

Old Testament Historical Books

Global Association of Theological Studies



1. *Old Testament History – Parts 1 & 2 (Alpha Bible Course)*
By Ralph Vincent Reynolds
Study Questions by Linda Poitras
2. Atlas, charts, and notes taken from:
New Life Application Study Bible Maps (CD-rom)
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Key Verses Memory Guide

JOSHUA – Joshua 21:43 – *“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.”*

JUDGES – Judges 17:6 – *“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”*

OR – Judges 21:25 – *“In those days there was no king in Israel: everyman did that which was right in his own eyes.”*

RUTH – Ruth 1:16 – *“And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”*

1 SAMUEL – 1 Samuel 15:22 – *“And Samuel said, 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.”*

2 SAMUEL – 2 Samuel 7:16 – *“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”*

1 KINGS – 1 Kings 18:21 – *“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”*

2 KINGS – 2 Kings 13:23 – *“And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.”*

1 CHRONICLES – 1 Chronicles 17:14 – *“But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.”*

2 CHRONICLES – 2 Chronicles 7:19-20 – *“But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for myname, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.”*

EZRA – Ezra 3:11 – *“And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is god, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”*

NEHEMIAH – Nehemiah 4:9 – *“Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.”*

ESTHER – Esther 4:14 – *“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*

Old Testament Historical Books

Pagan Religions of the Promised Land

(All information is from *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, 1990 Edition; and *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, 1967 Edition.)

Baal - as a proper noun, it stood for the Canaanite (Semitic) deity or deities. Baal is not the name of one god, but the name of the presiding deity of any given locality. Because Baal worship was much the same in all of Canaan, in time Baal came to represent the idea of one god. The Baalim were the gods of the land, owning and controlling it, and the increase of crops, fruits, and cattle was under their control. The farmer was completely dependent on the Baalim. Baal was worshipped:

- 📖 On high places in Moab in the time of Balaam and Balak (Numbers 2:41)
- 📖 On altars erected to him in Palestine during the period of the Judges (Judges 2:13; 6:28-32)
- 📖 So much during the time of Ahab and Jezebel that the worship of Jehovah was almost ignored (1 Kings 16-18).

In the myths, Baal is portrayed as bloodthirsty and highly sexed. The erotic element in Baal worship was intended to stimulate the god to mate with his consort (who in biblical times was called Asherah or Astarte), and so bring rain and fertility to the land. The Bible identifies ritual prostitution as one depraved element in Baal worship (Judges 2:17; Amos 2:7-8).

In the worship of Baal:

- 📖 Incense and burnt sacrifices were offered to him (Jeremiah 7:9).
- 📖 On extraordinary occasions the victims were children offered by their parents (Jeremiah 19:5).
- 📖 Lascivious rites accompanied the worship (1 Kings 14:23-24).
- 📖 Sometimes priests, dancing around the altar in a state of frenzy, slashed themselves with knives (1 Kings 18:26, 28).

Throughout Israel's history (before exile) they were very attracted to Baal worship. They erected local "high places" where Baal's rituals were practiced (Deuteronomy 4:3; Judges 2:11; Jeremiah 2:8). They may have done this because of Baal's supposed control of the rain – a very vital part of life in Palestine. But the sensual parts of Baal worship, which encouraged and justified sexual excess, was in direct contract to God's Laws against such practices, and appealed to many Israelites. They forsook the one true God to worship this idol for more than three and a half centuries. Josiah demolished them in 2 Kings 23:13-14. After the Babylonian captivity, Israel never again worshiped idols.

Asherah – Canaanite goddess of fertility and originally the consort of El, but in biblical times, of Baal. She was known in Scripture as:

- 📖 Ashtoreth
- 📖 Ashtaroth (plural form)

Identified in other parts of the Near East as:

- ✓ Inanna (*Sumeria*)
- ✓ Ishtar (*Mesopotamia*)
- ✓ Ashratum (*Babylon*)
- ✓ Ashirat (*Phoenicia*)
- ✓ Astarte (*Greece*)

In Bible times, the people of Canaan and Syria worshiped Asherah as a fertility goddess. Her worship involved sexual excesses intended to stimulate rain and quicken the ability of animals and people to reproduce. Asherah figures were apparently made of wood (Judges 6:26), and the goddess is associated with sacred trees or groves

of trees. The depraved worship of Asherah and Baal had a fatal attraction for Israel. Gesenius related the name Ashtoreth to the Persian word "*sitarah*" or "*star*" and connects it with Venus, the goddess of love.

Chemosh – the god of Moab, so named in an ancient Israelite song (Numbers 21:29). Mesha, king of Moab, suffered a great disaster in his rebellion against Israel, in consequence of which he offered his son, the heir to the throne of Moab, as a burnt offering (2 Kings 3:4-27). The inscription on the Moabite stone shows that this sacrifice was made to Chemosh, and describes the help that Mesha believed Chemosh had given his people in war, and the chastisement that Chemosh meted out to them when they were unfaithful.

Molech, Moloch - a pagan deity, the national god of the Ammonites (1 Kings 11:7; Acts 7:43) involving gruesome orgies in which little ones were sacrificed. At least in some places, an image of the god was heated and the bodies of children who had just been slain were placed in its arms.

The worship of Molech was known to the children of Israel before they entered Canaan, for Moses very sternly forbade its worship (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5). In spite of this prohibition, King Solomon, to please his numerous heathen wives, set up high places for Chemosh and for Moloch on Mount Olivet (1 Kings 11:7), though its principal place of worship in and after Manasseh's time was the valley of the son of Hinnom (2 Chronicles 33:6), a place of such ill repute that "*Gehenna*," i.e., "*the valley of hinnom*" became a type for hell (Matthew 5:29-30).

The Old Testament speaks of sacrificing children "*to Molech*" (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35). The Hebrew text of these verses may refer to a *molk* sacrifice. This involved burning young children alive in order to receive some benefit from a god. Jeremiah associates these *molk* sacrifices with another god, Baal, and expresses the Lord's horror at a practice that "*I never commanded, nor did it enter my mind, that they should do such a detestable thing*" (Jeremiah 32:35).

The words "*Moloch*," "*Molech*," "*Milcom*" (1 Kings 11:5), "*Malcom*" (Zephaniah 1:5) are all variants of Hebrew words meaning "*the reigning one*." Latter-day Jews often went from the sacrifices to Moloch in to the house of the Lord to worship there (Ezekiel 23:37-39) and this impiety was particularly offensive to Jehovah as it added insult to injury. (Read Jeremiah 7:9-11; 19:4-13). Because of this heathen worship, God gave the land of Israel over to the rule of its enemies for many years (Psalms 106:35-42).

Child Sacrifice – the practice of killing one's children as an offering to a pagan god. The nations that inhabited Palestine prior to the Israelites practiced child sacrifice in the worship of their pagan deities. These rituals continued even after Israel conquered the land – both in neighboring nations and at times in Israel itself. For instance, King Mesha of Moab sacrificed his oldest son when his city was under siege by an Israelite army (2 Kings 3:27). A text recovered from Ugarit contains the ritual prayer to be used on such an occasion. It reads in part:

*O Baal:
Drive away the force from our gates,
The aggressor from our walls,
We shall sacrifice a bull, O Baal,
A votive-pledge we shall fulfill:
A firstborn, Baal, we shall sacrifice,
A child we shall fulfill.*

This terrible rite is depicted in various pictorial records of ancient warfare, like one showing Ramses II's attack on Ashkelon.

Some Baal cults encouraged the sacrifice of children in normal times. When the Old Testament mentions sacrificing children to Molech, it refers to the pagan practice of burning young children alive (Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35). In Jeremiah's day the people of Judah had established a *topheth* – a high place where young children were sacrificed to pagan deities and their ashes buried in jars (Jeremiah 7:31-32; 19:11-15).

The Old Testament condemns human sacrifice. God's command to Israel to exterminate the Canaanites was intended to punish such sins and to wipe out the practice.

Tophet, Topheth – A district or place set aside for child sacrifice. A Tophet excavated near ancient Carthage has revealed the remains of thousands of children, usually between birth and age four, who had been burned alive as sacrifices.

Such a district existed in Israel, in the Valley of Hinnom southeast of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 7:31-32). Two of Israel's kings, Ahaz (2 Kings 16:3) and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:6), offered their own children as sacrifices. Josiah desecrated the Tophet's "sacred" grounds "so no one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter on the fire" (2 Kings 23:10). In a possible reference to Josiah's decisive action, Jeremiah predicted that because of Judah's idolatry God would treat Jerusalem as Josiah had treated Hinnom's Topheth (Jeremiah 19:12-14).

***Take the Land** – God told Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (also called Canaan) and conquer it. This was not an act of imperialism or aggression but an act of judgment. Here are some of the earlier passages in the Bible where God promised to give this land to the Israelites and the reasons for doing so.

Genesis 12:1-3 – God promised to bless Abraham and make his descendants into a great nation.

Genesis 15:16 – God would choose the right time for Israel to enter Canaan, because the nations living there then would be wicked and ripe for judgment (their sin would run its course).

Genesis 17:7-8 – God promised to give all the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

Exodus 33:1-3 – God promised to help the Israelites drive out all the evil nations from Canaan.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 – The Israelites were to be an example of right living to the whole world; this would not work if they intermingled with the wicked Canaanites.

Deuteronomy 7:1-5 – The Israelites were to utterly wipe out the Canaanites because of their wickedness and because of Israel's call to purity.

Deuteronomy 12:2 – The Israelites were to completely destroy the Canaanite altars so nothing would tempt them away from worshiping God alone.

(*These notes taken from *The Lie Application Study Bible – New Living Translation* – study notes found in the book of Joshua.)

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

PART I

International Alpha Bible Course

By

Ralph Vincent Reynolds

Lesson One

BEFORE THE CONQUEST

What I Have Learned

A. AT KADESH - BARNEA

When the children of Israel first arrived at Kadesh-Barnea, God instructed Moses to send twelve men, one from each tribe, to spy out the Promised Land. These twelve spies spent forty days going as far north as Rehob. When they returned, all agreed that the land was fertile, but only Caleb and Joshua asserted that Israel could take Canaan with God's help. The other ten spies claimed that it would be impossible to possess the land.

When the people listened to and believed the report of the ten spies, God threatened to annihilate Israel. Moses interceded, however, and God changed the nature of the punishment. God stated that the entire nation would remain in the wilderness for a total of forty years, one year for each day that the spies spent in Canaan, and that no Israelite, twenty years and older, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, would enter the Promised Land (Num. 14:20-25).

Israel then began wandering in the desert for thirty-seven and a half years. During these years they moved about in a confined area, going as far south as the northern tip of the Gulf of Aquaba, about eighty-five miles in distance. Some sixteen stopping places are listed within this area. It is likely that much of the time was spent at Kadesh-Barnea. They were definitely at Kadesh-Barnea at the beginning of the fortieth year, for it was here Miriam died (Num. 20:1).

During this period of wandering, 1,200,000 men and women had to die (600,000 of both men and women). This meant they averaged eighty-five funerals per day. Thus they were constantly reminded of the judgment of God upon them because of unbelief.

B. THE DEATHS OF MIRIAM AND AARON

In passing judgment upon Israel, God made exception for only Caleb and Joshua. This meant that even the members of the head family had to die before Canaan could be possessed. Miriam, Aaron and Moses, however, were permitted to live until the final year of wandering in the wilderness. Miriam died in the first month of the fortieth year while at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 20:1) and Aaron died five months later at Mount Hor at the age of 123 years (Num. 33:38). God instructed Moses to accompany Aaron and Eleazer, Aaron's son and successor, to the top of the mountain. He took Aaron's clothes and placed them upon Eleazer, and they, alone, came down the mountain. Aaron died on the top of the mountain. The people mourned for Aaron for thirty days.

C. THE SIN OF STRIKING THE ROCK THE SECOND TIME – Numbers 20:2-13

At Kadesh the people lacked water once more. When they complained to Moses, he took the matter to God. Moses was instructed to bring water from the rock as he had done at Rephidim (Exo. 17:1-16). However, this time he was instructed to speak to the rock; nothing was said about striking it.

Apparently the patience of Moses was being exhausted, for he did a very foolish thing. Instead of speaking to the rock, he struck the rock twice and cried out to the people, "Shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?" In this act he greatly displeased the Lord and God pronounced, in judgment, that he would not be permitted to enter the Promised Land.

We need to understand the seriousness of the sin committed by Moses. In this act he was guilty of the following:

1. He disobeyed God
2. He had made it appear that he had produced water through his own human efforts.
3. He broke the type. Christ as the Rock (I Corinthians 10:4) was smitten only once at Calvary. Now one needs only to speak to Him to receive the water of life.

We should remember that it is possible to commit a similar sin today (Heb. 6:4-6).

D. THE REQUEST TO PASS THROUGH EDOM DENIED – Numbers 20:14-22

At Kadesh, Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom, asking permission to travel through his land. His plan was to go around the southern end of the Dead Sea and march north to the east side of the Jordan River. Moses promised to travel on the King's Highway, a well-known, ancient road. This was an easier and shorter route, but the king of Edom refused. Because of his refusal, Israel had to travel south and then north. It is estimated that the children of Israel traveled some 180 extra miles.

Moses did not interfere with the Edomites and traveled around their territory. He also skirted the land of Moab. Moses then requested permission to travel across the kingdom of Sihon. When the king of Sihon refused, Moses defeated him and occupied this territory to the Jabbok River. Moses then took the offensive and defeated Og, king of Bashan, who ruled as far north as Mt. Hermon. These defeats gave Israel control of most of the land east of the Jordan River, from Moab in the south to Mt. Hermon in the north, a distance of 130 miles.

E. BALAAM – Numbers 22:27

With these victories, Moses assembled Israel near the Jordan River across from Jericho. Balak, king of Moab, became concerned and sent messengers to Balaam, a prophet who lived in the far north. He requested Balaam to come south and curse Israel.

Balaam first refused to go but was finally persuaded. However, instead of cursing God's people, Balaam blessed Israel. As Balaam could not curse Israel, he advised Balak how the nation could be defiled and weakened. Through his advice the Israelites were ensnared in the cult worship of Baal-peor. As a result God punished Israel by sending a plague, which took 24,000 lives. The plague was stopped only when Phinehas, son of the high priest Eleazer, slew an Israelite man and a Midianite woman in a tent (Num. 25:8). Moses then sent an army of 12,000 men who defeated the Midianites and Balaam himself was killed.

The following New Testament Scriptures can be applied to Balaam:

1. Error of Balaam (Jude 11): This speaks of the sin of using the gift of God for material gain, of selling God's gift and of becoming a hireling.
2. Doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14): This speaks of the sin of enticing God's children to commit fornication.

F. A REQUEST GRANTED – Numbers 32

With the land east of Jordan conquered and found to be good pastureland, the tribes of Reuben and Gad (and, later, half of Manasseh) asked permission to settle there. At first Moses did not agree. When these tribes assured him that their men would fight for the conquest of Canaan, he consented. He made it clear that all men of military age would have to cross over and help in occupying the Promise Land. When the agreement was reached, they began preparing the land for their families while the men were away fighting.

G. PREPARING FOR THE CONQUEST

In preparation for the conquest, Moses had a second census taken (Num. 26). The first census had been taken thirty-nine years before at Mt. Sinai. During these thirty-nine years some 1,200,000 deaths had occurred and there was a need to know Israel's strength as she faced the challenge of Canaan. The census revealed there were 601,730 men twenty years and older.

In these thirty-nine years, seven tribes had grown in number while five tribes were now smaller. The tribe, which increased the most, was Manasseh, which had grown from 32,200 to 52,700; the tribe, which decreased the most, was Simeon, which had gone from 59,300 to 22,200.

No person could have been more than fifty-eight or fifty-nine years of age except Caleb (seventy-nine years old), Joshua (possibly ninety years old), and Moses (120 years old).

H. THE DEATH OF MOSES – Deuteronomy 34

As it was nearing the time for Moses to die, a new leader had to be chosen. God's choice was Joshua (Num. 27:15-23). As God instructed Moses, Joshua was placed before Eleazer and installed as the new leader.

On the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, Moses orally delivered the great messages of Deuteronomy. This was only two months and ten days before Israel crossed the Jordan River.

With his work of leadership and writing complete, Moses was now ready for death. He was 120 years old, but his eyesight was not dim nor his natural force abated. He climbed to the top of Pisgah and surveyed Canaan. God assured him that this was the Promised Land, then took him in death and buried him in an unknown place of a nearby valley.

Lesson Two

JOSHUA

What I Have Learned

A. THE SUCCESSOR TO MOSES

When Moses came to the end of his life, someone had to be selected to take his place. This was a very important decision, for the successor would be the one to lead Israel across Jordan to possess Canaan. God's choice was Joshua.

1. His Name

The meaning of the name "Joshua" is "Jehovah is Salvation." It may be written as Hoshea, Oshea, Jehoshua, Jeshua, and in the New Testament, Jesus.

2. His family

He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8, 16).

3. His Experience

- Led Israel in the battle against the Amalekites (Exo. 17:8-14).
- Accompanied Moses part way of Mt. Sinai when Moses received the Mosaic Law (Exo. 24:13).
- Assisted Moses and ministered to him following Israel's repentance regarding the sin of the golden calf (Exo. 33:11).
- Went as one of the twelve spies, representing the tribe of Ephraim. He brought back a good report and, along with Caleb, urged Israel to occupy the land (Num. 13:8; 14:6-9).
- He, along with Caleb, was one of the older men who would be permitted to enter Canaan. He was probably about ninety years of age.

4. His Character

Throughout his life, Joshua always acquitted himself well, demonstrating responsibility and leadership. He assumed the tremendous task of leading the Israelites into Canaan without making a single excuse. He showed his humility in his service to Moses.

Throughout his life no sins are recorded against him. The record of his life is faultless. In the conquest of Canaan, Joshua met with only one reverse, the defeat at Ai, showing the necessity of absolute obedience to God's commands. Some of

the greatest characteristics possessed by Joshua were faith, obedience, and courage.

B. JOSHUA – A TYPE OF CHRIST

Apart from bearing the same name as Jesus and leaving a sinless record, Joshua was a type of Jesus in the following ways:

1. He was captain of the armies of the Lord
2. He followed after Moses (the law)
3. He led his people through to victory
4. He was their advocate
5. He allotted the portions due to the people.

C. GOD'S MESSAGE TO JOSHUA – Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses, the Lord appeared to Joshua with a message of encouragement. This is one of the outstanding selections in the book of Joshua. This message may be divided into five main points:

1. Statement Concerning the Death of Moses

Since no man was with Moses when he died, it was necessary for Joshua to be certain that Moses had died. God did not leave Joshua in doubt.

2. The Covenant of Abraham Confirmed Once Again

God clearly defined the borders of the Promised Land as had previously been promised to the patriarchs and Moses. The borders were to be the wilderness in the south, the River Euphrates in the north, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west.

3. God's Message of Encouragement

God made several promises to Joshua to encourage him. These promises were:

- God would give him every place that the sole of his feet should walk upon (verse 3).
- No man would be able to stand before him all his life (verse 5).
- God would be with him even as He was with Moses (verse 5).
- God would not fail him nor forsake him (verse 5).
- God would be with him wherever he went (verse 9).

4. God's Exhortation

Three times God exhorted Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He also exhorted him not to turn from the law of Moses, neither to the right hand nor to the left.

5. God Placed Emphasis Upon the Importance of the Law

Joshua was exhorted to meditate upon the law day and night and not to let it depart out of his mouth. He was told that he must observe it just as it was written. The promise of prosperity and success would be conditional upon this factor.

It is evident that Joshua remembered God's message to him throughout the years of conquest and undoubtedly his success was greatly dependent upon this fact.

D. RAHAB AND THE SPIES – Joshua 2:1-24

Joshua recognized that the city of Jericho was a strong city and was to be the first objective. He desired more knowledge of the city and sent out two spies. A harlot, Rahab, whose house was located on the city wall, protected these spies. When the men were detected, she hid them beneath drying stalks of flax on the roof. She was convinced that Jericho would be taken by the Israelites and requested safety for herself and family in return for saving the lives of the spies. With her help, the men escaped back to Joshua. They did not learn much about the city, but they did learn that the people of Jericho greatly feared Israel. This was a good report.

Rahab tied a scarlet line in her window, which, like the blood applied to the doors of the Israelites at the time of the Passover, became the means of her salvation. This scarlet line was a type of the crimson line of blood, which runs throughout the Bible. As a result Rahab and her family were saved and she came to be included in the ancestral line of David and of Christ (Matt. 1:5).

E. CROSSING THE JORDAN – Joshua 3-4

The next morning after the return of the spies, Joshua ordered the people to move to the bank of the Jordan River. Here they camped for three days while they received final instructions. The river was at flood stage, making it most difficult to cross.

When all was ready, the ark, carried by the Levites, went ahead. Two thousand cubits (3,000 feet) separated the people from the ark, permitting a large number of people to see it going ahead. As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water of Jordan, a great miracle occurred. Every drop of water at a given point quit flowing and banked up in a great heap while the water below flowed on

toward the Dead Sea. God's invisible dam was stronger than any built by man.

The priests halted midway in the river. They stood holding the ark of the Lord until all the people had passed over. The Lord's name was in His ark (I Corinthians 13:6). Here the new generations born in the wilderness were baptized. Like the older generation baptized by the crossing of the Red Sea, this younger generation had to go through the water (in the name of the Lord).

Two memorials of this crossing were created; one was in the Jordan and the other across at Gilgal where the people encamped (Jos. 4:1-24). Twelve men, one from each tribe, took one stone each from the Jordan, near where the priests stood, and carried them to the place of encampment. Joshua then set up twelve stones in the middle of the river at the spot from, which the other stones had been taken.

The priests bearing the ark then moved across the river to the back and the river once again flowed downstream. When all the people had arrived at Gilgal, Joshua made the second pillar from the stones carried from the river.

F. CIRCUMCISION

The generation, which had been born in the wilderness, had not been circumcised, but at Gilgal, after Jordan had been crossed, Joshua commanded that they all should be. This rite had been given to Abraham and now was commanded as a sign of separation between the Israelites and their new neighbors. It also symbolized the removal of Israel's reproach.

What Have You Learned?

1. Why was choosing the person to take Moses' place such an important decision? _____

2. What does the name "Joshua" mean? _____

3. List five (5) ways Joshua was a type of Jesus.

4. List three (3) of Joshua's greatest characteristics.

5. List the five (5) main points of the Lord's message to Joshua after the death of Moses (Joshua 1:1-9). _____

6. Who was Rahab? What role did she play in the defeat of Jericho? _____

7. List the steps in the Lord's instructions for the crossing of the Jordan. _____

8. Why did God command the male Israelites to be circumcised at Gilgal? _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Three

THE CONQUEST OF JOSHUA

What I Have Learned

A. THE LAND OF CANAAN

The land of Canaan was an area of city-states. There was no central government, but many cities, each with its own king. To conquer the land meant to defeat each city in turn. Egypt was nominal overlord, but the then-present Pharaoh had very little interest in his domain and left the individual cities of Canaan to themselves as prizes of conquest for Israel.

This does not mean that Israel's task was to be easy. Thirty-nine years before, the spies had given a true report in speaking of vigorous Canaanites and their strongly fortified cities. The Canaanites' frequent fights among themselves and with outside foes kept their warriors in fighting trim and well-equipped. The cities were built to withstand siege for months at a time. Sometimes these cities banded together against a common enemy – as they later did against Joshua in both a southern and northern confederacy. Beside this, the land was mountainous. It was rugged country, difficult in which to travel and to fight wars.

Canaan was advanced in material culture. Cities were well laid out. Workers were skilled and their pottery was among the finest in the world. Extensive trade was conducted with foreign countries. In technical knowledge, the Canaanites were much more advanced than the Israelites who had spent the past forty years in the desert. This led to a grave danger for Israel. The advanced knowledge of the Canaanites influenced the Israelites and eventually led them to accept the worship of the Canaanite Baal.

Apparently the strategy of Moses was revealed to him by God. It was to attack the land at its midpoint, coming in from the east, and to divide it into a south and north section. Then each of these areas was to be conquered separately. He very likely had shared this plan with Joshua who now prepared to carry it out.

B. JERICHO

The ancient city of Jericho lay directly before the children of Israel when they crossed over Jordan. It was located some five miles west of the Jordan and seven miles north of the Dead Sea. It was about average size for the cities of that day, covering an

area of eight acres. The great wall, which encircled the city, was of such strength and size that houses were built on it. These walls were forty to fifty feet high.

One day while Joshua was inspecting the city, the Lord appeared as a man with a sword drawn in his hand. He told Joshua that He was the captain of the host of the Lord. The Lord gave Joshua definite instructions how he was to conquer Jericho. The plans were to have men of war, led by seven priests carrying the ark, walk around the city once each day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day. At the close of the thirteenth time, the priests would blow trumpets and the people would shout with a loud voice. When they did this, the walls of the city would collapse and the army would enter.

The plan was carried out as given to Joshua by the Lord. Thirteen times the city was encircled and the walls fell when the trumpets were blown and the people shouted. The army took the city with ease. All the people of the city were killed, with the exception of Rahab and her family, and the city was leveled by fire. No Israelite was permitted to enrich himself by spoil, for God had placed a ban on the city, declaring that it was a kind of first fruits to Himself. Valuable metals, gold, silver, bronze were placed in God's treasury. Joshua further pronounced a curse on any who would rebuild the city.

C. ACHAN

The victory of the nation depended on personal obedience. God showed His displeasure because of disobedience in the defeat of Israel's army at Ai.

The city of Ai was the next objective before Israel. A small party was sent out by Joshua to inspect the city. They were not impressed by Ai's strength and advised that merely two or three thousand men would be sufficient to take the city. Joshua sent 3,000, but they were defeated by the men of Ai, who killed thirty-six men as Israel's army fled.

The reason for the defeat was the existence of sin in Israel's camp. Achan, of the tribe of Judah, had sinned in disregarding God's ban on the items from Jericho and took for himself a Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver and a fifty-shekel bar of gold. God revealed to Joshua that such a sin had been committed and told him to make inquiry as to the identity of the guilty party. The fault was found to be with Achan, who had hidden these goods in his tent. These were recovered from their hiding

place. Achan, his family, and all his possessions were stoned and burned.

