillow and poured oil on it. Jacob then promised God that if He would go with him and bring him again to his father's house, he would serve the Lord and pay a tithe of all to Him (Genesis 28:20-22).

God did bless Jacob in Haran and brought him back to Canaan to fulfill His purpose in his life. Jacob spent twenty years in Haran, during which time he was employed by his uncle Laban. In exchange for seven years of labor, Jacob was to receive Laban's younger daughter, Rachel, in marriage. But Laban deceived him, giving him Leah for a bride instead. Jacob then served another seven years for Rachel (Genesis 29:16-30).

Although Laban was unfair and dishonest with Jacob concerning his wages, God prospered Jacob so that he returned to Canaan with considerable wealth (Genesis 30:43; 31:1-9).

After twenty years in Haran, God spoke to Jacob in a dream and told him it was time to return to Canaan. He, with his two wives, eleven sons, one daughter, and many servants and herds, left suddenly without telling Laban. Laban learned of their departure three days later and pursued them. He overtook

them seven days later in Mount Gilead. Laban and Jacob finally made a covenant of peace and Laban returned home to Haran (Genesis 31:25-55).

Jacob sent messengers to Esau, who lived south of the Dead Sea, to tell him he wanted to make peace and find grace in his sight (Genesis 32:1-5). But he was much disturbed when the messengers returned, saying Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. He called on the Lord for deliverance from the wrath of his brother. Then, trying to appease his brother, Jacob sent servants ahead with droves of goats, camels, and herds as gifts for Esau (Genesis 32:13-21). He also sent all his servants with all his herds, and his wives and children across the brook Jabbok, while he stayed behind.

God then met with him in the form of an angel, with whom Jacob wrestled all night. The angel disjointed his thigh to render him helpless and pretended to want to go. However, Jacob would not let go of him till he blessed him.

This was the attitude God wanted him to take, and He gave him the blessing He needed. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32:28). God changed him from Jacob (supplanter) to Israel (a prince of God). This is what God does for all who surrender to Him, by filling them with His Spirit. The Lord must win the battle over our flesh before we can have victory with Him.

When Jacob went out in the morning to meet Esau with confidence, he met him in peace. God had worked on Esau as well as on Jacob. Esau now wanted to take his brother home with him, but Jacob made the excuse that his herds and children could not travel fast. Esau then returned home while Jacob journeyed across the Jordan into Canaan (Genesis 33:1-17).

Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi caused him great trouble by committing a crime against the men of Shechem. God told him to go back to Bethel and make an altar. Jacob realized he could not go back to Bethel, the house of God, until he cleansed his household of the idolatry they had brought out of Haran. He did this, then went back to Bethel and built an altar to the Lord. God met with him and renewed His promises when Jacob renewed his vows (Genesis 35:1-15).

Every child of God needs to return frequently to "Bethel" where he was first given a preview of "God's ladder from earth to heaven." There we first met Jesus, who came to earth to die for all men, thereby making a bridge from earth to Heaven (John 1:47-51). There we need to renew our vows for a renewal and

refilling of the Holy Ghost. Continuous filling of the Holy Ghost is as essential to spiritual life as breathing is to the natural life.

Jacob and his family next journeyed south toward Ephrath, which was Bethlehem. On the way Rachel gave birth to her second son Benjamin. She died at his birth and was buried near Bethlehem. Jacob set a pillar over her grave.

Jacob now had twelve sons. Some of them did things that grieved and embarrassed him, but in later years they were considerably reformed.

Jacob journeyed on south to Arbah, which was Hebron, where Isaac, now one hundred eighty years old, was living. Isaac died soon after Jacob arrived, and Esau and Jacob buried him (Genesis 35:22-29).

The twelve tribes of Israel came from the twelve sons of Jacob. God told Abraham that his descendants would become as the stars of heaven for multitude, would be strangers in a land that was not theirs, would be servants, and would be afflicted.

However, He also promised they would return to the land of Canaan in their fourth generation. There were perhaps two reasons why Israel did not inherit the land of Canaan earlier: they grew to be a multitude of people in Egypt where they benefited from their experiences and learning; and they came out of Egypt with great substance. Also, God would not drive out the Amorites before them until the cup of their iniquity was full (Genesis 15:3-6, 13-16).

Since Rachel was Jacob's first love, perhaps it was only natural that he should love her first son Joseph more than his other children. However, his partiality caused his other sons to be jealous of Joseph and to hate him. When Joseph was seventeen years old, the Lord gave him two dreams that clearly indicated that in the future his brothers, father, and mother would bow down to him. When he told these dreams his brothers became more incensed against him.

Joseph's brothers later went to Shechem to pasture their father's flocks. Jacob later sent Joseph as a messenger to bring back word of their well-being. When the brothers saw Joseph coming they conspired to kill him. However, on the advice of Judah, the brothers sold him to a company of Ishmaelite traders who were transporting merchandise to Egypt, and who in turn sold him as a slave to Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard.

Joseph's brothers then dipped his coat in the blood of a goat and told the father they found it. Jacob mourned many days, thinking Joseph had been killed by wild animals (Genesis 37:3-36).

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

God blessed and prospered Joseph in Potiphar's house, but Potiphar's wife accused him of attacking her, causing him to be sent to prison. The Lord continued to bless Joseph there, giving him favor with the keeper of the prison who made him overseer of all the prisoners (Genesis 39:1-23).

The royal butler and baker had offended the king and were put in prison under the supervision of Joseph. They each dreamed a dream the same night and were troubled about what they meant. Joseph, by God's inspiration, interpreted their dreams that were fulfilled within three days. The butler was restored to his former position, but the baker was hanged. Joseph had asked the butler to speak to Pharaoh in his behalf, but the unappreciative butler forgot Joseph (Genesis 40:1-23).

Two years later Pharaoh dreamed two very impressive dreams. He called for all the wise men and magicians, but none were able to interpret his dreams. The butler then remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh how he had interpreted his and the baker's dreams. Pharaoh immediately called for Joseph, who answered, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (Genesis 41:16).

The interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams was the immediate beginning of seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of devastating famine. Joseph warned that the famine would soon eat up the surplus from the seven years of plenty. He advised Pharaoh to choose a wise man to be in charge of storing all the surplus of the seven years of plenty for use during the years of famine. Pharaoh answered, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Genesis 41:38). Joseph was chosen for this gigantic task.

Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all Egypt, second only to himself. Joseph was thirty years old when he was appointed to this most important position. Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, the priest of On. Two sons were born to them. The firstborn was Manasseh and the second was Ephraim. The descendants of these two sons became the two tribes of Israel: Manasseh and Ephraim.

After the seven years of plenty, the famine began and very soon the people were crying to Pharaoh for food. He sent them to Joseph. The famine was in all the surrounding countries as well as in Egypt. And soon, people from all these countries began coming to Joseph for food (Genesis 41:53-57).

In the land of Canaan, Jacob and his family began to be in want, and he sent his ten sons to Egypt to buy food. He refused to send Benjamin, who was Joseph's own brother and the youngest of Jacob's sons, for fear that he might become the victim of some unfortunate mishap.

When Joseph's brothers came to him, they bowed with their faces to the earth and he remembered the dream he had in his youth in Canaan. He knew them although they did not recognize him. He desired to make himself known to them; but to test their present characteristics, he treated them gruffly and accused them of being spies.

Because he spoke to them through an interpreter, they did not know he understood when they acknowledged to one another that this treatment was judgment on them for what they had done to Joseph. He turned away from them so they would not see him weep. He finally kept Simeon as a prisoner and permitted the nine to return with their sacks filled with corn. He demanded that they return with their youngest brother before he would release Simeon.

They became very fearful when they found each man's money he had paid for the corn had been returned in his sack (Genesis 42:1-38). Jacob refused to let them take Benjamin to Egypt until their food was exhausted. But when the other sons refused to go without him, he finally agreed for them to take him.

When Joseph's brothers returned with special presents for him and double money, he gave orders for them to be brought to his house to dine. He had a banquet prepared for them and asked about their father, yet he did not yet make himself known to them (Genesis 43:1-34).

As a final test, Joseph ordered them sent on their way with each man's money in his sack and his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. He then sent his steward to overtake them and search each man's sack. When the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, Joseph declared he would keep Benjamin as a prisoner and let the others return in peace. Judah fell before him and told the full story of his father's love for the lad and begged to be kept in the place of Benjamin. After this touching scene Joseph could no longer keep his identity from them. He ordered all others to leave him alone with his brothers and then told them he was Joseph.

He begged them not to blame themselves for selling him, for God had ordained it all that their lives might be preserved. A very emotional scene followed in which Joseph embraced his brothers and they embraced him in a real show of love. He then sent them back to Canaan to bring their father and all the family to Egypt.

Joseph arranged for them to live in the land of Goshen, which seems to have been the most fertile part of Egypt. Pharaoh was pleased that Joseph's family was coming to Egypt. He ordered wagons sent to Canaan to move them with all their belongings to Egypt.

When Joseph's brothers returned to Canaan and told their father all that had happened, he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (Genesis 45:28). Jacob, his sons, and all their families, with all their herds and possessions, began their journey to Egypt. On the way they stopped in Beer-sheba where Jacob offered sacrifice to God and the Lord spoke to him in a vision. He said, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again" (Genesis 46:3-4).

When Jacob and his family arrived in Egypt, they were honored by Pharaoh for Joseph's sake. They were given the best of the land in which to live and pasture their herds.

Jacob was now old and knew he must soon die. He requested that when he died Joseph would carry him back to Canaan and bury him with his fathers. Joseph assured him with an oath that he would do so (Genesis 47:1-12, 27-31). Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt before he died at the age of one hundred forty-seven years (Genesis 47:27-28).

When Jacob was sick, Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim to visit him and Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. Perhaps because Joseph had spent most of his life in service to Egypt, his inheritance in Israel seems to have come through Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph, through his sons, became the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. The tribe of Levi was chosen of God for the priestly tribe and did not receive an inheritance of land as did the other tribes. However, the two tribes from the sons of Joseph made the twelve tribes to receive their inheritance in the land of Canaan (Genesis 48:1-22).

Before he died, Jacob blessed each of his twelve sons. He described their past evils, failures, and successes, and prophesied of their future. The

descendants of these sons were to become the great nation that God promised to make of Abraham. They grew to be a multitude during their four hundred years in Egypt.

When Jacob died, Joseph had him embalmed and all Egypt mourned for him seventy days. Then a great procession of elders and officials in Egypt, as well as all the adult members of Jacob's family, carried him to his burial in Canaan. After they returned from the funeral, Joseph's brothers feared he might now seek vengeance on them for selling him into Egypt. But he quieted their fears. He said to them, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them" (Genesis 50:20-21).

Joseph lived to be one hundred ten years old and saw his grandchildren to the third generation. Before he died he told his brothers that God would surely visit the children of Israel and lead them back to Canaan. Joseph took an oath of his brothers that when Israel went out of Egypt they would carry his bones with them. When Joseph died they embalmed him and put him in a coffin. And when Moses led the people out of Egypt, more than three hundred years later, he took the bones of Joseph (Exodus 13:19). They finally buried his bones in Shechem, more than fifty years after they came into Canaan (Joshua 24:32).

Lesson in Review

Part II. The Patriarchs

1. Define the benefits of the birthright.

2. What did Jacob promise God at Bethel after the vision of the ladder?

3. What did God change Jacob's name to after he wrestled with the angel , and what does it mean?

4. How old was Joseph when his brothers sold him into slavery? Why did they do this?

5. What was the interpretation Joseph gave to Pharaoh concerning his dreams?

6. What did Joseph advise Pharaoh to do to prepare for the famine?

7. The sons of Joseph became what two tribes of Israel?

8. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food, what was the condition he put on them in order to return for more food?

9. What were Jacob's words when he was told that Joseph was alive in Egypt?

10. After Jacob had been buried in Canaan, what did Joseph tell his brothers to comfort them?

PART III:
FROM MOSES TO SAMUEL



ISRAEL UNDER BONDAGE TO EGYPT

A few generations after Joseph died, the Egyptians forgot what he had done for Egypt. The people of Israel had multiplied rapidly, and the Egyptians feared they might rise up and take over their country. They made slaves of the Hebrews and began to afflict them. Finally the king commanded that every male child born to the Hebrews (Israelites) should be slain (Exodus 1:7-22). The Hebrew midwives were charged to carry out this command, but they feared God and made excuses.

When conditions in Egypt became almost unbearable for Israel, God's plan to deliver them began to materialize: He ordained Moses before he was born as His instrument to lead His people out of Egypt.

Moses was born to Amram and Jochebed, who were both Levites. His mother hid him for three months. When she could no longer hide him, she put him in a little bulrush ark, which she had made watertight, and put him in the flags by the bank of the Nile River, the place where Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe.

Jochebed left her daughter Miriam nearby to watch the outcome. Pharaoh's daughter came to the river and saw the ark. When her maid brought it to her, the babe cried and won her heart. Just then Miriam appeared and asked if she wanted a nurse from the Hebrew women. Miriam called her mother to nurse her own child. This loving mother was able to rear her own child in the faith of Jehovah God and was paid wages for doing so. When Moses was older Pharaoh's daughter took him for her own son. It was she who had named him Moses because she had drawn him out of the water (Exodus 2:1-10).

Moses was reared and educated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was said to be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds. But his mother, who had cared for him in his childhood and who evidently had contact with him after he grew older, instilled in him a true faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had a strong faith in God's covenant promise made to Abraham and his seed. It was made known to Moses that God had called him to deliver his own people Israel from Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:22-25). And we read in Hebrews 11:24-27:

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

When Moses was forty years old he went out into the field one day and killed an Egyptian who was smiting an Israelite. He was perhaps a little too hasty, taking the situation in his own hands rather than waiting for God's direction. The next day when he tried to make peace between two Israelites, one of them asked if he would kill him as he did the Egyptian. Pharaoh had also learned Moses had killed an Egyptian and sought to kill him. Moses then fled from Egypt and became a fugitive in the land of Midian. He was taken into the home of Reuel (Jethro), the priest of Midian. He married Jethro's daughter Zipporah. Two sons were born to them (Exodus 18:1-5). He spent forty years in Midian tending his father-in-law's sheep (Exodus 2:11-22).

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT

When Moses first felt called to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage, he was not yet prepared for this assignment. But after forty years in Midian, he was sufficiently matured, and it was God's time to send him back to Egypt. Also, after another forty years of hard slavery, the people of Israel were more prone to listen to him (Exodus 2:23-25).

On a particular day Moses led Jethro's flock to the backside of the desert and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Here he saw a bush that burned but was not consumed. He turned aside in amazement. Then God spoke to him out of the burning bush and told him to remove his shoes in awe of the presence of the Holy God. As Moses covered his face in fear, the Lord told him He had heard the cries and seen the affliction of His people in Egypt and had come to deliver them by the hand of Moses. Moses felt altogether unqualified for this mission that now seemed so impossible. But he was to learn that God, with whom nothing is impossible, would perform the task. God had been grooming Moses the full eighty years of his life as the instrument He would use in this most important accomplishment (Exodus 3:1-10).

When Moses asked God whom he should say had sent him, God revealed His identity as "I AM THAT I AM." The Israelites had known Him only as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they were now to come to know Him as the only true, eternal, self-existent God. The name of God, as expressed in "I AM

THAT I AM” has come down to us in our English Bible as JEHOVAH or LORD. And Israel was to know Him as their Lord Jehovah (Exodus 6:1-17). The king of Egypt who had wanted to kill Moses was dead, and God told Moses it was time for him to return. He also told him He would give him Aaron, his brother, to speak for him. And Aaron met him when he returned to Egypt with his wife and two sons (Exodus 4:20-28).

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh with God’s message, “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness” (Exodus 5:1).

Then the conflict between the Lord and Pharaoh began. The Lord instructed Moses what to do and say, Moses told Aaron, and Aaron told Pharaoh. Pharaoh fought back with all his might. He increased the burden of affliction on the people of Israel. But he was a conquered foe before Almighty God (Exodus 7:1-9). The Lord, by the hand of Moses and Aaron, sent nine grievous plagues on the Egyptians. But each time after the plague was lifted, Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the people go (Exodus 7:10-25; 8:1-32; 9:1-35; 10:1-29).

The tenth and final plague, which God had reserved to break Pharaoh’s resistance, was the death of the firstborn in every house that did not have blood on its door. Every family of Israel was commanded to kill a lamb, sprinkle its blood on the door, and roast its flesh and eat it. There was not a single death among the Israelites, but a great cry of grief went out from every Egyptian home. God had passed through the land and slain the firstborn of every family who did not have any blood on the door.

After this last plague, Pharaoh and all the Egyptians were anxious for the Israelites to leave as quickly as possible. The Israelites had been prepared for this and were ready to leave immediately (Exodus 11:1-10; 12:1-41).

God commanded Israel to keep the Passover Feast at this same time each year as a memorial of their great deliverance. From henceforth this was to be the beginning of their year (Exodus 12:1-2). The Passover Feast was ordained of God to be both commemorative and prophetic (Exodus 12:42-47). It was a memorial of God’s deliverance from the hopeless condition of Egyptian slavery, while the Passover lamb was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Passover (I Corinthians 5:7).

The Lord told Moses that all the firstborn sons whom He had redeemed from death should be sanctified (set apart) for His service (Exodus 13:1-2). From then on the firstborn male of every family belonged to the Lord. But after the

priestly service was set up in the wilderness, the Lord traded all the firstborn sons for the Levites who were sanctified for the priestly services of the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:11-13, 40-48; 8:5-18).

God did not lead the people of Israel by the main traveled route between Egypt and Canaan. Taking that route would have involved them in war with the Philistines and they would have been tempted to turn back to Egypt (Exodus 13:17-18). Instead, He led them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night through the wilderness of the Red Sea.

When Pharaoh realized the people of Israel had gone, he again hardened his heart. He took his army and all the chariots in Egypt and pursued them. God used the hardness of his heart to give him a last demonstration of His almighty power and to destroy, once for all, any danger he might pose for Israel.

When Pharaoh learned the direction the Israelites had traveled, he thought they would be caught in a trap by the sea. He overtook them the third night of their journey as they were encamped by the sea. The Israelites were in a state of terror when they saw the Egyptians. Moses quieted their fears and told them to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord (Exodus 14:13). He told them God would fight for them and they would never see the Egyptians again.

The pillar of fire stood between the camp of Israel and the camp of the Egyptians all that night. It was dark on the Egyptians' side but light on the side of Israel and a wall of protection to them. Moses, by God's direction, held his rod out over the sea. God caused a strong east wind to blow all night to divide the water that made a dry path through the sea. In the morning the people of Israel crossed over on dry ground with a wall of water on either side. The Egyptians then plunged into the path the Lord had made for Israel, but their chariot wheels came off in the midst of the sea. Moses then held his rod over the sea again and immediately the water returned to its place, drowning all the Egyptians (Exodus 14:13-31). Moses and all Israel then danced and sang this song of praise to the Lord:

"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 my 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" (Exodus 15:1-2).

THE JOURNEY FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI

From the crossing of the Red Sea God led the people three days journey into the wilderness of Shur without finding water. They then came to the water of Marah, but it was bitter. The people complained and murmured against Moses. The Lord showed him a tree, which he cast into the waters, and the water was healed (Exodus 15:22-26).