Joshua then prepared to attack Ai the second time. He sent an ambush to hide in the valley between Ai and Bethel. The next day Joshua led another force in a frontal attack. When the men of Ai came out from the city, Joshua's force again retreated as if defeated. The ambush then arose and attacked the army of Ai from behind. Joshua's force then turned and the enemy was trapped. The result was that all 12,000 of the male inhabitants of Ai were killed, the king was hanged and the city was reduced to rubble. This time God permitted the Israelites to take of the spoil. God had taught the Israelites three lessons: the seriousness of sin, God's dealings with personal sin and the error of overconfidence.

D. THE GIBEONITES

Everyone can be deceived if they fail to ask counsel of the Lord. One should not rest upon past experiences but ask God's guidance in every issue. By not doing this, Joshua was tricked into making a league with the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites heard of Israel's early successes and saw wisdom in making peace with Israel. They contrived a trick. Wearing worn out clothing and bearing moldy bread to make themselves appear to have traveled from a distant country, they asked that Israel make a treaty of peace with them. It was granted. This was contrary to God's instruction, however, and the Israelites were held responsible because they had not asked counsel of the Lord (Jos. 9:14). When Joshua learned they had been tricked, he and the elders kept the treaty, but forced the Gibeonites to serve as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the entire congregation. The one good thing that came of this was the fact that Israel gained control in some cities in the central part of the land without having to fight.

E. THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

When news of the capitulation of Gibeon reached the other cities in the south, an alliance was made to resist Israel by first attacking Gibeon. Five kings formed the alliance and marched against Gibeon. They were Jerusalem, Hebron, Jermuth, Lachish and Eglon.

The Gibeonites appealed to Joshua for help, and he brought his troops, by forced march, the twenty-four miles distance to Gibeon in one night. He took the attackers by surprise, routed them and pursued after them. The armies of the southern kings fled

down the hills and God rained hailstones upon them. More died from these stones than by the swords of the Israelites. The five kings were captured and beheaded.

With this battle won, Joshua continued south to subdue all the lower part of the land. His army even reached Kadeah-Barnea. Finally, Joshua returned to Gibeon where the campaign had started. This extensive campaign must have occupied several months. The cities had fallen with comparative ease. However, one city was not conquered at this time and that was the city of Jerusalem. It was not conquered until David seized it much later, then making it the capital.

F. JOSHUA'S LONG DAY – Joshua 10:12-14

As Joshua stood on a hill watching the enemy flee before his troops, he feared that the Canaanites might escape. He, therefore, commanded the sun and the moon to stand still. They obeyed until the conquest was complete. The verb translated "stand still" basically means, "be silent." In some way God controlled the light and permitted Joshua to have a long day.

We should note that it states "about a whole day." It is thought that the miracle of the shadow on the sundial going back ten degrees for Hezekiah, as recorded in II Kings 20, equaled forty minutes and that Joshua's long day was twenty-three hours and twenty minutes. If so, the two miracles would total twenty-four hours or a whole day. Science confirms the fact that there is a day that cannot be accounted for except by the miracles that took place for Joshua and Hezekiah.

G. DEFEAT OF THE NORTHERN CONFEDERACY

The northern or Galilean district remained to be subdued. News of Joshua's remarkable conquest of the south traveled north and reached the ears of Jabin, powerful king of Hazor. Jabin, fearing an attack on his region, formed a confederacy. He planned to do better than the southern alliance by gathering a greater force. This confederacy grouped its forces in the vicinity of the waters of Meron and the host numbered like the sand that is on the seashore (Jos. 11:4). Joshua moved north, attacked and surprised them. The huge enemy army was routed and chased far to the west. Joshua followed up this triumph by smiting them with the edge of the sword. He then returned to the city of Hazor

and burned it, something he did not do to the other cities.

Defeat of the northern confederacy completed the conquest of Canaan, though many areas were bypassed and resistance continued until the time of David. One principle region escaped Joshua's forces; that was the Mediterranean coastline. For the most part, the coastal territory remained untouched and was not completely subdued until conquered by David.

What Have You Learned?

1. Briefly explain the political and governmental setup of Canaan. _____

2. What was the strategy of Moses, as revealed to him by God, for conquering Canaan? _____

3. Briefly describe the wall that encircled the city of Jericho. _____

4. Why were the Israelites forbidden to take any of the spoils of Jericho? _____

5. The victory of the nation of Israel depended on what? _____

6. How many men from Israel's army died at Ai? _____

7. Why was Israel defeated by Ai? _____

8. Who had taken spoil from Jericho, and what was it? Where did he hide it? _____

9. What three (3) lessons did God teach the Israelites through the trials at Ai? _____

10. How was it possible for the Gibeonites to trick God's people? _____

11. When Joshua learned he had been tricked, what did he force the Gibeonites to do? _____

12. What one good thing came of the Israelite's dealings with Gibeon? _____

13. What five (5) kings formed the alliance to march against Gibeon? _____

14. What miracle is confirmed by science concerning a missing day? _____

15. What principle region of Canaan escaped Joshua's forces? Who finally conquered this area? _____

Lesson Four

THE DIVISIONS OF CANAAN

What I Have Learned

A. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND – Joshua 13

Under Joshua's leadership, thirty-one kings had been conquered. Now Joshua was commanded to divide the land among the tribes (Jos. 13:1-6). Joshua, with the help of Eleazar, the high priest, now had the task of dividing the land. In dividing Canaan, Joshua both recognized the victories given by God and encouraged the tribes to enter and occupy the land assigned to them. Joshua divided the land as follows:

1. Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh

These tribes already had their territory assigned to them on the east side of the Jordan during the lifetime of Moses.

2. Judah

The territory assigned to Judah was very large. It consisted of southern Canaan, stretching from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and including Kadesh-Barnea.

3. Ephraim and Manasseh

The important central part of Canaan was given to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. This was still inhabited by a number of Canaanite groups, which had to be conquered. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim. Gideon came from the tribe of Manasseh. For many years Ephraim was the principle tribe.

4. Benjamin and Dan

These tribes were assigned territory between the lands of Judah and the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. At the border between Judah and Benjamin was the city of the Jebusites. This city, Jerusalem, later became the spiritual and political center of Israel. The tribe of Dan had difficulty in establishing itself in the coastal area, and a group of them migrated to the extreme northern sector of Canaan.

5. Asher, Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali

These tribes received inheritance in the north. This area later became Galilee. It was here where Jesus spent the greater part of His earthly life.

6. Simeon

Simeon was given no land area as such, but the tribe was assigned seventeen cities within the large territory of Judah. One reason for this was that the part of the children of Judah was much too much for them (Jos. 19:1-9). Another reason was that Simeon was one of the smallest of the tribes, numbering only 22,200 men at the time of the second census.

7. Levi

The tribe of Levi was not given a tribal inheritance since they were devoted to the offices connected with the priesthood. They were supported by the tithes and offerings of the whole people. They were given forty-eight cities for their residence; six of which were cities of refuge. The Levites lived throughout the land of Canaan.

B. MAPS OF THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN AND DIVISIONS OF THE LAND (See Quick Guide to Joshua – Division of the Land.)

C. CALEB'S PORTION – Joshua 14:6-15

Caleb was not Israelite. He was a descendant of Kenaz, a grandson of Esau. Caleb represented the tribe of Judah when the spies went into Canaan, but he was not actually of that tribe. At Kadesh-Barnea, Moses had promised him Hebron and now Caleb reminded Joshua of this promise. Caleb was eighty-five years old, but he drove out the Anakim from the land and possessed the mountain that had been promised him.

Caleb was a great man. He was courageous, faithful, energetic, generous and humble. Caleb is remembered by his great faith and the fact that at his advanced age he said, "Give me this mountain."

D. THE TABERNACLE AT SHILOH – Joshua 18:1

Shiloh, located in the territory of Ephraim, north of Bethel, was chosen as the resting place for the ark of the tabernacle. The ark remained there for many generations and Shiloh remained the central place of worship until just before God allowed the building of the Temple. The Hebrew people went there from year to year to celebrate the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. After the ark had been removed from Shiloh, God forsook Shiloh and its judgment came upon it (Psalms 78:58-61; Jeremiah 7:12).

E. THE CITIES OF REFUGE – Joshua 20:1-9

Six cities were set apart to be cities of refuge. Three of these cities were located east of Jordan and three were located west of the river. These cities were set apart to make provision for the protection of all those who unwittingly committed murder. The names of these cities were: (1) Kadesh, (2) Shechem, (3) Kirjath-arba, (4) Bezer, (5) Ramoth, and (6) Galan.

F. THE PORTION OF THE LEVITES

After the land was divided, the Levites requested at Eleazar, the priest, present their claim for cities to dwell in. They were given no division of land, but forty-eight cities and their suburbs was their portion. They served at Shiloh and later at Jerusalem. It was God's plan that the Levites, his ministers to the people, live holy, separate lives. God gave them the tithe of their brethren for their support (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:26). Tithing was not instituted under the law; it began with Abraham (Gen. 14:20).

G. THE ALTAR EAST OF JORDAN

The tribes who chose to stay on the east side of Jordan had passed over Jordan with their brethren and helped them subdue the land. Then Joshua commanded them to go home, cautioning them to remain faithful to the Lord. Nevertheless, they did a very unwise act when they passed over Jordan. They built a great altar on the bank of the Jordan. This almost resulted in war, for the other tribes feared this would create a rival establishment to Shiloh. Phinehas and ten princes were sent to confer with them. They showed them that they needed no altar beside the altar of the Lord at Shiloh (Jos. 22:19). However, the men of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh explained that they had no intention of ever offering sacrifices on the altar, but built it only as a witness that "the Lord is God" (Joshua 22:34). Their explanation was accepted.

From the time of the building of the Tabernacle, God has had one place for His altar. First it was in the Tabernacle, next it was in the Temple, and now it is in His church.

H. THE DEATH OF JOSHUA

About twelve or fourteen years after the final division of the country, Joshua assembled the heads of all the tribes at Shechem and gave his final charge. They were entreated to cleave to the Lord and they vowed never to turn to idols.

1. Who was in charge of dividing the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes? _____

2. The important central part of Canaan was given to what two tribes? _____

What two (2) important leaders were from these tribes? _____

Which one was the principle tribe in Israel for many years? _____

3. What is another name for the city of the Jebusites? _____

4. What four (4) tribes made up the area in the north where Jesus spent most of His earthly life? What was this area called? _____

5. List two (2) reasons why the tribe of Levi was not given an inheritance. _____

6. List two (2) reasons why Caleb is remembered as a great man. _____

7. List the six (6) cities of refuge, and briefly explain what that means. _____

8. When did tithing begin? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

9. From the time of the building of the Tabernacle, where has the dwelling place for God's altar been? _____

Lesson Five

JUDGES

Part I

What I Have Learned

A. THE BOOK OF FAILURES

The book of Judges is a book of failures, followed in each case with divine deliverance. When Israel settled in Canaan, it was a day of great promise. God had promised an unusual blessing, stating that if the people followed Him faithfully, they would be “the head, and not the tail,” and be “above only” and “not beneath” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

In Judges we have the account of a series of national calamities in which the enemies of Israel gained control of the land and of the judges who were raised up to deliver God’s people. The historical record given in this book shows the reason Israel did not receive the great blessings promised her. The main reason was that of disobedience. One of the key verses of Scripture, which explains clearly why there were so many failures, is repeated twice:

“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6).

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

Throughout Judges, there is recorded a series of cycles, which were all very similar. They followed these steps:

- Lapse into idolatry
- Idolatry was followed by great immorality
- Judgment of God brought them under the servitude of other nations
- Judgment was followed by a cry of repentance
- In answer to their cry for help, God sent them a deliverer
- They would remain faithful during the lifetime of the deliverer

The main reasons for the failures and sins of Israel during this period of time may be summed up as follows:

1. Failure to drive the Canaanites from the land. Under Joshua important confederations from the north and south had been conquered. However, many Canaanites were left in the land and became pockets of resistance, which

challenged Israel until the time of Saul. These Canaanites, which were left in the land, were the means of Israel’s downfall. This was the main reason Israel lapsed again and again into idolatry.

2. Lost sense of unity. It became difficult to maintain a sense of unity. They still had a theocratic government and the Tabernacle remained at Shiloh (Jos. 18:1; Jud. 18:31). However, it soon became evident that each tribe was on its own.
3. Material prosperity and worship of Baal. Baal was one of the gods of the Canaanites who believed he controlled rain and storm. The Israelites were attracted to this form of idolatry, for they wanted to prosper in their new agricultural way of life. The main reasons for failure in Israel may cause our defeat today.

B. THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

The events of Judges were not recorded chronologically. The oppressions and deliverances were not successive, but occasionally while one part of the country was struggling for deliverance, the rest of the land had peace. Also, certain of the events overlapped in time. For example, in Jud. 10:7 it is implied that Jephthah, occupied with the Ammonites east of Jordan, and Samson, concerned with the Philistines on the west, were contemporary in activity.

The sum of the time periods as given in Judges is:

Judges 3:8	Mesopotamian oppression	8 years
Judges 3:11	Othniel’s deliverance	40 years
Judges 3:14	Moab oppression	18 years
Judges 3:30	Ehud’s deliverance	80 years
Judges 4:2	Canaanite oppression	20 years
Judges 5:31	Deborah’s deliverance	40 years
Judges 6:1	Midianite oppression	7 years
Judges 8:28	Gideon’s deliverance	40 years
Judges 9:22	Abimelech’s rule	3 years
Judges 10:2	Tola as judge	23 years
Judges 10:3	Jair as judge	22 years
Judges 10:8	Ammonite oppression	18 years
Judges 12:7	Jephthah’s deliverance	6 years
Judges 12:9	Ibzan as judge	7 years
Judges 12:11	Elon as judge	10 years
Judges 12:14	Abdon as judge	8 years
Judges 13:1	Philistine oppression	40 years
Judges 15 :20	Samson’s exploits	<u>20 years</u>
	TOTAL	410 years

It is necessary to reconcile this information with I Kings 6:1, “And it came to pass in the four hundred

and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel ... he began to build the house of the Lord." This Scripture states there were 480 years between the Exodus and Solomon's fourth year. These years include the following:

Wilderness Period	40 years
Joshua's leadership	16 years
Time between Samson and Saul	5 years
Saul's reign	40 years
David's reign	40 years
Solomon's first four years	<u>4 years</u>
TOTAL	145 years

A study of this information shows there was an overlap of time in the events in Judges of seventy-five years. We may safely conclude that the actual length of time covered by the judges was 335 years.

C. THE JUDGES

The judges were twelve in number. They are listed as follows:

Name	Oppression	Reference
1. Othniel	Mesopotamians	Judges 3:7-11
2. Ehud	Moabites	Judges 3:12-30
3. Shamgar		Judges 3:31
4. Deborah	Canaanites	Judges 4-5
with Barak		
5. Gideon	Midianites	Judges 6-8
6. Tola		Judges 10:1-2
7. Jair		Judges 10:3-5
8. Jephthah	Ammonites	Judges 10:6-12:7
9. Ibzan		Judges 12:8-10
10. Elon		Judges 12:11-12
11. Abdon		Judges 12:13-15
12. Samson	Philistines	Judges 13-16

To this list Abimelech, Eli and Samuel may be added. However, Abimelech was a renegade king during his three years of leadership, and Eli and Samuel were high priest and prophet, respectively.

D. THE SIX INVASIONS OR SERVITUDES

Sometimes the whole country was not brought under the dominion of the enemy. On some occasions it was only the part that lay nearest to the enemy's respective territories that suffered from their attacks.

The following summarizes the six servitudes:

Oppressor	Judge	Reference
Mesopotamia	Othniel	Judges 3:5-9

Moab	Ehud & Shamgar	Judges 3:12-31
Jaban & Sisera	Deborah & Barak	Judges 4:1-23
Midian	Gideon	Judges 6-7
Philistines & Ammon	Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, & Abdon	Judges 10-12
Philistines	Samson	Judges 13-16

E. INSECURITY OF THE EASTERN TRIBES

The tribes, which settled east of Jordan, were far more open to attack from the enemy than the other tribes. Apostasy from the true faith seemed to have broken out more frequently among them since they were closer to idolatrous neighbors. Because of this they suffered many chastisements and were the first to go into captivity.

What Have You Learned?

1. Write the key verse of Scripture (repeated twice in the book of Judges) that explains why Israel did not receive the great blessings promised her. Mention both references for this verse.

2. List the six (6) steps followed in the series of cycles throughout Judges. _____

3. List and briefly explain the three (3) main reasons for the failures and sins of Israel during this time in their history. _____

Lesson Six

JUDGES

Part II

What I Have Learned

A. THE FIRST SERVITUDE

The people of Israel served the Lord as long as the elders who saw the miracles of God under the ministry of Joshua lived (Jud. 2:7). However, soon after the death of the elders, Israel began its decline into apostasy. It was only a short time until the Israelites began marrying into heathen families, forsaking the Lord, worshipping Canaanite gods and falling into terrible immoralities.

The first punishing oppressor came from the far northeast. This was an invasion from Mesopotamia. The name of the leader was Cushan Rishathaim. He was the only oppressor who came from such a distant land. During this first servitude the Israelites were kept in bondage for eight years.

The deliverer was Othniel, the first judge and younger brother of Caleb (Jos. 15:17). He won the daughter of Caleb, Achsah, by winning the battle against Kirjath-sephar (Jud. 1:11-15). No record is given of how he won the victory against the Mesopotamians except the statement, "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" (Jud. 3:10). After the victory, the land had rest forty years before the next oppression.

B. THE SECOND SERVITUDE – Judges 3:12-31

The second nation of oppress Israel was Moab. Moab lay directly across the Dead Sea from Judah. It was their king, Balak, who had brought Balaam from the north to curse Israel. Now, with help from the Ammonites and the Amalekites, the Moabites crossed the Jordan River and used the former site of Jericho as their headquarters. They inflicted great suffering on the eastern tribes, as well as Benjamin and all who dwelt near Jericho. The king of Moab was Eglon, who was a very fat man. This servitude continued for eighteen years.

When Israel cried to God for help, the Lord raised up another deliverer, Ehud of Benjamin. He brought deliverance, not through warfare, but through an act of deception in which he succeeded in slaying King Eglon. When Eglon was killed, the Moabites retreated and Ehud's men slew 10,000 of them. This brought a lengthy peace of eighty years to Israel. This was the longest period of peace enjoyed during the period of the Judges.

During the eighty years of peace, Shamgar lived as a third judge. We are not told much about this man except that he won a great victory over the Philistines. On one occasion he slew 600 Philistines with nothing but an ox-goad as a weapon.

C. THE THIRD SERVITUDE – Joshua 4, 5

The third oppression came from the Canaanites within Palestine, whom the Israelites should have driven out in the first place. Jabin, king of Hazor, was the leader and Sisera was his general. The city of Hazor had been defeated by Joshua but again had become strong. Sisera had 900 chariots of iron. The Canaanites attacked Zebulun and Naphtali and reduced them to a condition of servitude for twenty years.

This time Israel's deliverer was a woman. Deborah was both a judge and a prophetess (Jud. 4:4). The people came to her for counsel. She received people under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, some sixty miles south of where the battle with Sisera would take place. She called Barak, who lived in the north in Kedesh of Naphtali. She instructed him to raise an army of 10,000 men from Zebulun and Naphtali and to fight Sisera. Barak agreed to do so if she would go with him. Deborah consented and they fought Sisera west of Megiddo on the banks of the Kishon. The Lord miraculously gave the victory and Sisera fled northward. On the way, he took refuge in the tent of a Kenite named Jael, who lived near Barak's hometown of Kedesh. Jael killed Sisera by driving a tent peg through his head. This brought forty years of peace to Israel.

Judges 5 records the triumphant song of victory of Deborah and Barak. In Judges 5:7 she called herself "a mother in Israel."

D. THE FOURTH SERVITUDE – Judges 6, 7

After a period of forty years, the old corruptions broke out again. Another invasion was sent as punishment. The Midianites, aided by Amalekites and "children of the east," came pouring into the land at the time of harvest. They plundered the country and depleted the land of both livestock and grain. The Israelites were so fearful they took refuge in caves.

Gideon was the deliverer. He lived in Ophrah, a village of Manasseh. The people of Ophrah had accepted Baal worship so complete they had built their own pagan altar. God's first command to Gideon was to destroy this idolatrous altar. This he

did, showing courage and faith. The people first wanted to kill Gideon, but later accepted him as their leader.

When he called for troops to fight the Midianites, 32,000 responded from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. These seemed too few to fight the Midianites, which numbered 135,000. However, God instructed Gideon that his army should be reduced, first by permitting all who were fearful to return home and then testing to see which men would drink from a brook in a manner showing readiness for battle. Gideon was left with only 300 men. He armed his men with trumpets and empty pitchers containing lamps. All the army blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers at the same time. The enemy was taken by surprise and fled in panic.

Israel invited Gideon to become king, but he would not listen to the proposal. He knew that God was Israel's king. Instead, Gideon acts as judge for forty years.

Gideon had seventy-one sons. One of his sons, Abimelech, child of the concubine at Shechem, wanted what Gideon had refused, the crown of Israel. He murdered sixty-nine of his brothers. Only Jothan, his youngest brother, escaped. Abimelech was crowned by the Shechemites and ruled for three years. He was finally killed in battle by a woman.

E. THE FIFTH SERVITUDE – Judges 10-12

The Ammonites ravaged the tribes east of Jordan, as well as Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, west of Jordan. When the children of Israel cried out for deliverance, God taunted them, telling them to cry to their heathen gods. Finally, the Israelites showed the fruit of repentance and put away their strange gods. God then raised up Jephthah to be their deliverer.

Jephthah was the son of Gilead and a harlot. His life was overshadowed by that fact and his brethren cast him out. In Tob he became a bold and successful captain, and he was accepted as captain over the army against the Ammonites. He entirely defeated the enemy.

Jephthah is especially remembered because of his foolishness. Due to the influence of the idolatrous worship around him, he vowed that he would sacrifice to the Lord whatever should first meet him on returning home if he won the victory. It turned out to be his daughter. This vow was

neither sanctioned by the Mosaic ritual nor acceptable to God.

F. THE SIXTH SERVITUDE – Judges 13-16

The last great oppression was brought by the Philistines. They were able to impose their will on Israel for forty years, the longest of any of the oppressions.

God's man to fight against the Philistines was Samson. His father was Manoah, a Danite. Samson's birth was announced by an angel. Samson was to be a Nazarite. He was never to drink wine or strong drink and never to cut his hair. He enjoyed great physical strength, but he proved to have a weak will.

Some of his feats of strength included:

- Killing a lion with his bare hands
- Slaying thirty Philistines, taking their changes of clothing
- Catching 300 foxes, tying firebrands to their tails and burning the Philistine crops
- Killing 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

Samson served as a judge for twenty years, until he fell victim to lust and sinned with a harlot (Jud. 16:1-3). He finally lost his hair, was blinded and lost his strength. Later, when his hair had grown out, he accomplished the great feat of pulling down the temple of the Philistines, killing them and himself.

G. CIVIL WARS

During the time of the judges, there were four periods of civil confusion that caused internal wars.

1. The jealousy of Ephraim (Judges 8:1-22)

The Ephraimites were jealous of Gideon and refused to give him and his men food when they were faint and weak. When the battle against Midian was completed, Gideon fought and subdued the Ephraimites. This was the beginning of a deep-rooted rift in Israel that finally ended in the division of the kingdom under Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

2. Abimelech (Judges 9:1-52)

Abimelech's ambition to set up a dynasty led to civil war.

3. The second jealousy of Ephraim (Judges 12:1-7)

Ephraim was jealous again after Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites. This terminated in the

slaughter of the Ephraimites who could not say *Shibboleth*.

4. The punishment of Benjamin (Judges 19-21)

The tribe of Benjamin was severely punished because of a lewd crime. The entire tribe was almost destroyed because of this.

What Have You Learned?

1. Read Judges 19-21. Briefly explain the crime that caused the severe punishment of the Benjamites. _____

2. What caused the beginning of Israel's decline into apostasy? _____

3. Briefly identify each of the following characters.

Othniel _____

Cushan Rishathaim _____

Eglon _____

Ehud _____

Shamgar _____

Sisera _____

Barak _____

Deborah _____

Jael _____

Gideon _____

Abimelech _____

Jephthah _____

Manoah _____

Samson _____

Lesson Seven

RUTH

What I Have Learned

A. THE STORY OF RUTH

One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is that of Ruth. This story occurred during the judgeship of Gideon. It has special interest to us because it shows the lineage of David. Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, who began to rule at Hebron in 1010 B.C. The last word in the book of Ruth is the word *David* and this reveals the main purpose of the book.

The account of Ruth shows a beautiful picture of a godly life and rewards of pure and true religious faith. Also, this book pictures many Hebrew customs of the times: the harvest, the land system of the Hebrews, the maintaining of family rights and how members of other nations could be converted and brought to know God.

One of the notable things about the story of Ruth is that Ruth, a Gentile, married into a Jewish family, and, thereby, came into the line of David. Through it all Gentiles have been blessed. It is also interesting to compare Ruth with the Book of Esther, the only other book in the Bible named after a woman. Esther, a Jewess, married a Gentile monarch and brought deliverance to the Jewish nation.

Ruth's story began with the Israelite family of Elimelech and Naomi moving from Bethlehem to Moab in time of famine. In Moab, Elimelech died, leaving his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Ruth married Mahlon and another Moabitess, Orpah, married Chilion. Then both sons died, leaving all three women as widows. Naomi heard there was plenty to eat back at Bethlehem and decided to return home. She urged her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah agreed to do so, but Ruth continued with Naomi, vowing never to leave her and to accept her mother-in-law's people as her own.

Ruth's statement of love and dedication is given in Ruth 1:16-17:

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

B. THE RETURN HOME

Naomi, accompanied by Ruth, returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. They were destitute, arriving home without anything. When the people of the city welcomed Naomi, she said, "Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara...I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:20-21).

The beautiful part of this picture was the faithfulness of Ruth to her mother-in-law, her devotion and love during this time of great need and destitution.

C. RUTH GLEANS IN THE FIELDS

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:9-10).

In this Scripture, the Lord instructed Israel to leave some of the crop in the field to be gleaned by the strangers and the poor. Naomi and Ruth were destitute and Ruth took advantage of this instruction. Since it was during the barley harvest, Ruth gleaned in the fields. She happened upon the field of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Elimelech. Boaz had heard of her kindness of Naomi and ordered his men to see that Ruth had special treatment and kindness while she gleaned in his fields.

D. RUTH'S MARRIAGE TO BOAZ

The third and fourth chapters of this book reveal a great deal about the customs of that day. We learn much in regards to the office of kinsman-redeemer. When Naomi learned that Boaz would be threshing his barley and there would be a celebration regarding the harvest, she instructed her daughter-in-law to go in and lie at the feet of Boaz. Ruth obeyed. When Boaz discovered her lying at his feet, he acknowledged the duty of a kinsman, and he sent Ruth back home with six measures of barley. The next day he called the next of kin, who had the first right to redeem the land of Naomi and to marry Ruth. When this kinsman refused his rights, Boaz was free to redeem the field and to marry Ruth.

E. THE GENEALOGY OF DAVID

The book of Ruth shows how a Gentile woman became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. When Boaz

married Ruth, they had a son whom they called Obed. He was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David. It should be noted that the father of Boaz was Salmon and his mother was Rahab, the harlot. The fact that David was descendant from both Ruth and Rahab takes on great significance as we consider Jesus Christ taking unto himself a gentile bride – the church.

What Have You Learned?

1. What is one of the most notable things to remember about the story of Ruth?_____

2. Write Ruth's statement of love and dedication to her mother-in-law found in Ruth 1:16-17. _____

3. When did Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem?_____

4. What did Naomi say when the people of the city welcomed her back? Give Scripture reference to support your answer. _____

5. Leviticus 19:9-10 gives the Lord's instructions for Israel about the way they should harvest their crops. List four (4) things they were specifically told. _____

Why were they told to harvest this way? _____

6. What special Israelite custom is described in the story of Ruth and Boaz? _____

7. Trace the genealogy of David back to Ruth. _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Eight

ELI

What I Have Learned

A. THE PRIEST ELI

Eli was a priest of the line of Ithamar. Ithamar was the younger son of Aaron. Aaron had two sons, Nadab and Abihu, who had been destroyed for offering strange fire. A line of priests descended from his other son, Eleazar, but Eli was a descendant of Ithamar. The office of priesthood remained with the line of Ithamar through Eli, until Solomon deposed Abiathar and returned the priesthood back to the descendants of Eleazar.

B. ELI'S PIETY

Eli was a man of noble character. His piety is shown by his meek submission to God's will (I Samuel 3:18), his reverential regard for the ark of God (I Samuel 4:18), his willingness to take and train the young child Samuel, and his discernment of the moving of the Spirit of God (I Samuel 3:8-9).

The fact that God trusted Eli with the training and bringing up of Samuel speaks well on him. Eli served Israel during a period of decided spiritual decline. It was about this time that God so thoroughly abhorred the people of Israel for their continual backslidings that He turned His face from Shiloh. Eli dwelt in Shiloh at the house of the Lord. Not everyone in Israel had turned their backs on God, but it was then, as it is now – salvation was personal and not national.

C. ELI'S NEGLIGENCE

Although Eli was a man capable of high ideals, there was a great blemish on his record. He completely failed in training his own sons. His sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were also priests. Eli was old and these two sons were in charge of ceremonies. They were wicked men, sorely perverting the ritual and profaning the sanctuary in a debauchery similar to that of Canaanite temples. As a result, people hated to come to worship. Eli was held responsible by God and was rebuked for permitting this abuse by his sons. Reprimand came first through an unnamed prophet and later through the boy, Samuel.

Hophni and Phinehas were worshipers of Belial. This was shown in their greed, their disregard of God's order their self-will and their unrestrained lust. God held Eli responsible for this and the sin of

his sons brought judgment upon Eli and the entire nation.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote that one of the qualifications of a minister was that his own children had to be in subjection and the minister had to rule his own house well. I Tim. 3:4-5 states, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God)." Eli disqualified himself for being priest for not correcting and disciplining his own sons.

D. ELI'S DEATH

Punishment from God came through a terrible battle with the Philistines. The Philistines had oppressed Israel for some twenty years and Israel attempted to end it by war. The battle was at Aphek. In the battle, Israel was badly defeated and lost some 4,000 men. The people, thinking that the presence of the ark at the battlefront would help in fighting, received permission from Hophni and Phinehas and took the ark from Shiloh, a distance of about twenty-three miles from camp. This was contrary to God's will. After moving the ark, another great defeat befell Israel. This time 30,000 men of Israel fell, including Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark was captured. When news of this catastrophe reached Shiloh, Eli fell backwards from his seat and died of a broken neck.

E. THE ARK TAKEN BY THE PHILISTINES – I Samuel 5-6

The ark of the Tabernacle had been captured in the battle of Aphek, but it was returned to Israel just seven months after its capture. This came about through a series of events in which God brought judgment upon the Philistines. First, the image of Dagon, beside which the ark had been placed, twice fell to the floor. Second, painful tumors were inflicted on the people, which in some instances brought death. Finally, the land was overrun with mice.

The Philistine priests thought of a plan in which to test God. They placed the ark on a new cart drawn by young heifers. They young heifers were unbroken and their calves were taken from them. But instead of turning back, they miraculously moved straight along the road to Bethshemesh, which was in Israelites territory.

At Bethshemesh, the ark was desecrated when curious people looked into it. God took the lives of

many in punishment. Instead of sending it back to the Tabernacle, the Bethshemites sent for men of Kirjath-jearim to come and get it. These people handled it properly and they experienced no harm. But, they still did not return it to the Tabernacle. It remained with them until David brought it to Jerusalem.

F. ICHABOD – I Samuel 4:21

The wife of Phinehas was ready to bear a child when the news came of the death of her husband. She immediately gave birth and died in childbirth. Before her death, she named the child Ichabod. The word means: "The glory is departed from Israel." This tells us a great deal about the character of this good woman, and also of the spiritual condition of all Israel. Ichabod not only spoke of the fact that the ark had been taken by the Philistines, but it spoke of the great spiritual depravity of the entire nation. Israel had reached one of the darkest moments in her history.

What Have You Learned?

1. What was the great blemish on Eli's record?

2. What was the sin of Hophni and Phineas? What was the result of that sin? _____

3. How did Eli disqualify himself from being priest? Write out the New Testament Scripture (with reference) to support your answer. _____

4. How did God bring judgment on the Philistines when they took the Ark of the Covenant? _____

5. Briefly describe the birth of Eli's grandson. _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Nine

SAMUEL

What I Have Learned

A. ASKED OF GOD

One of the outstanding men of the Old Testament was Samuel. Samuel was called a judge, but he was also a prophet and a priest. Samuel was the son of a Levite, Elkanah. Samuel's mother was Hannah, one of Elkanah's two wives.

Prior to Samuel's birth, Hannah had been barren. She prayed for a son while at the house of God in Shiloh. The priest Eli saw her and thought she was drunk because of her intense burden. God heard her prayer and Samuel was born.

This should teach us that children are the heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3) and that the young women, when they marry, should desire to bear children according to the plan of God. It also teaches us that every child has a divine right to be wanted. The name Samuel means, "asked of God."

B. GIVEN TO GOD

After Samuel was weaned, he was brought to the Tabernacle and given to the Lord for service. Since God had given Samuel to Hannah, she gave Samuel back to the Lord. The example of Hannah is a great inspiration to all godly parents, even today.

C. CALLED OF GOD

God called Samuel while he was still just a boy, ministering in the Tabernacle. Conditions at the Tabernacle were not good and were getting worse. The call of God came to Samuel one night (I Samuel 3:3). It is also stated about this time "*the word of the Lord was precious in those days.*" It simply meant that God seldom spoke to His people.

On this occasion God called Samuel three times. The first three times, he thought it was Eli and then Eli instructed him how to answer on the fourth. Samuel answered the Lord, "*Speak; for thy servant heareth.*" He not only received his call from God, but God confided in him the judgment that was to befall Eli and the nation because of the sins of Eli's sons. Although Samuel was still just a boy, it was his responsibility to carry this message to the aged priest.

D. FAITHFUL TO GOD

When Eli died, Samuel was thrust into the position of Israel's leader. He was about twenty-five years

of age. Samuel had already achieved a reputation as a prophet of God among the people (I Samuel 3:20).

Prospects for the country were extremely dismal and the task of bringing order out of near chaos was clearly his. Samuel knew well the corrupt atmosphere of the Tabernacle and the dire religious need of the people. He also knew the low morals that existed everywhere. However, Samuel had been given a courageous heart, full of faith in God and Samuel moved into his work with ability and strength. The priests and Levites in their widely distributed cities, had to be encouraged. The images of Baal and Ashteroth had to be destroyed and the people had to return to the worship of the true God.

E. THE VICTORIOUS BATTLE OF MIZPEH – I Samuel 7:5-15

Under the leadership of Samuel, a revival took place at Mizpeh in Benjamin. The Philistines, hearing of the assembly of Mizpeh, went to battle. But, in answer to Samuel's earnest intercession, God sent a thunderstorm, making the Philistines easy prey to the Israelites. Samuel's weapon was prayer.

F. THEOCRACY REJECTED BY THE PEOPLE – I Samuel 7:15-8:22

God had blessed the work of Samuel. And following the Mizpeh victory, the priests and Levites were now doing their work with reasonable effectiveness. To help in the south, near Beersheba, Samuel installed his two sons, Joel and Abiah, as judges. These two sons did not follow the godly example of their father, but took bribes in perversion of justice.

Joel's and Abiah's poor conduct and the desire of the people to be like other nations, stirred the people to make a request of Samuel, which disappointed him greatly. They asked that they be given a king. Samuel took the request as a personal affront. He had worked hard for Israel and now believed that the country was in a relatively strong condition. The request from the people seemed an indication of a lack of confidence in him. God, however, told him that this was not so, but the affront was really against Himself. It was God that they were rejecting. God had given them a theocratic form of government, but they were rejecting it and desired a king. God told Samuel to comply with the people's request.

Samuel was true to God. He willingly obeyed and then save Saul, whom he anointed king, counsel from God. Self-interests were forgotten. Samuel knew his place and his responsibility and he endeavored to lift Saul to the same level of spirituality that he himself had reached. Never once did he shirk his duty because God had allowed the people to have a king.

G. A PROPHET-PRIEST

As prophet, Samuel represented God to the people; as priest, he represented the people to God. Not only did he deliver the Word of the Lord to them, he interceded to God for them. Israel needed this prophet-priest, for soon the young king lifted himself up with arrogant pride and began to defy the Word of God. All true ministers should have these priestly and prophetic aspects to their ministry.

Saul was unexcused for intruding into the priest’s office. His excuse was his fear of the Philistines; his reason was his pride and impatience. Samuel pronounced the rejection of Saul and foretold God’s choice of David to be king (I Sam. 13:14). Through all the tension that developed in the kingdom with the failure of Saul, Samuel proved faithful to the people and endeavored to establish their faith in God.

Samuel is remembered for his fearlessness, his prayerfulness, his compassion, his devoted love for God and his service to his people. Undoubtedly, much of this was due to the prayers and dedication of his saintly mother.

What Have You Learned?

1. What three (3) offices did Samuel hold in Israel?

2. What does the name “Samuel” mean? _____

3. How did Samuel come to live in the Tabernacle?

4. What was meant by the statement, “the word of the Lord was precious in those days”? _____

5. List five (5) things Samuel had to do (after the death of Eli) to bring order out of chaos in Israel. _____

6. Briefly describe the victorious Battle of Mizpeh. _____

7. What two (2) things stirred the people to request a king from Samuel? _____

8. What was Saul’s excuse and reason for intruding into the priest’s office? _____

9. List five (5) things that Samuel is remembered for. _____

Lesson Ten **KING SAUL**

What I Have Learned

A. THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The people had requested a king that they might be like the other nations around them; God gave them a man according to their own choice. The man that God chose for them was Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was one of the smallest of tribes, situated between two of the largest tribes, Judah and Ephraim. Having a man chosen from Benjamin would prevent jealousy arising from either Judah or Ephraim.

Saul was tall and of striking appearance. None in Israel was a "goodlier person than he" (I Sam. 9:2). He was also humble and timid when he was a young man.

His father sent him with a servant to search for some lost asses. When he came to Ramah to seek the advice from the prophet Samuel, he was told that the animals had been found and then the astonishing fact that he was actually to be Israel's first king. Saul was invited to a feast where a special portion had been prepared for him. Early the next day Samuel went to the edge of the city with Saul and there anointed him and proclaimed him captain over God's inheritance (I Sam. 10:1).

Samuel gave Saul three signs that he would experience as he traveled. First, he would meet two men who would tell him that the lost asses had been found. Second, he would meet three men having goats, bread and wine, who would give him two loaves of bread. Third, he would encounter a company of the prophets. He was to join the last party of prophets and the spirit of the Lord would come upon him. He would prophesy and be turned into another man.

Samuel summoned representatives of the tribes to meet with him at Mizpeh. He went through the procedure of choosing tribes and families until he came to the tribe of Benjamin, to Saul's family and finally to Saul himself. When the people looked for Saul, he was hiding among the wagons and baggage. He was summoned and when the people saw his kingly stature, they accepted him with shouts of approval. It is here that people shouted, "God save the king" (I Samuel 10:24).

B. A PROMISING BEGINNING

An opportunity soon arose for Saul to establish himself as king. The Ammonites, who had been defeated by Jephthah some forty years earlier, attacked the city of Jabesh-gilead across the Jordan. These people sent for help and their appeal came to Saul's attention. Saul butchered a yoke of oxen and sent pieces to all the tribes. Three hundred thirty thousand men responded to this appeal. From this group, Saul selected three army contingents, which he led against the Ammonites, winning a decisive victory. The Israelites now fully accepted him as king. The formal ceremony was conducted at Gilgal with Samuel leading the proceedings. Saul was crowned as first king amidst an offering of sacrifices and rejoicing.

Saul began his reign in a most promising manner. His government was simple and he did not demand too much from the people. He established his capital at Gibeah, his own hometown. The Bible records the name of one officer, Abner, captain of the army, who was a cousin of Saul.

C. THE FIRST REJECTION – I Samuel 13:1-14

The Philistines gathered a tremendous force of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and many foot soldiers, and camped at Mishmah, just four miles northeast of Gibeah. This brought great terror to the Israelites. Saul quickly assembled a force at Gilgal to withstand them and waited for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice prior to the engagement. Having waited seven days, the impatient Saul assumed the priestly office and offered up a burnt offering himself. Saul was guilty before God of entering the priestly office. He had been anointed king but not priest. Through Samuel, God announced that for this act the kingdom would go to another. A considerable change was beginning to take place in the character of King Saul.

D. THE SECOND REJECTION – I Samuel 15

The second rejection came as a result of Saul's battle with the Amalekites. For a number of years Saul had been quite successful in battling the enemy that was always pressing against Israel. Then came the battle with the Amalekites where Saul proved disobedient and lost the kingdom.

Amalek was a grandson of Esau. He and his descendants were always at enmity against the people of the Lord. As Israel traveled through the wilderness, the Amalekites approached from the rear and smote the feeble Israelites. Because of this, the Lord gave the command that after the people of

Israel settled in Canaan, they should exterminate the Amalekites. Now was the time for this command to be carried out.

Samuel gave Saul specific instruction regarding the battle. He was to destroy the people and all of their livestock. Saul won the battle; he defeated the foe. However, he disobeyed in sparing King Agag and some of the finest sheep and oxen. He explained to Samuel that the animals were for sacrifice. Samuel rebuked him and said that God desired obedience more than sacrifice. Samuel then killed Agag with his own hands. Saul's incomplete obedience was a type of uncontrolled flesh. Incomplete obedience is disobedience.

E. POSSESSED OF AN EVIL SPIRIT

Saul let disobedience rule in his heart until an evil spirit finally took possession of him. Once a man takes a step away from God, he can quickly go from bad to worse. With Saul it was first pride, which led to presumption, and then it was an act of disobedience. Now extreme jealousy regarding David took over in his life and he began to seek to take the life of David.

With this jealousy came an evil spirit that took possession of him. The Spirit of the Lord departed from his life and periods of severe depression came upon him. These periods of depression may have been partly due to the fact that he knew he had been rejected by the Lord.

F. AN ATROCIOUS ACT

One of the most terrible acts that King Saul performed was slaying eighty-five of the Lord's priests and destroying the city of Nob. He did this in his anger and jealousy of David. Ahimelech, the high priest, had given David some of the shewbread that had been taken from the altar and the sword of Goliath. This information had been passed on to Saul by Doeg, an Edomite. Saul reacted in a fit of insane jealousy, killing all the priests. Only Abiathar, son of the high priest, escaped to David (1 Samuel 22:11-23). This was the most atrocious act of his entire life.

G. THE WITCH OF ENDOR

The final battle with the Philistines came at Mount Gilboa. The Philistines encamped at Shunem near Mount Gilboa. Saul moved to meet them and took up quarters in that mountain. Fearing the coming encounter, he sought information on its outcome from God. However, he was not answered by

dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets (I Sam. 28:6). In desperation he visited a witch who dwelt at Endor.

Saul *would* not pray at first. At the last he *could* not pray. He rejected God at the first and finally God rejected him. He could not hear from God. The future frightened him. The power of his enemies haunted him. The person who gets so far from God that he cannot hear from Him will go to any source in order to get an answer.

God permitted Samuel to appear to pronounce Saul's final doom. Saul's words to Samuel were, "*God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.*" What was Samuel's answer? It was doom because of sin. He pronounced the judgment of God.

H. A TRAGIC DEATH

Saul began his reign in such a promising manner, but the end could not have been more tragic. The Israelites were completely defeated by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, and Saul and his three sons were slain.

Saul was wounded; then he attempted to commit suicide by falling on his own sword. As he lay there in agony, a young Amalekite man came, finished slaying him and took his crown and his bracelet. It should be noted that this young man was an Amalekite, one of those whom Saul had saved in his act of disobedience, which caused him to lose his crown.

The story of Saul should not be finished without noting the reaction of King David towards this Amalekite. Even though Saul had sought David's life for years and had failed God in such a miserable manner and been rejected by God, David avenged Saul's death. He said to the Amalekite, "*How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?*" (II Sam. 1:14) Then he called a young man to slay the Amalekite. This should cause us, today, to be very careful how we lay our hands upon the anointed of the Lord.

What Have You Learned?

1. Why did the people of Israel want a king? _____

Lesson Eleven

KING DAVID

Part I

A. HIS BACKGROUND

David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth.

David was born about 1080 B.C. in Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem. Jesus was born at Bethlehem over 1,000 years later. Ramah, Samuel's headquarters, was only a few miles from Bethlehem, and undoubtedly Samuel's character and teaching had influenced this area.

David's job as a boy was tending his father's sheep. He became known for his skill as a shepherd boy and a musician with a harp. This background taught him to have a love of nature and brought him into fellowship with God.

David was not tall and handsome like his oldest brother, Eliab, but he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes. He had a pleasing personality and won the hearts of others. He was of blonde complexion, and as such he contrasted with others about him who were dark skinned. As he grew up, he became a man of God – bold, patient, talented and skilled in war. He was a great king, a great warrior, a great poet and a religious reformer.

B. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID

When Saul was rejected by God, Samuel was given instructions to anoint another man to take his place. He was to go to Bethlehem and anoint a son of Jesse. Jesse brought his sons before him and God refused each. David, the eighth and youngest, had been left to care for the family sheep. Samuel insisted that he be brought and God showed him that this was the one. As Jesse and the other seven sons watched, Samuel anointed David to be Israel's second king. He was probably about fifteen years of age at that time.

The appearance of David contrasted sharply with that of his brothers, and it is here that we have the well-known statement recorded. *"Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature...for the lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"* (I Samuel 16:7). We cannot always judge a person by the outward appearance. It is good to know that God sees both the outer and inner appearance of a man.

David was not only anointed by oil, but also by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward (I Sam. 16:13).

C. GOLIATH

David's well-known victory over Goliath took place in the valley of Elah, fifteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. The Philistines had invaded Israel. Instead of the two armies engaging in battle, the giant Goliath came forth as the champion, taunting the people of Israel. The practice of letting a single champion on each side settle the issue was common in ancient days.

Goliath was a member of the Anakim race of giants. He was about nine and one half feet tall. He wore a coat of mail weighing 157 pounds. For forty days he challenged Israel and the Israelites were greatly afraid of him. On the fortieth day, David heard his challenging words. He had come to visit his three oldest brothers and to bring them food. When he heard the insulting words of Goliath, he was astonished and cried out, *"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* When Saul heard these words, he sent for David. David convinced the king that his exploits with the bear and lion while he kept his father's flocks made him equal to this fight with the Philistine who dared insult Israel's God.

A somewhat comic scene took place when Saul tried to put his armor on David. However, David laid it to one side and picked up his familiar staff and sling. With five smooth stones from the brook, he went forth to meet the Philistine. Goliath was insulted when he saw David, who appeared to be such an unlikely opponent. Goliath was covered with armor from head to foot and had a shield bearer before him. However, David went forth, not in his own strength, but in the name of the Lord. David said, *"I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel"* (I Samuel 17:45-46). One stone was all that David needed. It struck Goliath in the one open place on his forehead. He fell to the ground, stunned and David quickly killed him, cutting off his head with his own sword.

This was a day of defeat for the Philistines and a tremendous victory for Israel. It had been accomplished in the name of the Lord of hosts. Victories, even today, are won in the name of Jesus.

D. SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID

As a young man, David had ministered to Saul as a minstrel. Saul had frequent times of great depression and melancholy. David was well known for his ability to play the harp and sing. David was sent for and as he ministered to Saul, Saul was helped. In the beginning he was fond of David, but became very jealous of David following the slaying of Goliath.

After the victory over the Philistines, the women came out of the cities, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul. But, their song made Saul very angry. They sang this song, "*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.*" Saul's jealousy of David was aroused and from that day, he sought to kill him on every occasion. Saul made at least five attempts to kill David while he was connected with his court. Finally David had to flee for his life and became a fugitive.

E. JONATHAN

David won the friendship and love of Jonathan. Jonathan was Saul's son and was one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. The friendship and love that existed between Jonathan and David is a great inspiration to all. The two men were as one. It was a friendship of the purest and warmest kind. Jonathan did all he could to soften Saul's jealousy of David and tried to dissuade Saul from his murderous plot to kill David. When he failed, he entered into a covenant with David to protect him and to inform him of Saul's secret movements. Jonathan asked nothing of him except that he would be kind to all of his kindred when he should come into his kingdom.

The friendship must have had an effect upon David for it showed him how noble a king would have succeeded Saul in ordinary course. It must have inspired him to be a man as good, or greater, than Jonathan.

F. DAVID'S LIFE AS A FUGITIVE

When David fled from Saul, he became a fugitive, legally an outlaw, hunted by the king. When David bade farewell to Jonathan, he went first to Nob where Ahimelech served as high priest at the Tabernacle. David received some of the sacred bread for food, Goliath's sword for a weapon, and an indication through Ahimelech of God's will. David then went to the Philistine city of Gath. He was recognized and feigned madness that he might escape harm.

He turned to his homeland and took up residence in a cave near Adullam, where he began gathering a protective force of men. He was within ten miles of his home in Bethlehem and he was able to make known his desire that men should join him. Four hundred men responded – men described as being in distress, in debt and discontented. Undoubtedly, many were political refugees.

When he had the band assembled, David moved east to Moab, taking his parents with him. David learned that the Philistines were attacking the inhabitants of Keilah. Desiring to make friends, he went to the relief of Keilah and helped defeat the Philistines. However, the people of Keilah were going to turn him over to Saul.

David then moved southward to the region of Ziph, below Hebron. Here Saul made his first attempt to seize David. David then moved east to Engedi, on the shore of the Dead Sea, where Saul again pursued him. It was here that David spared Saul's life for the first time. Saul had entered the cave where David was hiding and David could have killed him, but, instead he merely cut off part of Saul's clothing for evidence of his nearness.

David next moves to the region of Moan. He sought food for his men from Nabal; a wealthy landowner lived near his camp. Nabal was a surly person and refused to help him. When David prepared to punish him, Nabal's wife, Abigail, intervened and supplied food. Nabal died ten days later and David then took Abigail as his own wife.

The Ziphites told Saul of David's hiding place and Saul came; a second time David spared his life. David, accompanied by Abishai, went to where Saul slept under the guard of Abner and the army. David took away Saul's own spear and jug of water. The next day, Saul, shown the articles by David, repented and promised not to pursue David any longer.

David moved to the land of the Philistines and succeeded in having residence of Ziklag. Here he served the Philistine king as a mercenary, attacking the foreign tribes on the south. When the Philistines were to fight Israel, David found himself in difficulty. However, he was saved from the embarrassing position when the Philistines themselves objected to his presence and sent him back to Ziklag. When he reached Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had destroyed the town and taken his wives, the wives of all his men and much booty. David's men came near mutiny. David

saved the situation by acting quickly and finding out the location of the Amalekites. David attacked them and recovered both wives and booty. David remained in the land of the Philistines for sixteen months.

Upon the death of Saul, the outlaw life of David came to an end. During his life as a fugitive, David had many bitter experiences, but undoubtedly these trials taught him many profitable lessons, which caused him to be a greater and nobler king.

G. KING OF JUDAH

When Saul died, David sought God's guidance, left Ziklag and returned to Hebron. Here the people of Judah anointed him king. This was quite logical, for David was well known in Judah. Many of his men came from Judah and he had been their champion for many years. They were familiar with his ability, leadership and warfare and were glad to make him king. He was one in whom they could place confidence. David was crowned king of Judah at Hebron in the year 1014 B.C. David ruled over Judah for seven and one-half years.

H. KING OF ISRAEL

After the death of King Saul, Abner, captain of the host, encouraged Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, to accept the kingship and he was crowned king of the northern and eastern tribes. His capital was in Gilead, but Abner was the actual ruler. Civil war between Israel and Judah resulted, and Judah always prevailed. Finally, Abner deserted Ish-bosheth and joined himself unto David, but Joab murdered him. Soon after this, Ish-bosheth was murdered by two of his servants, and then David was anointed king over Israel. The civil war ended and David became king over the United Kingdom. He ruled for thirty-three years over Israel, making a total reign of forty and one half years.

What Have You Learned?