The Lord then led Israel to Elim where they found twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. But after they left Elim and came into the wilderness of Sin, they began to complain because they had no food. The Lord rained bread from heaven (manna) in the mornings and gave them quails in the evenings. The Lord also gave them a vision of His glory in the cloud to shame them for their murmuring. They ate manna for forty years, until they came to the border of Canaan (Exodus 16:1-35).

Israel next camped in Rephidim where there was not any water for the people to drink. They again complained to Moses for bringing them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. The Lord told Moses to take his rod and strike a rock in Horeb. He did this and water came out of the rock for all this great company (Exodus 17:1-7). The Lord did this not only to supply the need of the people, but that it should be a clear type of the Lord Jesus Christ from whom flows the water of life (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39; I Corinthians 10:1-4).

Israel's next test was with the people of Amalek. Amalek was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12). The descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob had trouble during all their generations, of which this seems to have been the beginning. Jacob represented God's spiritual people and Esau represented the fleshly line. God's people have always had trouble with the carnal flesh (Romans 8:1-14; I Corinthians 3:1-3). But there will always be victory through the Holy Ghost when we wholly follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joshua led the army of Israel against the forces of Amalek while Moses stood on the top of the hill and held up his rod toward heaven. So long as he held it up, Israel prevailed. But when he became too tired to hold up his hand, Amalek prevailed. Then Aaron and Hur placed a stone for Moses to sit on and one on either side of him held up his hands while Joshua defeated Amalek and his people (Exodus 17:8-13). Moses then built an altar to the Lord and called it Jehovah-nissi (Jehovah my banner). The Lord said He would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek (Exodus 17:14; I Samuel 15:1-33). Just as the Lord

eliminated the Amalekites, so we must crucify the flesh if we would walk with the Lord (Galatians 5:16-24).

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, taught him a very valuable lesson in organization (Exodus 18:17-27). Afterward Moses organized the congregation of Israel according to Jethro's advice.

ISRAEL'S ENCAMPMENT AT MOUNT SINAI

Three months from the day Israel left Egypt, they came into the wilderness of Sinai and camped before Mount Sinai. Immediately God began to talk to Moses. From the mount He gave instructions for the people of Israel. He wanted them to become a peculiar treasure, a holy people, and a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:3-6). They never attained to this high goal because it was not possible for them to be perfected by laws alone; the Law merely pointed the way to God's perfect kingdom in Christ (Romans 3:20; 7:12-25; Hebrews 7:19; 10:1-23).

From Mount Sinai God gave Moses the Law by which to govern His people. He spoke the Ten Commandments in tones of thunder for all the people to hear (Exodus 19:9-25; 20:1-26) in a demonstration of God's wrath and judgment against sin. The apostle Paul contrasted it with the grace and peace we now have in coming to Jesus, God's great Mediator of His new covenant (Hebrews 12:18-29).

God called Moses up into the mountain and into the glory cloud of His presence where He gave him two tables of stone on which He had written His covenant of law (Exodus 24:12-18).

Moses was in the mount with the Lord for forty days, during which time he was given the blueprints for the Tabernacle. God gave complete instructions for its construction, materials, furniture, services, and its priesthood with all the offerings and sacrifices. Moses was told to ask the people for a freewill offering of all materials needed for setting up the Tabernacle and its services. The Lord said, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). This was God's first purpose for the Tabernacle, that the people might recognize His presence in their midst. But the Tabernacle, with its priesthood and services, portrayed in types and shadows the full plan of salvation in Christ and the New Testament church.

While Moses was on Mount Sinai with the Lord, the people of Israel grew impatient and unbelieving. They did not know what had become of Moses. They asked Aaron to make them gods to lead them. He called for their golden jewelry and made a golden calf (the Egyptians' god). The Lord knew what they were doing and He sent Moses down from the mount. God told Moses He would destroy the people of Israel and make of him a great nation (Exodus 32:10).

However, Moses interceded for the people and God relented after sending judgment on them for their sin (Exodus 32:11-35). Nevertheless, we are not to conclude that Moses was more merciful than God. God had ordained and prepared Moses to be the mediator between Himself and a sinful people. God made him a type of our Lord Jesus, the great Mediator between God and sinful men (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19; Acts 7:35-39; Hebrews 8:6; 12:24).

When Moses saw the people dancing around the golden calf, he threw down the tables of the Law in anger and they were broken. After God had judged the people for their sin, He told Moses to hew two tables of stone like the first and come to Him in the mount. He wrote again all He had written on the first stones. Moses again spent forty days with the Lord and when he came down to the people his face shown with the glory of God so they could not look on him. He then put a veil over his face when he talked to the people and took it off when he went to talk to the Lord (Exodus 34:1-35).

When Moses gave the people God's message concerning the Tabernacle, they entered into the work enthusiastically. The Lord appointed certain ones and gifted them with specific skills to be the leaders in this great project. But all the people worked and brought materials until they were told there was already too much (Exodus 36:1-7). A temporary tabernacle that Moses had used to house an altar to the Lord was no longer used after this Tabernacle was completed and set up (Exodus 24:4-8; 33:7-11).

It was very important that the Tabernacle and all that pertained to it should be constructed exactly as God had commanded (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:1-5) because its long range purpose was to foreshadow God's plan of salvation in Christ and His New Testament church (Hebrews 9:1-28). The study of the types and shadows in the Tabernacle, its materials, its furniture, the brazen altar, the laver, the priests, their garments, and their services is a very important study. Many of these are explained in the Book of Hebrews.

The Tabernacle was finally completed and set up on the first day of the first month of their year (Exodus 12:1-2). It was a marvel in its construction and

interior beauty. It was completely portable, and the Levites were educated and organized for their duties in dismantling, moving, and setting it up again. After it was set up with the court around it, and all the furniture in place, the Lord Himself dedicated it. His glory filled it so that even Moses could not enter in for a time (Exodus 40:16-35). From henceforth Israel was to recognize God's presence as dwelling in the Most Holy Place between the cherubims over the Mercy Seat, which was the cover over the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:8; Numbers 7:89).

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

In Leviticus is recorded all the laws that God spoke to Moses for the people of Israel. His laws covered everything that pertained to their worship, morals, conduct in their relationships, and their physical needs, such as what they should and should not eat. They also involved the Sabbath Day, the feast days, and all their sacrifices. God also warned them of chastisement for disobedience to His laws.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEY FROM SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA

Before Israel left Sinai, where they had been encamped for about a year, God instructed Moses concerning the numbering of the people by their tribes and the arrangement of their camp. The Tabernacle was always to be set up facing east and in the center of their camp. The three families of the Levites camped next to the curtain wall of the court around the Tabernacle: one family on the north side, one on the west side, and one on the south side. Aaron and his sons, the priests, camped on the east side directly in front of the gate to the court. The other tribes camped farther out from the Tabernacle, three tribes on each side (Numbers 1:1- 54; 2:1-34; 3:1-39).

The glory cloud of God's presence covered the Tabernacle by day and was of the appearance of fire by night. When the cloud lifted the people broke camp and followed the cloud. When the cloud hovered they set up the Tabernacle and pitched their tents. Every move was well organized. Those on the east led the way when the trumpet sounded and all the others fell in line as they had been instructed (Numbers 9:15-23; 10:1-10).

On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year of their journey, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle and led them out of the wilderness of Sinai (Numbers 10:11-12). After three days of travel the people became weary

and discouraged. They complained of the food, comparing its monotony to the variety of foods they had eaten in Egypt. Moses almost broke beneath the burden of their complaints. The Lord told him to choose seventy men of the elders and officers to stand with him at the Tabernacle to help bear the burden of the people. The Lord also promised to give them flesh to eat, and He sent quails in such abundance that they could not cope with them. Then He sent a plague on them because of their complaining (Numbers 11:1-35).

Miriam and Aaron, perhaps out of envy, also spoke against Moses' leadership. They seem to have taken advantage of his meekness. The Lord spoke from the cloud and told them He had chosen Moses to lead the people, and that He spoke to him face to face, as He did to no other man. He smote Miriam with leprosy. Aaron acknowledged their sin and asked Moses to pray for them. God healed Miriam, but she was shut out of the camp for seven days (Numbers 12:1-14).

After Aaron and Miriam repented and Miriam was received back into camp, the cloud lifted and Israel journeyed into the wilderness of Paran (Numbers 12:15-16). Kadesh-barnea was situated in the northern part of this wilderness. It was from this place that Moses sent twelve men, one from each tribe, to spy out the land that God had promised them if they would go in and possess it (Numbers 13:1-20).

The twelve traversed the land of Canaan from the south to its northern border and returned in forty days. They found a beautiful and fruitful land, but they also saw some walled cities and giants. They brought a sample of the grapes of Eshcol. But because of the giants and the walled cities, ten of the spies brought an evil report of the land. They said, "We were in our sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:33).

Caleb and Joshua were overwhelmed by the fruitfulness of the land and the giants did not look so big to them. They believed God's word that He would give them the land. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).

Most of the people had been faithless and complaining in every test they had met. Now they were faithless again. They murmured against Moses and Aaron and wanted to elect a captain to lead them back to Egypt. In spite of the pleading of Joshua and Caleb, they rebelled (Numbers 14:1-10). God told Moses He would destroy them and make of him a great nation, but Moses again interceded for the people. God said He would pardon them. But all above twenty years old could not go into the land because of their constant rebellion and

complaints. They were sentenced to wander in the wilderness forty years until they all died. Only Joshua and Caleb and those under twenty years old could go into Canaan. The people then repented and tried to go into the land, but the Lord did not go with them. They were badly defeated (Numbers 14:11-45).

ISRAEL'S JOURNEY FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO JORDAN

Korah, a great grandson of Levi, disputed the authority of Moses and the high priesthood of Aaron and led a rebellion. Moses rebuked these unappreciative Levites who had been chosen of God to minister in the service of the Tabernacle (Numbers 16:8-11). The punishment was severe. The Lord judged Korah and his company by opening the earth to swallow them; those who burned incense were burnt with fire; and more than fourteen thousand who sympathized with them were killed by a plague. Had not Aaron made an atonement for them, many more would have died (Numbers 16:12-50).

The Lord then proved to the people that He had chosen Aaron and his family for the priestly dynasty by causing Aaron's rod, a branch cut from a tree, to bud, blossom, and bear almonds, from among the rods of the princes of the twelve tribes (Numbers 17:1-13). The Israelites were led by the cloud from Kadesh-barnea to Meribah-Kadesh (Deuteronomy 32:51) where Miriam died and was buried (Numbers 20:1). There was no water in this place and the people again murmured against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. The Lord told Moses to take the rod and gather the congregation, along with Aaron, and speak to the rock in the presence of the people. Moses was angry with the people for their complaints. Perhaps he had not listened as attentively as he should to God's instructions. Instead of speaking to the rock, he struck it, as he had done in Mount Horeb (Exodus 17:1-7).

For this one act of disobedience Moses was not permitted to go into Canaan. His striking the rock the second time was a serious infraction because he violated that which God had intended as a perfect type of Christ. Christ was to be smitten only once for the sins of the world. We now need only to look back to His death on the cross and speak to Him in faith to receive the water of life (Hebrews 9:25-28).

The Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness many years since the Lord had sentenced the older generation to die in the wilderness. Moses felt the time was near when they might go into Canaan from the east side of the Jordan. He sent messengers to the king of Edom with a request to pass through their

territory south of the Dead Sea, but the king refused. Israel then journeyed to Mount Hor, some distance south of Edom's territory (Numbers 20:14-22).

The Lord told Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazar up on Mount Hor where they took the priestly garments off Aaron and put them on Eleazar. Aaron died there on top of the mountain. He could not go into Canaan because he had a part with Moses when he struck the rock at Meribah (Numbers 20:23-29).

After the death of Aaron, Israel journeyed to the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, the eastern arm of the Red Sea, from which point they could travel around Edom's territory and north again east of Edom.

The people again became weary on this long roundabout way and blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. The Lord judged them by sending fiery serpents among them and many died. The Lord told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole so all who looked on it would be healed (Numbers 21:4-9).

This was another very significant type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Jesus took our sins on Himself and died as being guilty of our sins that we might look to Him for eternal life (II Corinthians 5:21).

The Israelites journeyed around the land of Edom and north through the eastern part of Moab, which was east of the Dead Sea (Numbers 21:10-15). At Pisgah they came near the border of the Amorites ruled by Sihon. Moses sent messengers to request passage through his land, but Sihon refused. Instead, he mobilized his army and attacked Israel. Nevertheless, Israel defeated him and took all his land from the border of Moab to the brook Jabbok. The Israelites took over their cities and dwelt in them (Numbers 21:21-32).

Moses next led Israel north into Bashan, another Amorite country ruled by Og. King Og also came out against Israel and the Lord gave Israel victory over this army. Og and his sons were killed and Moses possessed all of his land. This was the area north of the brook Jabbok and east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee (Numbers 21:33-35; Deuteronomy 3:1-11). The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh requested this territory that they had taken from the two Amorite kings for their inheritance. Moses divided it between them with the agreement that all their men of war would go across the Jordan and help their brethren win the territory west of the Jordan (Numbers 32:1-6, 16-22).

After Moses' successful campaigns for the land of the Amorites, the Israelites camped on the plains of Jordan, across from Jericho. This was just north of the Dead Sea and very near the border of Moab. The king of Moab, fearful that the Israelites might take his country, sent for the prophet Balaam to come and curse them (Numbers 22:1-41; 23:1-30; 24:1-25).

Balaam believed in Jehovah, but he was not a true prophet of God. He practiced the arts of divination and enchantments. However, his enchantments would not work on God's people, no more than Satan's wiles will work on God's saints today (Ephesians 6:11). Balaam failed in his efforts to curse Israel and instead gave a beautiful prophecy concerning them (Numbers 24:15-25). Yet this prophecy did not come out of his own heart, for God spoke through him as He had spoken through Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:27-28). Balaam finally advised Balak to defeat Israel by enticing their men to unlawful relationships with the daughters of Moab (Numbers 31:14-16). This brought the judgment of God on Israel in the form of a plague that killed twenty-four thousand of them (Numbers 25:1-18).

God told Moses of his coming death and he asked God to appoint a man over the congregation of Israel. God told him to lay his hand on Joshua, to bring him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation of Israel, and to bestow his honor on him that all the people should honor and obey him (Numbers 27:12-23).

The Lord had Moses to instruct Joshua further concerning the inheritance of the tribes, of the forty-eight cities to be given to the Levites, and of the cities of refuge (Numbers 35:1-15). The cities of refuge were also a type of Christ, our refuge, referred to in Hebrews 6:18. Before Moses died he rehearsed all the laws of God to the new generation of Israelites who would soon cross the Jordan into Canaan. In Deuteronomy 4-32 is recorded the many laws he taught and his exhortations, instructions, and warnings.

After Moses had blessed all the tribes (Deuteronomy 33:1-29), the Lord took him up to Mount Nebo and showed him the lands He had promised to the descendants of Abraham. Moses then died at the age of one hundred and twenty years; the Lord buried him in an unknown place in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 34:1-8). "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

Moses had installed Joshua as the new leader of Israel and all the people had recognized and accepted his authority as they had the authority of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9). Joshua, under the leadership of Moses, had been in training for this position for forty years. He had proven himself faithful and worthy during all the years in the wilderness. And he proved to be a faithful and worthy leader of Israel till his death.

Joshua's first assignment from the Lord was to lead the people of Israel across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan. The Lord encouraged him with these words: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

Joshua immediately began preparations for the crossing of the Jordan. He sent two spies to Jericho to investigate the situation there. They learned what they needed to know from Rahab who shielded them from the king's officers. For this act she won from the spies the promise of salvation for herself and her family when Jericho should be destroyed (Joshua 2:1-23). The spies told Joshua, "Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" (Joshua 2:24).

At the end of three days Joshua prepared the people for the crossing of the Jordan, which was overflowing its banks at this harvest season. The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant led the way. When they put their feet into the brink of the water, the water began to recede. The Lord laid an invisible dam across the river upstream some distance from where the Israelites were to cross. The water above that point stood up as a wall and the water below it flowed on into the Dead Sea, leaving a dry riverbed for the crossing. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant halfway across and stood in the middle of the river, after which the men of war led all the rest of the people across. Twelve men were chosen to carry a stone from the riverbed for a memorial on the other side. Joshua set up twelve stones within the river where the priests stood with the Ark.

After the people had all crossed over, Joshua ordered the priests to come up out of the Jordan. Only after the priests reached the west bank of the river, did the water flow down again and overflow its banks as it had before (Joshua 3:1-17).

The Israelites camped between the Jordan and Jericho, where they set up the twelve stones that had been brought from the river for a memorial. They

were to point to this memorial in the generations to come and tell their children what a great thing God had done in bringing them through the river on dry ground (Joshua 4:19-24).

All the male children who had been born during the forty years in the wilderness had not been circumcised. Those children were now the men of war, and the Lord told Joshua to circumcise them (Joshua 5:2-8). When this had been done, the Lord said to Joshua, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you" (Joshua 5:9). Israel then gave the name Gilgal ("rolling") to the place where they had set up the memorial stones.

The Israelites crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month of their year, and just four days later, on the fourteenth day, they kept the Feast of the Passover. The following day they began to eat of the old corn of this land and the manna ceased (Joshua 4:19; 5:10-12).

THE SEVEN YEARS OF CONQUEST FOR CANAAN

Joshua, probably preparing to begin his campaign for possession of the land of Canaan, went out into the vicinity of Jericho. Suddenly he saw a man with a drawn sword. He asked him if he was for Israel or for their adversaries. When the man answered that He was Captain of the Lord's host, Joshua removed his shoes and fell on his face before Him in worship. The Lord then told Joshua exactly where to start and what to do (Joshua 5:13-15; 6:1-5).

The inhabitants of Canaan had heard how God rolled back the waters of the Red Sea when He led Israel out of Egypt forty years before. Now they had heard how the waters of the Jordan had rolled back for their crossing. They were beside themselves with fear (Joshua 2:9-11; 5:1).

Jericho was well fortified with a strong wall and the people had barricaded themselves behind this wall. The Lord told Joshua to have the people of Israel compass Jericho once each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. The men of war led the procession. Next to the soldiers were seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns. They were followed by the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant with all the other people following behind. On the seventh day, when they had compassed the city seven times, the priests blew a great blast with their trumpets, all the people gave a great shout, and just as the Lord had said, the wall fell down flat. And Israel marched in and took the city (Joshua 6:1-21).

Joshua saved Rahab and her family as the spies had promised, but the soldiers killed all others and burnt the city. They saved only the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron, which they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord (Joshua 6:22-25). Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who should afterward attempt to rebuild the city (Joshua 6:26-27). This curse was sent on Heil the Bethelite during the reign of the wicked King Ahab (I Kings 16:33-34).

The fall of Jericho was wholly the work of the Lord. But in the attempt to take Ai, a small city near Bethel, Israel was trusting in numbers rather than the power of God. The men who were sent to view the situation advised that they would need only two or three thousand to take this small city. The three thousand who were sent were miserably defeated, not because of their numbers but because they did not go in the name of the Lord.

Joshua and the people were greatly distressed and discouraged over the defeat. However, when Joshua went to the Lord, he was told there was sin in the camp and they could not stand before their enemies until the accursed thing had been removed from among them (Joshua 7:1-13).