1. Who was David and where did he come from?

2. Briefly describe the anointing of David as king.

3. Write 1 Samuel 17:45-46 in full. _____

4. What happened to arouse Saul's jealousy of David? _____

5. What did Jonathan ask of David when he realized David would be king? _____

6. When David fled from Saul as a fugitive, where did he go first? What happened here that led to a terrible act by Saul? _____

7. Describe the type of men who joined David as fugitives. _____

8. Describe how David spared Saul's life the first time. _____

9. Briefly describe how David met and married Abigail. _____

10. Describe how David spared Saul's life a second time. _____

11. Why was it logical for David to be anointed king of Judah? How long did David rule over Judah? _____

12. Describe the civil war that resulted in David becoming king over the united kingdom of Israel.

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Twelve

KING DAVID

Part II

What I Have Learned

A. THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

When David became king of the united nation, he began to look for an appropriate capital. David's choice was Jerusalem, which was still held by the Jebusites and was called Jebus. The city had never been completely in the possession of the Hebrews. It was centrally located, suited to be the capital of the kingdom, laid on the border between Judah and Israel, had a good water supply, and was also a very good stronghold. The capture of this city was difficult, but successful.

David desired to make Jerusalem not only the political capital but also the religious capital of the nation.

B. THE ARK PLACED ON MOUNT ZION

Since David desired Jerusalem to be the religious capital, it was not long before he sought to bring the ark of Jerusalem. It had been at Kirjath-jearim for seventy years. His first attempt was a failure due to a disregard of God's Word. Rather than have it carried by the Levites, it was put on a new cart. Uzzah, who touched it, died and the ark was left for three months in the home of Obededom, whose household was greatly blessed by God as a result. After this, David brought the ark up to Jerusalem in the proper manner. Amidst great rejoicing and offering of sacrifices, he placed the ark in a tent, which he had prepared.

The work of God must be done God's way and according to His instructions.

C. DAVID'S DESIRE TO BUILD A TEMPLE

David built a fine palace for himself, but he was not happy because the ark of God rested in a tent. He planned to build a permanent Temple for the ark, but God did not permit him to do this. The prophet Nathan told him that this honor would be given to his son since David was a man of war. David's reaction to these disappointing words was to voice a prayer of submission and thanksgiving before God. He then proceeded to gather substantial quantities of material in preparation for the time when he son would build the temple.

D. A MAN OF WAR

King David was very successful in warfare. He defeated the Philistines on the west. Then, he turned east and defeated Moab, Edom, the Ammonites and the Amalekites. Finally, he began to extend his kingdom in the north, as far as the Euphrates River, subduing the Syrians and their allies. He brought into his dominion a large tract of country up to the Euphrates River. For the first time, the Hebrew territory filled up the whole outline originally traced in the promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18).

E. DAVID'S SIN WITH BATHSHEBA – II Samuel 11:1-27

The darkest blot on David's record concerned the sins of adultery and murder. While his army, under Joab, was in battle with the Ammonites, David was resting at home. He saw Bathsheba washing herself as he looked from a palace window. He desired her, sent for her and committed adultery with her. When she informed him that she was expecting a child, he had Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, brought home from the battlefield so that he might be with his wife. However, Uriah would not go to his home and David assigned him a deadly position at the battlefield. Uriah was killed, as David had planned, and David took Bathsheba as his wife. For this serious sin, David was severely punished.

David accepted the rebuke from the prophet Nathan, humbled himself and repented. The rebuke brought him to the lowest depths of penitence. David's salvation at this time was in the fact that he was able to humble himself, confess and truly repent. This did not save him, however, from the judgment of God. The Bible states, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap." As David had sown, he also reaped. The child born of Bathsheba died, and the sword ever departed from David's house. All his days, David's heart was torn by domestic trial and tragedy.

There are a few lessons that the student should learn from this tragic episode in David's life:

- One sin generally leads to another. The sin of murder took place as David tried to cover up the sin of adultery.
- No sin can be covered. The Bible says, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).
- This sin took place because David was at home, idle. He should have been at the battlefield, leading his army. It does not pay to be idle.

- David’s sin took place because he looked upon Bathsheba. We must be very careful what we look upon.
- All sin must be judged.
- There must be heart-felt confession and repentance before there can be forgiveness.
- Our sins generally affect others. The results of sin are far reaching and others suffer as well as the one who commits the transgression.

F. ABSALOM

One of David’s greatest trials transpired through a conspiracy led by his own son, Absalom. Absalom was David’s third son. His mother’s name was Maacah (II Samuel 3:3).

Amnon was the eldest son of King David. He had defiled his own sister, Tamar, and for this Absalom slew Amnon. It was probably at this time that the idea of taking the throne presented itself to Absalom. Following the murder of Amnon, Absalom fled to Geshur where his mother’s father, Talmai, lived. After three years Joab persuaded David to permit Absalom’s return to Jerusalem (II Sam. 14:1-21). However, it was not until another two years had passed before David consented to see him and to forgive him.

Absalom was a handsome man and many people were attracted to him. He moved through the country with chariots and fifty attendants. He pretended to take a great interest in people by meeting those with problems. He was clever and convincing and these efforts caused many people to favor him. After four years, Absalom had sufficient goodwill to take the decisive step. He went to Hebron, assembled his followers and had himself anointed king (II Samuel 15:7-12). With a considerable force of men, he marched north against his father. David had to flee.

A battle was fought in an area called the “wood of Ephraim” (II Samuel 18:1-18). Absalom had gathered the troops of Israel and he had a greater number of troops than David. However, David’s men were hard-core troops, seasoned in battle and much superior to Absalom’s hastily gathered soldiers. David’s men won a decisive victory. With the battle won, Joab killed Absalom who had become ensnared in a tree by his long hair. When David learned of this, he reacted with great grief. Absalom’s death finished the revolt and David was able to return to Jerusalem.

G. NUMBERING THE PEOPLE – II Samuel 24:1-25; I Chronicles 21

Another great sin that took place in David’s life came about by his decision to take a census. The Lord did not want his people to have their trust in their numbers. Repeatedly He had proven His power to deliver them regardless of the power of the enemy. God had told them not to number the people (Exodus 30:12). However, David commanded Joab to do so.

The census was definitely an act of pride on the part of David. He may have also had other reasons for doing this, such as, a desire to levy taxes upon the people. The Bible states that Satan provoked David to number the people. Consequently, this act was directly due to Satan’s influence upon David. Joab tried to show David this was wrong, but David refused to listen.

The record in II Samuel and I Chronicles state different numbers, but a careful reading of the Scripture will show why different numbers are given. Here are the numbers:

II Sam. – Israel	800,000	I Chron. Israel	1,100,000
	Judah <u>500,000</u>		Judah <u>470,000</u>
TOTAL	1,300,000	TOTAL	1,570,000

It is necessary for us to read carefully the explanation that the Bible gives. Concerning Israel, II Samuel states that the *valiant men* that drew the sword were 800,000; Chronicles states that *all* Israel was 1,100,000. Likewise, according to the record in II Samuel, the men of Judah numbered 500,000 while Chronicles states that the men who drew the sword were 470,000. In other words, in Israel there were 300,000 non-combatants and in Judah there were 30,000 non-combatants.

Joab actually didn’t complete this census. He did not count the men of Levi and Benjamin.

God sent the prophet of God to David with three choices of punishment. David was to choose one. David’s words were pathetic. He said, “I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD, for his mercies are great: but let me not fall into the hand of man” (II Samuel 24:14). When he saw the pestilence from God taking men by the tens of thousands, David begged God to let the judgment fall on him and his father’s house. Sin and disregard for God’s Word cannot go unpunished. There is no respect of persons with God.

The plague which killed 70,000 of David's newly counted people, was stopped just outside of Jerusalem at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. (This was where Solomon later built the Temple.) In repentance, David purchased the floor and oxen from Araunah and offered sacrifices to God.

The last days of David were marked by physical weakness and a contest among his sons for the throne. David reigned for forty years and was buried on Mount Zion. His reign was one of the most memorable periods of Israel's history.

What Have You Learned?

1. List five (5) reasons why David chose Jerusalem as the capital of his united kingdom. _____

2. In what two (2) ways did David want to make Jerusalem capital of Israel? _____

3. Why was David's first attempt to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem a failure? _____

4. Why was David not allowed to build the Temple? _____

5. Describe how David successfully conquered the territory that filled up the whole outline originally traced in the promise to Abraham for God's people.

6. How and why did David kill Uriah? _____

7. List the seven (7) things we can learn from the tragic episode of adultery and murder in David's life. _____

8. Describe the battle fought in the "wood of Ephraim." _____

9. Why was the census taken by David such a great sin? _____

10. What were the three (3) choices of punishment sent by God for the sin of taking the census? (You will have to look this up in the Bible.) _____

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY II

Lesson One

KING SOLOMON

TEXT: I Kings 2:1-11; II Chronicles 1-9

What I Have Learned

A. SOLOMON CROWNED KING

Adonijah was David's fourth son and he believed that, as the eldest living son, he was the rightful heir to the throne. When he was convinced that King David had other plans, he attempted to take the throne while his father was still living. He was able to get Joab and Abiathar, the high priest, to support him. He assembled his followers at the spring En-rogel that he might be anointed king.

Nathan reported this insurrection to David who immediately gave directions that Solomon should be anointed king. This took place at the spring of Gihon, which was about 2,000 feet north of En-rogel. When the people shouted, Adonijah's followers quickly dispersed in fright. Adonijah then submitted to Solomon and civil war was avoided.

It was not long before Solomon found reason to have Adonijah killed. Adonijah had Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, request for him Abishag, the beautiful Shunamite girl, who had ministered to David (I Kings 1:1-4). Solomon interpreted this as a threat, for a man's concubines were to be a part of the inheritance. Not only was Adonijah killed, but also Joab. Abiathar was deposed from his office as high priest. Eventually, Shimei who had cursed David was also killed. The kingdom then became firmly established under Solomon's leadership.

B. KING SOLOMON

Solomon was David's second child by Bathsheba. He was young when he became king, possibly about twenty years of age. He reigned for forty years.

There was a contrast between David and Solomon. David had been raised in the open country and had known the life of a fugitive. Solomon knew only the ease and luxury of the palace. Solomon's court became lavish with splendor. No other king could rival King Solomon in wealth and wisdom. His reign was one of unparalleled magnificence.

Solomon was a king of peace and was content to stay at home. His court became luxurious and he

had a large family. He maintained a large harem, having a total of 700 wives and 300 concubines.

C. SOLOMON'S WISDOM

Early in his reign Solomon had a vision at Gibeon in which the Lord appeared to him and told him to ask what he would have. He confessed his weakness and ignorance and said, "Give thy servant an understanding heart" (I Kings 3:9). The Lord was pleased that he did not ask for riches nor long life. The Lord promised him that he should be the wisest of men and also that he would possess great riches and honor. He became known as the wisest man in the East and his fame traveled far.

One of the examples of his wisdom is shown in how he settled the quarrel between two mothers. These mothers brought two babies before him, one dead and the other alive. They were quarrelling over who was the mother of the live baby. Solomon soon settled the argument. He ordered a sword to be brought and the living baby to be divided. The true mother pleaded for the life of the baby and offered to have it given to the other woman. This was just one example of his wisdom, which astonished the people.

Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and composed 1,005 songs. He was learned in literature, botany and zoology. Three books of the Bible were written by Solomon; they are Proverbs, The Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes.

He also was a man of folly, which showed up in such contrast to his wisdom. His folly was revealed in five main areas:

1. Luxurious living
2. Marrying heathen women
3. Sanctioning idolatry
4. Excessive sensuality
5. Oppressing the people

D. SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

The time of David and Solomon was the Golden Age in the history of the Hebrews. Egypt, Assyria and Babylon were weak and Israel was the most powerful nation on earth. Jerusalem was the most magnificent city.

Saul and David were warriors, but Solomon was a mighty ruler. He was more interested in maintaining the boundaries of his country rather than expanding them. He fortified the key cities, which protected the country; such as, Hazor,

Megiddo, Gezer, Beth-horon, and Baalath. One of the means of defense was his use of the chariot. He had 1,400 chariots, 12,000 horsemen, and 4,000 horses (II Chronicles 9:25).

Solomon maintained a program of labor conscription. He used a large number of Canaanites but also conscripted the Israelites themselves.

Solomon had far-flung trade relationships and made alliances with Egypt and Tyre. To seal these treaties, he married the kings' daughter in each case. He constructed a fleet of ships, which sailed from Ezion-geber to Ophir, which was probably the present country of India. These ships brought back gold, silver, hardwood, precious stones and ivory. The trip took three years (I Kings 10:22). He also carried on a trade in horses and chariots.

His alliance with Tyre (Phoenicia) was very important. Phoenicia had colonies around the Mediterranean and carried on extensive trade. Solomon received much help from Hiram, the king of Tyre, in building the Temple.

E. QUEEN OF SHEBA – I Kings 10:1-13; II Chron. 9:1-12

One of the important foreign visitors who came to see Solomon was the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was probably the present country of Yemen. Solomon's ships had likely been stopping there to trade in spice and incense. Having heard about Solomon's great wealth and wisdom, the queen wanted to meet Solomon for herself.

She traveled some 1,200 miles, taking with her a large gift of 120 talents of gold. Solomon graciously entertained her and answered all her questions. When she saw the splendor of Solomon's palace and court, there was no more spirit in her. She said, *"It was a true report that I heard...and behold, the half was not told me"* (I Kings 10:6-7). Solomon gave her all her desire and she returned home satisfied.

F. SOLOMON'S BACKSLIDING – I Kings 11:1-13

Solomon loved wisdom, wealth and women. It was his many foreign wives, which brought about his loss of favor with God.

Solomon was a capable and successful king, but he did not remain true to his commitment with God. In order to seal alliances with other nations, he married heathen wives who brought their idolatry with them. These women caused him to turn away his heart after other gods. The sad tragedy of this is very great when we remember how God appeared

to him on two occasions and blessed him so wonderfully.

He built high places for Ashtaroth and other heathen deities. Some of these high places remained in Israel for many years. His apostasy brought judgment upon Israel. The division of the kingdom and the captivity of the ten tribes and of Judah were the result.

G. THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

Solomon ruled for forty years (970-931 B.C.). It was a rule of prosperity and peace. It was a period of extensive building, trading and international relations. Solomon, however, did not remain faithful to God's will; consequently, the real potential for Israel was not realized.

Solomon loved the world more and more, and God less and less. He had everything that the world could offer. He had his palaces, gardens, gold and honor. Did this bring happiness to Solomon? In spite of all his wealth and fame, he was very unhappy. He wrote, *"...All is vanity and vexation of spirit"* (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

Whether Solomon repented at the close of his life, we do not know. Nevertheless, there is one bright thing we should remember. One of the last things he wrote was, *"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

What Have You Learned?

1. Briefly explain who tried to take the throne before David was dead, and how they did it. _____

2. Who told David about this insurrection, and what did he do? _____

3. What was the reason Solomon had Adonijah killed? _____

4. What was the major contrast between David and Solomon? _____

5. Briefly explain how Solomon became so wise. Use Scripture to support. _____

6. Give one example (about one baby and two mothers) that shows Solomon's amazing wisdom. _____

7. What five (5) ways was Solomon foolish? _____

8. How was Solomon and his kingdom different from Saul and David? _____

9. How did Solomon develop such good trade relationships with far off nations? _____

10. List three (3) reasons why the alliance with Tyre was so important. _____

11. Write in full (with reference) the verses of Scripture that express the Queen of Sheba's reaction to Solomon and his kingdom. _____

12. What caused Solomon's loss of favor with God? _____

13. What was the result of Solomon's turning away from the one true God? _____

14. Write Ecclesiastes 12:13 in full. _____

Lesson Two

THE TEMPLE

TEXT: II Chronicles 1-9

What I Have Learned

A. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

The Temple, which Solomon built, was the most costly and magnificent building upon earth at that time.

It was built on the site of Araunah's threshing floor (II Samuel 24:16-25), which was Mt. Moriah where Abraham had been commanded to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:2).

It was built similar to the plan of the Tabernacle, but twice the size. Figuring the cubit to be a foot and one half, the Temple was ninety feet long, thirty feet wide and forty-five feet high (I Kings 6:2). The Temple faced east, in front of which was a porch fifteen feet deep across the entire width. The west thirty feet was the Most Holy Place or Oracle. The east sixty feet was the Holy Place or House. They were separated by a veil of blue, purple, crimson and fine linen (II Chronicles 3:14).

The Temple was built of stone and paneled with cedar, overlaid with gold.

The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies along with the Mercy Seat, overshadowed by cherubim's. In here shone the mysterious lights, the Shekinah, the symbol of the presence of God. Only the High Priest could enter here, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement. In the Holy Place were the Altar of Incense; ten golden lamps stands standing five on each side, and the table of shewbread (I Kings 7:48-49).

Along the sides and rear of the Temple were three stories of side-chambers for the priests.

In front of the Temple was the Brazen Altar of Burnt Offering, thirty feet square and fifteen feet high. This spot is now called the "Rock of the Dome," directly under the center of the present Mohammedan mosque. To the south was the Brazen Laver, fifteen feet in diameter, eight feet deep and set on twelve brazen oxen. There were also ten smaller portable lavers.

There were two courts, an Inner Court and a Great Court. The Inner Court was for the priests and the Great Court was intended for the people (II Chronicles 4:9).

B. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE – I Kings 5-7; II Chronicles 2-4

David wanted to build the Temple but was forbidden because he was a man of war. However, God had revealed to him plans for the structure, which he passed on to Solomon. Before he died, he gathered much material for it.

The actual building began during Solomon's fourth year and was completed seven years later. Solomon entered into a contract with Hiram, king of Tyre, to supply the cedar and to help prepare the stone needed. It required 30,000 Israelites to cut the timber in the Lebanon forests. It took 80,000 slaves to quarry and shape the stones. The logs were floated down the coast in rafts, picked up at Joppa. The stones were transported on the backs of 70,000 slaves. The Phoenicians supervised the work, annually taking for their pay 200,000 bushels of wheat and 180,000 gallons of olive oil.

C. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

When the Temple was finished, Solomon called all Israel to come to the great feast when the Temple would be dedicated.

First of all, Solomon had the Ark of the Covenant brought from the tent where David had placed it. Since it was the Ark constructed at Mt. Sinai, it represented God's presence. When it was placed in the Holy of Holies, the cloud of God's glory filled the building (I Kings 8:1-11; II Chronicles 5:1-14).

Then Solomon preached a short sermon and followed with a longer prayer of dedication. When he finished, miraculous fire fell from heaven to ignite the offering placed on the Brazen Altar.

One should note the song of thanksgiving with which the priests and musicians praised the Lord: "*For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.*" When the glory of the Lord filled the house, the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud.

One should also note and carefully study Solomon's prayer. He had made a platform four and none-half feet high. On this platform, he knelt and spread forth his hands. He prayed for forgiveness and that the Lord would always hear the prayers of His people.

D. GOD'S PROMISE AND WARNING – II Chronicles 7:14-22

The Lord appeared to Solomon by night and told him that his prayer had been heard. The Lord said

that he had chosen and sanctified the Temple that His name might be there forever.

In II Chronicles 7:14, we read the promise the Lord made to Solomon. This is a promise of forgiveness and restoration. There were, however, conditions attached, which must be met by His people who are called by His name. The conditions were:

- 📖 They must humble themselves
- 📖 They must pray
- 📖 They must seek the Lord's face
- 📖 They must turn from their wicked ways

The Lord promised Solomon that if he would walk before Him as David walked, he would establish the kingdom.

Along with the promise, the Lord gave a serious warning. If Solomon forsook the Lord and worshipped other gods, He would pluck Israel up by the roots and He would cast the Temple out of His sight.

Tragically, Solomon forgot the warning and the judgment came to pass as the Lord said.

E. OTHER BUILDINGS BUILT BY SOLOMON – I Kings 7:1-12

Solomon erected many other buildings. His own palace took thirteen years to build. He also built a "Hall of Judgment." In this building, Solomon sat for judgment on a six-step throne of ivory overlaid with gold. He also built a special house for one of his wives, the daughter of Pharaoh. Throughout all his building projects, Hiram continued to help with materials, workmen and gold.

What Have You Learned?

1. Where was Solomon's temple built? _____

2. What was the purpose of each of the two courts?

3. When did the actual building of the Temple begin, and how long did it take? _____

4. Describe the labor force required for the temple construction. _____

5. What was the first thing Solomon did after the Temple was completed? _____

6. What four (4) things must we do if we want the promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14? _____

7. What warning did God give Solomon if he worshipped other gods? _____

Lesson Three

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

TEXT: 1 Kings 12:1-24; 2 Chronicles 10

What I Have Learned

A. KING REHOBOAM

Solomon was succeeded by his son, Rehoboam. Rehoboam's mother was the Ammonite princess Naamah (I Kings 14:21).

Rehoboam was illiterate and domineering. The historian, Josephus, called him a proud and foolish man. Like his father, he had luxurious habits. He had eighteen wives, sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. He was forty-one years of age when he became king and reigned for seventeen years.

B. KING JEROBOAM

Jeroboam was the first king of the northern kingdom. His father was Nebat, an Ephraimite.

He was a capable man. He had been employed by Solomon and was in charge of the workmen building the Millo.

Ahijah, the prophet who tore his new garment into twelve parts and gave Jeroboam ten, met him. He explained that these ten parts represented the ten tribes over, which he would rule. Solomon heard of this and sought to kill Jeroboam who fled to Egypt where Pharaoh gave him protection.

After Solomon's death, Jeroboam married an Egyptian princess and returned to Israel to become king over the northern ten tribes.

C. REVOLT UNDER REHOBOAM – II Chronicles 10

Very soon after Solomon's death, a revolution divided the nation.

Rehoboam must have been aware of the dissatisfaction of the northern tribes. Normally, they would all have assembled at Jerusalem for the inaugural ceremonies. Because of the unrest, Shechem was selected because it was centrally located.

Jeroboam also attended the meeting, having returned from Egypt. The tribes, with Jeroboam as leader, requested relief from the heavy load of taxation, which they had endured under Solomon. Rehoboam requested three days to consider their request. He consulted the older men who had

experienced the heavy load under Solomon. These men advised Rehoboam to be kind and ease the burden. They assured him that he would win the true loyalty of everyone.

Rehoboam then turned to the young men who apparently desired a continuation of the lavish court. They advised him to say, *"My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins."* The young men's advice was taken and Rehoboam told Israel when they assembled on the third day, *"My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions"* (II Chronicles 10:11).

The cry went forth, *"Every man to your tents, O Israel."* When Rehoboam saw what had happened, he sent his chief tax collector, Adoram, to them. This man was stoned to death and Rehoboam retreated to Jerusalem. He assembled an army of 180,000 men, but God forbade him to fight. He then began to fortify a number of cities and reigned over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

D. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO KINGDOMS

The tribes of Judah and Ephraim had been jealous of each other since the days of Egypt. Judah was the largest and had been favored with being in the lead position. Ephraim had descended from Joseph and Joshua had been of this tribe. The rivalry of these two tribes showed up at various times. It was revealed at the crowning of David and at Absalom's rebellion.

The division was only an outbreak of an old condition. If Rehoboam had been wise, he would have taken care not to make matters any worse.

The northern kingdom with its ten tribes was more powerful than the southern kingdom; however, the latter was stronger spiritually.

E. THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The Kingdom of Israel continued for about 250 years. The Assyrians under Shalmaneser overthrew it in 721 B.C.

The capital of the northern kingdom was first at Shechem and then at Samaria.

Nineteen kings reigned, representing nine ruling families. Eight kings were either assassinated or committed suicide. All of these kings, from Jeroboam to Joshea, were idolaters.

The prophets to Israel were Jonah, Amos, Hosea and Micah.

In recent years, the northern kingdom has been spoken of as "The Ten Lost Tribes." James knew their identity for he addressed his epistle to them (James 1:1).

F. TWO GOLDEN CALVES

Jeroboam was a religious apostate. He feared that if the people returned to Jerusalem to worship, they would favor a reunion of the two kingdoms. To guard against this, he established new worship centers at Dan and Bethel. He erected gold images of calves at each place. He built temples to house the images and founded a non-Levitical priesthood. He substituted the Feast of the Tabernacles with an annual pagan festival.

Frequently, his apostasy is linked with his name. "Jeroboam, who did sin, and made Israel to sin." Jeroboam opened the door for Baal worship. The nation was never completely delivered from the idolatry introduced by Jeroboam.

On one occasion, an anonymous prophet rebuked him, but Jeroboam was only angry and did not repent.

G. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The kingdom of Judah continued for almost 400 years under twenty kings from Rehoboam to Zedekiah. Many of these kings were pious. During this time, there were three revivals during the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah.

The prophets that were sent to the Kingdom of Judah were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Zephaniah, Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk.

What Have You Learned?

1. What is a "religious apostate?" _____

2. Who was Jeroboam, and how did he become king of Israel? _____

3. Who was Adoram, and what happened to him?

4. How did Rehoboam lose the kingdom that his father Solomon had left him? _____

5. What were the differences between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? _____

Lesson Four

ELIJAH

TEXT: I Kings 17, 18, 19

What I Have Learned

A. THE PROPHET ELIJAH

Elijah was one of the most remarkable characters of the Old Testament. His entire story is one of great fascination. Little is given of his background except what is stated in I Kings 17:1, "*Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead.*"

Gilead was the country east of the Jordan River, a high plateau of 2,000 feet elevation. It was here in the wild hills and ravines of Gilead that Elijah became acquainted with the true God of Israel. It was here that the fierce zeal of his prophetic ministry was nurtured.

It is claimed that his clothing consisted of a girdle of skin around his loins. He also wore a mantle or cape of sheepskin and his hair long, hanging down his back.

His sudden appearance to King Ahab must have been somewhat frightening. He dramatically prophesied of drought: "*There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word*" (I Kings 17:1).

B. THE IDOLATRY OF ISRAEL

At the time of Elijah, Israel was wholly given to idolatry. King Ahab had married a Phoenician wife, Jezebel, who was a champion of foreign culture.

Jezebel had the altars of Jehovah torn down and heathen ones built. She was responsible for the hatred and persecution of the true prophets. Jezebel introduced the idolatrous worship of Baal into Israel and the licentious orgies of the goddess Ashtoreth. It was a very dark hour for Israel.

C. THE BROOK CHERITH – I Kings 17:3-7

It was to be expected that Ahab would seek to take Elijah's life. The Lord instructed Elijah to go eastward to the Brook Cherith and to hide there. Each morning and evening, God sent ravens with bread and meat to feed him. Throughout Israel, there was a drought accompanied by famine, but Elijah was miraculously fed until the brook dried up.

D. THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH - I Kings 17:8-24

Elijah had hid from Ahab during the forty-two months of the drought. Ahab hunted for him everywhere, even in foreign countries. (I Kings 18:10)

After the Brook Cherith had dried up, God told Elijah to go to Zarephath where a widow would sustain him. Zarephath was a Phoenician town situated between Tyre and Sidon. The last place to expect Elijah to find safety would be in Phoenicia, Jezebel's native country and from where the idolatrous worship of Baal came.

The widow woman was apparently an Israelite who believed in God. She was extremely poor and lived alone with her son. Elijah found her gathering a few sticks to make a fire to prepare her last meal. At Elijah's request, she provided for Elijah first and the miracle of the meal and oil being replenished took place. As long as Elijah remained there, the widow and her son had food to eat.

While Elijah was in her home, another miracle took place. The son became ill and died. Elijah prayed and stretched himself upon him three times. He prayed again and the son revived (I Kings 17:17-24).

E. CONTEST ON MT. CARMEL

At the end of the drought, there was very little vegetation still growing. King Ahab and his steward, Obadiah, were searching for grass when Elijah suddenly appeared to Obadiah. Obadiah was a believer in God and had supported a hundred young prophets in hiding. Obadiah was persuaded to tell Ahab that Elijah had appeared. The king and the prophet met and Elijah proposed a contest to see whether Baal or God was the true God.

The contest took place on Mt. Carmel. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves were on one side and Elijah alone on the other. He challenged the people to accept the God who could answer by fire. Throughout the day, the Baal worshippers called frantically on their god, but to no avail.

When it came Elijah's turn, he took some very simple steps in preparing the altar. It would be profitable to study these steps, for they are the same steps that need to be taken to bring revival in any generation:

- 📖 The altar of the Lord was repaired...PRAYER
- 📖 The altar was built with twelve stones. Elijah ignored the division in the nation...UNITY

- 📖 He called upon the name of the Lord...THE NAME OF JESUS IS ESSENTIAL
- 📖 He dug a trench around the altar...SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD
- 📖 Wood was placed in order...CALVARY
- 📖 A bullock was placed on the altar...SACRIFICE AND SHEDDING OF BLOOD
- 📖 Twelve barrels of water was poured on the altar...WATER BAPTISM

It only took a short majestic prayer for the fire to fall to consume the sacrifice. The people were convinced and cried, "The LORD, He is God." At Elijah's command, the prophets were taken to the foot of the mountain and slain.

Elijah now prayed for rain. He sent his servant to look for clouds. The seventh time the servant reported a cloud like a man's hand. He sent his servant to warn Ahab to hasten back to Jezreel. As Ahab rode back, the prophet girded up his gown and ran before the chariot all the way to Jezreel, a distance of about sixteen miles.

F. ELIJAH IN THE WILDERNESS – I Kings 19:4-8

Jezebel vowed vengeance and Elijah fled for his life. In the wilderness, he was discouraged and despondent. He sat under a juniper tree and despaired of his life. An angel touched him and bade him eat. A cake was baked on some coals and there was a cruse of water. Twice he was ordered to eat, and with the strength of that food, Elijah went for forty days.

G. ELIJAH AT HOREB – I Kings 19:9-21

At Horeb, Elijah lodged in a cave. Here he experienced a mighty wind, an earthquake and fire. Then he heard the still small voice of the Lord. He was commissioned to anoint Hazael as king of Syria, Jehu as king of Israel and Elisha to be his own successor. Elijah was assured that there were 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

He first found Elisha plowing in the field. He cast his mantle upon Elisha. Elisha went back to kiss his father and mother. He killed his oxen and fed the people. He then followed Elijah until Elijah was caught away.

H. NABOTH'S VINEYARD – I Kings 21:1-24

When Jezebel took Naboth's vineyard for Ahab and had Naboth murdered, Elijah met the king in the vineyard and rebuked him. Elijah prophesied that

the dogs would lick Ahab's blood in the same spot that Naboth died.

I. ELIJAH IS TRANSLATED – II Kings 2:11

Elijah and Enoch were the only two men who were caught up to heaven without dying.

As Elijah and Elisha walked along, a chariot and horses of fire parted them and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Later Elijah appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3, 4). Some believe that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11.

Certainly this prophet was one of the greatest characters of the Old Testament, yet he was a man of like passions as we are (James 5:17).

What Have You Learned?

1. Who was Elijah and where did he come from?

2. What did Elijah say to King Ahab the first time he appeared before him? (Give Scripture reference to support.) _____

3. How did Israel become wholly given to idolatry?

4. What happened to Elijah at the Brook Cherith?

5. How long did the drought pronounced by Elijah last? _____

6. What did God tell Elijah to do after the Brook Cherith dried up? _____

7. What happened to the widow's son while Elijah was in her home? _____

8. Who was Obadiah, and how did he help Elijah? _____

9. What seven (7) steps used by Elijah in preparing the altar will bring revival in any generation? _____

10. How many times did Elijah's servant go look for rain? _____

11. Why did Elijah run to the wilderness, and what happened to him there? _____

12. Where did Elijah stay at Horeb? What three (3) things did he experience there? _____

13. Where did Elijah find Elisha? What was Elisha doing? _____

14. How was Elijah involved in the story of Naboth's vineyard? _____

15. Briefly explain Elijah's death. Support with Scripture. _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Five

ELISHA

TEXT: II Kings 2-9

What I Have Learned

A. THE PROPHET ELISHA

Elisha was the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah. His father was a farmer and appeared to be quite wealthy since he had twelve yoke of oxen plowing in the field at one time.

He began his ministry during the reign of Jehoram and continued through the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz. He died during the reign of Joash. He was God's prophet for Israel for a period of fifty years. Elisha was gentle and diplomatic. While Elijah was a man of the wilderness, Elisha lived in the cities and dressed like other people.

Elijah was a man of moods, but Elisha was self-controlled and even-tempered. He was interested in the needs of the people and many of his miracles were to heal and give relief to persons in need.

The request that he might have a double portion of Elijah's spirit apparently was granted, for there are more than twice as many miracles recorded under his ministry as Elijah's.

During his ministry, Elisha witnessed the worship of Baal coming to an end in Israel.

B. ELISHA'S CALL – I Kings 19:16-21

At Horeb, God directed Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor. He found Elisha plowing with a yoke of oxen. Elijah threw his rough mantle over Elisha's shoulders and strode on.

Elisha delayed in answering the call only long enough to give his parents a farewell kiss and preside over a feast with his people. He slaughtered the oxen and used his plow for fuel to cook the meat. He thus cut the ties, which bound him to his former life.

Seven or eight years passed before Elijah's translation. During that time, Elisha was undoubtedly Elijah's minister, for he is described as pouring water on Elijah's hands (II Kings 3:11). During this time, he was also Elijah's disciple, learning and helping Elijah in every way.

When it was revealed that Elijah was going to be caught away, Elisha refused to be discouraged by those who tried to tell him that he was following

Elijah in vain. He accompanied Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho and to the banks of the Jordan. Elijah smote the waters with his mantle and he two walked across on dry ground.

Because Elisha saw him go, a double portion of Elijah's spirit was given to him. The mantle fell on Elisha and he took it and smote the waters of the Jordan and crossed over on dry ground. When the sons of the prophets saw it, they exclaimed, "the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

Each one of us should ask whether or not we are among the spectators of God's power or whether we are where the action is. Are we among the sons of the prophets looking on from a distance or are we receiving our portion of God's spirit?

Another question might be asked today. It is not necessary to ask, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" it would be more appropriate to ask, "Where are the Elijah's of the Lord God?" We certainly need true prophets of God today.

C. THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

One of Elisha's main interests was the training of young prophets. Elijah had likely established schools at Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho. Elisha expanded this ministry. His purpose was to train dedicated men to be true prophets, which were so greatly needed in sinful, idolatrous Israel.

Emphasis may be placed today upon the same ministry. There is nothing greater than the work of Bible schools training young ministers.

D. THE MIRACLES OF ELISHA

In the record of Elisha's ministry, there is a total of some eighteen incidents. We shall be briefly studying eight of the most familiar.

1. The Cursing of the Children (II Kings 2:23)

As Elisha went to Bethel, some children made fun of his baldness. They cried out, "Go up, thou bald head." Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord. Two female bears came out of the forest and attacked them. The Bible does not state that the children were killed but they were clawed and torn.

There is much disrespect shown today. This is a good lesson to learn that we must always show proper respect to men of God.

2. Widow's Oil Increased (II Kings 4:1-7)

This miracle teaches some important lessons in receiving the Holy Ghost. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The oil met this woman's need and paid her debts.

Let us examine the steps the widow took:

- 📖 She understood her great need and was greatly burdened and concerned.
- 📖 She knew where to go. She went to the man of God for help.
- 📖 She obeyed explicitly.
- 📖 She took empty vessels. There is no room for oil if there is something else in the vessels. Likewise, our hearts must be emptied of worldliness and sin.
- 📖 She shut the door. Thus the world was shut out. If we will learn the lesson of closing our closet doors, we too can witness the flowing of oil.

3. The Shunammite's Son Raised from the Dead (II Kings 4:8-37)

This is a very beautiful story. This Shunammite woman is spoken of as being a great woman (II Kings 4:8). She was very kind and hospitable to Elisha. Whenever he passed by her house, he went in and ate. Finally, she spoke to her husband and they made him a prophet's chamber with a bed, table, stool and candlestick.

One day Elisha wanted to do her a favor. His servant, Gehazi, informed him that she had no child and that her husband was old. Elisha told her that she was going to have a son. This happened according to Elisha's word. When the boy was old enough to go to the field with his father, he apparently suffered sunstroke and died.

The mother hastened to Elisha and caught him by the feet. Elisha sent Gehazi on ahead with his staff. When Elisha arrived, he closed the door and prayed. He then stretched himself upon the boy and put his mouth to the boy's mouth. The boy's body grew warm; he sneezed seven times and then opened his eyes.

4. Poisonous Pottage Healed (II Kings 4:38-41)

There was a famine in the land and the sons of the prophets ate whatever herbs could be found. Upon one occasion, a poisonous plant was put into the pot of pottage. One of the prophets cried out, "There is death in the pot!" Elisha threw in some meal and the food was healed of the poison.

5. Food Multiplied During the Famine (II Kings 4:42-44)

We are familiar with the story of our Lord multiplying the loaves and fishes and feeding five thousand. A similar miracle took place under the ministry of Elisha. A man brought to him a gift of food, twenty loaves of barley and ears of corn. This food was set before 100 men. The food was multiplied so that all ate until they were satisfied.

6. Naaman Healed of Leprosy (II Kings 5)

This is possibly the most familiar of Elisha's miracles. The following points of this story should be carefully noted.

- 📖 This took place because of the faithful witnessing of a little maid who worked for Naaman's wife.
- 📖 The high office and wealth of Naaman made no impression upon Elisha. He left him standing at his door and gave him the simple instruction of bathing seven times in Jordan.
- 📖 Naaman almost lost the blessing because of the simplicity of it. Obedience, however, brought deliverance. So it is with the gospel. People stumble over the simplicity of it, but obedience brings salvation.
- 📖 Elisha refused any reward. This should teach us that one cannot put a monetary price tag on the gift of God.
- 📖 The judgment that came to Gehazi because of his greed and lying should not be overlooked. These are the sins of our present age and bring judgment upon all who are guilty.

7. The Lost Ax head Recovered (II Kings 6:1-7)

While the sons of the prophets were cutting wood to build a house, a borrowed ax head fell into the river. Seeing the distress of the man, Elisha threw a stick into the water and the iron ax head came to the surface.

8. The Defeat of the Syrians (II Kings 6-7)

On many occasions, the Syrians attacked Israel. Elisha was able to warn the king each time. The Syrians then tried to capture Elisha but were struck blind.

One of the greatest miracles is recorded in chapter seven. The Syrians attacked Samaria and the city was reduced to terrible straits. The people were starving and began to eat their own children. When the king blamed Elisha, Elisha prophesied that there would be abundance the very next day. One

of the officers of the king laughed at him and Elisha said that he would see but not eat thereof.

The Syrians fled when they heard a noise of chariots and horses. The message that the four lepers carried to the city constitute a gospel sermon, "This Day is a Day of Good Tidings."

E. SUMMARY OF ELISHA'S MINISTRY

The fifty-year ministry of Elisha was very eventful. He completed the tasks assigned to Elijah of anointing Hazael and Jehu as king of Syria and Israel respectively.

His story does not end at his death. After he was buried, a corpse was placed beside him. The bones of Elisha were touched and the man came to life.

The Bible student will do well to study carefully the details of the life of this great man of God.

What Have You Learned?

1. Who was Elisha and where did he come from?

2. Describe Elisha's ministry.

1) Who were the kings he prophesied to? _____

2) How long did Elisha's ministry last? _____

3. List four (4) differences between the character and ministry of Elijah and Elisha. _____

4. How did Elisha symbolically cut the ties that bound him to his former life? _____

5. How long did Elisha minister to Elijah? _____

6. What were some of the duties of Elisha during this time Elijah was still alive? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

7. What was the one (1) requirement for Elisha to receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit? _____

8. Which one of Elijah's works did Elisha continue and expand? How did Elisha accomplish this? _____

9. List the eight (8) most familiar incidents of Elisha's ministry. Give Scripture to support each.

10. What part of Elisha's story takes place after his death? Support with Scripture. _____

Lesson Six

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

What I Have Learned

A. THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The Kingdom of Israel consisted of the ten tribes, which broke away under Jeroboam. The name "Israel" is sometimes used for the Jews as a whole, but in the records of the kings, it is usually used for the ten tribes.

This Kingdom of Israel lasted for almost 250 years under the reign of nineteen kings belonging to nine different families. All of these kings were idolaters. It was not said of any of these kings that they "did right in the sight of the Lord."

The overthrow of Israel by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser took place about 722 B.C.

After the Israelites were carried into Assyria, people were brought from different parts of the Assyrian Empire to occupy the country. At first, they worshipped idols, but later they turned to the worship of Jehovah mixed with their worship of idols. The Samaritans of the New Testament were descendants of this mixed race.

The kingdom of the ten tribes was never restored.

B. THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

During the history of the kingdom, there were nineteen kings belonging to nine families or dynasties. The longest reign was that of Jeroboam II who reigned for forty-one years. The shortest reign was that of Zimri who reigned for seven days.

Because of idolatrous worship, there was much violence. Seven kings met death by violence: Nadab, Elah, Tibni (I Kings 16:21, 22), Jeroboam, Zechariah, Shallum and Pekahiah.

Here is the list of the kings of Israel with the length of time each reigned.

First Dynasty	Jeroboam I	22 years
	Nadab	2 years
Second Dynasty	Baasha	24 years
	Elah	2 years
Third Dynasty	Zimri	7 years
Fourth Dynasty	Omri	12 years
	Ahab	22 years
	Ahaziah	2 years
	Jehoram	12 years
Fifth Dynasty	Jehu	28 years
	Jehoahaz	17 years

	Jehoash	16 years
	Jeroboam II	41 years
	Zechariah	6 months
Sixth Dynasty	Shallum	1 months
Seventh Dynasty	Menahem	10 years
	Pekahiah	2 years
Eighth Dynasty	Pekah	20 years
Ninth Dynasty	Hoshea	9 years

A total of 241 years, 7 months and 7 days.

C. JEROBOAM I – I Kings 11:26-40; 12:1-14:20

Israel's first king was a religious apostate. He was the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite. His mother's name was Zeruch. One version states that she was a harlot. His wife was Ano, an Egyptian princess.

Fearing a continuation of religious pilgrimages of Jerusalem, he made two calves of gold and set them up at Bethel and Dan. He founded a new priesthood and started popular pagan festivals.

In the twenty-one times that Jeroboam's name is mentioned, his apostasy is linked with it, "Who did sin, and made Israel to sin." Every king of Israel followed his example of idolatry.

D. NADAB – I Kings 14:20; 15:25-31

Nadab was Jeroboam's son and followed his father's bad example. He was murdered within two years.

E. BAASHA – I Kings 15:27-16:7

Baasha's name meant, "wicked" and he was true to his name. To protect his throne, he massacred all the relatives of Jeroboam.

F. ELAH AND ZIMRI – I Kings 16:5-20

Elah was a drunkard and was known as a "debauchee." While drunk, he was murdered by Zimri who conspired against the king. Zimri reigned only one short week, for the people did not accept him. He was rejected because of his treason. Zimri set fire to the palace and died in the flames.

G. OMRI – I Kings 16:15-28; 20:34

The Bible states that Omri did worse than all the others that were before him (I Kings 16:25). He moved the capital to Samaria where he built a new palace. Samaria now became the capital and sometimes the northern kingdom was called Samaria because of the capital.

H. AHAB – I Kings 16:29-22:40

Ahab was Omri's son and succeeded him as king. His father had arranged his marriage with Jezebel, a Phoenician woman, who dominated her husband. Ahab was one of the strongest and, at the same time, one of the weakest kings. Baal worship was introduced and everything possible was done to destroy the worship of the one true God.

I. AHAZIAH – I Kings 22:51; II Kings 1:18

Ahaziah was a weak king and followed in the steps of his wicked parents. During his reign, the Moabites successfully rebelled. He fell from the lattice of his apartment and died after reigning two years.

J. JEHORAM - II Kings 1:17; 2; 6; 9

Jehoram was also called Joram. Ahaziah had no children so Jehoram, Ahaziah's brother, succeeded him. During Jehoram's reign, the translation of Elijah took place. This king deeply respected the warnings and miracles of the prophet Elisha. The healing of Naaman and the overthrow of the Syrian hosts also took place during his rule.

Jehoram was wounded in battle with Syria. Jehu was anointed king by one of the sons of the prophets. He set out for Jezreel and killed Jehoram on the very land Ahab had taken from Naboth. He had Jezebel flung from a window and eaten by dogs.

K. JEHU - II Kings 9-10:36

Throughout Jehu's twenty-eight year reigns, he was a bloody king. His character was revealed by the way he drove. He was a furious driver and a ferocious man. He abolished the worship of Baal but allowed the worship of golden calves to continue. His purge of Baalism created serious political problems with the Phoenicians. He was forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian king.

L. JEHOAHAZ - II Kings 13

Jehu was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz. During his reigns, Hazael of Syria reduced Israel to little more than the hill country of Ephraim. Because of oppression, he prayed unto God for help and God promised deliverance, which came during his son's reign (II Kings 13:4, 5).

M. JEHOASH – II Kings 13:10-25

Jehoash is also called Joash. He attacked Syria and regained the cities, which had been lost by his father.

He respected Elisha and paid respect to him during his final illness. It was at this time that Elisha gave him an object lesson with the arrows.

During the last years of his reign, he attacked Amaziah of Judah, plundered Jerusalem and the Temple and carried off palace treasures.

N. JEROBOAM II - II Kings 14:23-29; Amos

Jeroboam II, the thirteenth king, was the son of Joash. He regained the territory lost to the Syrians. His reign was one of expansion and prosperity.

During his reign, both Amos and Hosea prophesied that Israel would be taken into captivity.

O. THE FINAL REIGNS

A state of anarchy followed the death of Jeroboam II. One king after another was murdered.

Hoshea was the last king. Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, threatened Israel. Hoshea agreed to pay him tribute. After a time, the tribute was withheld and Hoshea looked to Egypt for help. Shalmaneser invaded and ravaged the land. The Israelites were taken captive.

What Have You Learned?

1. What are two different ways the name "Israel" is used? _____

2. The Kingdom of Israel lasted for almost _____ Years under the reign of _____ kings belonging to _____ different families. The overthrow of Israel by the _____ under _____

took place about _____ B.C. After the Israelites were carried into _____, people were brought from different parts of the Assyrian Empire to occupy the country. At first, they worshipped _____, but later they turned to the worship of _____. The mixed with their worship of _____. The _____ of the _____ Testament were descendants of this _____ race. The kingdom of the _____ tribes was _____.

3. Which king reigned the longest period of time in the northern kingdom of Israel? _____ How long was he king? _____

4. Which king reigned the shortest period of time in Israel? _____

How long was he king? _____

5. Name the seven (7) kings of Israel who met their death by violence. _____

6. Given the following facts, write the name of the king who was a part of this action or event.

_____ 1) His name meant "wicked."

_____ 2) Rejected because of treason, this king set fire to the palace and died in the flames.

_____ 3) He made two calves of gold and set them up at Bethel and Dan.

_____ 4) He was a drunkard, known as a "debauchee."

_____ 5) He followed his father's bad example, and was murdered within two years of becoming king.

_____ 6) The Bible states this king did worse than all the others before him.

_____ 7) His father had arranged his marriage with Jezebel, a Phoenician woman, who dominated her husband.

_____ 8) He fell from the lattice of his apartment and died after reigning two years.

_____ 9) The translation of Elijah took place during his reign.

_____ 10) This man was anointed king by one of the sons of the prophets. He killed King Jehoram on the very land Ahab had taken from Naboth.

_____ 11) Throughout his 28 year reign, he was a bloody king, who was known by the way he drove.

_____ 12) Baal worship was introduced during his reign and everything possible was done to destroy the worship of the one true God.

_____ 13) The healing of Naaman and the overthrow of the Syrian hosts took place during his rule.

_____ 14) He abolished the worship of Baal but allowed the worship of golden calves to continue.

_____ 15) He respected Elisha and paid respect to him during his final illness.

_____ 16) During his reign, both Amos and Hosea prophesied that Israel would be taken into captivity.

_____ 17) During the last years of his reign, he attacked Amaziah of Judah, plundered Jerusalem and the Temple, and carried off palace treasures.

_____ 18) As the thirteenth king, his reign was one of expansion and prosperity.

_____ 19) Because of oppression, he prayed to God for help and God promised deliverance which came during his son's reign.

_____ 20) This king deeply respected the warnings and miracles of the prophet Elisha.

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Seven

THE KINGS OF JUDAH

What I Have Learned

A. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The kingdom of Judah continued for almost 400 years (975-586 B.C.) or 150 years longer than Israel. Like Israel, there were nineteen kings but they ruled for longer periods of time. All the kings of Judah were of one dynasty and were lineal descendants of King David. About half of these kings were good and for that reason the kingdom continued longer than that of Israel. The longest reign was that of Manasseh's, sixty-five years. The shortest reign was that of Jehoahaz, which lasted only three months.

The kingdom of Judah continued 468 years after David began to reign, 388 years after the division of the kingdom, and 134 years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel.

The prophets who ministered during this period of time were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Zephaniah, Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk. The prophecies of these men were literally fulfilled.

During this period, the character of the nation was greatly influenced by the character of the king. The nation was blessed and enjoyed peace and prosperity when the king was pious and faithful.

B. FOUR PERIODS OF TIME

The history of the kingdom of Judah was divided into four periods of religious decline and three revivals.

- 📖 First Period – Between the reigns of Rehoboam and Jehoshaphat – about eighty-six years.
- 📖 Second Period – Between the reigns of Joash and Hezekiah – about 207 years.
- 📖 Third Period – Between the reigns of Manasseh and Josiah – about eighty-eight years.
- 📖 Fourth Period – Between Jehoahaz and Zedekiah – about twenty-three years

C. REHOBOAM – I Kings 12:20-24; 14:21-31

After Rehoboam's rejection by the northern tribes, he tried to bring the entire nation under his control. This move was stopped by the advice of the prophet Shemaiah.

Many priests and Levites came from the northern kingdom and supported the one who gave outward regard to the worship of Jehovah. Like his father,

Rehoboam had many wives who led him into idolatry. As punishment, the Lord permitted Shishak, king of Egypt, to attack him and plunder both the palace and the Temple.

Rehoboam died at the age of fifty-eight.

D. ABIJAM (ABIJAH) – I Kings 5

Abijam reigned three years. He had fourteen wives, twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

He declared war against Jeroboam and recovered some of the border cities of Israel.

His reign was one of religious apostasy. Cult images of various types were venerated and ritual prostitution was practiced.

E. ASA – I Kings 15:9-15; II Chron. 14-16

Asa was the son of Abijam who ruled for forty-one years. He was a good king. He was the godly son of a godless father. Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all of his days.

The first ten years were occupied in religious reforms and in abolishing idolatry.

In later years, his faith weakened. He lost territory to Baasha, king of Israel, and appealed to Ben-hadad of Damascus for help. The prophet Hanani rebuked him and was imprisoned for three years.

He suffered from a serious foot disease and turned the government over to his son, Jehoshaphat.

F. JEHOSHAPHAT – I Kings 22:2-33; 41-50

Jehoshaphat was a contemporary of three kings of Israel, Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram. He was a godly man and reigned for twenty-five years. The kingdom regained much of its former prosperity and was encouraged in the true worship of God.

His greatest errors were in making alliances with Ahab and Ahaziah. From this came the grave mistake of marrying the crown prince, Jehoram, to Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. With this marriage a Dark Age began. It would be sometime before a good king would reign again.

G. JEHORAM – II Kings 8:16-24

Jehoram reigned for eight years and this was a low place in Judah's history. Dominated by his wife, Athaliah, he built a Baal temple in Jerusalem. He assassinated his brothers. The Edomites cut off the sea route to Arabia and the Arabs from the south plundered the palace and carried off his harem. All

of his sons, except Ahaziah, were killed in battle. Jehoram died at the age of forty.

H. AHAZIAH – II Kings 8:25-29

Ahaziah was also called Jehoahaz. He reigned only one year. His mother who encouraged Baal worship and an alliance with his uncle, Jehoram of Israel, influenced him.

Jehu killed him while visiting Jehoram.

I. ATHALIAH – II Chronicles 24:7

She ruled for six years. She was a tyrant. She had all the royal seed (her grandchildren) slain and then took the throne. One child, Joash, escaped. When Joash was six years old, the high priest showed him to the captains of the guard. He was proclaimed king and Athaliah was slain.

J. JOASH – II Kings 11, 12

Joash was also called Jehoash. He was the son of Ahaziah and Zibiah, a woman of Beersheba. Later he married two wives and had several sons and daughters.

He reigned for forty years. The high priest, Jehoiada, was his guardian. As long as the priest lived, Joash did what was right. After Jehoiada's death, he lapsed into idolatry. He bribed Hazael with treasures from the house of the Lord. Finally he was murdered in bed by one of his own servants.

K. AMAZIAH – II Kings 14

Amaziah was the son of Joash and reigned twenty-nine years. He began well but ended badly. He defeated the Edomites but carried home their gods. He began to worship these gods. He was assassinated.