Joshua went through the people, tribe by tribe, family by family, and the Lord brought to light the guilty man. Achan had taken a Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold from Jericho, hiding them in his tent. He was destroyed and all that pertained to him. Only then did God help Israel to take the city of Ai. God again showed them it was by His power and not by their prowess (Joshua 8:1-29).

Joshua was given a deeper realization of the importance of minutely obeying the word of the Lord. He built an altar to the Lord of whole stones, exactly as God had commanded Moses (Exodus 20:25), upon which he wrote a copy of the law of Moses in the presence of the people of Israel (Joshua 8:30-32). He then carefully read all the words of the law of Moses before all the congregation of Israel (Joshua 8:34-35).

The Lord had told Moses that He would send His fear before Israel, destroying and driving out the inhabitants before them. He commanded that Israel should make no covenants with the people of the land or enter into any agreement with them; they should drive the heathen tribes out of the land lest they become corrupted by them (Exodus 23:27-33).

It was Joshua's intention to obey everything the Lord commanded, but the Gibeonites deceived him. They realistically acted out the story that they had

come from a far country because they had heard of all the Lord had done in Egypt and also of the victory He had given Moses over the Amorites east of the Jordan. They showed their old moldy bread and torn wineskins. Joshua and the elders believed their story without asking counsel of the Lord (Joshua 9:14). Joshua made a league of peace with the Gibeonites to let them live. Three days later he learned they belonged in the land and lived close by. Joshua and the elders now felt honor bound to stand by their oath so they let them live but made them servants to Israel (Joshua 9:1-27).

There was no union between the native tribes of the land; but each city was ruled by its own king. And thus far Israel had battled only one city at a time. However, when the other cities heard of the tremendous victories over Jericho and Ai, and of the league of peace with Gibeon, which was one of the stronger cities, they were much concerned for their own safety. Five of the more important cities formed a league to resist Israel's invasion. It was headed by Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, who was joined by the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. These five kings consolidated their armies and marched against the city of Gibeon, which had become tributary to Israel (Joshua 10:1-5).

The men of Gibeon sent a hurried call for help to Joshua. By the leading of the Lord, he gathered all his army and marched overnight, suddenly coming upon the attacking armies and defeating them.

Israel chased them as they fled west from Gibeon. Just before the fleeing armies reached Beth-horon the Lord cast down great hailstones on them. More were killed by the hailstones than by the swords of Joshua's army. But the day was drawing to a close and Joshua needed more time to complete the victory. In the hearing of the children of Israel, he said to the Lord, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (Joshua 10:12). The Lord answered his prayer. The sun stood still and the moon stayed in its place about a whole day, till Israel had completely routed the enemy (Joshua 10:6-15).

The five kings who had escaped death fled and hid in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua ordered his men to roll great stones over the mouth of the cave and set a guard over it so the kings could not escape. Israel's army then pursued the fleeing enemies and destroyed all but a few who escaped into the walled cities (Joshua 10:16-20).

Joshua then ordered his men to open the cave and bring out the five kings. They killed them and hung them on five trees. At sundown they took them down and cast them back into the cave and rolled the stones over the mouth of it.

After this Joshua and his men captured a number of the kings' cities. They went as far south as Kadesh-barnea, from which place Joshua and eleven other men had searched the land more than forty years earlier. From there they went to Gaza, a Philistine city, and took all the country from there back to Gibeon (Joshua 10:21-43).

Not long after Joshua's victories in the southern part of the country, a group of kings in northern Palestine consolidated their forces and pitched camp at the water of Merom, a small lake on the Jordan River, north of the Sea of Galilee. The Lord told Joshua He would deliver them into his hand on the following day (Joshua 11:1-9).

Joshua made one of his characteristic swift marches up the Jordan Valley and suddenly attacked. He chased them north to Zidon, west to the seacoast, and east to the Valley of Mizpeh. He burned their chariots and houghed their horses (cut their sinews), making them useless since Israel did not use horses in their warfare. Israel killed the people and took their cities and cattle, as the Lord had commanded Moses (Joshua 11:15).

The Israelites did not kill innocent people just to take their land. This was God's judgment on the inhabitants of the land because the cup of their iniquity was full (Genesis 15:16).

God dealt with Israel as His natural nation. His laws showed them His will for a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6). But they could not know the spiritual life as we can know it today because Christ had not yet come and His Spirit had not been given. The natural blessings and victories God gave to Israel were types and shadows of His spiritual blessings and victories He bestows on His people today. We may now have victory over those things within our human nature that war against the holy life (Galatians 5:13-24).

Over a period of about seven years in three campaigns, Joshua took all the land from Kadesh-barnea on the south to Hazor and the cities in the northernmost part of Canaan. His central campaign included Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, and all the hill country in that area. The southern campaign reached from the central to Kadesh-barnea on the south and as far as Gaza on the west. Joshua even cut off (destroyed) the Anakims (giants) from the region of Hebron and Debir. And the northern campaign won for Israel all the cities in the northern part of the country (Joshua 11:10-23).

Later some of the people reoccupied some of their cities, and Israel was never able to drive out the Philistines who occupied the area along the Mediterranean coast. Israel's conquest of the land God had promised to Abraham was never fully realized till the reign of David. He conquered all the land God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21), but Israel never really possessed all of it.

Joshua was growing old. In spite of his very successful campaigns, much more territory remained to conquer. The Lord had promised to give him every place his foot should tread (Joshua 1:1-7), but it seems that time had run out for him. The Lord told him to divide the land by lot to the nine and one-half tribes, and it would be their responsibility to conquer and possess their inheritance (Joshua 13:1-7). Moses had given the other two and one-half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan River. The tribe of Levi was not given an inheritance of land except for forty-eight cities with their suburbs in which to dwell (Joshua 14:1-5).

Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, came to Joshua to remind him of God's promise to him at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 14:6-12). And Joshua blessed him and gave him Hebron, the area where the spies had seen the giants and the walled cities (Joshua 14:6-15). Caleb took Hebron from the sons of Anak, the giant he had encountered forty-five years earlier (Numbers 13:21-25). His son-in-law took the neighboring city of Debir (Joshua 15:13-17).

The allotment of land to the tribe of Judah is described in Joshua 15:1-12. The whole congregation of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle (Joshua 18:1). The tribes of Judah, Ephraim, and half of Manasseh had already received their allotments of land, but there were seven tribes yet to receive their inheritance. Joshua said to them, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?" (Joshua 18:3). He sent three men from each of the seven tribes to go through the land to describe it and divide it into seven parts. They did this and brought the description back to Joshua, who then by lot gave each of the seven tribes their inheritance (Joshua 18:2-10). The land of Canaan west of the Jordan River was divided between the nine and one-half tribes of Israel about 1170 BC.

After the designation of the forty-eight cities for the Levites, among which six were designated as cities of refuge (Joshua 20:1-9; 21:1-3), Joshua called the men of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh to send them back to their inheritance east of the Jordan. He commended them highly for fighting alongside their brethren during the seven years of their conquest of Canaan. He exhorted them

to give diligent heed to obey all the commandments of the Lord and to walk in His ways. He then blessed them and sent them back to their families and homes (Joshua 22:1-6).

The men of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh departed to go to their own inheritance, but just before crossing the Jordan they built a great altar to the Lord. The people of Israel on the west side of Jordan misunderstood their intention. They thought the men of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh were turning from the Lord to idolatry and were about ready to go to war against them. Then these men explained they had built the altar to be a monument to succeeding generations that they wanted always to be a part of their brethren on the west side in spite of the Jordan which seemed to be a boundary between them. This satisfied the people on the west side and the difficulty was settled (Joshua 22:9-34).

Joshua seems to have lived several years after he had divided to the tribes their land. Before dying he again called all Israel to assemble before him. He reminded them of the great blessings and victories God had given them in the past, but he also reminded them that there was much more territory to be conquered. He exhorted them to be faithful and true to the Lord and warned them against being led into the sin and idolatry of the nations around them. He told Israel the Lord would drive out their enemies if they would be courageous and keep all of His laws. He told them if they failed to keep God's laws and failed to keep themselves separated from the heathens, the wrath of God would come on them and they would quickly perish from the good land He had given them (Joshua 23:1-16). He challenged them to choose between the Lord God and the heathen gods around them. He said, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). They covenanted with him that they would serve the Lord, and he let them depart to their own homes.

Soon after Joshua's last meeting with all Israel, he died at the age of one hundred ten years. He had served the Lord faithfully during all the wilderness wanderings, the campaign for eastern Palestine under the leadership of Moses, and during all the years of his own leadership of Israel. As the result of his zeal for the work of the Lord and his faithfulness in performing all His commandments, it was stated, "And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31).

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

After the death of Joshua the children of Israel inquired of the Lord who should be first (or leader) to move against the Canaanites, and the Lord said Judah should be first. Judah was the leader, but the tribe of Simeon joined with them. And the Lord gave them good success. They took all the mountain country as far south as Kadesh-barnea. However, they were unable to drive out the inhabitants of the valley toward the Mediterranean Sea because they had chariots of iron (Judges 1:19). Evidently the Israelites did not have courage to go against those who waged chariot warfare. They captured the wicked King Adoni-bezek and cut off his thumbs and big toes. He acknowledged he had done the same to seventy kings and this was God's judgment on him (Judges 1:5-7).

The tribes of Israel were never completely able to drive the Canaanites, Amorites, and Philistines out of their territories. They were more willing for the inhabitants of the land to dwell among them than to make a strong effort to drive them out. However, some of the heathen tribes were forced to become tributary to Israel, but the Lord was not pleased with this. It happened as He had told them it would: Israel was corrupted by the heathens and their idolatry began to creep in among the Israelites. This brought the wrath of God upon them. He permitted the nations around them to oppress them and to spoil them (Judges 2:11-15, 20-23).

Yet God, in great love and mercy, never gave up on the children of Israel. He raised up judges who, when Israel cried to the Lord, delivered them from their enemies (Judges 2:16-18). The period of the judges was a time when Israel did not have a strong leader as they had had under Moses and Joshua who continuously taught them God's laws. Israel had now forgotten the laws of God and every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25; 2:19).

When the Israelites began to intermarry with the heathen tribes and to worship their gods, the Lord permitted the king of Mesopotamia to subjugate Israel, who served him eight years (Judges 3:5-8). Then they remembered the Lord and began to cry to Him. The Lord raised up Caleb's nephew, Othniel, to deliver them. The Lord moved on Othniel and he went to war with the king of Mesopotamia and prevailed against him. The people of Israel then had rest forty years, until Othniel died (Judges 3:5-11).

After the death of Othniel the people of Israel soon slipped back into the ways and religion of the nations around them. This time the Lord stirred up the king of Moab. He, together with the Ammonites and Amalekites, attacked

Israel and took the city of palm trees, which is thought to have been in the vicinity of Jericho. Israel was under the rule of the king of Moab for eighteen years (Judges 3:12-14).

Again Israel cried to the Lord in their trouble and He raised up Ehud, a Benjamite, to deliver them. Ehud made a double-edged dagger and girded it under his garment on his right thigh. He then carried a present from Israel to the king of Moab. After presenting the gift, he told the king he had a secret errand, and the king sent all those with him away. Then Ehud, who was left-handed, came near the king and with his left hand drew the dagger and killed him (Judges 3:15-22). Ehud escaped and called the men of Israel together by blowing a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim. They took the fords of the Jordan and slew about ten thousand men of Moab as they tried to cross over from the east side (Judges 3:26-30). Moab was subdued and Israel then had rest for eighty years.

Shamgar delivered Israel from the Philistines by killing six hundred men with an ox goad (Judges 3:31).

When Israel again did evil, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. He oppressed Israel for twenty years.

Deborah, a prophetess who lived in Mount Ephraim near Bethel, was judge over Israel at this time. She called Barak from Kedesh-naphtali, which was near Hazor, and told him the Lord had commanded him to take ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun to meet Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and multitude. Barak said he would go if Deborah went with him. She agreed to go but told him he would not get the honor of the victory.

The Lord helped Barak and his men defeat Sisera's army, but Sisera slipped out of his chariot and fled on foot. Later, when Barak pursued Sisera, he found Jael, Heber's wife, had killed the heathen king. God sold him into the hands of a woman (Judges 4:9). Jabin was subdued and the Lord helped Israel to destroy him (Judges 4:1-24).

After the victory over Jabin, Israel had rest from war forty years. But they gradually drifted away from the Lord again. We may wonder why the people of Israel were so prone to forget their past blessings from the Lord and their need to depend wholly upon Him. We should remember that they did not have the experience of the Holy Ghost that we may have today. During the period of the

judges, they did not have sufficient teachers to teach them the laws of God. When the older generations passed on, the younger ones did not have proper influence to keep them true. It was easy in their carnal state to be influenced by the heathens around them. Even now, if God's people do not pray every day and read God's Word, it is easy to become carnal again and fail the Lord (I Corinthians 3:1-3).

After the people of Israel drifted back into the evil ways of the heathens, the Lord permitted the Midianites to prevail over them seven years. The Midianites, the Amalekites, and others overran their land, took their crops and animals, and left them impoverished (Judges 6:1-5). However, there were still some among them that loved the Lord and had enough faith to cause them to call upon the Lord in their distress (Judges 6:6-10).

The Lord always knows where to find one of faith who will obey His commands. On this occasion it was Gideon who was threshing wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. The Lord called him to save Israel from their plight. Gideon built an altar and sacrificed in obedience to the Lord. God proved to him by answering his fleece that He would go with him and give him victory (Judges 6:11-40).

God gave Gideon victory in such a way that he and all Israel knew it was by the power of God, and not by their numbers or prowess. God purposely cut Gideon's army from thirty-two thousand men to three hundred, to go against their enemies who were like grasshoppers for multitude. The great victory the Lord gave them left no room for them to take credit or honor to themselves (Judges 7:1-25).

Israel then wanted to make Gideon their ruler and his sons after him, but he refused and told them the Lord should rule over them (Judges 8:22-23). The Midianites were subdued and Israel again had peace for forty years during the lifetime of this mighty judge (Judges 8:28-32). But after the death of Gideon the Israelites failed the Lord and again worshiped Baal (Judges 8:33-35).

Abimelech was not called of God to deliver His people, but was a self-appointed, wicked leader who caused much trouble in Israel and was finally slain at Thebez, north of Shechem (Judges 9:1-57).

Tola of the tribe of Issachar, which dwelt in Mount Ephraim, judged Israel for twenty years, but nothing is recorded of his rule (Judges 10:1-2). After Tola,

Jair, a Gileadite, judged Israel twenty-two years and nothing is recorded of his rule (Judges 10:3-5).

When the people of Israel began to worship all the gods of the nations around them, the Lord permitted the Philistines to oppress them. The Ammonites on the east side of Jordan also crossed over Jordan and fought against Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, sorely distressing them. The Israelites then confessed to the Lord that they had sinned and pleaded to be delivered. But only after they put away their strange gods and began to serve the Lord did He have mercy on them (Judges 10:6-16).

The Israelites sent to Tob and called Jephthah to lead them against the Ammonites (Judges 11:1-29). Jephthah promised the Lord, if He would give him victory over the Ammonites, he would sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that met him when he returned home. He won a mighty victory, but when he returned home his daughter, his only child, came out to meet him. He was heartbroken. However, he later carried out his vow (Judges 11:30-40). He had internal trouble with the Ephraimites, who were jealous of his victories. He judged Israel six years before he died (Judges 12:1-7).

Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel seven years (Judges 12:8-10). Elon of the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel ten years (Judges 12:11-12). Then Abdon of Ephraim judged Israel eight years (Judges 12:13-15). The twenty-five years of the reigns of these three judges seem to have been a time of peace since there was no mention of trouble.

When Israel had no trouble to drive them to the Lord, they drifted back into the sins and idolatry of their neighbors. The Lord next delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years (Judges 13:1). The Lord then promised Manoah and his wife, both of the tribe of Dan, a son whom He ordained to be a Nazarite from his birth that he might deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines (Judges 13:2-23). In due time Samson was born. The Lord was with him and moved on him at times as he grew up (Judges 13:24-25).

When Samson had grown to be a young man, he saw a Philistine woman in Timnath whom he desired to marry. His parents were displeased about his desire for a Philistine wife. But he said to them, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well" (Judges 14:3). The Lord had moved Samson to do this to bring about an occasion against the Philistines who had dominion over Israel (Judges 14:4).

On Samson's next trip to Timnath, a lion roared against him from the vineyards of Timnath. The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him and he killed the lion with as much ease as he would have killed a kid goat. When he returned again to make the woman his wife, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion he had killed. He found that bees had made honey in the lion's carcass. He ate of the honey and gave some to his father and mother but did not tell them where he found it. At his wedding feast he gave a riddle to his guests with an agreement that if they could not solve it they would give him thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments. However, if they did solve it he would give them thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments. The riddle he gave them was: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges 14:14).

Since they were unable to solve the riddle, they threatened Samson's wife if she did not get the answer from him and tell them. In fear, she wept before Samson until he told her and she in turn told the men. On the seventh day they said to Samson, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle" (Judges 14:18).

Samson became God's one-man army against the Philistines. It seems He used Samson's anger over the way the men had learned his riddle to deal another blow to the Philistines. The Spirit of the Lord came on Samson and he went to Ashkelon, slew thirty men, and took the spoil of them to give the thirty changes of garments to the thirty men who had learned his riddle. Then in anger he went back to his father's home.

Samson's father-in-law gave Samson's wife to his companion—perhaps one of the men who had a part in the wedding ceremony (Judges 14:19-20). When Samson came back later and learned that his wife had been given to another man, he felt justified in doing as much damage as possible to the Philistines. He caught three hundred foxes, tied them together in pairs by their tails, and tied firebrands between their tails. He then turned all one hundred fifty pairs loose in the Philistines' cornfields, vineyards, and olive groves.

In retaliation, the Philistines burned Samson's wife and her family. He again took vengeance by killing a great number of Philistines (Judges 15:1-8).

The Philistines then came against Judah, looking for Samson. The men of Judah bound Samson and delivered him to the Philistines to save themselves trouble with that nation. After Samson was delivered to the Philistines, the Spirit of the Lord came on him and with ease he broke the cords that bound him. He

then picked up a new jawbone of an ass and slew a thousand Philistines with it (Judges 15:9-17).

Samson's final trouble with the Philistines was caused by his falling in love with another Philistine woman named Delilah. The lords of the Philistines promised to pay this woman well if she would entice Samson to tell her the source of his great strength and how they might bind him.

Several times he deceived her. When she thought he was bound and called the Philistines, he would easily break his bonds. She kept on pleading with him until he finally weakened and told her he was a Nazarite unto God from his birth.

His parents had taken the Nazarite vow for him, which meant he must never cut his hair, must never drink wine or strong drink, or eat the fruit of the vine, and must never defile himself by touching a dead body (Numbers 6:2-8). He belonged to God by means of his separation, and God used him by giving him supernatural strength against the enemies of His people.

Nevertheless, when his vow was broken by the Philistines cutting his hair, he lost his strength. They then put out his eyes and bound him with fetters of brass and made him grind in the prison house in Gaza. However, his hair began to grow again (Judges 16:1-22).

The Philistines gathered in a celebration to sacrifice to their god Dagon because they thought Dagon had delivered Samson into their hands. A great crowd gathered and the house was filled. They then called for Samson to be brought out to entertain them.

In the meantime Samson's hair had grown out. He asked the lad who guided him to let him feel the pillars that held up the house. As he stood between the two main pillars with an arm around each pillar, he prayed to the Lord for strength to take vengeance on the Philistines for his eyes. God granted him his desire to pull the house down on the people. He killed more Philistines at his own death than he had during his lifetime. His relatives then took him home and buried him in the burying place of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years (Judges 16:23-31).

It is difficult for us to understand all the things the people did under the Law in Old Testament times. God dealt with them as a natural kingdom, while He deals with us as His spiritual kingdom. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the difference between some Old Testament standards and the

standards required of His spiritual people under grace (Matthew 5-7). They only had God with them, while we have Him in us in the Holy Ghost (Colossians 1:27).

The period of the judges, from the death of Joshua to the time of Eli, covered about three hundred years. The chronology of the narrative ended with the death of Samson. The vicious crimes and happenings recorded in the last five chapters took place during the earlier part of the period. The period of the judges was one of the saddest times in the history of Israel. Perhaps the main cause of their numerous backslidings is revealed in the statement, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). (Also see Judges 21:25.) The Lord permitted their enemies to trouble them as chastisement for their backslidings.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The story of Ruth is thought to have taken place during the first half of the period of the judges. The whole episode seems to have been ordained of God. It is filled with types and shadows of His plan of salvation, particularly the type of redemption. It shows the faith and obedience to God's laws of those who stood true to Him in a lawless age. It also reveals much of Israel's lifestyle during that period of their history.

With this study we need to review God's law concerning Israel's inheritance of land in Canaan. Joshua divided the land of Canaan between the tribes of Israel. Each family was then given an inheritance of land within their tribe. God said the head of a family should not sell his inheritance but that it should be handed down from generation to generation.

However, He made provision for one who became poor and had to sell a part or all of his inheritance. It could be redeemed any time before the next year of Jubilee if there was a near kinsman who was willing and able to buy it back into the family (Leviticus 25:23-28).

Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, had their inheritance in Bethlehem of Judah. Because of a famine in Judah, they left their home and went to the land of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. They either lost or sold their inheritance before they left Judah.

Elimelech died in Moab, leaving Naomi and their two sons. The sons married women of Moab: one married Orpah and the other married Ruth. Then Mahlon and Chilion both died, leaving Naomi with the two daughters-in-law. When Naomi learned that the Lord had blessed the land of Judah and conditions were more prosperous there, she decided to return to her homeland.

She tried to persuade Ruth and Orpah to return to their own families and people. She told them they would be strangers in Israel, and she could not promise them they would find husbands in Israel. Orpah tearfully turned back, but 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" (Ruth 1:16). Ruth had become a proselyte to Naomi's faith. This speaks of Naomi's faithfulness to God, even in a strange land.

Naomi and Ruth arrived back in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. Ruth asked Naomi's permission to go into the fields and glean wherever she was permitted so that she might provide for herself and her mother-in-law. It happened (doubtless by divine providence) that she went into the field of Boaz, a wealthy man and a relative of Elimelech, her late father-in-law.

Boaz had heard of Ruth's devotion to Naomi and of her commendable character. When he learned that it was she who had gleaned that day in his field, he spoke kindly to her and encouraged her to continue to glean there. He ordered the other harvesters to show her kindness, and at mealtime he had her come to eat with his reapers.

At the end of the barley harvest, Naomi advised Ruth how to let Boaz know that Ruth would be pleased for him to redeem the inheritance of Elimelech, which would include taking her, the widow of the heir to the inheritance, as his wife.

Boaz had been much impressed with the character of this girl and was pleased to redeem the inheritance. However, there was a nearer relative than himself, who must first be given the right of redemption. The other relative refused the offer, which left the redemption open to Boaz. He immediately went through with the transaction and called on the men in the gate (place of court transactions) to witness it. They witnessed and pronounced their blessings on him.

A son was born to this union who was named Obed. He became the father of Jesse who became the father of David. And Ruth, who was adopted into the tribe of Judah, became an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 3:23-32).

The story of Boaz redeeming Naomi's lost inheritance is a type of the Lord Jesus redeeming humanity's lost inheritance of eternal life. When Adam sinned by disobeying God's command, eternal life was lost to the human race. The only hope for an individual to get back to the beautiful relationship with God was through Christ and the provision of redemption. There had to be a near kinsman who was willing and able to buy it back. The price of the inheritance of eternal life was the death of the Redeemer. Jesus alone was qualified to be the Redeemer because He was the only one without sin. All other humans have sinned and could only pay the penalty for their own sins, which is eternal death. Jesus, by partaking of human flesh, became our near Kinsman, and He was willing to pay the price of death to redeem a lost world (Hebrews 2:14-17). Because He was sinless, He could come forth in the resurrection to bestow His resurrection life on us.

SAMUEL, THE LAST OF THE JUDGES

Eli was the high priest at the time of the birth of Samuel and during his childhood. We know little of Eli's early history; he was said to have judged Israel forty years (I Samuel 4:18). He was a descendant of Aaron and evidently had inherited the office of high priest (I Samuel 2:27-28). The only charge against him was that he failed to restrain his sons from their wickedness while they served with him in the priesthood (I Samuel 3:11-13). This was a serious charge for the sins of his sons had caused the people to abhor the offerings of the Lord (I Samuel 2:12-17).

Hannah promised the Lord that if He would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord as a Nazarite all the days of his life (I Samuel 1:11). The Lord gave her her desire and she named her son Samuel. When she had weaned him she took him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh to serve the Lord under the tutelage of Eli (I Samuel 1:20-28). Like the parents of Samson, she had taken for him the Nazarite vow for his lifetime. The Lord's hand was on Samuel in a very special way. While he was yet quite young the Lord called him to serve Israel as priest, prophet, and judge (I Samuel 2:35; 3:20-21; 7:15). He was the last of the fifteen judges.

Israel had been under oppression by the Philistines for forty years (Judges 13:1). This trouble was continuing when Samuel became judge. The Philistines

had defeated Israel in a battle near Eben-ezer. It was suggested that if Israel took the Ark of the Covenant out to battle, surely the Lord would give them victory. They sent to Shiloh where the Tabernacle was set up, with the Ark resting in the Most Holy Place between the cherubims. When they brought the Ark of the Lord into Israel's army camp, the people cried with a great shout.

The Philistines were afraid when they heard that the Ark of the Lord had come into Israel's camp. But again the Philistines defeated Israel. They killed thirty thousand of Israel's army, the two wicked sons of Eli, and captured the Ark (I Samuel 4:1-11).

Eli, now ninety-eight years old, was sitting on a seat by the wayside when a messenger came with the news of the capture of the Ark and the death of his two sons. When he heard the message, he fell from his seat and broke his neck (I Samuel 4:12-18).

In grief, the wife of Eli's son Phinehas travailed in the birth of her son. Before she died she named the child I-cha-bod, for she said, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (I Samuel 4:22).

The Ark, which contained the Book of the Law, represented the presence of God to all Israel, for the glory of God abided over the Mercy Seat (the gold cover of the Ark) between the cherubims (Deuteronomy 31:26; Leviticus 16:2). Thus, the capture of the Ark meant to Israel that God had gone from their midst.

The Philistines took the Ark to Ashdod and set it up in the house of their god Dagon. They were to learn that it represented God's glory and power, but not for any benefit to them.

When they came into the house in the early morning they found Dagon fallen on his face before the Ark of God. They set him up in his place, but on the following day they found him again on his face with his head and both hands cut off. The Lord then sent a plague in the form of emerods (a kind of tumor) on the people of Ashdod. They sent the Ark to Gath and the Lord sent the plague on the men of Gath. They next sent it to Ekron. But the people of Ekron, in fear, besought the lords of the Philistines to send it back to Israel (I Samuel 5:1-12).

God refused to honor the wicked sons of Eli who had carried the Ark before the army of Israel, but He took care of His name and reputation in the land of the Philistines. They reaped no victory from its capture. After seven months, they were very happy to send it back. God further proved His power

when He made two milk cows that were hitched to a new cart on which the Ark was placed leave their calves and go straight back to Beth-shemesh in Israel (I Samuel 6:1-12).

The men of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat when they saw the Ark coming down the road. The cart stopped in the field of Joshua beside a large stone. The Levites placed the Ark and the jewels that had been sent with it on the stone. They used the cart for wood and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. But more than fifty thousand curious people looked into the Ark and were smitten by the Lord (I Samuel 6:13-21).

The men of Kirjath-jearim brought the Ark into the house of Abinadab and sanctified his son Eleazar to take care of it. It remained there twenty years (I Samuel 7:1-2).

During this time Samuel was busy teaching and persuading the people of Israel to turn from their sins, to put away all their strange gods, and to worship the Lord only. He told them if they would do this, the Lord would deliver them from the Philistines. He called all Israel to assemble at Mizpeh where he prayed for them and they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord (I Samuel 7:3-6).

The Philistines heard that the people of Israel were at Mizpeh and led their army there for an attack. In fear, the people of Israel asked Samuel to pray the Lord to deliver them. Samuel offered a burnt offering to the Lord, prayed, and the Lord answered. He gave Israel a mighty victory by which the Philistines were subdued and came no more into their territory during Samuel's lifetime. Samuel faithfully judged Israel during all the days of his life (I Samuel 7:7-17).

In his later years, Samuel had trouble with his sons, as had Eli before him. He made his two sons judges over Israel in Beersheba, perhaps because he was no longer able to travel as he had done before. However, these sons were wicked and the people of Israel were dissatisfied with them. They asked Samuel to appoint a king over Israel. The Lord told Samuel to give them their desire but to tell them clearly what the consequences of their choice would be. Yet, the people insisted they wanted a king like the other nations. And Samuel began to look for the right man (I Samuel 8:1-22).

Lesson in Review

Part III, From Moses to Samuel

1. When did God ordain Moses as His instrument to lead His people out of Egypt?

2. What event led Moses to become a fugitive in the land of Midian?

3. How did God identify Himself to Moses in the burning bush, and how did Israel understand that name?

4. When God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb, what was this a type of?

5. Why was it very important that the tabernacle and all that pertained to it should be constructed exactly as God had commanded?

6. What was the single act of disobedience that kept Moses and Aaron from entering the promised land, and why was it so significant?

7. Once Balak's efforts to curse Israel failed, how did Balaam advise him in order to weaken Israel?

8. The story of Boaz redeeming Naomi's lost inheritance is a type of what?

9. After Sampson's hair had grown back while he was made to grind in the prison house in Gaza, what was said regarding his time as a judge in Judges 16:30?

10. What judgment fell upon Eli the high priest and his sons?

PART IV: THE KINGDOM



SAUL, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, sent his son Saul to look for his donkeys. After Saul and his servant had searched from Benjamin to Ephraim but had not found them, the servant suggested they go to a man of God, a prophet in the city. They followed directions and found Samuel.

The Lord had told Samuel that He would send a man that day whom he should anoint to be captain over Israel. Samuel told Saul his father's donkeys had been found. He then took Saul to a feast he had prepared and honored him, and the following morning he sent him away (I Samuel 9:1-27). But before sending him on his way, he anointed him with oil. He then told him where he was to go and what he was to do.

Saul had objected that his tribe was the smallest tribe in Israel and his family the smallest in his tribe. But Samuel told him that he would meet a company of prophets. When he joined the prophets, the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, he would prophesy, and be turned into another man. After that, he was to go to Gilgal where Samuel would meet him. It all came to pass as Samuel predicted (I Samuel 10:1-13).

Samuel called all Israel to Mizpeh and gave them the Lord's message. The Lord said they had failed to obey and trust Him to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. They had rejected the Lord by asking for a king, and He was granting their request.

Saul had hidden himself, but he was brought out and the lot fell on him. He was taller, from his shoulders up, than any of the people, and they shouted, "God save the king" (I Samuel 10:24). Then Samuel sent all the people home (I Samuel 10:1-27).

Samuel had anointed Saul king of Israel. Saul was not acclaimed by all the people, however, until after his spectacular deliverance of Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites. Samuel then called all the people to Gilgal where they unanimously acclaimed Saul king, after which they sacrificed to the Lord and rejoiced (I Samuel 11:1-15).

Samuel then made a speech to all Israel. He called them to witness against him if he had not labored unselfishly for their best interest and spiritual welfare, from his childhood to his old age. There was not a flaw to be

found in Samuel's life or ministry, and the people witnessed to his sincerity and faithfulness (I Samuel 12:1-5).

He then sought to establish them in the faith of their forefathers. He called them to remember God's mercy and love in raising up judges to deliver them during the dark period of their backslidings. He emphasized that the Lord wanted to be their king, pleading with them to always fear Him and faithfully obey Him.

The Lord witnessed to Samuel's words that day by sending thunder and rain. The people feared, repented, and called Samuel to pray for them. He reassured them of God's great faithfulness to them (I Samuel 12:6-22). He then closed his message on this note: "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (I Samuel 12:23).

After Israel's victory over the Philistines at Eben-ezer they were peaceful during the remaining years of Samuel's reign as judge (I Samuel 7:10-14). But after Saul became king, they seem to have renewed their attacks on Israel. Saul, after reigning two years, gathered a choice army of three thousand men. At that time the Philistines had a garrison in Michmash, one in Bethel, and one in Geba, all in the southern part of Israel's territory. Jonathan, Saul's son, led one thousand men against the garrison in Geba and defeated them. Saul led the other two thousand men against the Philistines in Michmash and in Bethel.

When the Philistines heard that Israel had defeated one of their garrisons, they fortified their army in Michmash till they were as the sand of the seashore for multitude (this phrase seems to have been used of any great multitude that could not be numbered). Many of the people of Israel hid in caves, rocks, and thickets, while some crossed the Jordan to the east side.

Saul was in Gilgal, where Samuel was to meet him on the seventh day. All the people with him were trembling in fear. Saul tarried till the seventh day but, in fear, failed to wait for Samuel. He offered a burnt offering, but as soon as he had done so, Samuel came (I Samuel 13:1-10).

Samuel was the high priest. By God's law the high priest was always over the kings and rulers of Israel. Only the priests were authorized to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to the Lord (Leviticus 16:7-8; Numbers 16:40; II Chronicles 26:16-21). Samuel reproved Saul and gave him God's message of judgment. If he had been obedient to God's law, the dynasty of Israel's kings would have

continued in his family, but now he would be the only king in his family. The Lord had already found a man after His own heart, in whose family the dynasty of Israel's kings would continue (I Samuel 13:11-15). Doubtless, it was of the Lord that the Philistines did not attack Israel at this time.

Jonathan, Saul's son, had great faith in God and was probably moved on by the Lord to take his armor bearer and make a surprise attack on an outpost guard of the Philistine garrison. The two of them killed about twenty men. The commotion and surprise of the attack caused the whole garrison to panic. Then the earth quaked and the whole garrison fled, beating down one another as they went. Saul and his company then went to the battle and those in hiding came out and pursued the Philistines (I Samuel 14:1-23). The victory that day was the Lord's and Israel was saved. Saul fought many battles against the enemies of Israel and had war with the Philistines all the days of his life (I Samuel 14:52).

The Lord sent Samuel to Saul with the commandment to smite the Amalekites and destroy every living soul of them and all their cattle and flocks. Saul was to leave absolutely nothing alive. Saul gathered an army of two hundred and ten thousand. They killed all the people but brought back King Agag alive. They destroyed the poor and weakly of the cattle and sheep but saved the best of them alive.

The Lord then sent Samuel to Saul with another message. Saul told Samuel he had performed the commandment of the Lord. But Samuel asked what was the meaning of the lowing of the oxen and the bleating of the sheep. The wayward king made the excuse that the people had saved the best of the animals to sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel answered, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22).

Samuel told Saul the Lord had rejected him because he had rejected the word of the Lord. Saul tried to repent, but it was too late. Samuel then hewed Agag in pieces. But Samuel came no more to see Saul to the day of his death (I Samuel 15:1-35).

The Lord sent Samuel to Jesse's house to anoint one of his sons to be king in the place of Saul. Samuel prepared a sacrifice, went to the house of Jesse, and called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. Jesse then presented each of his sons before the prophet, beginning with the eldest. But the Lord refused each of the first seven sons. Samuel asked if he did not have another son. He then sent for the

youngest, who was out in the field with the sheep. When David came, the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (I Samuel 16:12). Samuel anointed him and the Spirit of the Lord came on David from that day forward (I Samuel 16:13).

The Philistines again prepared for an attack on Israel. The Philistine army stood on a mountain on one side of a valley and Israel's army stood on a mountain on the other side of the valley. The Philistines' champion was a giant named Goliath. Each day for forty days Goliath came out and challenged Israel to send a man to fight with him. The hearts of the men of Israel melted as they saw this nine-foot giant with an armor of brass that completely shielded him from any weapon they had.

David was sent to Israel's camp with provisions for his three older brothers who were in Saul's army. When he heard the challenge and learned that no man in Saul's army would go against the giant, he volunteered to go against him. He refused Saul's armor but took his sling and five stones and went to meet Goliath.

That Saul would send a youth like David to fight with him humiliated the giant. He cursed and vowed to feed the lad's flesh to the fowls and beasts of the field. Then David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and 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" (I Samuel 17:45).

As the giant started toward the lad, David ran to meet him, and as he ran he took a stone out of his bag and slung it. David's stone hit the giant in his forehead, perhaps the only spot that was not covered with brass. Goliath fell forward on his face and David took the giant's sword and cut off his head. The Philistine army then fled and Saul's army pursued them into their own land. When Israel returned they took the spoils from the Philistines' tents (I Samuel 17:1-58).

Saul was greatly impressed with David and took him into his own home to live. Saul's son Jonathan and David became close friends. David was obedient to Saul, and Saul set him over his men of war. But when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women came out dancing and singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 18:7). Saul became jealous and angry because they had ascribed greater honor to David than to himself.

From that time on he hated David and took every opportunity to kill him. He continued sending David, as his captain, out to battle, hoping he would be killed in battle, but the Lord was with David and preserved him. Saul promised

David his daughter Michal for his wife if he would bring him a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, still hoping he would be killed by the Philistines. David and his men went out and slew two hundred Philistines and brought the foreskins to Saul, and took Michal for his wife (I Samuel 18:1-29).

The second time Saul tried to kill David with a javelin, he escaped and fled. Michal helped him escape from their home and he came to Samuel at Ramah. Saul sent messengers after David, but none would take him. Saul then came after him, but the Lord would not allow David to be harmed (I Samuel 19:1-24).

Jonathan became convinced that his father was determined to kill David. The two companions met and made a covenant between them to remain friends for life. They had a tearful separation and David fled for his life. When he again escaped Saul, David went to Ahimelech the priest at Nob. Ahimelech gave him shewbread and the sword of Goliath that had been laid up in the house of the Lord. David then fled to Achish, king of Gath. However, fearing the Philistines, he found refuge in the cave of Adullam.

His brethren and all his father's house, when they heard he was there, came to him. Others who were distressed, in debt, or discontented came to him until he had about four hundred men of whom he became captain (I Samuel 21:1-15; 22:1-2).

David feared for the life of his parents. He asked the king of Moab to let them dwell in his land while he was having to hide from Saul for his own life. The king granted his request and David took his parents to dwell there.

Saul was insane with hatred of David and wanted to kill any who favored him. He ordered his servants to kill the priests who had given him shewbread and the sword of Goliath. The servants refused, but Doeg, the Edomite who was Saul's henchman, killed about eighty-five priests that day (I Samuel 22:3-23).