L. UZZIAH (AZARIAH) -II Kings 15

Uzziah came to the throne when he was sixteen and reigned for fifty-two years. He was a capable administrator and was talented in engineering. He tried to assume the ministry of the priest by offering incense on the Golden Altar. He was stricken with leprosy and spent his last years in seclusion.

The prophet Isaiah received his call during the year of Uzziah's death.

M. JOTHAM – II Kings 15:32-38

Jotham's record is clean. There was no sin laid to his charge. He reigned sixteen years and the kingdom prospered.

Isaiah and Micah prophesied during his reign.

N. AHAZ – II Kings 16; II Chronicles 28

Ahaz reigned sixteen years and had the reputation of being the most wicked and idolatrous of all the kings of Judah. He burned his own children as sacrifices in his idolatrous worship. It was a good thing that he died at an early age of thirty-six years; otherwise Judah might have been taken captive at this time.

O. HEZEKIAH – II Kings 18-20

Hezekiah carried out a great reformation. The high places of idol worship were destroyed. The Temple was re-opened and the Passover celebrated.

In the fourteenth year of his reign, Hezekiah refused to pay tribute to Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Sennacherib prepared to invade Judah. He went into Egypt to wage war. When he returned, the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian warriors and Sennacherib retreated.

At this time, Hezekiah had a serious illness. He earnestly prayed and the Lord added fifteen years to his life.

P. MANASSEH – II Kings 21:1-9

Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah. He was born during Hezekiah's added fifteen years. He became king at the age of twelve and reigned for fifty-five years. He destroyed the faith that his godly father had established and revived all the abominations his father destroyed. Manasseh was the worst of the Jewish kings.

Black arts flourished and all forms of evil were indulged in. The Temple was polluted with images to Baal. Manasseh's children were burned in honor of Baal and he shed much innocent blood. Tradition states that he killed Isaiah by placing him inside a hollow tree and sawing him asunder (Heb. 11:37).

He was taken captive with hooks by the king of Assyria. At Babylon he experienced genuine repentance. When he was allowed to return to Jerusalem, he tried to abolish idolatry, but his reform efforts were not very successful.

Q. AMON – II Kings 21:18-26

Amon was the godless son of Manasseh. He copied all his father's sins. He was assassinated after reigning only two years.

R. JOSIAH – II Kings 22:1-23:10

Josiah became king at the age of eight. At the age of sixteen, he devoted his time to the work of God and commenced reformation at the age of twenty. With a hatchet, he began the destruction of the images of idolatry. The Book of the Law was discovered and Josiah had it read to the people. The Temple was cleansed and a Passover held. He was slain in battle as he fought with Egypt.

S. THE FINAL DECLINE

Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, reigned only three months and then was carried away captive into Egypt.

It was during the reigns of the final three kings that the captivity took place and we shall study regarding them in the following lesson.

What Have You Learned?

1. The Kingdom of Judah continued for almost _____ years, or _____ years longer than Israel. Like Israel, there were _____ Kings but they ruled for _____ periods of time. _____ the kings of Judah were of _____ dynasty and were lineal descendants of King _____.

2. The longest reign was that of _____ years.

3. The shortest reign was that of _____ which lasted only three _____.

4. The Kingdom of Judah continued _____ years after _____ began to reign, _____ years after the _____ of the kingdom, and _____ years after the _____ of the Kingdom of Israel.

5. Name the seven (7) prophets who ministered during this time. _____

6. During this period, how did the character of the king affect the nation? _____

7. Given each of the periods of decline, who was reigning and for how long?

1) First Period - _____

2) Second Period - _____

3) Third Period - _____

4) Fourth Period - _____

8. Given the following facts, write the name of the king who was part of this action or event.

_____ 1) Like his father, this king had many wives who led him into idolatry.

_____ 2) He suffered from a serious foot disease and turned the government over to his son, Jehoshaphat.

_____ 3) He reigned three years, had fourteen wives, twenty-two sons, and sixteen daughters.

_____ 4) The first ten years of his reign were occupied in religious reforms and abolishing idolatry.

_____ 5) He was a contemporary of three kings of Israel: Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram.

_____ 6) He was dominated by his wife to build a Baal temple in Jerusalem, and he assassinated his brothers.

Lesson Eight

THE CAPTIVITY

What I Have Learned

A. THE CAPTIVITY FORETOLD IN PROPHECY

1. At the Time of Hezekiah

When a delegation from the king of Babylon came with a present for Hezekiah, in his eagerness to make a worldly alliance, Hezekiah showed them all the treasures of his house. The prophet Isaiah rebuked him and prophesied:

“Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (II Kings 20:17, 18).

Over 100 years passed before this prophecy was fulfilled. This shows how judgment for our sins may fall upon our children.

2. The Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 11:11; 39:6, 7)

This prophecy of Isaiah is recorded and repeated in his prophecy. (Also see Isaiah 6:11-12.)

3. The Prophet Micah

“And thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered” (Micah 4:10).

Here Micah definitely stated that the place of captivity would be Babylon.

4. The Prophet Jeremiah

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon” (Jeremiah 25:11-12).

Here Jeremiah states the length of time that the Jews will be in captivity.

B. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

“And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God” (Daniel 1:2).

We should take note of the expression “and the Lord gave.” This was an act of judgment upon the part of God. God’s judgment came upon Judah, not only because of Hezekiah’s sin, but also because of

the idolatry that was brought in by the many wicked kings who ruled similar to Manasseh.

C. BABYLON’S RISE TO POWER

At this time in history, Assyria began to decline in power and became weak. Assyria’s two main cities, Assur and Nineveh, had fallen and Assyria’s army fled westward to Haran. In 610 B.C., Haran fell to Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, which all but finished the Assyrians. In 609 B.C., Necho, the king of Egypt, marched north to meet the Babylonians. He did not succeed in taking Haran, but the Egyptians remained dominant in the West for another three years.

Early in 605 B.C., the Battle of Carchemish occurred on the Euphrates. The Babylonians were under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar. He revealed great genius and sent the Egyptians fleeing in headlong defeat. From this point, Babylon became the new world leaders.

D. THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CAPTIVITY – 605 B.C.

Jehoiakim was appointed king of Judah by Pharaoh and reigned eleven years. He was godless and reckless. During his reign, he heard the prophecies of Jeremiah warning of the coming judgment. Upon one occasion, he took a knife and cut the scroll into pieces and threw it upon the fire. Jeremiah prophesied that he would be buried as an ass and that was fulfilled.

When Nebuchadnezzar made great conquests in Syria, Jehoiakim professed loyalty to him. Later Jehoiakim shifted to King Necho of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took many captive, including Daniel and his companions. Jehoiakim was taken in chains to Babylon.

At this time, Nebuchadnezzar carried off the vessels of the house of God and the members of the nobility of Judah to Babylon. If Jehoiakim had taken heed to the fearless preaching of the prophet Jeremiah, this might not have happened.

While Nebuchadnezzar was busy in his conquests, he was interrupted by the sudden death of his father. He hurried back to Babylon to be crowned king.

E. THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CAPTIVITY – 597 B.C.

Jehoichin was the son and successor of Jehoiakim and reigned only for three months and ten days.

In 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem again. This time he took captive Jehoichin, his mother, his wives, 3,000 princess, 7,000 men of might and 1,000 artisans, (II Kings 24:14-16). Among them were Ezekiel and Mordecai. Jeremiah evaded capture and urged the exiles in Babylon to be good citizens (Jeremiah 29:1-10).

F. THE THIRD PHASE OF THE CAPTIVITY – 586 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah to be king of Judah and he ruled for eleven years.

After eleven years, Zedekiah listened to wrong advice instead of listening to Jeremiah. He revolted against Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar's army was soon back outside Jerusalem's walls. This time Nebuchadnezzar burned the Temple destroyed the city of Jerusalem and deported all but the poorest to Babylon (II Kings 24:14-16).

Zedekiah was taken captive, watched the execution of his sons, had his eyes gouged out, and was carried to Babylon.

At this time, the Temple, palaces and public buildings were destroyed. Jerusalem lay in ruins.

G. THE CAPTIVITY

There was much suffering at the time of this last siege. Prisoners were maimed, impaled and skinned alive.

Once they were settled in Babylon, the Jews were not heavily oppressed by their conquerors. They engaged in business, built houses and held high positions in the land. The prophet Ezekiel constantly encouraged them.

What Have You Learned?

1. Why did King Hezekiah show the delegation from the king of Babylon all the treasures of his house? _____

2. In what two (2) places in the Bible is the prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah recorded?

3. How many years passed before this prophecy was fulfilled? _____ What does this tell us? _____

4. What other two (2) prophets spoke of the Babylonian captivity of Judah? Give Scripture reference for each. _____

5. Briefly explain Babylon's rise to power. _____

6. Who appointed Jehoakim king of Judah? _____

7. How did Jehoakim treat the prophet Jeremiah?

8. What did Jeremiah prophesy about the death of Jehoakim? _____

9. How long did Jehoachin reign after his father Jehoakim had died? _____

10. When Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem again in 597 B.C., whom did he take as captives?

11. Who did Nebuchadnezzar appoint to be king of Judah in 586 B.C.? _____

How long was he king of Judah? _____

12. What brought about the downfall of Zedekiah?

13. After Zedekiah's revolt, what did Nebuchadnezzar's army do to Jerusalem? _____

14. What suffering did Nebuchadnezzar's army inflict on the Jews during this last siege? _____

15. What happened to the Jews after they were settled in Babylon? _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Nine

THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

What I Have Learned

A. BABYLON'S BEGINNING

The place that the Babylonian Empire has had in the history of God's people can never be understood without going back to its beginning. It began with Nimrod and the Tower of Babel about 100 years after the flood and 326 years before the call of Abram.

1. Nimrod

The story of Nimrod is found in Gen. 10:8-10. Nimrod was Ham's grandson; his father was Cush. Nimrod is a type of Anti-christ. The word "Nimrod" means, "rebel." This points forward to one of the titles of the Anti-christ given in II Thess. 2:8, "The Lawless One." Nimrod's rebellion was to lead a movement in revolt against God.

Three times in this passage, and also in I Chron. 1:10, it states that Nimrod was mighty. In Genesis 10:9, he is described as being a "*mighty hunter before the Lord.*" this infers that he pushed his own designs in defiance of his Creator.

2. The Tower of Babel

In Gen. 10:10, it states, "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel." Here we have the first mention of Babel. In the language of that time, Babel meant, "the gate of God," but afterwards, because of judgment, it meant, "confusion." Here we find that Nimrod had a kingdom and therefore was "king." Not only did he start a new kingdom, but also he instituted a new and idolatrous worship.

- 📖 "Let us build us a city" – This refers to a political system, a world empire.
- 📖 "Let us build us a tower" – This refers to a religious system, a religion of good works, reaching heaven without any help from God. It was a system of deifying man. It was Cain's religion beginning again.
- 📖 "Let us make us a name" – This refers to a desire for fame and power. Salvation was to come in their name. However, God had a name through which there would be salvation (Jesus) and it was not yet God's time to reveal that name.

Everything about Babel was in opposition to God. It was because of this that judgment fell and God scattered them.

Let us ever remember that the root of all sin is rebellion and the result is always the same, confusion and a scattering.

B. THE BEGINNING OF THE BABYLONIAN RELIGION

In Revelation 17, we have pictured the false idolatrous religion of the last days, a harlot sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, a politico-religious system of great power. In Gen. 11, we find the history recorded of the beginning of this false religion.

After the Fall, God clothed our first parents and instituted the true plan of salvation and worship. We find this continued by Abel, Noah and other men of faith. Following the flood, God instituted the principle of human government, a system by which God would maintain law and order, and preserve peace and harmony.

Both of these two institutions were of divine origin. God ordained, however, that these two institutions, religion and government, would be kept separate until Jesus Christ would come and who would unite the principle of priest and king in one person. Until that time came, these two institutions were to be administered by different individuals. The king must come to be of the tribe from Judah and the priest must come from the tribe of Levi. In the New Testament, Jesus confirmed this principle when He said, "*Render unto Caesar the things, which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.*" This is the separation of church and state.

Nimrod married a girl by the name of Semiramis who bore a son called Tammuz. Going back to the promise of Gen. 3:15, Semiramis claimed that she was the woman of the promise and that her son was the seed of the woman. Although they had turned their backs upon God, they could not eliminate the knowledge that had come down to them. Semiramis set herself up as the high priestess of the Babylonian religion. It was a religion that centered in the worship of the mother and the child. The sign of this religion was a mother who held a baby in her arms and was known as the "mother-child" cult. Semiramis took for herself the name "The Queen of Heaven" and taught that access into the presence of God was through her

high priestess ministry. She became a mediator between God and man.

When Tammuz came to young manhood, he was slain while hunting a wild boar. Semiramis gathered a number of virgins and after a forty-day period of prayer and fasting, Tammuz was supposed to be resurrected from the dead by the power of his mother, "The Queen of Heaven." That forty-day period became an annual time of mourning throughout Babylon. At the conclusion, they had a feast in honor of Semiramis and Tammuz. They made the egg, which was a symbol of life out of death, the sacred symbol. On the birthday of Tammuz, they erected evergreen trees as the symbol of eternal life.

This religion spread to Phoenicia, Egypt, and Greece, but Babylon continued to be the center of this false religious system until her destruction. The system then moved to Pergamos and from there to Rome. After the professed conversion of Constantine, this pagan religion that began with Nimrod was super-imposed upon the Christian church.

C. THE CITY OF BABYLON

Babylon was the "wonder city" of the world. It was located in the cradle of the human race near the Garden of Eden region. Babylon was situated in central Mesopotamia on the river Euphrates, some fifty miles south of modern Baghdad, capital of Iraq.

It was within easy reach of the Persian Gulf and, being situated on an important caravan route, it was in contact with all the most important centers of the near East. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), it was probably the largest and most elaborate city in the ancient world.

Nebuchadnezzar's objective was to make his capital the most notable city in the world. He constructed new canals, erected magnificent buildings, and laid out extensive parks. A permanent water supply assured fertility for the surrounding areas.

The city occupied an area of 200 square miles and was built on both sides of the Euphrates, which divided the city into two almost equal parts. A double brick wall, reinforced with towers, protected it.

Ancient historians have written that its walls were fifty miles around, fifteen miles on each side, 300 feet high, eighty feet thick, extending thirty-five

feet below the ground. There were 250 towers on the wall, guardrooms for soldiers and gates of brass. The walls were protected by wide and deep moats filled with water.

Both banks along the Euphrates were guarded with a brick wall. There was one bridge one-half mile long, thirty feet wide with drawbridges, which were removed at night. There was a tunnel under the river fifteen feet wide and twelve feet high.

In the days of ancient warfare, the city was simply impregnable.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. There were terraces supported by arches on which were carefully tended gardens laid out at different levels.

D. THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

The Babylonian Empire was the most powerful empire that had existed up to that time. It was sometimes called the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This was the empire that broke the power of Assyria and swept westward, destroying Judah and conquering Egypt.

The Babylonian Empire lasted seventy years (605-536 B.C.) and Daniel was there from its rise to its fall.

Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest Babylonian king and one of the greatest monarchs of all time. He reigned for forty-five years. He extended the power of Babylon over most of the then-known world.

In the second chapter of the prophecy of Daniel, we read where Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar in interpreting his dream, "Thou art this head of gold." Of all the Gentiles kingdoms that were to come, Babylon was the greatest. The Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar was the beginning of what is known as the "times of the Gentiles."

Babylon fell to Cyrus, king of Persia, in the year of 536 B.C. In the same year, Cyrus authorized the return of the Jews to their own land.

Although the kingdom of Babylon fell, the influence of Babylon is still with us. The religious system of Babylon is predominately in the religious world and the apostate church receives its name from Babylon (Revelation 17).

What Have You Learned?

1. Where did the nation of Babylon begin? _____

2. The story of _____ is found in Genesis _____. Nimrod was _____ grandson; his father was _____. Nimrod was a type of _____. The word "Nimrod" means "_____." This points forward to one of the titles of the Anti-Christ given in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, "The _____ One." Nimrod's _____ was to lead a movement in _____ against _____.

3. Where is the first mention of Babel in the Bible?

In the language of that time, what did Babel mean?

After the judgment of God, what did Babel mean?

4. Briefly explain each of these Bible phrases:

"Let us build us a city" - _____

"Let us build us a tower" - _____

"Let us make us a name" - _____

5. What is the root of all sin? _____

What is the result of all sin? _____

6. What Old and New Testament Scripture passages give us the history and picture of the false idolatrous religion of the last days? _____

7. What did God do for humanity immediately after the Fall? _____

Who continued with God's plan? _____

8. Following the flood, what did God do for humanity, and why? _____

9. Briefly explain the separation of church and state, as related to God's divine plan for both. _____

10. Briefly explain Nimrod's family, and how they started a new religious system. _____

11. What is the story around the death and supposed resurrection of Tammuz? _____

12. How did this religion become a part of the Christian church? _____

13. Describe the city of Babylon, its location and significance. _____

14. What did King Nebuchadnezzar do to make Babylon notable? _____

15. Describe the walls that protected Babylon. _____

16. Describe the sight in Babylon that became one of the seven wonders of the world. _____

17. How long did the Babylonian Empire last? _____

What famous Jew was there from its rise to its fall? _____

18. _____ was the greatest Babylonian king, and one of the greatest _____ of all time. He reigned for _____ years. He extended the power of _____ over most of the then-known world. The Babylonian Empire under _____ was the beginning of what is known as the "_____ of the _____." Babylon fell to _____ King of _____, in the year of _____ B.C. In the same year, _____ authorized the return of the _____ to their own _____.

19. What influence does the kingdom of Babylon have today, even though the kingdom fell many years ago? _____

Additional Notes: _____

Lesson Ten

DANIEL

TEXT: Daniel 1-12

What I Have Learned

A. DANIEL, THE MAN

Daniel was born into an unidentified family of Judean nobility at the time of Josiah's reformation. His lineage was of the tribe of Judah and one could probably trace his ancestry back to King David. A noble birth and an educated background are seen in him being chosen in the first deportation.

Josephus, the historian, wrote that Daniel and his three friends were related to King Zedekiah.

He was a handsome, brilliant young man of strong convictions. He was absolutely unswerving in his own religious convictions and refused to compromise even to save his own life. He was honest and truthful at all times.

Since he was both a statesman and a prophet, his life could be compared to Moses. The fact that he kept his life untarnished while a captive in a heathen country would remind us of Joseph.

His name means "God will judge." "Dan" means "to judge" and "el" means "God."

Daniel lived until he was at least ninety years of age and throughout the seventy years of captivity.

B. DANIEL, THE PROPHET

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15).

Jesus called Daniel "the prophet." To deny this would be to deny our Lord. Daniel was one of the greatest prophets. He predicted many future events, which have already become history.

Sir Isaac Newton said, "To reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion."

Josephus wrote that when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem in the year 332 B. C., he was shown the prophecies of Daniel in which he was described. Alexander was impressed with it.

Daniel prophesied of the times of the Gentiles. Without the prophecy of Daniel, certain passages in the New Testament, such as our Lord's Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation, could not be understood.

C. DANIEL, THE CAPTIVE

Daniel and his three friends were among the select youthful hostages taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C., the third year of King Jehoiakim (Daniel 1:1, 3).

For three years Daniel was trained in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:4, 5). He was given a new name, Belteshazar. The names of his three friends were also changed.

Daniel (God will judge for God is my judge) was changed to Belteshazar (Whom Bel favors).

Hananiah (Beloved of the Lord) was changed to Shadrach (illumined by the Sun-god).

Mishael (Who is as God) to Meshach (Who is like Venus).

Azariah (The Lord is my help) to Abednego (The servant of Nego).

The purpose of this was to wean them away from their native land and religion. However, changing a man's name does not change his character and these young men were loyal to God throughout.

They were made eunuchs. This is evident for they were turned over to the prince of the eunuchs. This meant that they would have no sons to carry on their name.

Daniel's first great test came quickly. He was offered meat offered to idols and intoxicating drink. Daniel could have been bitter about his condition and fatalistic about the future. He could have reasoned that there was no purpose in keeping true. But Daniel did no such thing!

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he could not defile himself with the king's meat" (Daniel 1:8). He kept his dedication to God and maintained his separation from the world. It was for this reason that he, like Joseph, could be promoted to the highest office in the land, next to the king himself.

D. DANIEL, THE STATESMAN

The dream that God gave Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign was extremely important. It has been called the ABC prophecy. It was because of Daniel's interpretation of this dream that he was promoted to be ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the wise men. He held this position for a long time, for years later Nebuchadnezzar referred to him as the master of the magicians (Daniel 4:9).

At the time of the Persian conquest when Daniel was eighty years of age, he was retained in a position of high responsibility. He was one of the three presidents over the governors of Persia's 120 provinces.

This speaks well of Daniel's ability as a statesman. God blessed him with a long, successful life because he had never compromised on his dedication to God's will.

E. DANIEL, THE HERO

Undoubtedly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews referred to him in Hebrews 11:33, "stopped the mouth of lions."

It was Daniel's habit to pray three times each day with his windows opened toward Jerusalem. When the decree went forth that he would be thrown to the lions if he asked petitions of anyone other than King Darius, Daniel's courage and faithful devotion was clearly revealed. Daniel prayed, "as he did aforetime." His prayer did not change.

Through this experience of spending a night with hungry lions, Daniel became a great hero of the Old Testament.

F. DANIEL, THE BELOVED OF GOD

The ninth chapter of his prophecy is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible.

Here we find it recorded that Daniel sought God by prayer, supplications, fasting, sackcloth and ashes. As he prayed, this godly man searched his heart and confessed his sins. In answer to his prayer, God sent Gabriel with the answer to his enquiry regarding the future of Daniel's people. Along with the answer, Gabriel told Daniel, "Thou art greatly beloved" (Daniel 9:23).

Certainly Daniel had a special place in the heart of God. He was the beloved of God!

What Have You Learned?

1. What do we know of Daniel's heritage? _____

2. How can we compare Daniel's life to Moses?

How can his life be compared to Joseph? _____

3. What does Daniel's name mean? _____

4. In Matthew 24:15, who called Daniel "the prophet?" _____

5. What writings of the New Testament did Daniel's prophecies help explain? _____

6. Daniel and his three friends were hostages of Nebuchadnezzar. What were their names, what were their names changed to, and what did these names mean? _____

7. Why did the Babylonians change Daniel's name?

Lesson Eleven

THE RETURN FROM EXILE

What I Have Learned

A. THE LENGTH OF TIME FORETOLD

“For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jeremiah 29:10).

The prophet Jeremiah had accurately foretold the length of the captivity. It was this prophecy of Jeremiah that caused Daniel to seek God in prayer and fasting as recorded in Daniel 9. It appears that Daniel might have greatly influenced Cyrus in his decree.

B. KING CYRUS

The document heralding a new era for the Jews came not from a Jewish lawgiver or prophet, but from the decree of a Gentile king.

Cyrus the Great captured Babylon in 538 B. C. He was a descendant from an Old Persian family of royal ancestry. He was a brilliant conqueror and became ruler of the largest empire in history up to that time.

Cyrus was noble in character. He was prudent, modest and religious-minded. He considered himself a liberator and instituted a policy of repatriation for the captive people. The Hebrews were encouraged to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple.

The edict of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4) came in his first year of reign. The main terms of this edict may be stated thus:

- The Temple at Jerusalem was to be rebuilt.
- The cost was to come from Cyrus' own treasury.
- There were certain specifications that had to be met regarding the building of the Temple.
- All Jews who wished to do so could return home.
- Jews who wanted to remain in Babylon were to assist with financial contributions.
- Gold and silver vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar were to be returned to Jerusalem.

C. ZERUBBABEL

The first return took place shortly after this edict of Cyrus was issued.

The first migration was under the leadership of Sheshbazzar called a “prince of Judah” (Ezra 1:8). Other leaders were Zerubbabel and Joshua (Jeshua), the high priest. As Daniel felt obligated to remain at his post, he was not among the number.

It is indicated in Ezra 2 that the number in the first migration was 42,360 besides 7,337 servants, nearly 50,000 in all. As the majorities were of the tribe of Judah, they became known as Jews. The majority of the captives, however, remained in Chaldea, Persia and Media.

The trip of 700 miles took four months. One year later they began to rebuild the Temple. This work was under the direction of Zerubbabel and Joshua. They first erected the altar and shortly after, observed the Feast of Tabernacles. Then they began work on the Temple itself. They laid the foundation and then celebrated. Some wept when they remembered the glory of the first Temple and realized that this one could not compare.

The Samaritans (a mixed race of Israelites and foreigners) asked permission to help but were refused. When they could not join in building, they gave much opposition. Finally the work stopped and the Temple remained for sixteen years, little more than a foundation.

D. KING DARIUS

Darius was one of the greatest of the Persian rulers, a descendant of Cyrus. Between the reigns of Cyrus and Darius, the work on rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple had stopped.

During the second year of Darius's reign, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged that the work would be resumed. Darius discovered the original decree of Cyrus favoring the Jews and permission was granted for the work to be resumed. Money was taken from the public treasury to finance the project. Haggai and Zechariah had rebuked the people for building their own homes and not the Temple.

The building was finished and the Passover observed. This was in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15), twenty years after the work had started.

About the time the Temple was completed, the Babylonians rebelled and the city was destroyed. It soon was so desolate as to be scarcely recognized, fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 13:19-21.

E. EZRA

During the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, the second return took place. This was led by Ezra, a descendant of Aaron. He was an able teacher of the Law (Ezra 7:6, 10).

This second return took place about eighty years after Zerubbabel and the first company had returned. The group who accompanied Ezra was much smaller than the first. When Ezra discovered that there were no Levites in the party, he delayed until thirty-eight Levites were persuaded to join.

Ezra's chief objective was to fully re-establish the Law of Moses. Before leaving, the people assembled, proclaimed a fast and called on God for protection and blessing. The journey took four months.

Ezra received many privilege from Artaxerxes. He could take as many Jews who desired to go. He had the privilege of receiving gold and silver from the Jews and also from the king for the Temple. he could purchase animals for sacrifices. The Temple's personnel were to be exempt from taxation. Ezra was given the authority to appoint magistrates in Judah to enforce the laws of Jehovah with power of life and death over the guilty.

Ezra's greatest contribution was the editing and publishing of the Book of the Law. As he read it to the people in the original Hebrew, he explained its meaning to them.