David learned the Philistines were fighting against Israel at Keilah, a short distance from the cave of Adullam. He inquired of the Lord who told him to go against them. He and the men who were with him defeated the Philistines with a great slaughter and delivered the people of Keilah. After this, David and his six hundred men fled out of the land of Judah to a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph, southeast from Hebron. Saul hunted him wherever he went (I Samuel 23:1-18).

Some from Ziph told Saul where David was hiding. Saul and his men went into the wilderness and were closing in on David when a messenger came with the word that the Philistines had invaded Judah. Saul forsook following David to fight the Philistines. David and his men then went farther east and found hiding places near En-gedi, on the west coast of the Dead Sea (I Samuel 23:19-29).

After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness of En-gedi. He took three thousand men and went to hunt his son-in-law. He passed by a cave, and being weary from travel, he went in to rest and fell asleep.

David and his men were in the side of the cave. David's men urged him to kill Saul as he lay sleeping, but David refused to lay a finger on Saul. He considered that Saul was still the anointed king of Israel. He cut off a piece of Saul's garment as proof that he could have killed him, but his heart smote him even for that.

David and his men withdrew to the side of the cave and Saul left without knowing they had been there. David then went out of the cave and called Saul and told him what had happened. He made a beautiful speech to the king and showed him the piece he had cut from his garment.

Then "Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" (I Samuel 24:16-17). He told the former shepherd boy that he was assured that David would become king of Israel and the kingdom would be established in his hand. He asked him to swear that when he became king he would spare his family and his father's house. David swore that he would. Saul then went home, but David and his men went back to their hiding place (I Samuel 24:1-22).

When Samuel died and was buried at his home in Ramah, all Israel mourned his death. Our study of Samuel's lifetime ministry to Israel has given us some understanding of how the people felt toward him and what his ministry meant to them. He was surely one of the greatest Bible characters. There is no certain record of his age, although it is thought he was about ninety-eight years old when he died.

David and his men went still further south into the wilderness of Paran, into the area of Israel's wandering in the wilderness before they came into the land of Canaan. There David had an unhappy experience with Nabal, a wealthy man who was said to be churlish and evil in his doings. However, Nabal's wife Abigail

was not only a beautiful woman but one of good understanding and of a beautiful character. David was on his way to wreak a terrible vengeance on Nabal for his surly and evil treatment. Abigail met David and convinced him of the folly of his intention and saved him from bringing a blot on his character. After Nabal died, David made Abigail his wife as he did Ahinoam of Jezreel. In the meantime, Saul had given David's wife Michal to another man (I Samuel 25:1-44).

Saul's repentance for seeking the death of David seems to have been short lived. He, with three thousand men of Israel, was again hunting David.

David learned the place of their encampment and along with Abishai slipped into the camp while Saul and all his men were asleep. David could have killed Saul but refused to harm him and would not permit Abishai to do so. They took his spear and cruse of water and withdrew to a hill some distance from the camp. David then called to awaken the sleeping men, and a second time he let Saul know he had spared his life.

Saul again appeared to have repented of his evil intention. He knew in his heart that David would become king of Israel, and he must have known the Lord had protected David from all his efforts to kill him. David told him to send a man to retrieve his spear. He then went on his way and Saul returned home (I Samuel 26:1-25).

After this last encounter with Saul, David gave up any hope of again winning Saul's friendship. Believing that Saul would continue to seek his life so long as he remained within the territory of Israel, he decided to go among the Philistines. He and his men, with their wives and children, went to Achish at Gath. He asked Achish to give him a town where he might dwell with his company and received the town of Ziklag.

David dwelt among the Philistines a year and four months. During that time he made a raid against some enemies of Israel in the southland, including the Amalekites, and killed all of them. He told Achish his raid had been against the people of Judah and others in the southland, and Achish believed him. He now believed David had permanently left Israel for the Philistines.

Soon after this the Philistines gathered their armies for war against Israel. Achish told David he expected him and his men to go with them to battle (I Samuel 27:1-12; 28:1-2).

The Philistines pitched their camp in Shunem, within the border of the tribe of Issachar, and Saul pitched his camp in Gilboa. When Saul saw the great host of the Philistines, his courage failed him. There was no one to whom he could turn for help because Samuel was dead. Saul tried to inquire of the Lord but received no answer. There was no prophet to whom he could go.

In earlier times, in obedience to God's Word, he had killed all the witches (I Samuel 28:3; Exodus 22:18), but now he asked his servants to find a woman with a familiar spirit. In desperation, he disguised himself and went to the woman in Endor, asking her to call up Samuel.

She called up an apparition, an old man with a mantle, which Saul took to be Samuel. The message he received was the same in essence that Samuel had given him when he failed to obey God's command to destroy all the Amalekites (I Samuel 15:26-28).

We know the devil can have no power over God's people, whether they are on earth or in Heaven. So it would seem that Saul, in his disoriented mental state and guilty conscience, heard what he already knew in his heart: that God had forsaken him and David would be established as king of Israel. Perhaps we do not thoroughly understand this incident, but we do understand that God's judgments against sin are certain (I Samuel 28:3-25).

David was providentially saved from having to go with the Philistines to fight against Israel. Achish trusted David's seeming loyalty to the Philistines and had him and his men in the rear of the marching army. The princes of the Philistines, however, did not trust him and refused to let him go with them (I Samuel 29:1-11).

When David and his men returned to Ziklag, he found the Amalekites had raided the town and carried off everything, even the women and children. By the providence of the Lord, they found the camp of the Amalekites, destroyed their forces, and brought back all the people and the spoils. David sent presents of the spoils they had taken from the Amalekites to his friends: the elders of Judah and those who had aided him when he and his men were hiding from Saul (I Samuel 30:1-31).

The Philistines won a great victory over Israel. Saul was wounded by the archers and asked his armor bearer to kill him with his sword. When the armor bearer refused, Saul fell on his sword and died. The armor bearer then fell on his own sword and died with him. Saul's three sons were also killed in battle that day.

When the Philistines came back to take the spoils from the slain, they found Saul and his three sons. They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, which they put in the house of their god Ashtaroath, and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-Shan.

The men of Jabesh-gilead, east of the Jordan, remembered the bravery by which Saul delivered them from the Ammonites soon after he was anointed king. They traveled all night and retrieved his body and the bodies of his three sons and brought them to Jabesh. They burned the bodies, buried the bones under a tree in Jabesh, and mourned for them seven days (I Samuel 31:1-13). It is grievous to think of one who started out with such promise came to such a sad end. But the wages of sin is death, which is eternal separation from God.

After Saul's death David inquired of the Lord whether he should return to his tribe in Judah, and the Lord told him to go to Hebron. David, his family, and all his men with their families returned and dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

THE REIGN OF DAVID

The men of Judah anointed David king over Judah. But Abner, who had been captain over Saul's armies, took Saul's son Ish-bosheth to Mahanaim and made him king over Gilead, east of the Jordan, and over Ashur, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin on the west side of Jordan (II Samuel 2:1-11). There were several years of war between the followers of Ish-bosheth and the followers of David.

Finally both Abner and Ish-bosheth were killed, but not by the will of David. He had those who committed the murders put to death. After the death of Ish-bosheth, all the elders of Israel came to Hebron and made a league with David and anointed him king over all Israel.

David was thirty years old when he was made king of Judah and he reigned over Judah seven years and six months. Then he reigned over all Israel thirty-three years, a total of forty years and six months (II Samuel 5:1-5). When David became king of all Israel the kingdom possessed only about six thousand square miles of territory. Before the end of his reign he had conquered all the territory that God had promised to the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Its boundaries, embracing about sixty thousand square miles, are roughly described in Genesis 15:18-21.

David's first campaign was to recapture Jerusalem. It had been captured under Joshua, but the Jebusites had fortified and it was called Jebus at this time. The Jebusites thought their city was impregnable. However, David and his men took it by storm (II Samuel 5:6-9). He renamed it Jerusalem and made it the capital of the kingdom of Israel. Twice the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim and twice David led the army of Israel and defeated them and drove them back into their own territory along the Mediterranean coast (II Samuel 5:17-25).

David next took his thirty thousand men to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem from the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim. It had been in his house for twenty years, since the Philistines had sent it home on a new cart (I Samuel 7:1-2). They put it on another new cart that was driven by two sons of Abinadab. On the way the oxen shook the Ark and Uzzah put his hand on the Ark to steady it. God struck him dead for touching the Ark. Because David was now afraid to try to move it, they took it into the house of Obed-edom, where it rested for the next three months. The Lord greatly blessed Obed-edom and his household while the Ark was in his house.

David then made another effort to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. This time it was borne by the priests (Numbers 4:15). David sacrificed and danced and the people shouted and praised the Lord. They put it in a tabernacle David had prepared for it (II Samuel 6:1-23).

Hiram, king of Tyre, had sent cedar trees, carpenters, and masons and they built David a house. David felt guilty when he thought of himself living in a house of cedar while the Ark of God was in a tent behind curtains. He wanted to build the Lord a house. However, the Lord told him his son should build the house (II Samuel 7:12-17). The Lord had other work for David during his reign over Israel. He led a number of foreign campaigns against the nations round about Israel and conquered all the territory God had promised to Abraham (II Samuel 8-10).

By inquiry, David found a son of Jonathan, who was lame. The son had been dropped by his nurse as she fled with him after the death of Saul and Jonathan. David brought him to Jerusalem to live with him and eat at his table. And in remembrance of his friendship with Jonathan, he also gave him all that had been the property of Saul.

David was a great man of many fine qualities of character. But in spite of his character of honor and justice and of his faith and love for God, he committed a great sin. He ordered Uriah to be put in the front of a battle so he

might be killed as David wanted to take his wife. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to him to give him a realistic picture of his sin. He then realized what a terrible thing he had done and repented bitterly and the Lord forgave him (II Samuel 11:1-27; 12:1-23).

David's prayer of repentance is recorded in Psalm 51.

This was only another testimony that the world needed a Savior to save from the seed of sin that is born in every human. The Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). We read also in Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

The Lord forgave David, but He promised judgment on him out of his own house (II Samuel 12:10-11). The judgment came in the form of several calamities in his own family: the crime of his son Ammon and Absalom's vengeance (II Samuel 13:1-39). His son Absalom tried to take the throne of Israel from David and he had to flee from Jerusalem for his life. Finally, in a battle between David's followers and those of Absalom, Absalom was killed. David was heartbroken and grieved deeply for Absalom (II Samuel 13-18).

The men of Judah sent a message to David to return, with all those with him, to Jerusalem. He was still on the east side of Jordan, and the men of Judah and Israel met him at the Jordan River to conduct him back to Jerusalem. They took a ferryboat to carry the king's household over the river (II Samuel 19:1-40). Jealousy and strife between some of the tribes was finally settled (II Samuel 19:41-43).

After David's many troubles, another war erupted with the Philistines. Several battles raged with the Philistines, in whose army were giants, one of whom was Goliath's brother. David's men were victorious in these battles and killed the towering men. In one battle at Gath, David's nephew killed a certain giant who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot (II Samuel 21:15-22).

II Samuel 22:1-51 is a beautiful song of praise and thanksgiving that David sang to the Lord after his deliverance from all his enemies and troubles. We may learn much of the character and faith of David from his many beautiful songs and prophecies in the Book of Psalms. II Samuel 23:1-39 is a record of some of David's last words, a list of the mighty men who worked with him and served him, and his commendation for the things they did.

David again displeased the Lord when he numbered the people of Israel. The Lord had told Moses to number the people, but not for the purpose of determining their military strength, which seems to have been David's motive at this time. In I Chronicles 21:1 it was said that Satan, who works through the carnal nature of men, provoked David to number Israel.

Joab reminded David that the Lord multiplied the strength of His people regardless of numbers. The Lord had told Gideon he had too many men and cut his army down to three hundred so the people could not glory in their own accomplishment. Perhaps the people, as well as David, were trusting more in their numbers and advantages at this time than trusting in God's miraculous power.

The Lord gave David a choice of three different ways to be punished for his sin. He chose to cast himself and the people upon the mercy of God in the three days of plague. When he offered sacrifice on Araunah's threshing floor, the plague was halted (II Samuel 24:1-25).

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

When David was old and ill, his son Adonijah plotted to seize the kingdom of Israel. Nathan the prophet learned what he was doing and went to Bath-sheba and then to David. David immediately made all arrangements to have Solomon anointed king of Israel. While Adonijah was having a feast with some friends in preparation to make himself king, he heard that Solomon had already been anointed king by the command and preparation of David. Adonijah then feared for his life, but Solomon assured him that so long as he conducted himself honorably he would be safe (I Kings 1:1-53).

David realized he would soon die and gave Solomon a solemn charge.

"Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (I Kings 2:2-4).

Soon after this David died and was buried in the city of David (I Kings 2:10). In spite of his failures, he was a man after God's own heart. God chose the line of David for the royal dynasty of Israel. Christ, the eternal King of God's people, was to be the son of David.

Solomon sought to rid the kingdom of some evil men who had held important positions but had caused David trouble. He loved the Lord and wanted to walk in the way of his father, David, but he began a practice in the early part of his reign that finally caused his downfall. He formed an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married his daughter (I Kings 3:1-3).

Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee" (I Kings 3:5). Solomon felt inadequate for the gigantic job before him. He told the Lord he did not know how to go out or to come in, in the matter of ruling God's great people Israel. He asked for an understanding heart and the ability to discern between good and evil that he might know how to judge God's people. God was pleased with his request and promised him a wise and understanding heart, and also riches and honor, more than all other kings of all nations (I Kings 3:4-15). A demonstration of Solomon's God-given wisdom is recorded in I Kings 3:16-28.

Solomon became very wise and very rich, and his fame spread through all countries. Besides an understanding heart and wisdom, God gave him the ability to become learned in all subjects. The many subjects he wrote on are recorded in the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. He spoke three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs. People came from every country to hear his wisdom (I Kings 4:29-34).

However, the most important matter of business with Solomon was the building of the Temple. The house of the Lord had been David's dream, but David had only been permitted to make plans and gather material. Araunah's threshing floor, which David bought to build an altar to the Lord (II Samuel 24:18-25; I Chronicles 21:18-30), seems to have been the Lord's chosen site of the Temple (II Chronicles 3:1-2).

Solomon began building the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, four hundred and eighty years after Israel came out of Egypt (I Kings 6:1). He built the Temple by the pattern the Lord had given to David and in turn had given Solomon (I Kings 6:2-38; I Chronicles 28:11-19).

This beautiful edifice was seven years in construction. It was built on the same floor plan as the Tabernacle that Moses built in the wilderness picturing the same types and shadows. However, it was built twice as large as the Tabernacle and was a permanent building, not portable as the Tabernacle that was built to be moved from place to place. It was truly a beautiful sanctuary with its carved work and all the inside overlaid with gold. But with all the wealth, the skilled labor, and great care that went into the seven years of its building, it was but a faint shadow of God's spiritual house of which it was a type. John was given a vision of His spiritual house that is comprised of all His redeemed, the bride, the Lamb's wife (Revelation 21:1-7, 9-23).

Solomon assembled all the elders, the heads of tribes, the Levites, the priests, and all the congregation of the people of Israel for the dedication of the Temple. The first act was to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the Most Holy Place. The priests brought it in and placed it between the cherubims. And as soon as they had gone out of the Most Holy Place, the glory of the Lord filled the house so the priests could not minister (I Kings 8:1-11). Solomon then spoke briefly to the people of how David had desired to build the house of the Lord, but the Lord had told him his time would be consumed with war against Israel's enemies. His work was to possess the Promised Land and establish the kingdom, but his son Solomon would build the Lord's house.

Solomon then prayed a mighty prayer. He mentioned everything that could and would happen to Israel in their future and asked God to be merciful and forgive when they repented (I Kings 8:22-54). He was standing when he began to pray, but before he finished, he was kneeling with his hands spread up to Heaven. He thanked the Lord for bringing them into this land and fulfilling all His good promises. He then blessed the people and admonished them to be faithful to the Lord that all people of all the earth might come to know that the Lord is God and there is none else.

Solomon and all Israel offered sacrifices to the Lord. They had a great feast that lasted fourteen days, after which Solomon sent the people home with glad hearts and rejoicing in the Lord (I Kings 8:55-66).

From then on all Israel recognized God's presence as dwelling in the Most Holy Place of the Temple. God had promised Israel that when they crossed over Jordan and possessed the land, He would choose a place to put His name where all Israel should come to worship, to offer sacrifices, and to celebrate their feast days (Deuteronomy 12:10-14). The people of Israel, wherever they were, always prayed toward the Temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 6:10). Solomon's Temple and

those that were built after it have been destroyed, but now God's spirit dwells in those of us who have been filled with the Holy Ghost.

Solomon's fame continued to spread throughout the known world. The queen of Sheba came from the southland to test his wisdom with some hard questions. When she had heard his wisdom and had seen his wealth and the organization of his kingdom, she said, "Behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (I Kings 10:7).

God tested the character of Solomon with the blessings of wisdom, fame, and riches. So long as he used these things for the glory of God, they were a blessing, but when he became proud and began to squander the gifts of God on himself, they became his downfall. He disobeyed God's commandment by marrying many wives of heathen nations. He seemed to think this gave him an advantage with the other nations. But instead they drew him down to their own level of idolatry (I Kings 11:1-8). "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" (I Kings 11:4).

A vivid picture of Solomon's backslidden state is recorded in Ecclesiastes 2:1-26. He testified that he began to use the blessings God had given him to try to satisfy every carnal desire of his own heart. Everything he did, he did for "me." But instead of finding happiness and satisfaction, he found only travail of soul. Everything became vanity and vexation of spirit.

The writings of Solomon in the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon tell us much of the two periods in his life. The first half of his reign over Israel, during which time he built the Temple, he was faithful to the Lord. The Book of Proverbs reflects his wisdom and faithfulness during this period. But the Book of Ecclesiastes reflects his backsliding, after his heart was turned away from the Lord (I Kings 11:1-13). However, the last chapters of Ecclesiastes seem to reflect an awakening to his condition and trying to find his way back. He confessed, "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished" (Ecclesiastes 4:13). And he closed his reflections with these words, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 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).

After reigning forty years over Israel, Solomon died and was buried in the city of David. And his son Rehoboam reigned in his stead (I Kings 11:41-43).

Lesson in Review

Part IV. The Kingdom

1. In Samuel's final message as prophet and priest to Israel, what promise did he make to the people?

2. What was king Saul's mistake in Gilgal as he waited for the prophet Samuel, and what was the consequences of that mistake?

3. How did Samuel respond when king Saul made the excuse that the people had saved the best of the Amalekite's animals to sacrifice to the Lord?

4. When the humiliated giant Goliath cursed at David and vowed to feed his flesh to the fowls and beasts of the field, how did David respond?