At this time the practice of building synagogues began. Here the Law was read and expounded. About this time, the "traditions of the fathers" began to be observed.

F. THE PROBLEM OF INTERMARRIAGE – Ezra 9:1-15

One of the greatest problems facing Ezra was the intermarriage of many Jews with idolatrous wives. Some of the Levites and priests were even involved.

When Ezra was told of this, he rent his clothes and pulled hair from his head. He offered a prayer of confession. The people were deeply moved and were convicted. It was decided that the marriages should be dissolved. Details were worked out how this difficult task should be carried out.

Each case was judged separately. Such separation caused much heartbreak, but it was completed in three months.

1. How long did the captivity last? _____

Which prophet foretold this? _____

2. Who wrote the document heralding a new era for the Jews? Why was this so amazing? _____

3. Describe the character of Cyrus the Great. _____

4. List the six (6) main terms of the edict of Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1-4). _____

5. Who was the leader of the first migration of Jews back to Jerusalem? _____

Who were two other early leaders? _____

6. How many people returned to Jerusalem in the first migration? _____

7. How long was the journey, and how long did it take them to complete it? _____

8. How long did they wait before beginning the rebuilding of the Temple? _____

Who was in charge of this reconstruction? _____

What Have You Learned?

What was the process followed in rebuilding?

9. Why did the rebuilding of the Temple stop?

10. How were the prophets Haggai and Zechariah instrumental in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple? _____

11. When was the Temple finished? _____

What was the first thing they did after completion?

What did the Babylonians do about the time the Temple was completed? _____

Where is the prophecy located in the Bible that foretold these events? _____

12. When did the second return to Jerusalem take place? _____

Who led this return? _____
What was his occupation? _____

13. Why did Ezra delay the return to Jerusalem?

What was his chief objective for returning? _____

14. List five (5) privileges Ezra received from Artaxerxes. _____

15. What was Ezra's main contribution to the Jews?

16. What major practice/trend began during this time? _____

17. What was one of the greatest problems faced by Ezra? _____

What did Ezra do when he heard about this problem? _____

What did the people do when they learned of Ezra's actions? _____

Lesson Twelve

NEHEMIAH

What I Have Learned

A. NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes who reigned, as king of Persia during the period of 465-425 B.C. Nehemiah was a trusted official. There is very little recorded about him apart from the book, which bears his name. He was a man of prayer, courage and perseverance.

One of Nehemiah's brethren, Hanani, brought word of the ruined condition of Jerusalem. Undoubtedly Hanani believed that Nehemiah could help because authority was needed from the king to overcome the local opposition. Ezra had been in Jerusalem for thirteen years, but he was mainly occupied as a priest, teaching the people.

Nehemiah was overcome with grief and immediately went to prayer (Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4). He spent four months in prayer before he made his request known to the king. He waited for the right opportunity to approach the king. In the spring of 444 B. C., the opportunity came. Artaxerxes noticed the sadness of Nehemiah and asked the reason. Nehemiah told him of the condition at Jerusalem and asked permission to go to help. The king not only granted his request but assigned soldiers to accompany Nehemiah.

B. THE THIRD RETURN

A number of Jews went with Nehemiah, returning to Jerusalem during the twentieth year of Artaxerxes reign (444 B. C.). There is no record just how many Jews accompanied Nehemiah. It would seem that there was a large number, although not as large as the two former migrations.

C. BUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

Arriving in Jerusalem, Nehemiah found the walls in rubble, completely dilapidated. He spent three nights inspecting the walls so that he might acquaint himself with the true condition. When he had all the facts, he met with the Jerusalem leaders and presented his plans. There was a good response. Workers were recruited from both inside and outside Jerusalem. They were assigned various sections of the wall on which to labor.

The work move forward rapidly, but severe opposition arose. The other nations who lived nearby, especially Samaria, benefited from Judah's

weakness. The leaders of this opposition were Sanballet, Tobiah and Geshem. Nehemiah divided the workers into two groups. One group worked at building the walls; the other group bore arms. Each night a heavy guard was posted. The wall was completed in fifty-two days and Jerusalem was once again a fortified city, 142 years after it had been destroyed.

D. NEHEMIAH'S SECOND TERM

Nehemiah served as governor in Jerusalem during two terms. He was governor the first time for twelve years and then returned to his former position in the Persian Court.

After being in the Persian capital for a short time, he was commissioned the second time to be the governor at Jerusalem. There seems to be no record stating just how long Nehemiah served this second time.

E. NEHEMIAH'S WORK AND REFORMS

1. Security

After the wall was completed, Nehemiah placed Hananiah in charge of security. He had one-tenth of the population move to Jerusalem. This gave Jerusalem great security.

2. Remission of Debts (Nehemiah 5:1-9)

Nehemiah took action to remit the debts of the poor people. Some of the wealthy took advantage of the heavy Persian taxes and poor crops to loan the poor money. When they could not pay their debts, the wealthy then took possession of their property. Nehemiah appealed to the people to stop this practice and restore what they had taken. Nehemiah set a personal example by refusing to accept a salary for being governor.

3. Reading God's Law (Nehemiah 8-10)

Nehemiah encouraged the people to assemble to hear God's Word read. This was done by Ezra. The Feast of the Tabernacle was kept, followed by a public confession of sin. A covenant to keep God's Law was signed by Nehemiah and the leaders.

4. Dedication of the Walls (Nehemiah 12:27-47)

The walls were formally dedicated. The people formed two processions and marched in opposite directions around the walls meeting together at the Temple. The singing and praises to God could be heard for a great distance.

5. Collection of Tithes

Nehemiah insisted that the people tithe. Certain rooms were set apart to receive the tithes. He ordered that the tithes would be brought with great care.

6. Keeping the Sabbath

There was much laxity in respecting the Sabbath. Many of the Jews worked and did business on the Sabbath. Nehemiah closed the city gates and prohibited all merchandising on the Sabbath Day.

7. Mixed Marriages Ended (Nehemiah 13:23-28)

In spite of Ezra's efforts, the sin of mixed marriages still existed. Nehemiah did not have the marriages dissolved, but the people had to swear that there would be no more mixed marriages.

F. OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY ENDED WITH NEHEMIAH

By Nehemiah's time, seventeen centuries had passed since the call of Abraham. The Old Testament records no more history after Nehemiah. Now there are 400 silent years until the time of Christ. The Old Testament closes during the period of time that the Persian Empire ruled the Middle East.

The efforts of the Persian kings to conquer Greece were never successful. Ultimately, Alexander the Great appeared on the scene. He conquered Tyre and took Egypt. Then he struck at the Persian Empire and won the Battle of Arbela. The empire of Cyrus lasted about 200 years.

Alexander died young and his empire was divided among four generals.

Ptolemy was given Palestine and the Jews fared well. The translation of the Scriptures into Greek was started during the time. This version became known as the Septuagint.

Alexander's general, Seleucid, was given Syria and soon acquired nearly all of Asia. The cities of Seleucia and Antioch were built.

During the reign of the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus the Great, Palestine was taken and added to the Syrian kingdom. This became one of the darkest periods in the history of the Jews. Antiochus Epiphanies slew 40,000 Jews and sold 40,000 as slaves. He desecrated the Temple by sacrificing a sow on the altar. He later made a terrible massacre and demonished the city and its walls.

For a period of time, there was glorious deliverance, which came with the Maccabees. This lasted for about 100 years before the Romans who were in power when Jesus was born conquered Palestine.

What Have You Learned?

1. What information do we have about Nehemiah?

Where does this information come from? _____

2. Why did Hanani think Nehemiah could help the situation in Jerusalem? _____

3. How long did Nehemiah wait before approaching the king? _____

What did he do during this time? _____

What did the king do when he heard what was troubling Nehemiah? _____

4. How many Jews returned to Jerusalem with Nehemiah? _____

5. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, what did he find? _____

What did he do the first three nights? _____

6. What was Nehemiah's plan for rebuilding the wall? _____

7. How did Nehemiah handle the opposition that arose? _____

8. Who were the main opposers of rebuilding the wall? _____

Why did they care if the wall was rebuilt or not?

9. How long did it take to rebuild the walls?

How long had the walls been down? _____

10. How did Nehemiah handle the security of the new wall? _____

11. What action did Nehemiah take to remit the debts of the poor people? _____

12. How did Ezra and Nehemiah work together?

13. Describe the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem. _____

14. What did Nehemiah do about the collection of tithes? _____

15. What did Nehemiah do about keeping the Sabbath? _____

16. What did Nehemiah do about the problem of mixed marriages? _____

17. By Nehemiah's time, how much time had passed since the call of Abraham? _____

How many silent years passed before Christ came?

18. The efforts of the Persian kings to conquer _____ was never successful. _____

and _____ were conquered by _____ the _____.

He struck at the Persian Empire and won the Battle of _____.

The empire of Cyrus lasted about _____ years. Alexander died young and his empire was divided among _____

generals. _____ was given _____ and the Jews fared well.

The Scriptures were translated into _____. This version was known as the _____.

_____ was given Syria, and soon acquired nearly all of _____.

The cities of _____ and _____ were built. During the reign of _____

the Great, _____ was taken and added to the Syrian kingdom. This became one of the _____ periods in Jewish history.

_____ killed _____ Jews and sold _____ as slaves.

He desecrated the _____ by sacrificing a _____ on the altar. Glorious deliverance came with the _____.

This lasted about _____ years before Palestine was conquered by the _____ who were

in power when _____ was born.

Additional Notes: _____

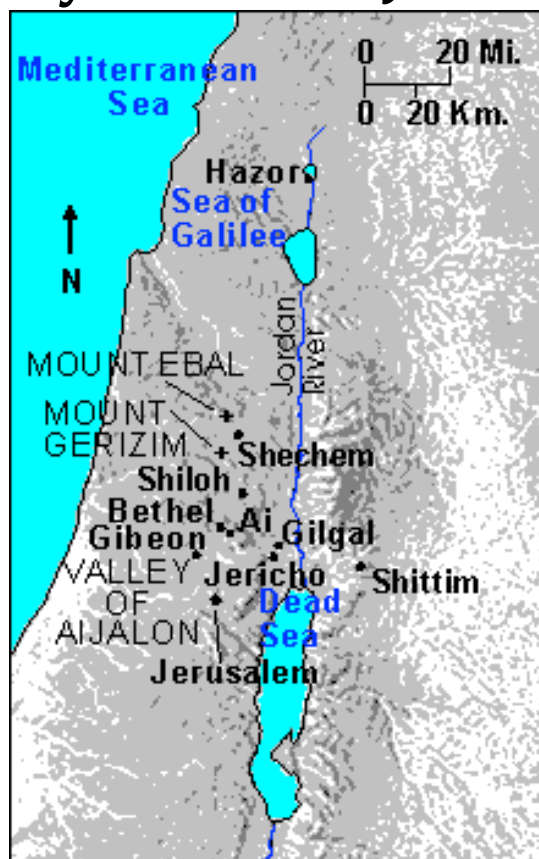
Old Testament Historical Books

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Key Places in Joshua



1 Shittim

The story of Joshua begins with the Israelites camping at Shittim. The Israelites under Joshua were ready to enter and conquer Canaan. But before the nation moved out, Joshua received instructions from God (Joshua 1:1-18).

2 Jordan River

The entire nation prepared to cross this river, which was swollen from spring rains. After the spies returned from Jericho with a positive report, Joshua prepared the priests and people for a miracle. As the priests carried the ark into the Jordan River, the water stopped flowing and the entire nation crossed on dry ground into the promised land (Joshua 2:1-4:24).

3 Gilgal

After crossing the Jordan River, the Israelites camped at Gilgal where they renewed their commitment to God and celebrated the Passover, the feast commemorating their deliverance from Egypt (see Exodus). As Joshua made plans for the attack on Jericho, an angel appeared to him (Joshua 5:1-5).

4 Jericho

The walled city of Jericho seemed a formidable enemy. But when Joshua followed God's plans, the great walls were no obstacle. The city was conquered with only the obedient marching of the people. (Joshua 6:1-27).

5 Ai

Victory could not continue without obedience to God. That is why the disobedience of one man, Achan, brought defeat to the entire nation in the first battle against Ai. But once the sin was recognized and punished, God told Joshua to take heart and try Ai once again. This time the city was taken (Joshua 7:1-8:29).

6 The Mountains of Ebal and Gerizim

After the defeat of Ai, Joshua built an altar at Mount Ebal. Then the people divided themselves, half at the foot of Mount Ebal, half at the foot of Mount Gerizim. The priests stood between the ark of the covenant as Joshua read God's law to all the people (Joshua 8:30-35).

7 Gibeon

It was just after the Israelites reaffirmed their covenant with God that their leaders made a major mistake in judgment: they were tricked into making a peace treaty with the city of Gibeon. The Gibeonites pretended that they had traveled a long distance and asked the Israelites for a treaty. The leaders made the agreement without consulting God. The trick was soon discovered, but because the treaty had been made, Israel could not go back on its word. As a result the Gibeonites saved their own lives, but they were forced to become Israel's slaves (Joshua 9:1-27).

8 Valley of Aijalon

The king of Jerusalem was very angry at Gibeon for making a peace treaty with the Israelites. He gathered armies from four other cities to attack the city. Gibeon summoned Joshua for help. Joshua took immediate action. Leaving Gilgal, he attacked the coalition by surprise. As the battle waged on and moved into the Valley of Aijalon, Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still until the enemy could be destroyed (Joshua 10:1-43).

9 Hazor

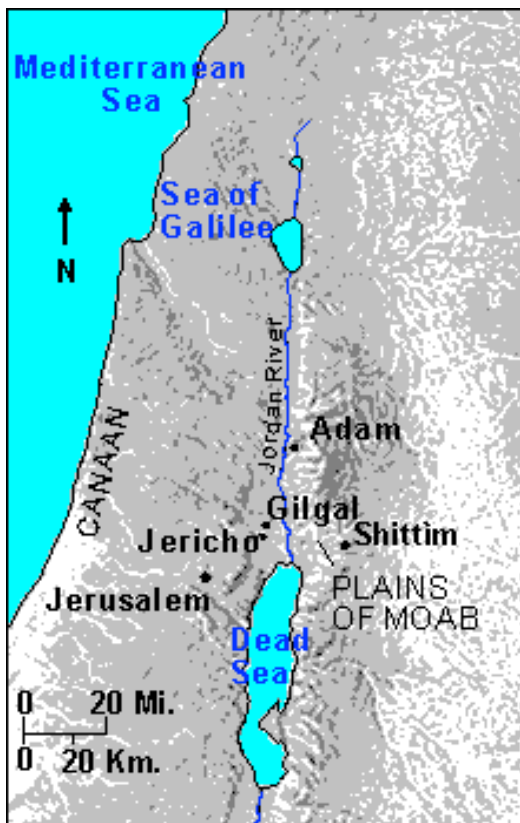
Up north in Hazor, King Jabin mobilized the kings of the surrounding cities to unite and crush Israel. But God gave Joshua and Israel victory (Joshua 11:1-23).

10 Shiloh

After the armies of Canaan were conquered, Israel gathered at Shiloh to set up the tabernacle. This movable building had been the nation's center of worship during their years of wandering. The seven tribes who had not received their land were given their allotments (Joshua 18:1-19:51).

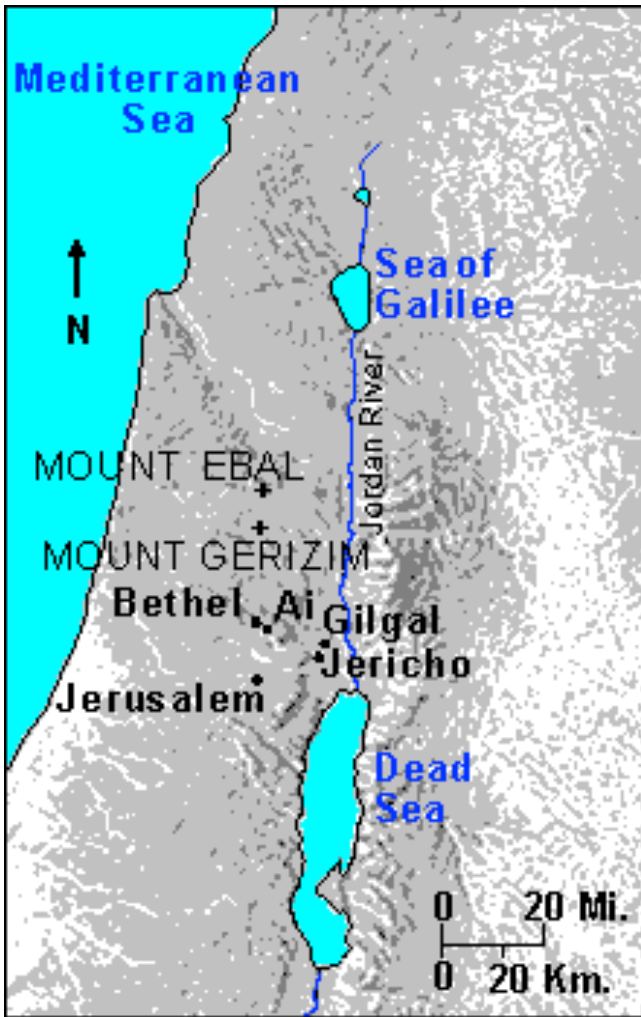
11 Shechem

Before Joshua died he called the entire nation together at Shechem to remind them that it was God who had given them their land and that only with God's help could they keep it. The people vowed to follow God. As long as Joshua was alive, the land was at rest from war and trouble (Joshua 24:1-33). §



The Spy Mission to Jericho

Two spies left the Israelite camp at Shittim, crossed the Jordan River, and slipped into Jericho. The city was built around an oasis in the midst of a hot and desolate valley 840 feet below sea level. Jericho was the first major city the Israelites set out to conquer. §



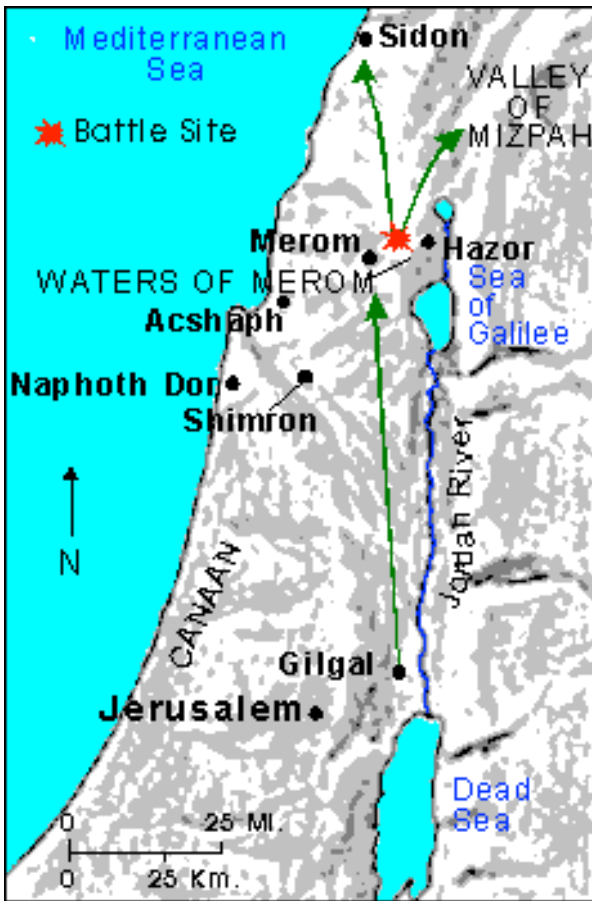
The Battle for Ai

During the night, Joshua sent one detachment of soldiers to the west of Ai to lie in wait. The next morning he led a second group north of Ai. When the army of Ai attacked, the Israelites to the north pretended to scatter, only to turn on the enemy as the men lying in ambush moved in and burned the city. §

The Battle for Gibeon

Five Amorite kings conspired to destroy Gibeon. Israel came to the aid of the Gibeonites. The Israelites attacked the enemy armies outside of Gibeon and chased them through the Valley of Aijalon as far as Makkedah and Azekah. §





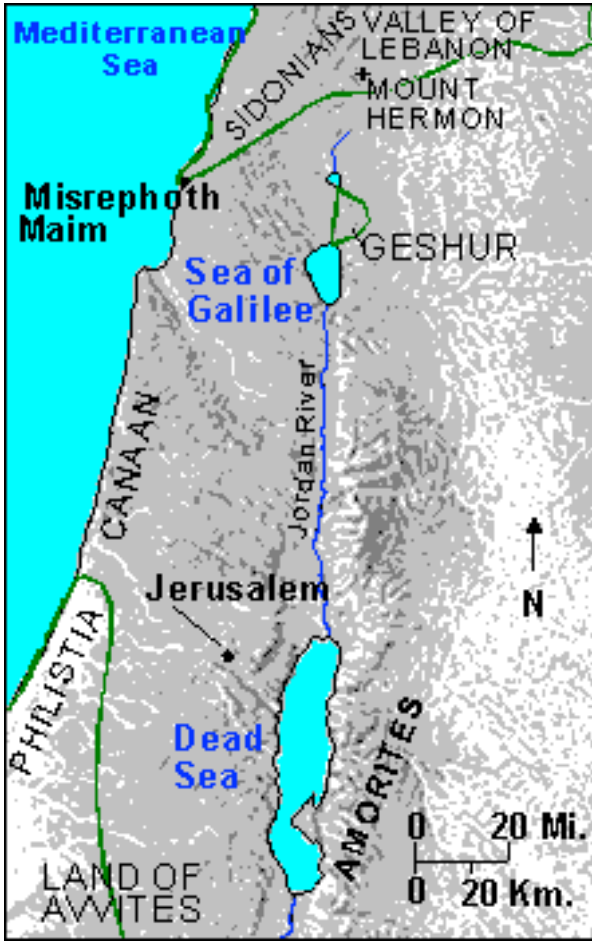
The Battle for Hazor

Kings from the north joined together to battle the Israelites who controlled the southern half of Canaan. They gathered by the waters of Merom, but Joshua attacked them by surprise--the enemies' chariots were useless in the dense forests. Hazor, the largest Canaanite center in Galilee, was destroyed. §

The Conquered Land

Joshua displayed brilliant military strategy in the way he went about conquering the land of Canaan. He first captured the well-fortified Jericho to gain a foothold in Canaan and to demonstrate the awesome might of the God of Israel. Then he gained the hill country around Bethel and Gibeon. From there he subdued towns in the lowlands. Then his army conquered important cities in the north, such as Hazor. In all, Israel conquered land both east (Joshua 12:1-6) and west (Joshua 12:7-24) of the Jordan River, from Mount Hermon in the north to beyond the Negev to Mount Halak in the south. Thirty-one kings and their cities had been defeated. The Israelites had overpowered the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Other people living in Canaan were yet to be conquered. §



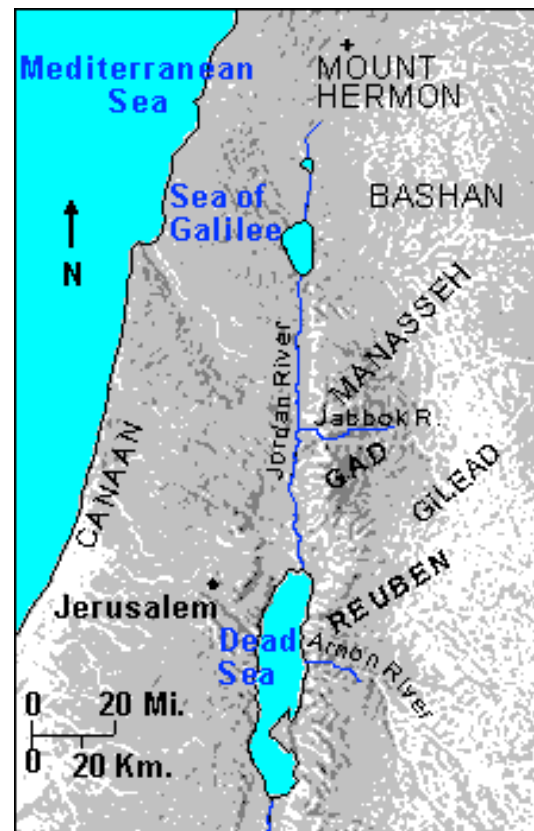


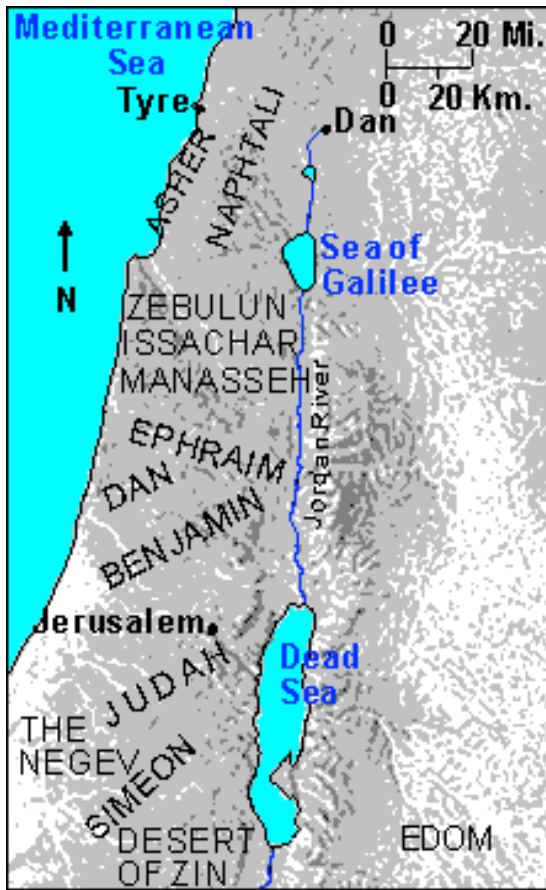
The Land Yet to be Conquered

Canaan was now controlled by the Israelites, although much land and several cities still needed to be conquered. Joshua told the people to include both conquered and unconquered lands in the territorial allotments (Joshua 13:7). He was certain the people would complete the conquest as God had commanded. §

Tribes East of the Jordan

Joshua assigned territory to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan where they had chosen to remain because of the wonderful livestock country (Numbers 32:1-5). §



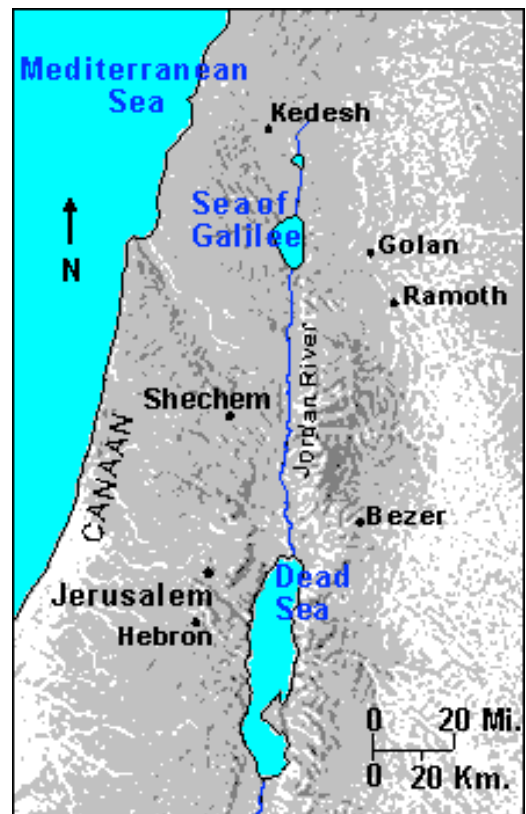


Tribes West of the Jordan

Judah, Ephraim, and the other half-tribe of Manasseh were the first tribes to receive land west of the Jordan because of their past acts of faith. The remaining seven tribes--Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Simeon, and Dan--were slow to conquer and possess the land allotted to them. §

The Cities of Refuge

A city of refuge was just that--refuge for someone who committed an unintentional murder that would evoke revenge from the victim's friends and relatives. The six cities of refuge were spaced throughout the land so that a person was never too far from one. §





Joshua's Final Speech

Joshua called all the Israelites to Shechem to hear his final words. He challenged the people to make a conscious choice to always serve God. Soon afterwards, Joshua died and was buried in his hometown of Timnath Serah. §

Key Places in Judges

1 Bokim

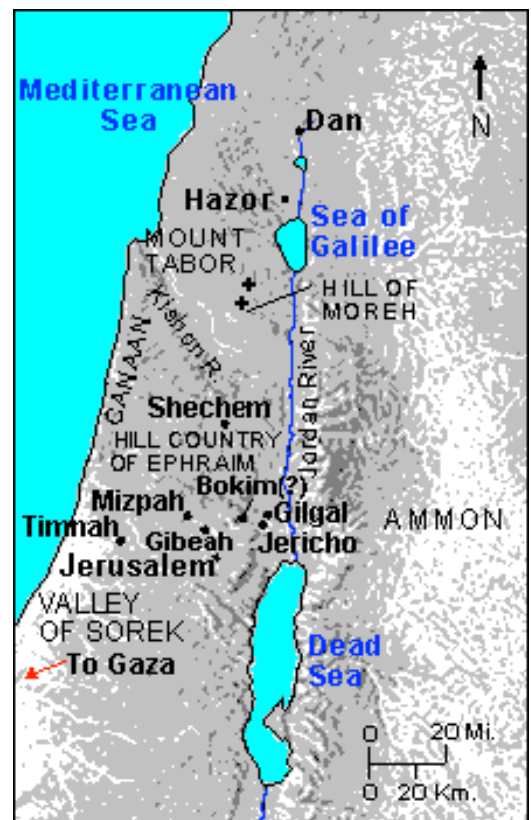
The book of Judges opens with the Israelites continuing their conquest of the promised land. Their failure to obey God and destroy all the evil inhabitants soon comes back to haunt them in two ways: (1) the enemies reorganized and counterattacked, and (2) Israel turned away from God, adopting the evil and idolatrous practices of the inhabitants of the land. The angel of the Lord appeared at Bokim to inform the Israelites that their sin and disobedience had broken their agreement with God and would result in punishment through oppression (Judges 1:1-3:11).