5. What was the song that the Israelite women sang about David that caused King Saul to hate him and desire to kill him?

6. In spite of David's character of honor and justice and of his faith and love for God, he committed what great sin?

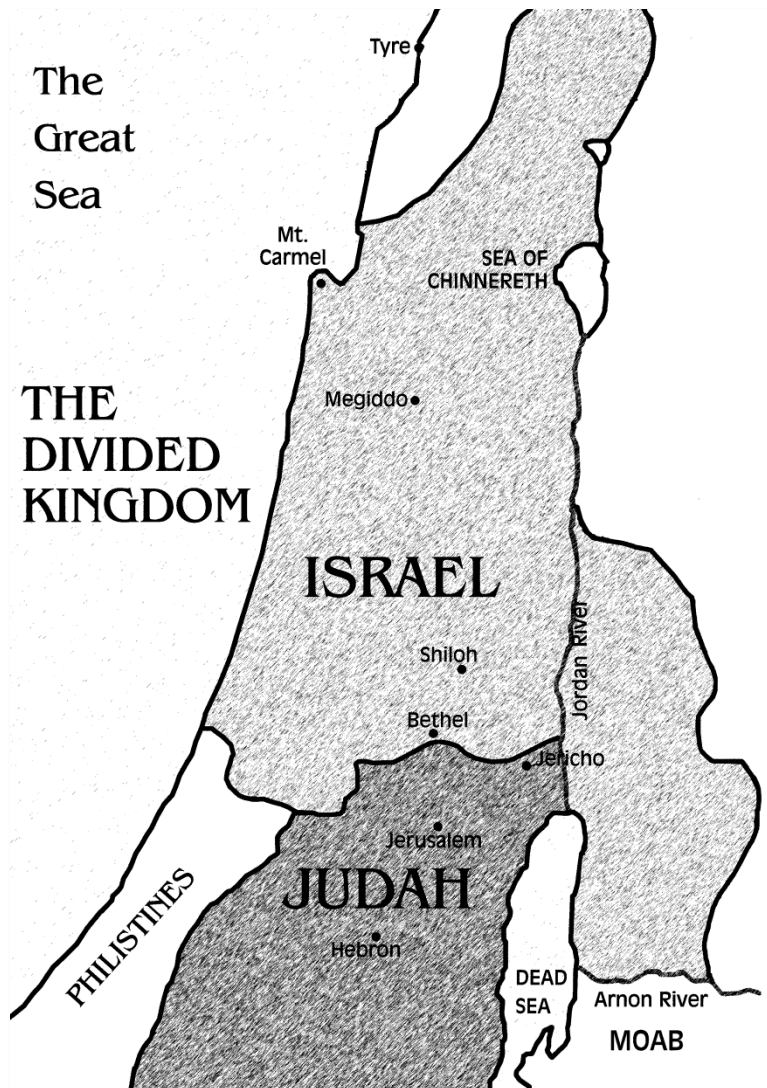
7. Solomon wanted to walk in the way of his father David, but he began a practice in the early part of his reign that finally caused his downfall. What was it?

8. What was the most important matter of business that Solomon was tasked with as king of Israel?

9. After the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Most Holy Place of Solomon's Temple, what happened next?

10. What is Solomon's conclusion of the whole matter at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes?

PART V: THE DIVIDED KINGDOM



THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

The Lord had told Solomon that because of his unfaithfulness He would rend the kingdom of Israel from his son, except for the tribe of Judah.

After the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem where all Israel met to make him king. After Solomon's backsliding, the people had become unhappy because of burdens he had imposed on them. They asked Rehoboam to lighten the grievous yoke, but Rehoboam refused the advice of the old men and answered the people according to the advice of the young men: he would make their yoke much heavier. They rebelled against him and asked Jeroboam to be their king. Consequently, the kingdom divided, fulfilling the word of the Lord (I Kings 12:1-25).

God had given the tribe of Judah to Rehoboam because He had chosen the house of David for the royal dynasty of Israel and the city of Jerusalem as the site of the Temple where He had chosen to put His name. Jeroboam was afraid if the people returned to Jerusalem to worship and offer their sacrifices, they would rebel against him and return to Rehoboam. To prevent this, he made two golden calves (the god of Egypt) and set one in Bethel, the southern part of his domain, and one in Dan, near the northern border of his kingdom. His excuse was that it was too much for the people to have to travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. He tried to pattern his calf worship like that of Jehovah to deceive the people. However, he made priests of the lowest of the people who were not Levites (I Kings 12:26-33). Ever after he was called the Jeroboam who made Israel to sin, for he led them into idolatry (I Kings 14:16; 15:34; 16:19).

Rehoboam gathered an army to fight against Israel and Jeroboam. The Lord, however, warned him not to fight against his brethren. Instead, Rehoboam strengthened himself in Judah and fortified some of the cities (I Kings 12:21-24; II Chronicles 11:1-14). The Levites and all those in Israel who were true to the worship of Jehovah left their possessions in Israel and came to Judah so they could worship in Jerusalem. Rehoboam was strengthened in Judah for three years (II Chronicles 11:1-23). But after he had established his kingdom and felt confident in his position as king, he forsook the law of the Lord and the people followed him in his evil ways (II Chronicles 12:1).

In the fiftieth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak, king of Egypt, with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, made war against Jerusalem. The Lord sent Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah to tell them He had left them in the hand of Shishak because they had

forsaken the Lord. When they humbled themselves before the Lord, He did not permit Shishak to destroy them, but he carried away treasures out of the house of the Lord and the shields of gold Solomon had made (II Chronicles 12:2-12). After reigning seventeen years in Judah, Rehoboam died, and his son Abijah reigned in his stead (II Chronicles 12:13-16).

Abijah began his reign in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign over Israel (the ten tribes). There had been war between Israel and Judah during the reign of Rehoboam. Abijah was now faced with this condition of war.

He took an army of four hundred thousand valiant men to Mount Ephraim, and Jeroboam came against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men. Abijah stood on a mountain peak and called across to Jeroboam. He reminded him and his people that the Lord had chosen David to be king of Israel and had chosen his house for the royal dynasty. He told Jeroboam that he and the people of Judah were trusting in the Lord and were keeping His laws and the worship of His house. He told them God was their captain and pleaded with them not to fight against the Lord (II Chronicles 13:1-12).

Nevertheless, Jeroboam, who had twice as many men as Abijah, had set an ambush behind the forces of Abijah and attacked them from the front and the rear. The people of Judah cried to the Lord, the priests sounded their trumpets, and the Lord gave them victory over Jeroboam and Israel. Five hundred thousand of Jeroboam's men were slain, and Jeroboam never regained his military strength during the reign of Abijah (II Chronicles 13:13-22).

Abijah died after reigning only three years in Judah. According to the record in I Kings 15:1-8, Abijah also forsook the Lord and followed in the way of Rehoboam, but evidently he began his reign in faith.

At the death of Abijah, his son Asa became king of Judah. He reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years, the first ten years of which were peaceful. He exerted himself to serve the Lord, to do right, and to lead Judah in the ways and laws of God. He built fenced cities and gathered an army of three hundred thousand out of Judah and two hundred and eighty thousand out of Benjamin (II Chronicles 14:1-8; I Kings 15:11-13).

After ten years of peace, the Ethiopians came against him with a thousand thousand men and three hundred chariots. Asa cried to the Lord, "LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name

we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee" (II Chronicles 14:11). The Lord gave them a sweeping victory over the Ethiopians (II Chronicles 14:9-15).

When Asa returned the prophet Azariah met him with a message from the Lord: "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2). All of Israel's troubles had come upon them because they had forsaken the Lord, but when they called on Him, He always helped them. Asa was encouraged by the prophet's message and began diligently to try to stamp idolatry out of Judah and Benjamin. He removed his own mother from being queen because she had made an idol in a grove (II Chronicles 15:3-19).

Jeroboam, king of Israel, died two years after Asa became king of Judah. Jeroboam's son Nadab reigned over Israel two years and continued in idolatry as his father had. Baasha of the tribe of Issachar conspired against him, killed him in a battle with the Philistines, and reigned in his stead. Baasha reigned over Israel twenty-four years and led the people in the way of idolatry, as had Jeroboam who made Israel to sin (I Kings 15:25-34).

In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign over Judah, Baasha king of Israel fortified Ramah on the border between Israel and Judah to prevent the people of Israel from going into Judah and the people of Judah from coming into Israel. A large number from Israel had gone into Judah during the reign of Asa. Asa sent silver and gold to Ben-hadad, king of Syria, asking him to break his league with Baasha so Baasha might leave the border of Judah. Ben-hadad did this and Baasha left off building at Ramah.

The Lord was displeased with Asa for going to the king of Syria instead of relying on the Lord for help. He sent the prophet Hanani to rebuke him. Hanani told him, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (II Chronicles 16:9). Instead of repenting, Asa became angry with Hanani and put him in prison (II Chronicles 16:1-11).

Three years later Asa became seriously diseased in his feet. Again he displeased the Lord by going to the physicians instead of seeking the Lord. He died and was buried in his own luxurious sepulcher, which he had luxuriously prepared. His son Jehoshaphat began reigning over Judah (II Chronicles 16:12-14).

Baasha had killed all the descendants of Jeroboam, so his family might become the kingly dynasty for Israel. Jehu prophesied that Baasha's house should be made as he had made the house of Jeroboam (I Kings 16:1-7). When Baasha died his son Elah reigned over Israel two years. Then his servant Zimri killed him while the king was drunk and reigned in his stead. Zimri then killed all the house of Baasha according to the prophecy of Jehu.

Zimri reigned only seven days. When the men of Israel heard what Zimri had done, they made Omri, captain of the army, king of Israel, and besieged Tirzah, the city of Zimri. When Zimri saw the city was taken, he went into the king's palace, burned it, and died in the fire (I Kings 16:8-20). Omri reigned twelve years, but he was more evil than the kings before him. He also moved the capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria.

When Omri died, his son Ahab reigned over Israel. Ahab reigned in Samaria twenty-two years and was more wicked than all who had reigned before him. He married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Zidon, and worshiped their god Baal. He built an altar and shrine to Baal in Samaria (I Kings 16:21-34).

The Lord sent Elijah to Ahab with the message no rain would fall until Elijah announced it would rain again. The Lord then directed Elijah to go into hiding where the Lord fed him by the brook Cherith till the brook dried up. Afterward the Lord sent Elijah to the widow of Zarephath where He took care of Elijah, the widow, and her son for the duration of the drought (I Kings 17:1-24).

In the third year of the drought, the Lord sent Elijah to meet Ahab. Elijah announced to Ahab a contest between the Lord Jehovah and the prophets of Baal. He told Ahab to assemble all the people of Israel, along with the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the groves at Mount Carmel.

When all the people had gathered to Mount Carmel, Elijah said to them, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). He instructed the prophets of Baal to prepare a bullock for a sacrifice and put it on wood but with no fire under it. Then he would do the same, and the god who answered by fire should be God.

The prophets of Baal did as Elijah said, calling on Baal all day till the time of the evening sacrifice. They became so desperate they leaped on their altar and cut themselves in a frenzy, but no fire fell.

Elijah then repaired the altar of the Lord that had been broken down, using twelve stones, one for each tribe of Israel. He put the wood on the altar and put the sacrifice on the wood. He made a trench around the altar and had twelve barrels of water poured on his sacrifice till the water filled the trench. He then prayed a simple prayer of faith. The fire of God fell, consumed the sacrifice and the altar, and licked up the water. After Elijah slew all the prophets of Baal, he told Ahab to eat and drink for it was going to rain. He then went to the top of Carmel and prayed till he saw a small cloud arise over the sea. He sent word to Ahab that it was going to rain, and very soon black clouds and wind brought a very great rain (I Kings 18:1-46).

Jezebel sent a message to Elijah that she was going to kill him because he had killed her prophets of Baal. Elijah then had to flee from her wrath. But the Lord took care of him until he had finished his great ministry in Israel and was taken up to Heaven in a chariot of the Lord (I Kings 19:1-21; II Kings 2:1-13).

Ben-hadad, king of Syria, besieged Samaria, but the Lord was merciful to Ahab and gave him victory over Ben-hadad. But in spite of Ahab's periods of partial repentance, he continued in his evil ways under the influence and rule of his wicked wife Jezebel (I Kings 20:1-43). When Naboth refused to sell to Ahab his inheritance from the Lord, Jezebel had him killed so Ahab could take his vineyard. The Lord then sent Elijah again to Ahab, foretelling his and Jezebel's doom (I Kings 21:1-29).

After Elijah's last visit to Ahab, Israel and Syria had three years of peace. Then Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, came to Samaria to visit Ahab. Ahab treated him royally and asked him to join him in battle against the king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Because Jehoshaphat wanted to inquire of the Lord, Ahab called about four hundred of his prophets who unanimously agreed that they should go against Syria. However, Jehoshaphat asked for another prophet. They called Micaiah who gave a true prophecy that Ahab would be killed in the battle according to the plan of God. They went into the battle and Ahab was killed in fulfillment of Elijah's message to him (I Kings 22:1-40).

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah. He walked in all the sins of his father and mother and of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin (I Kings 22:51-53). Ahaziah died, according to the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah (II Kings 1:2-6). His brother Jehoram reigned twelve years over Israel. He put away the image of Baal, which his father Ahab had made, but he continued in the sins of Jeroboam (II Kings 1:17-18; 3:1-3).

The Lord told Elijah to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his stead when he should be translated (I Kings 19:15). Elisha was anointed and followed Elijah and served him during the rest of Elijah's ministry. When the time drew near that Elijah was to be taken up, Elisha would not leave him, for he was determined to see him as he went up. A chariot of fire appeared and Elijah was caught up in a whirlwind and taken into Heaven. Elisha took up the mantle that fell from Elijah and began to do with it the same miracles Elijah had done. He became the Lord's prophet in Israel (II Kings 2:1-25).

When the king of Moab rebelled against Jehoram, king of Israel, Jehoram asked Jehoshaphat to go with him to fight against Moab. Jehoshaphat agreed and the king of Edom also joined them. They traveled seven days and found no water for their armies or their animals. Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet that they might inquire of the Lord, and they found Elisha. Elisha agreed to inquire of the Lord only because of the presence of Jehoshaphat. He told them to make the valley full of ditches and the Lord would fill them with water. It happened just as Elisha said. They then defeated Moab and returned to their own land (II Kings 3:4-27).

Later Jehoshaphat learned that Moab was coming against Judah with a great host. He was afraid and confessed to the Lord that he and his army had no might against this great company, but they were trusting in the Lord. The Lord answered him by the prophet Jahaziel, "Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's" (II Chronicles 20:15).

Jehoshaphat and all the people fell on their faces and worshiped the Lord. When Jehoshaphat appointed singers to go out before the army, praising the Lord for the beauty of holiness, the Lord caused their enemies to turn on one another and they destroyed themselves. Truly the battle was the Lord's.

Jehoshaphat and all his army came home to Jerusalem rejoicing in the Lord. The fear of God came on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel (II Chronicles 20:1-34). But Jehoshaphat joined with Ahaziah, the wicked king of Israel, to make ships, and the Lord caused the ships to be broken so they could not go to Tarshish (II Chronicles 20:35-37).

When Jehoshaphat died, his son Jehoram reigned over Judah. There were two Jehorams. Ahab's son Jehoram reigned over Israel after the death of his brother Ahaziah. And Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram reigned in Jerusalem eight years. Jehoshaphat had been one of Judah's best kings since David, but his son

Jehoram was wicked. He married the daughter of Ahab and walked in the ways of Ahab and the kings of Israel (II Chronicles 21:1-7).

All the nations around Israel had been conquered by David and made tributary to Israel. But after the division of the kingdom of Israel, they began to break away. Both Edom and Libnah revolted against Judah during the reign of Jehoram. Elijah, before he was translated, sent a letter to Jehoram in which he reproved him for his sins (II Chronicles 21:12-15). The Lord stirred the Philistines, the Arabians, and the Ethiopians against Jehoram. Then the Lord smote him with an incurable disease and Jehoram died by the judgment of God (II Chronicles 21:16-20).

The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, king in his stead. He reigned one year. His mother Athaliah was the daughter of Omri and sister to Ahab. She counseled Ahaziah in the wicked ways of the house of Ahab.

Jehoram, king of Israel, was wounded in a battle with the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead and returned home to Jezreel to be healed. Ahaziah went to visit him at Jezreel and while he was there, Jehu came to execute judgment on the house of Ahab. Ahaziah, along with all the relations of Ahab, was slain (II Chronicles 22:1-9).

Athaliah, the wicked mother of Ahaziah, tried to kill all the royal descendants of David so she might reign in Jerusalem. But Jehoshabeath, the wife of Jehoida the priest and the sister of Ahaziah, stole Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, and hid him in the house of God for six years. In the seventh year Jehoida the priest called all the chief people and the Levites to the Temple, where they brought Joash out, anointed him, crowned him king, and Athaliah was slain. Jehoida made a covenant with the people that they would serve the Lord. They destroyed the altar and the images of Baal and killed their priests. Then all the people of Judah rejoiced (II Chronicles 23:1-21).

Joash began his reign over Judah at the age of seven years and served the Lord. He was a worthy king during all the days of the good priest Jehoida. During this time they repaired the Temple (II Chronicles 24:1-14). But when Jehoida died at the age of one hundred thirty years, the princes of Judah influenced Joash to turn away from the Lord. When the priest Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, tried to bring them back to the Lord, they stoned him to death in the Temple courtyard (Luke 11:57). The Syrians then invaded the land and defeated Judah. They left Joash in great disease. Later, the royal servants killed the king. His son Amaziah reigned in his stead (II Chronicles 24:15-27).

God has never left Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17). He did not leave Himself without a witness among the tribes of Israel. Elijah was His witness during the wicked reign of Ahab. Elisha followed him and was a mighty witness and minister in Israel for many years. The Lord performed many miracles through him as a witness to all Israel. He witnessed to Israel of God's power and of His great mercy and care for His people. The ministry of Elisha is recorded in II Kings 2-13.

The Lord told Elisha to send one of the younger prophets to Ramoth-gilead to anoint Jehu, son of Minshi, to be king over Israel that he might avenge the blood of the prophets slain by Jezebel and the sins of Ahab. The young prophet found Jehu and anointed him king over Israel, and the other captains of the army acknowledged him as king. Jehu proceeded to carry out God's judgment on the house of Ahab. He killed every descendant of Ahab, including Jehoram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah. Not one was left. He also killed Jezebel. She was eaten by dogs, according to the word of Elijah (I Kings 21:17-26). Jehu then killed all the prophets of Baal and exterminated Baal worship in Israel.

However, Jehu did not keep God's laws himself, but walked after the sins of Jeroboam. God often uses the wickedness of men to fulfill His purpose for the good of the righteous. He used the wickedness of the Pharisees, the weakness of Pilate, and the greediness of Judas to bring about His eternal plan of salvation for all those who will come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jehu reigned over Israel twenty-eight years. When he died his son Jehoahaz became king (II Kings 9:1-37; 10:1-36).

Jehoahaz reigned seventeen years in Samaria, leading the people in the ways of his father Jehu. During this time the Lord permitted the Syrian king Hazael and his son Ben-hadad to overrun Israel and to oppress them. Although Jehoahaz seems to have had a partial repentance (II Kings 13:4-6), the Syrian oppression continued all the days of his reign.

The Lord seems to have given Israel a respite under the reign of Jehoahaz's son Joash, who took back the cities the Syrians had taken from his father (II Kings 13:22-25). Joash (Jehoash) visited Elisha during the prophet's illness, and Elisha tried to show him he should go against Syria till he had consumed it. But Jehoash smote his arrows on the ground but three times, and he smote Syria only three times (II Kings 13:14-19, 25).

Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign over Judah in the second year of the reign of Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. He was

twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. He followed the Lord but not as David had. After he felt the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, he slew the servants who had slain his father Joash (II Kings 14:1-6; II Chronicles 25:1-4).

Amaziah gathered an army of three hundred thousand men of Judah and Benjamin. He hired another one hundred thousand men from Israel to go with him against Edom. The Lord sent a prophet to warn him against taking the men of Israel who did not serve the Lord. He listened to the prophet and sent the men of Israel home. The Lord gave him a great victory over the Edomites. But he brought home the gods of the Edomites and bowed and burned incense to them. He then challenged the king of Israel, who had plundered some of the cities of Judah, and was badly defeated. After Amaziah turned away from the Lord, the men of Jerusalem conspired against him and killed him in Lachish, where he had fled (II Chronicles 25:1-28).

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah over Judah, Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash, king of Israel, began his forty-one year reign over Israel. He walked in the evil ways of the kings of Israel, but he was successful in restoring much territory that Israel had lost to their enemies. Jonah had prophesied this of him (II Kings 14:23-25). The Lord saw the affliction of the people of Israel and was merciful to them. This was perhaps the most prosperous period in the history of the ten tribes (II Kings 14:23-29).

When Jeroboam II died, his son Zachariah reigned over Israel six months. Shallum conspired against him, slew him, and reigned in his stead (II Kings 15:8-12). This was in fulfillment of God's word that Jehu's sons should reign over Israel to the fourth generation (II Kings 10:30).

Shallum, who began to reign in Samaria in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah's reign in Jerusalem, reigned a full month. Menahem, the son of Gadi, came to Samaria, slew Shallum, and reigned in his stead. He was wicked, as all the kings of the ten tribes had been. He reigned ten years and died. His son Pekahiah reigned two years over Israel. Then Pekah, the son of Remaliah, killed Pekahiah in the king's palace in Samaria and reigned twenty years over Israel. During Pekah's reign, which began in the fifty-second year of Uzziah's reign in Jerusalem, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, invaded Israel and carried a number of the people captive to Assyria. Then Hoshea slew Pekah and reigned in his stead (II Kings 15:13-31).

Lesson in Review

Part V: The Divided Kingdom

1. Why did God give the tribe of Judah to Rehoboam?

2. What was the message of the prophet Hanani to king Asa of Judah after Asa went to the king of Syria for help?

3. What was Elijah's message to the people of Israel at Mount Carmel when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal?

4. How did the prophet Jahaziel answer Jehoshaphat when Moab was coming against Judah with a great host?

5. After Jehu was anointed king over Israel, what did he do to the house of Ahab?

6. After ten years of peaceful reign, King Asa of Judah was attacked by the Ethiopians. What did Asa cry to the Lord?

7. When King Asa returned from the battle with the Ethiopians, the prophet Azariah met him with what message from the Lord?

8. How many kings of the northern tribes of Israel served the Lord during their reigns?

PART VI: THE DISPERSION AND RETURN



THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Hoshea reigned nine years in Samaria and walked in the idolatrous ways of the kings of Israel. During this time, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came against Israel, and Hoshea became his servant and paid tribute to him year by year. Then Shalmaneser learned that Hoshea had sent to the king of Egypt for help. He returned, conquered Israel, carried the people to the land of Assyria, and placed some of them in the cities of the Medes (II Kings 17:1-6).

God had been very merciful and longsuffering with Israel. He had chastised them for their sins and had then mercifully helped them many times. He gave them the wonderful ministries and testimonies of both Elijah and Elisha. But they had never turned from the sins of Jeroboam, who led them into idolatry (II Kings 17:7-23).

The king of Assyria, who at this time ruled over most of the eastern countries, repopulated the land of Israel with people from Babylon and various other places. When the foreign settlers began to have trouble in the land of Samaria, they complained to the king of Assyria that they did not know the ways of the god of Samaria. Therefore, he ordered a priest to be sent back to teach them the religion of the Israelites. The religion of the ten tribes had become a mixture of idolatry that they had tried to pattern after the worship of Jehovah. It seems evident that some of the Israelites were either left in their land or were sent back with the priests. They intermarried with these other tribes and so became a mixed race with a mixed religion. This was the origin of the people who came to be called Samaritans (II Kings 17:24-41).

THE KINGS OF JUDAH

After Amaziah was slain, all the people of Judah made his sixteen-year-old son, Uzziah, king of Judah. He reigned fifty-two years in Judah. His reign began about eighty-three years before the Assyrian captivity of the ten tribes of Israel in about 721 BC.

In his youth Uzziah had the good fortune to be under the influence of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, and as long as he sought the Lord he prospered (II Chronicles 26:5). He was victorious in war against the Philistines and other tribes around him. He became famous and strong.

“But when he was 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” (II Chronicles 26:16). Azariah the priest led the company of priests into the Temple after Uzziah and withstood him as he attempted to burn incense, which only the priests were authorized to do.

Uzziah wrathfully resisted the priests, and the Lord struck him with leprosy. When it rose up in his forehead, Uzziah hurried out of the Temple before the priests could thrust him out. For the rest of his life, he had to live in a separate house as a leper. His son Jotham was over the house of the Lord and judge of the people of Judah. When Uzziah died, Jotham reigned as king (II Chronicles 26:17-23).

Isaiah was God’s prophet in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1). It was in the year that Uzziah died that Isaiah was humbled before the Lord by a mighty vision. And when the Lord touched him by His Spirit, he freely offered himself for the Lord’s service (Isaiah 6:1-8).

Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned over Judah sixteen years. He was a very good king and did much for the people and the land of Judah. He became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord (II Chronicles 27:6). However, many of the people continued to burn incense in the high places and did corruptly. Before his death both Syria and Israel began to trouble Judah. When Jotham died, his son Ahaz reigned in his stead (II Kings 15:32-38; II Chronicles 27:1-9).

Ahaz began his reign over Judah when he was twenty years old and reigned sixteen years. He walked in the idolatrous ways of the kings of Israel, practicing all the abominations of the heathens. He even made molten images of Baal.

The Lord permitted the Syrians to defeat the forces of Ahaz and they carried a large number of the people to Damascus. The Lord also permitted the army of Pekah, king of Israel, to defeat Ahaz. They carried away two hundred thousand people and took much spoil from Judah. However, the people of Israel were rebuked by the prophet Oded and returned all they had carried away. The Edomites and Philistines invaded Judah and caused much trouble. Ahaz asked help from Assyria. Tiglath-pileser took his tribute but did not help him. Ahaz cut in pieces the holy vessels of the Temple and shut the doors of the house of God. He died without honor and his son Hezekiah reigned over Judah (II Chronicles 28:1-27).

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. He came to the throne of Judah at perhaps its lowest spiritual ebb, but he walked in the faith and the ways of David and brought the people back to God.

In the first year of his reign he opened the doors of the house of God and repaired them. He commanded the Levites to sanctify themselves and prepare to resume the services of the Lord. The priests cleansed the Temple from its innermost wall out to the door and carried the refuse to the brook Kidron.

When this was done, Hezekiah gathered all the rulers of the city to the house of the Lord for a great sacrifice to the Lord. While the burnt offering was being offered, the Levites sang and played the songs of David and Asaph and the priests blew their trumpets, as David had conducted the service of the Lord in his day. Then all the people bowed and worshiped the Lord. And Hezekiah rejoiced that the Lord had prepared the people to worship and serve Him (II Chronicles 29:1-36).

The ten tribes of Israel were carried into Assyria about five years after Hezekiah became king of Judah. But before this happened, Hezekiah began to prepare for a great Passover Feast, which they had not had in Jerusalem for a long time. They kept it in the second month of the year since there was not time for the priests to sanctify themselves for the first month. They also sent messengers throughout all Israel, asking all who would to come to Jerusalem for the Passover. Many mocked and refused, but many more came and a great congregation gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover. It was kept in the same style that God had commanded through Moses, and it was the greatest Passover Feast since the days of Solomon (II Chronicles 30:1-27).

Hezekiah next sent people throughout the land to destroy all the images, groves, and places of idol worship. He restored all the services of the Temple and commanded the people to bring their tithes and offerings for the support of the priests and Levites. The people brought the firstfruits of their increase and their tithes in abundance and the surplus was stored in rooms in the Temple. And everything Hezekiah did in the service of the Lord, he did with all his heart, and prospered (II Chronicles 31:21). Surely these lessons on the kings of Israel and of Judah should impress us all with the great responsibility of the leaders and ministers of God's people. The evil kings led the people away from the Lord, but the good kings led them back to the Lord.

Judah was prepared spiritually for the invasion of Sennacherib king of Assyria, who had besieged the fenced (walled) cities in Judah. Hezekiah counseled the princes and leading men to stop the waters of the fountains and brooks that flowed out of the cities, so that the Assyrians would not find water in their locations. After doing all they could to fortify themselves against this enemy, Hezekiah gathered all the captains to the gate of Jerusalem to encourage them with these words, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah" (II Chronicles 32:7-8).

Sennacherib threatened, railed, and ridiculed Hezekiah and Judah for trusting in the Lord, and he blasphemed the Lord. But the Lord quieted the spirit of Hezekiah by a message sent by Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah told him the Lord would send a blast and cause Sennacherib to hear a rumor, so he would return to his own land where he would be killed by his own sons (II Kings 19:6-7). It happened to Sennacherib and his army just as the Lord had told Isaiah (II Kings 19:35-37; II Chronicles 32:20-21).

Hezekiah became sick unto death and Isaiah told him to set his house in order for he would die. Hezekiah's response to this message was to turn his face to the wall and pray. Then the Lord sent Isaiah back to him with the message that God had heard his prayer and would add fifteen years to his life (II Kings 20:1-11).

Hezekiah made one mistake in his last days. The king of Babylon, who had heard of his illness, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah by his agents. This friendly gesture influenced Hezekiah to open his house and show the men all his wealth and valuables. The Lord then sent Isaiah to tell him he had done foolishly. He told him the time would come when all the wealth that he and all the kings before him had laid up, as well as the people, would be carried into Babylon (II Kings 20:12-18; II Chronicles 32:31).

When Hezekiah died they buried him in the best sepulcher of the sons of David. And all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Judah honored him at his death. His son Manasseh reigned in his stead.

Manasseh began his reign at the age of twelve years and reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He was very wicked and undid most of the good Hezekiah had wrought in Judah. His wicked deeds are recorded in II Chronicles

33:1-10 and in II Kings 21:1-16. The Lord permitted the Assyrians to come against Jerusalem. They bound Manasseh and carried him to Babylon. There in affliction he humbled himself and sought the Lord. God had mercy on him and brought him back to Jerusalem to continue his reign where he tried to undo some of his evil deeds against the people of Judah (II Chronicles 33:11-20).

Manasseh died and his twenty-two-year-old son Amon reigned two years in Jerusalem. He was even more wicked than his father. His servants slew him in his own home. The people of Judah then killed the servants who had conspired to kill Amon. Then they made his son Josiah king of Judah (II Chronicles 33:21-25).

Josiah began his reign at the age of eight years and reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. While he was yet young he sought the Lord. And when he was twelve years old he began to purge Jerusalem and Judah from idolatry. The Temple had been turned into a place of idols. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he appointed men to begin the repair of the house of God.

In the process of repairing the Temple, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Moses. He gave it to Shaphan the scribe who read it to Josiah. Josiah was greatly troubled when he realized how greatly the people of Judah had sinned against the word of the Lord. He sent Hilkiah and some others to Huldah the prophetess to inquire of the Lord. The Lord's message to Josiah was that He would bring great trouble on Jerusalem and all the people of Judah but that it would not come during his lifetime (II Chronicles 34:1-33). Josiah then prepared for and kept the greatest Passover Feast that had been kept since the days of Samuel (II Chronicles 35:1-19).

The king of Egypt came into the area. Josiah went out against him, was wounded in battle, and died. There was great mourning among all the people of Judah for Josiah. Jeremiah, who had begun to prophesy in the thirteenth year of his reign, lamented for him (II Chronicles 35:20-27).

The people of Judah then made Josiah's son Jehoahaz king of Judah. He reigned only three months when the king of Egypt made Judah tributary to Egypt. The Pharaoh dethroned Jehoahaz, made his brother Eliakim king of Judah, and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz was carried to Egypt.

Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He was evil and brought much evil on Judah. Later Nebuchadnezzar, having gained power over most of the territory formerly held by Assyria and Egypt, subjugated Judah. He bound Jehoiakim and would have carried him to Babylon. But as Jehoiakim taxed the

people to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, he was left in Judah (II Kings 23:31-37; 24:1-7; II Chronicles 36:1-8). Nebuchadnezzar, however, took much treasure from the house of the Lord and some of the best of the young men of Judah, including Daniel and his three friends, to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-7).

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, the Lord told Jeremiah to write in a roll of a book all the messages of judgment He would send on Judah, Israel, and the other nations for their sins. Jeremiah was then to have it read in the house of the Lord. Jeremiah dictated the messages to Baruch and sent him to read them to the people. Jeremiah could not go himself, for he was shut up in prison.

The messages brought fear on the people and some went to Jehoiakim about them. He asked to see the scroll. When the king heard it read, he took the scroll, cut it with a penknife, and threw it on the hearth fire till it was consumed. But he was to learn that he couldn't burn the Word of the Lord.

The Lord had Jeremiah dictate the words again, with the added words of His judgment to come on Judah and Jehoiakim in the near future (Jeremiah 36:1-32).

When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin was made king of Judah. He had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar's armies again besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiachin gave himself up, and he, his family, and his officials were carried to Babylon (II Kings 24:8-16; II Chronicles 36:9-10). Evidently, Ezekiel was also carried to Babylon with this group, approximately five years after Daniel was taken to Babylon (II Kings 24:11-16).

Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, son of Josiah and brother to Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He changed his name to Zedekiah (II Kings 24:17-19; II Chronicles 36:10). Zedekiah reigned eleven years till the fall of Jerusalem. He came to Jeremiah secretly on various occasions to inquire of the will of the Lord, but he was too weak to take a stand against the princes of his court. He finally yielded to their pressure to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, in spite of Jeremiah's warning against this action (Jeremiah 37:11-21; 38:2-28).

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Zedekiah rebelled in the ninth year of his reign, and Nebuchadnezzar's armies immediately besieged Jerusalem. In less than two years, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed (II Kings 25:1-21; II Chronicles 36:11-21; Jeremiah 39:1-12; 40:1-6).

At the fall of Jerusalem, Zedekiah tried to escape, but he was caught and brought to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. Nebuchadnezzar slew Zedekiah's sons before him, then put out his eyes and carried him to Babylon, where he died (Jeremiah 32:1-5; 39:1-7; Ezekiel 12:10-13).

Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied of the fall of the kingdom of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem as God's judgment for the years of continual sinning by their kings and the people. Ezekiel prophesied to the captives who were already in Babylon that God would give the people of Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Now their prophecies had been fulfilled.

It was a sad sight indeed as described in the last chapters of II Kings, II Chronicles, and Jeremiah. All the gold and treasures had been removed from Solomon's beautiful Temple and it was burnt with fire. The palaces and buildings of Jerusalem were burnt and the walls were thrown down. Many of the people were killed. All others were carried captive to Babylon, except for a small group of the poor of the land who were left for vinedressers and husbandmen (farmers).

Nebuchadnezzar gave orders that no harm should come to Jeremiah. He was to be given his freedom to go to Babylon or any place he should choose. He chose to remain with those who were left in the land of Judah. Gedaliah was made governor of those who were left in the land, but Ishmael, a traitor, assassinated him. Then the remnant of the Jews, fearing they would be punished by Nebuchadnezzar, fled to Egypt and took Jeremiah with them (Jeremiah 39:11-14; 40:2-16; 41:1-2; 43:1-7). They later perished when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

Neither the Assyrian captivity of Israel (the ten tribes), about 721 BC, nor the Babylonian captivity of Judah, about 586 BC, was intended of God to be the end of His people on earth. He permitted both kingdoms to be dissolved when each had become almost entirely taken over by idolatry. But He never forsook His people. The captivities of both Israel and Judah were God's chastisement for their turning away from the worship of Jehovah to idolatry with all its attendant sins. But He was with them in captivity, where most of them returned to the faith of Jehovah.

Before the Babylonian captivity, God promised through Jeremiah that after seventy years the captives from Israel and Judah would return to their

homeland (Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10; II Chronicles 36:20-23). The seventy-year period probably began at the time Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem under the reign of Jehoiakim and carried the first deportation to Babylon. It ended with the return of the first group of Jews, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, by the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, who had conquered Babylon (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-11; 2:1-70).

The Book of Daniel is our greatest source of scriptural history for this seventy-year period. This has been called Israel's missionary period. It has been said that they did more to plant the faith of one true God among the heathen nations during the time of their captivity than they had ever been able to do during the approximately nine hundred years between their exodus from Egypt to their captivity by Babylon.

Daniel recorded some mighty demonstrations of the power of God in the lives of some faithful Jews in Babylon. The first testimony to Babylon was when Daniel and his friends purposed in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the king's meat or wine. God's diet made His children look much better than those who had been on the diet prescribed by the king (Daniel 1:8-16). God gave Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and He gave Daniel understanding in all visions and dreams. The king found them ten times better than all his magicians and astrologers (Daniel 1:17-20).

Nebuchadnezzar was disturbed and sleepless over a dream he could not remember. After his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers could not tell him the dream, Daniel told him the dream and the interpretation of it. It was a prophetic revelation of the history of the four great world empires from the Babylonian empire of Nebuchadnezzar to the Roman empire of the time of Christ (Daniel 2:1-45).

Nebuchadnezzar, feeling exalted over Daniel's interpretation, made an image of gold and commanded that any who failed to bow down and worship it at the sound of a trumpet should be cast into a fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to worship his image and were cast into the fiery furnace. When they came out without the smell of fire on their garments, Nebuchadnezzar confessed the Lord God before all his people. He then promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:1-30).

Daniel interpreted another dream for the king that revealed that the Lord was going to humble Nebuchadnezzar by taking his reason from him for seven

years. During the seven years he would be driven from his dwelling and live as a beast of the field. The king would eat grass like an ox till he should acknowledge that the only true Lord God rules in the kingdoms of men. Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar to break off his sins by righteousness and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. God gave him twelve months to repent, but he continued in his pride and went insane.

At the end of the seven years he awoke with his understanding and acknowledged and praised the only Lord God of the Heavens. He said, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those who walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37).

Jeremiah prophesied of Nebuchadnezzar, "And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him" (Jeremiah 27:7).

THE FALL OF BABYLON

Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled on the night of God's handwriting on the wall. Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, was having a great feast with a thousand of his lords. He served them wine in the gold and silver vessels that his grandfather had taken out of the Temple in Jerusalem, the vessels that had been consecrated for the service of the Lord. Daniel interpreted the writing, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting . . . Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:26-28).

That very night the Medes and Persians, having diverted the water of the Euphrates River, marched into Babylon under its wall through the dry riverbed. Belshazzar was slain and the Medes and Persians took his kingdom (Daniel 5:30-31). There was an alliance between the Medes and Persians, and Babylon was given to Cyrus of the Persians.

Isaiah prophesied of the manner of the fall of Babylon and of the role of Cyrus in the return of the Jews, about one hundred seventy five years before its fulfillment. He described the manner of the fall of Babylon and called Cyrus by name in Isaiah 44:27-28: "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 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." Cyrus did exactly what Isaiah said he would do.

According to *Clarke's Commentary* on Daniel 5:30-31, Darius, who took the city of Babylon, was supposed to be the maternal uncle of Cyrus. The Medes and Persians were confederates in their war against Babylon, and apparently Darius gave the throne of Babylon to Cyrus. After the fall of Babylon, all the Jews came under Medo-Persian rule. And again Daniel became prominent. Darius preferred him above all the presidents and princes as the top ruler of the realm (Daniel 6:1-3). His rivals fostered a plot to have him thrown into the lions' den. However, he came out with greater honors than before (Daniel 6:4-24). His experience became a mighty testimony for the Lord (Daniel 6:25-28).

THE JEWS RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND

It was now about seventy years since Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Judah, and about fifty years since Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. It is evident that Cyrus became acquainted with the prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 44:27-28; 45:1-4) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10), and that he came to believe in Daniel's God, the Lord Jehovah: "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 1:2).

Cyrus's decree for the Jews to return to Judah to rebuild their Temple and country seems to have been one of the first items of business in the first year of his reign (Ezra 1:1-4). He not only put the proclamation in writing and sent it throughout all his kingdom, but he encouraged the Jews to return and himself helped them in every way possible. He brought out all the vessels Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem and gave them to the Jews who were returning (Ezra 1:7-11). Not all the Jews returned to their homeland, but it was a large group that first returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was of the royal lineage (Ezra 1:5, 6; 2:1-70).

During the first seven months in Judah, the people settled in their cities. Then Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua (Joshua), the high priest, gathered all the people to Jerusalem, built the altar of the Lord, and began sacrificing burnt offerings to Him. They kept the Feast of Tabernacles and made preparations for building the Temple (Ezra 3:1-7).

In the second year of their return, they laid the foundation for the Temple. They then set the priests in their apparel and the Levites with cymbals to sing and praise the Lord. They had a grand service of worship and praise to the Lord.

Yet, many of the older men who had been in Jerusalem before Solomon's beautiful Temple was destroyed wept loudly because they knew they could not build another Temple to equal their former house of worship. They were now only a fraction of their former number, and they were a subjected people. Their weeping blended with the shouts of the younger generation who were happy in the hope of having a place where they could meet God (Ezra 3:8-13).

The Samaritans, who had originated from the people Sennacherib sent into the land from Assyria after the captivity of Israel, began a campaign to hinder the building of the Temple. First they tried to compromise them by offering to build with them. But Zerubbabel would claim no relationship to these Samaritans, even though some may have had some Jewish blood in them. When they could not join the Jews, they tried to discourage them in every way possible. Finally, when Cyrus no longer reigned, they were able to obtain a command to stop the building in the reign of Artaxerxes. The Jews then ceased building till the second year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 4:1-24), which seems to have been about fourteen years later.

During these years the Jews began to build and beautify their own homes, and became indifferent concerning the building of the Temple (Haggai 1:2). Darius was now king of the Medo-Persian Empire, but they had made no attempt to learn if he might permit them to resume the building of the Temple. Because of their lack of zeal for the Lord's house, the Lord sent adversity upon them. They became poor and lacked food or clothing to satisfy their needs. The Lord sent the prophet Haggai to show them the reason for their poverty (Haggai 1:1-6).

The efforts of Haggai and Zechariah were very successful. Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest rallied the people and they began to build with zeal (Haggai 1:7-15).

Again their enemies tried to stop the building. When they sent a letter to Darius (Ezra 5:1-17), the king made an earnest search of the records and found the decree Cyrus had made. He sent a message to Tatnai to let the work of the Jews alone. He also commanded them to give the Jews everything they needed to continue with the building of the Temple and their worship of Jehovah. Thus the people of Israel prospered and the Temple was completed four years later, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 6:1-15).

At the dedication of the Temple, the Jews offered twelve goats, one for each tribe, as a sin offering for all Israel in addition to their other sacrifices (Ezra 6:17). There was never any division between Israel and Judah after they returned from captivity. The Assyrians, who took the ten tribes captive, had controlled the same territory that Babylon ruled when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah. In captivity they were all in the same country. It appears that there were some of all the tribes who returned to the land of Israel in the various groups that returned from time to time (Ezra 6:16-22).

The people of the southern kingdom came to be called Jews from the name Judah. However, all the tribes kept records of their genealogies and their identities till after the birth of Christ. It was very important that the records should show clearly that Jesus was the promised son of David. However, after the resurrection of Christ and the establishment of the early church, the tribes gradually blended into one race. They are all still with us and they are called either Jews or Israelites.

About sixty-eight years after Zerubbabel had led the first group of Jews to Jerusalem, the Persian king Artaxerxes authorized Ezra, a scribe of priestly descent, to lead another group back to Jerusalem. (This was not the same Artaxerxes as mentioned in Ezra 4:11.) Ezra gathered about two thousand of the chief men of Israel, among whom were many priests and Levites, to go with him back to Jerusalem: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). Ezra purposed in his heart to first practice God's laws and then to teach them to the people of Israel.

Artaxerxes gave Ezra a letter in which he stated his full authorization and support of this journey. This speaks to us of the good name some Israelites had made for themselves while in captivity. The king urged all who would to give offerings of silver and gold and all that would be needed for the worship of the Lord in His house in Jerusalem. He personally gave to this fund and sent word to his governors in the land of Israel to help the Jews with anything they might need (Ezra 7:11-26). Ezra expressed thanksgiving to the Lord for this great blessing (Ezra 7:27-28).

Ezra assembled his group at the river Ahava and proclaimed a fast before starting on their four-month journey (Ezra 8:1-20). He knew this could be a hazardous journey except for the protection of the Lord as there were usually robbers along the way. He would not ask the king for a band of soldiers as a

convoy to guard them on the way because he had testified to him that the Lord would take care of His people.

And the Lord did take care of them in a marvelous way. Ezra chose twelve of the chief priests and gave into their custody all the silver, gold, and valuables that had been given them in freewill offerings. It was weighed and a record kept of the amount given into the safekeeping of the priests. When they arrived in Jerusalem, it was weighed again and the full amount was found intact (Ezra 8:21-36).

The Lord knew the great need in Jerusalem when He moved Ezra to return to teach the people the Word of the Lord. The Jews were fast drifting again into the ways of the heathens around them and were intermarrying among them. Ezra was overcome with grief when he learned the sad story. He rallied, began to intercede for the people, and to confess their sins (Ezra 9:1-15).

As Ezra lay on his face before the house of God, praying, weeping, and confessing, a great congregation of men, women, and children gathered around him and wept. They wanted to turn from their sins and again make a covenant with God. A large number of the people and some of the priests had intermarried with the heathens, but they now put away their heathen wives and the children of the heathen wives and turned back to the Lord (Ezra 10:1-44).

About fourteen years after Ezra returned to Jerusalem, in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, the Lord moved on another Jew in the land of captivity. Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, a position of honor, in that he was entrusted with this personal service to the king. His brother, along with some friends, came to Persia from Jerusalem and told him about the conditions in Jerusalem: the people were in great affliction and reproach, and the walls of the city were still broken down. They had never been rebuilt since they were torn down by Nebuchadnezzar's army. Nehemiah was grieved by this report. He wept, fasted, and prayed for some days before the Lord. He received a burden, and doubtless a call, from the Lord to return to Jerusalem to help the people there (Nehemiah 1:1-11).

The next time Nehemiah went into the king's presence with his wine cup, he perhaps went with a prayer in his heart that God would work out the matter of his desire to go to Jerusalem. The king noticed the sadness of his cupbearer's countenance. He then told the king of the condition of his homeland and the city of Jerusalem. He requested that the king would send him to Jerusalem to build

the walls and other buildings. He asked the king for letters to those in authority in the land to give him passage and the materials he would need for the building.

The king granted all his requests. He also gave him captains and an army of horsemen to assure his safe passage across the country. But Sanballat, the Horonite, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, were very unhappy that one had been sent to seek the welfare of the Jews (Nehemiah 2:1-10).

After Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem three days, he slipped out in the night to view the ruins of what had once been the wall around Jerusalem. Because of so much rubble, he could not get through some places on the animal he rode. He had not yet told anyone of his mission to Jerusalem or of the authority given him by King Artaxerxes. After his night of investigation, he told the rulers and the people of his burden and of the king's granting his request to come and rebuild.

Then the people said, "Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work" (Nehemiah 2:18). Sanballat and Tobiah tried from the first to hinder the building, but the Lord prospered the Jews (Nehemiah 2:10-20).

The rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem was a masterpiece of organization. Nehemiah divided the project into forty sections and organized a separate group to build each section. And all forty sections went up together. The priests built the sheep gate, and the fortieth section reached to the sheep gate. Sanballat and Tobiah opposed them by every means within their power, but in spite of their efforts the wall was finished in fifty-two days (Nehemiah 3:1-32; 4:1-23; 5:1-19; 6:1-19).

When Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem, he appointed him governor of the Jews in Judah (Nehemiah 5:14). And Nehemiah appointed his brother Hanani and Hananiah to oversee the opening and closing of the gates of Jerusalem, that they might be safe from any outside attack (Nehemiah 7:1-4). He then gave his attention to the genealogical records of the people. He found the register of all those who came to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, which is recorded in Nehemiah 7:6-67.

In the seventh month, the people came from their homes in the province to Jerusalem to hear the Word of the Lord. They assembled in the street before the water gate (the gate that led from the Temple to the brook Kidron), and called Ezra to read to them the book of the law of Moses. Ezra stood on a platform that had been prepared for him, read the Word of the Lord, and

explained its meaning to the people. He read from morning till noon, and the people wept when they heard the word of the law. Then Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest told the people to eat, drink, and be glad, for the day was holy to the Lord.

On the second day Ezra read to them that Moses had commanded the people to dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month (the Feast of Tabernacles). Then all the people made themselves booths. And the Law was read to them every day for seven days. Their feast closed on the eighth day with a solemn assembly (Nehemiah 8:1-18).

As the result of hearing the Word of God, the people repented, confessed their sins, and separated themselves from strangers (heathens). They signed a covenant to serve the Lord and to keep His commandments (Nehemiah 9:1-38; 10:1-39). They sought to reestablish all the Temple services. The people continued in faithfulness through the rule of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 12:44-47).

Nehemiah had received leave from the service of Artaxerxes to come to Jerusalem for twelve years, after which he returned to Babylon for a time. During his absence from Jerusalem, Eliashib, the priest who had the oversight of the chambers of the Temple, became allied to Tobiah and brought him into one of the chambers. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and found this situation, he threw Tobiah out with all his belongings. They cleansed the chambers and again used them for the vessels of the house of the Lord and for the offerings (Nehemiah 13:1-6). Nehemiah worked zealously to eradicate all sin from among the people of Israel and to establish them in the fear and the worship of Jehovah (Nehemiah 13:7-31).

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The first verse of this book perhaps gives the most definite base for determining its time in history. The story of Esther took place during the reign of Ahasuerus who, sometime during the Persian Empire, reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces reaching from India to Ethiopia. And since the captive Israelites remained under Persian rule from the time the Medo-Persian Empire captured Babylon in 536 BC till it was defeated by Alexander the Great in 330 BC, the story recorded in this book took place during that period.

Although the name of God is not mentioned in the story of Esther, it is a beautiful example of how God watched over His people whether in Egypt, in

the wilderness, in their home land of Canaan, or in captivity, just as He does today. We may be sure that our Lord never loses sight of a single one of His children. He uses the circumstances in each life to manifest His tender loving care for each individual. He works through those circumstances for the good of all concerned. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9).

Many of the people of Israel who were taken captive by Assyria and Babylon never returned to the land of Israel. In the time of Christ, they were called "the Jews of the dispersion," but they continued to return to Jerusalem for their yearly feast days. Many were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given (Acts 2:7-11). From the time of their captivity and dispersion among the nations, the people of Israel made many proselytes to the Jews' religion and the faith of Jehovah (Esther 8:17). In New Testament times, many of them accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and became a part of the New Testament church.

THE LAST BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

We have already noted the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah to the Jews in Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel. These two prophets encouraged the Jews to resume the building of the Temple in Jerusalem after the Jews had left off building for fourteen years. Haggai showed them that their indifference toward the Temple was the reason the Lord had left them with short supplies and little return for their labor. Zechariah encouraged them with visions of the glorious future for the people of God. These prophets, together with Ezra and Nehemiah, wrought a much-needed revival among the Jews, but after about thirty-five years, the Jews in Jerusalem were again in dire need of a revival.

Nehemiah was the last book of Old Testament history, and Malachi was the last book of Old Testament prophecy. In about 400 BC, the Lord sent the prophet Malachi to give the Jews in Jerusalem His last message till the forerunner of the Christ should come on the scene. Malachi pictured the people as outwardly religious but inwardly as indifferent and insincere. Their worship had become an empty formality, performed by a corrupt priesthood. They had backslidden from the revival brought about by Nehemiah and Ezra and Haggai and Zechariah, and were now cold and hardened toward the laws of God.

Malachi told the Jews they had failed to honor God as their Father and Lord. Their priests dishonored Him by offering polluted bread and blemished sacrifices. They served only for reward. They brought reproach on the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and brought the curse of God on themselves by their sins.

Malachi, like all the other prophets, could only promise Israel salvation through the coming of Christ. But he revealed that the coming of the promised Messiah would not fulfill their expectations for national restoration and glory. Rather, His holy presence would condemn their unrighteousness and hypocrisy. Jesus fulfilled this utterance in His clash with the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-33). Malachi closed his prophecy, which was the last message God would speak to His people for the next four hundred years, with a promise of the coming of the Messiah, preceded by His forerunner (Malachi 4:1-6).

Lesson in Review

Part VI: The Dispersion and Return

1. Who was God's prophet in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah?

2. Hezekiah led the people of Judah back to God, but he made one mistake in his last days. What was it?

3. What did King Josiah do in the eighteenth year of his reign over Judah?

4. What did King Johoiakim do to the scroll of God's messages of judgment that Jeremiah wrote?

5. At the fall of Jerusalem, what happened to King Zedekiah after he tried to escape?

6. What did Nebuchadnezzar say at the end of his seven years of insanity?

7. How did the people of Jerusalem respond to Nehemiah when he told them of his burden and of the king's granting his request to come and rebuild?

8. In spite of the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah, the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem took how long?

9. What were the Jews called in the time of Christ who were taken captive by Assyria and Babylon, but never returned to the land of Israel?

10. How did the prophet Malachi close his prophecy, which was the last message God would speak to His people for the next four hundred years?

Missionary Spotlight: Rev. and Mrs. Elton Bernard

By David K. Bernard

General Superintendent
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MK (Missionary Kid)

Elton and Loretta Bernard were the pioneer United Pentecostal missionaries to South Korea, founding the United Pentecostal Church of Korea. They were appointed in 1963 and arrived in 1965 with their two children, David and Karen. They adopted a Korean daughter, Julie, in 1972.



The Bernards grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, under the pastorate of C. G. Weeks. Elton (known as Tony to family and friends) received the Holy Ghost at age nine. His father was a part-time preacher who ministered in French to fellow Cajuns. Elton served in the U.S. Army in Korea during the Korean War, earned a bachelor's degree in personnel management from Louisiana State University, and became an accountant. Loretta was converted at age sixteen along with her family and attended Apostolic College in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Elton and Loretta were lay leaders in their home church, and after marriage they assisted in starting a church in Port Allen, Louisiana. One night in prayer at home, they received a call to Korea. Both of them obtained ministerial license, and they started a church in Hammond, Louisiana.

Soon after their missionary appointment, their plans were set back one year when a drunken driver hit them head-on and demolished their new vehicle. Elton's nose and both of his arms were broken, and a nerve in his right hand was severed. The doctor said he would never use the hand again, but God later healed him. Loretta had a broken neck and a brain concussion; she was in and out of consciousness for six weeks. During this time Elton led a nurse to repentance, and soon she was born again.

In order to bring furniture and clothing for five years, the Bernards traveled to Korea by ship—a Taiwanese freighter that took forty days. The ship caught on fire in the Caribbean; since the lifeboats were unusable due to corroded cables the ship rushed to the Panama Canal Zone. The American firefighters who extinguished the blaze estimated that ten percent more heat would have caused the ship to explode.

For the first two years in Korea, the Bernards studied Korean for eight hours a day while starting a church. They founded a three-year Bible school, a U.S. military ministry of three fellowships, and the First Pentecostal Church of Seoul. For much of the time Elton served as pastor of this church as well as the Seoul military fellowship. They shared the responsibilities of preaching, teaching, and counseling in Korean. Elton was president of the Bible school and both were instructors, with Loretta teaching most doctrinal classes. When the Bible school moved to Kwang Myung City, she started a church there and was the pastor for some years. During school vacations, Elton and Loretta evangelized, often preaching meetings separately. The typical revival consisted of fourteen services from Monday night through Saturday morning, with three services on the other days: morning prayer at 4:00 AM, Bible study at 10:30 AM, and evangelistic service at night. One year Elton calculated that he preached and taught 359 times while Loretta did so over 300 times.



Elton supervised an extensive literature program including the translation and publication of many books and tracts, development of a three-year Sunday school curriculum for children, and monthly publication of the Korean *Pentecostal Herald*. He authored a book, a booklet, and many articles in Korean. At his urging their son, David, wrote *In Search of Holiness* (1981) based primarily on Loretta's teaching notes. Elton wrote about their life and missionary experiences in *The Korean Frontier: A Story of Pentecostal Revival* (1989).

The Bernards conducted numerous ministerial seminars, revivals, and camps attended by people of various organizations. Many denominational preachers and lay leaders were baptized in the name of Jesus and received the

Holy Ghost. Some became part of the UPC of Korea, while others operated independently or in other organizations but proclaimed the message of Acts 2:38. In the early 1970s, the Bernards conducted large meetings at a prayer camp, and Korea experienced great revival. At a five-day camp meeting in 1972, 200 received the Holy Ghost and 550 were baptized in Jesus' name. Such results were unusual for that time and inspired people in other fields to believe for revival. During his missionary service, Elton personally baptized about 3,000 people.

There were many notable miracles in their ministry, including healings of cancer, tuberculosis, deafness, lameness, and paralysis; casting out of demons; and deliverance from suicide. During a weeklong meeting, Loretta almost died one night from carbon monoxide poisoning due to a faulty heating system, but the Lord raised her up and she finished the revival. At times, the Bernards and the church suffered persecution for the name of Jesus, including strong opposition from other groups, a governmental investigation due to false accusations, and even some physical assaults. Converts from ancestor worship and Buddhism were expelled from their families, and some were severely beaten.

In 1985, the Bernards felt that the work was ready for national leadership, so they returned home for a new ministry. At their departure, the UPC of Korea consisted of twenty-two churches and 3,000 constituents. After stints of teaching in a Bible school and pastoring a small church, in 1988 they founded the UPC of Ascension Parish in Gonzales, Louisiana, supporting themselves by secular employment. They also started Centro de Vida, a Spanish-speaking congregation in Gonzales, in 1998 and pastored both churches for a time. The current pastor of Centro de Vida, Fred Garcia, was converted under their ministry as a teenage immigrant. He is now a successful business owner and coordinator for Louisiana District Spanish Ministries, which Elton helped organize. The church is on a major highway with a first building that is paid for and a sanctuary that seats 700. By 2010 three daughter works were launched from this church.

In fifty years of active ministry, Elton and Loretta Bernard labored as pioneers in two great mission fields—the work in Korea and the Spanish work in Louisiana.