2 Jericho

The nation of Moab was one of the first to oppress Israel. Moab's King Eglon conquered much of Israel—including the city of Jericho ("the City of Palms")—and forced the people to pay unreasonable taxes. The messenger chosen to deliver this tax money to King Eglon was named Ehud. But he had more than money to deliver, for he drew his hidden sword and killed the Moabite king. Ehud then escaped, only to return with an army that chased out the Moabites and freed Israel from its oppressors (Judges 3:12-31).

3 Hazor

After Ehud's death, King Jabin of Hazor conquered Israel and oppressed the people for 20 years. Then Deborah became Israel's leader. She summoned Barak to fight Commander Sisera, the leader of King Jabin's army. Together Deborah and Barak led their army into battle against Jabin's forces in the land between Mount Tabor and the Kishon River and conquered them (Judges 4:1-5:31).



4 Hill of Moreh

After 40 years of peace, the Midianites began to harass the Israelites by destroying their flocks and crops. When the Israelites finally cried out to God, he chose Gideon, a poor and humble farmer, to be their deliverer. After struggling with doubt and feelings of inferiority, Gideon took courage and knocked down his town's altar to Baal, causing a great uproar among the citizens. Filled with the Spirit of God, he attacked the vast army of Midian, which was camped near the hill of Moreh. With just a handful of men he sent the enemy running away in confusion (Judges 6:1-7:25).

5 Shechem

Even great leaders make mistakes. Gideon's relations with a concubine in Shechem resulted in the birth of a son named Abimelech. Abimelech turned out to be treacherous and power hungry--stirring up the people to proclaim him king. To carry out his plan, he went so far as to kill 69 of his 70 half brothers. Eventually some men of Shechem rebelled against Abimelech, but he gathered together an army and defeated them. His lust for power led him to ransack two other cities, but he was killed by a woman who dropped a millstone onto his head (Judges 8:28-9:57).

6 Land of Ammon

Again Israel turned completely from God; so God turned from them. But when the Ammonites mobilized their army to attack, Israel threw away her idols and called upon God once again. Jephthah, a prostitute's son who had been run out of Israel, was asked to return and lead Israel's forces against the enemy. After defeating the Ammonites, Jephthah became involved in a war with the tribe of Ephraim over a misunderstanding (Judges 10:1-12:15).

7 Timnah

Israel's next judge, Samson, was a miracle child promised by God to a barren couple. He was the one who would begin to free Israel from their next and most powerful oppressor, the Philistines. According to God's command, Samson was to be a Nazirite--one who took a vow to be set apart for special service to God. One of the stipulations of the vow was that Samson's hair could never be cut. But when Samson grew up, he did not always take his special responsibility to God seriously. He even fell in love with a Philistine girl in Timnah and asked to marry her. Before the wedding, Samson held a party for some men in the city, using a riddle to place a bet with them. The men, however, forced Samson's fiancée into giving the answer. Furious at being tricked, Samson paid his bet with the lives of 30 Philistines who lived in the nearby city of Ashkelon (Judges 13:1-14:20).

8 Valley of Sorek

Samson killed thousands of Philistines with his incredible strength. The nation's leaders looked for a way to stop him. They got their chance when another Philistine woman stole Samson's heart. Her name was Delilah and she lived in the Valley of Sorek. In exchange for a great sum of money, Delilah deceived Samson into confiding in her the secret of his strength. One night while he slept, Delilah cut off his hair. As a result, Samson fell helplessly into the hands of the enemy (Judges 15:1-16:20).

9 Gaza

Samson was blinded and led captive to a prison in Gaza. There his hair began to grow again. After a while, the Philistines held a great festival to celebrate Samson's imprisonment and to humiliate him before the crowds. When he was brought out as the entertainment, he literally brought down the house when he pushed on the pillars of the banquet hall and killed the thousands trapped inside. The prophecy that he would begin to free Israel from the Philistines had come true (Judges 16:21-31).

10 Hill Country of Ephraim

In the hill country of Ephraim lived a man named Micah. Micah hired his own priest to perform priestly duties in the shrine which housed his collection of idols. He thought he was pleasing God

with all his religiosity! Like many of the Israelites, Micah assumed that his own opinions of what was right would agree with God's (Judges 17:1-13).

11 Dan

The tribe of Dan migrated north in order to find new territory. They sent spies ahead of them to scout out the land. One night the spies stopped at Micah's home. Looking for some assurance of victory, the spies stole Micah's idols and priest. Rejoining the tribe, they came upon the city of Laish and slaughtered the unarmed and innocent citizens, renaming the conquered city Dan. Micah's idols were then set up in the city and became the focal point of the tribe's worship for many years (Judges 18:1-31).

12 Gibeah

The extent to which many people had fallen away from God became clear in Gibeah, a village in the territory of Benjamin. A man and his concubine were traveling north toward the hill country of Ephraim. They stopped for the night in Gibeah, thinking they would be safe. But some perverts in the city gathered around the home where they were staying and demanded that the man come out to have sexual relations with them. Instead the man and his host pushed the concubine out the door. She was raped and abused all night. When the man found her lifeless body the next morning, he cut it into 12 pieces and sent the parts to each tribe of Israel. This tragic event demonstrated that the nation had sunk to its lowest spiritual level (Judges 19:1-30).

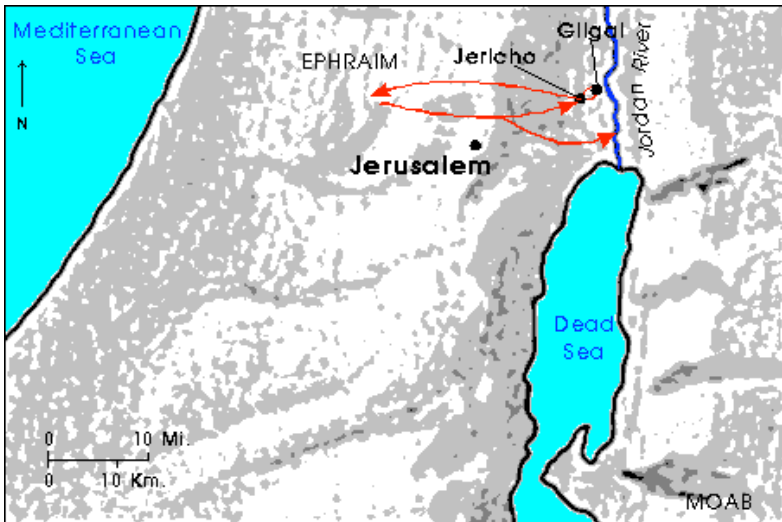
13 Mizpah

The leaders of Israel came to Mizpah to decide how to punish the wicked men from the city of Gibeah. When the city leaders refused to turn the criminals over, the whole nation of Israel took vengeance upon both Gibeah and the tribe of Benjamin where the city was located. When the battle ended the entire tribe had been destroyed except for a handful of men who took refuge in the hills. Israel had become morally depraved. The stage was now set for much-needed spiritual renewal that would come under the prophet Samuel (Judges 20:1-21:25). §



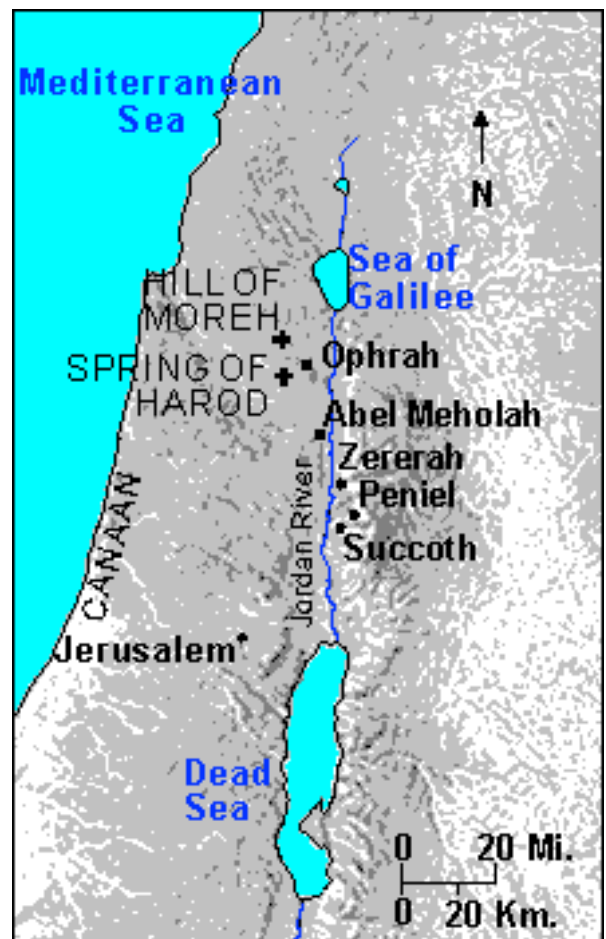
Judah Fights for its Land

The tribe of Judah wasted no time beginning their conquest of the territory allotted to them. With help from the tribe of Simeon, Jerusalem was conquered, as were the Canaanites in the Negev and along the coast. Hebron and Debir fell to Judah, and later Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron. §



Ehud Frees Israel from Moab

When King Eglon of Moab conquered part of Israel, he set up his throne in the city of Jericho. Ehud was chosen to take Israel's tribute there. After delivering Israel's tribute, Ehud killed King Eglon and escaped into the hill country of Ephraim. From there he gathered together an army to cut off any Moabites trying to escape across the Jordan River. §



King Jabin is Defeated

Deborah traveled from her home between Ramah and Bethel to march with Barak and the Israelite army against Hazor. Sisera, commander of Hazor's army, assembled his men at Harosheth Haggoyim. In spite of Sisera's 900 chariots and expertly trained army, Israel was victorious. §

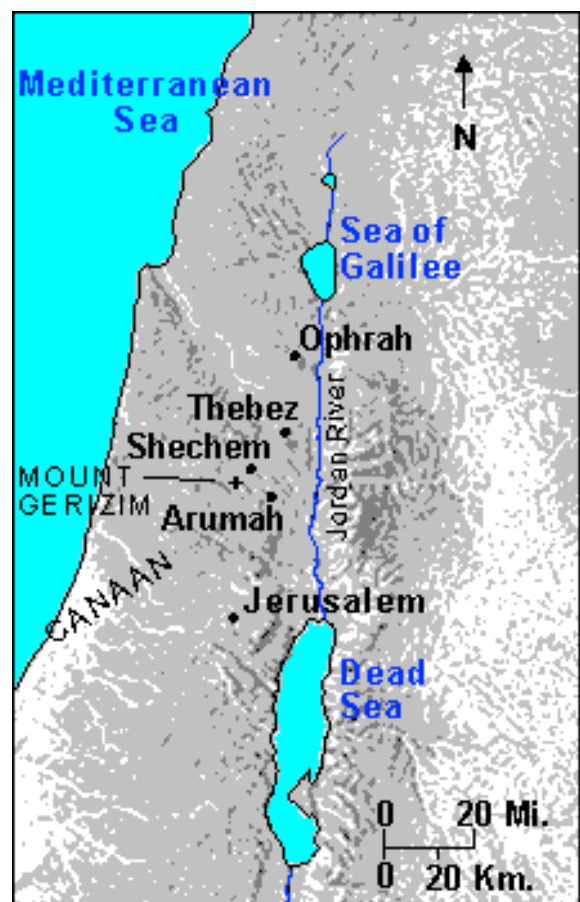
Gideon's Battle

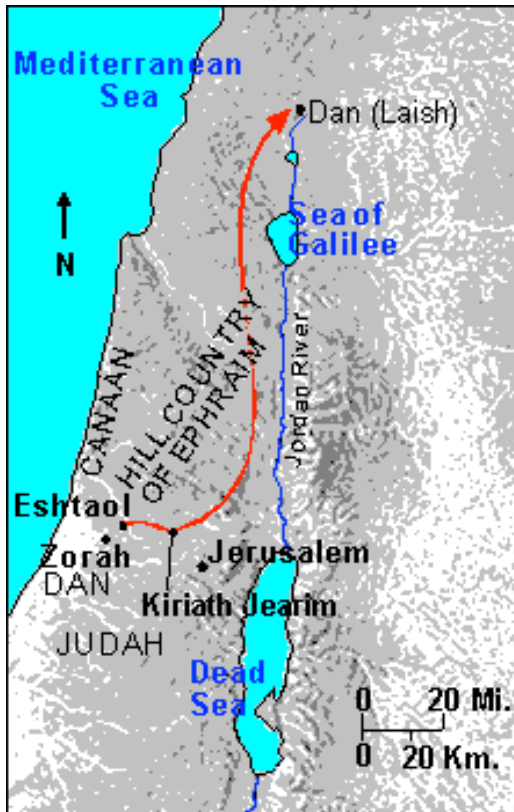
In spite of Deborah and Barak's victory, the Canaanites still caused trouble in the fertile region. God appeared to Gideon at Ophrah and called him to defeat them. With only 300 fighting men, Gideon routed thousands of Midianites, chasing them to Zererah and Abel Meholah. §



Abimelech's Fall

Gideon's illegitimate son killed 69 of his half brothers in Ophrah and returned to Shechem to be acclaimed king. But three years later, Shechem rebelled. From Arumah, Abimelech attacked Shechem, Beth Millo ("the tower of Shechem"), and Thebez where he was killed. §



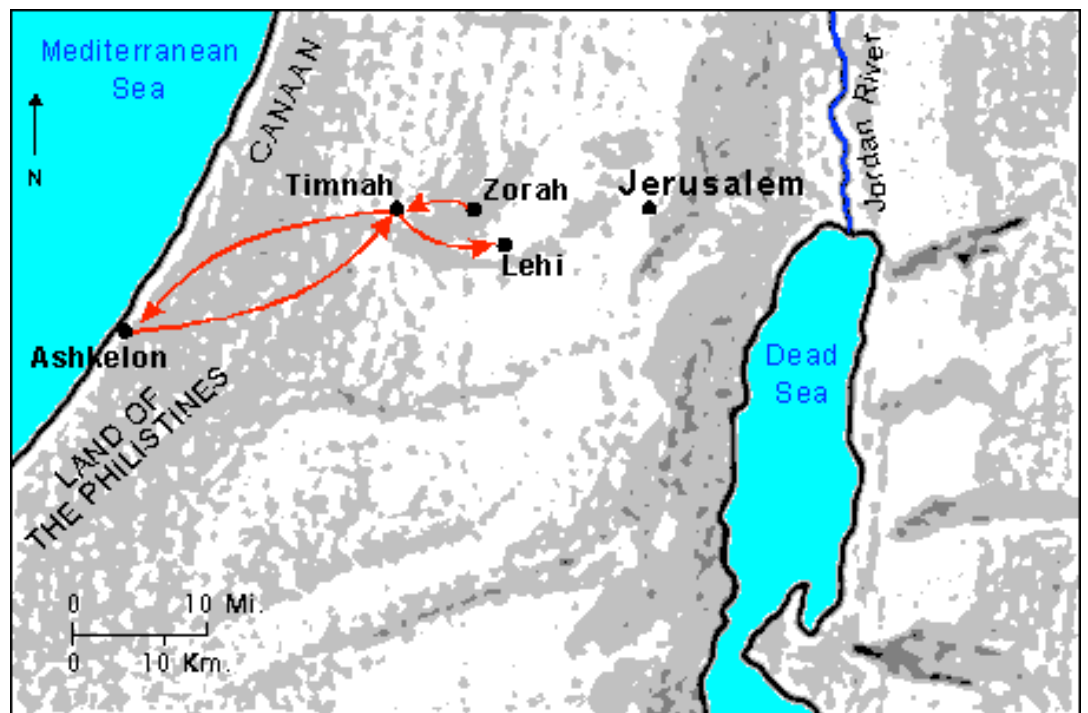


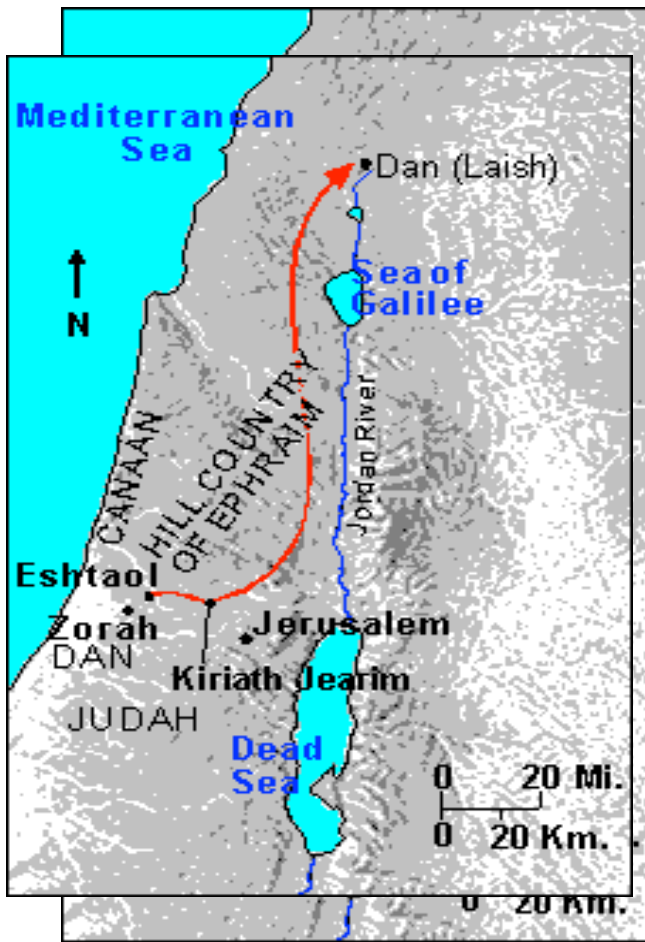
Jephthah's Victory

The Ephraimites mobilized an army because they were angry at not being included in the battle against Ammon. They planned to attack Jephthah at his home in Gilead. Jephthah captured the fords of the Jordan at the Jabbok River and killed the Ephraimites who tried to cross. §

Samson's Ventures

Samson grew up in Zorah and wanted to marry a Philistine girl from Timnah. Tricked at his own wedding feast, he went to Ashkelon and killed some Philistine men and stole their clothes to pay off a bet. Samson then let himself be captured and brought to Lehi where he snapped his ropes and killed 1000 people. §



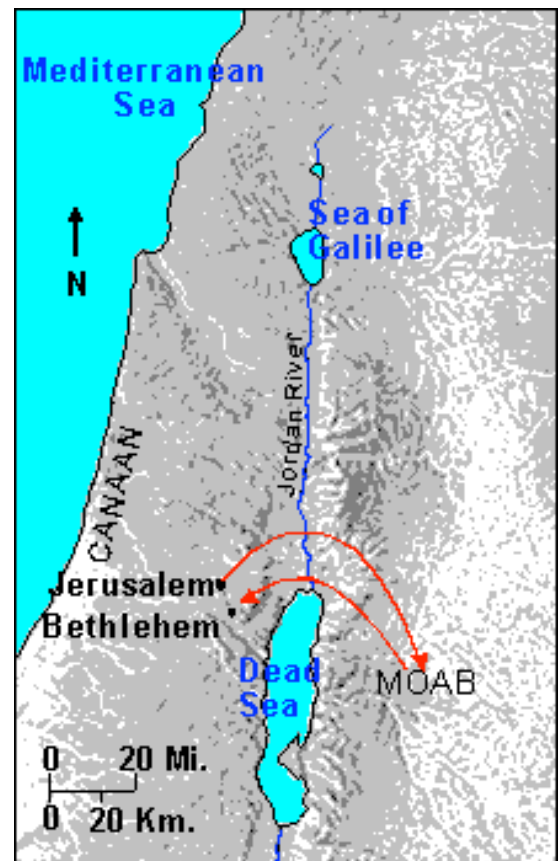


The Tribe of Dan Moves North

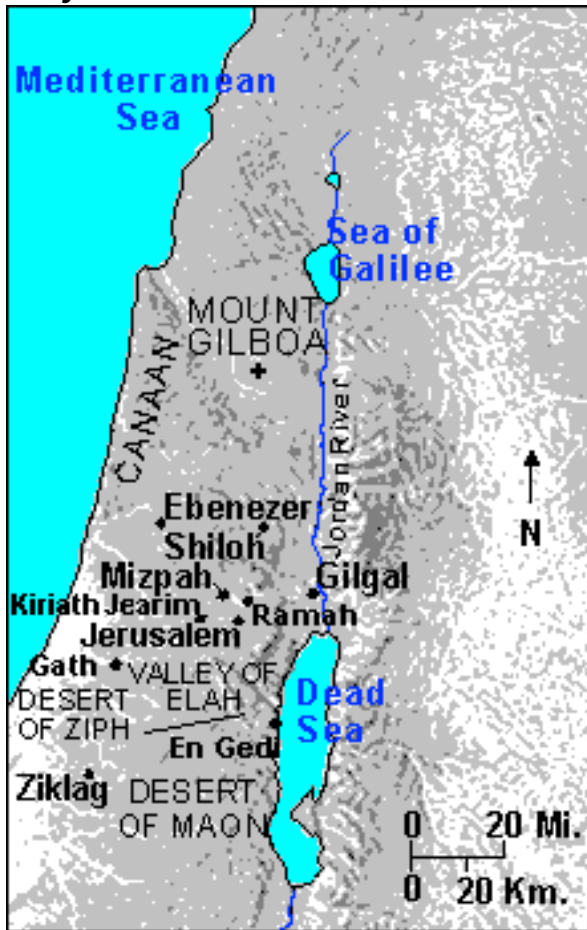
Troops from the tribe of Dan traveled from Zorah and Eshtaol into the hill country of Ephraim where they persuaded Micah's priest to come with them. They continued north to Laish where they ruthlessly butchered the citizens. The city was renamed Dan and the priest's idols became the focus of their worship. §

Setting for the Story

Elimelech, Naomi and their sons traveled from Bethlehem to Moab because of a famine. After her husband and sons died, Naomi returned to Bethlehem with her daughter-in-law Ruth.



Key Places in 1 Samuel



1 Ramah

Samuel was born in Ramah. Before his birth, Samuel's mother Hannah made a promise to God that she would dedicate her son to serve God alongside the priests in the tabernacle at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11).

2 Shiloh

The focal point of Israel's worship was at Shiloh, where the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant resided. Eli was the high priest, but his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were evil men who took advantage of the people. Samuel, however, served God faithfully, and God blessed him as he grew (1 Samuel 2:12-3:21).

3 Kiriath Jearim

Israel was constantly at odds with the Philistines, and another battle was brewing. Hophni and Phinehas brought the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to the battlefield, believing that its mere presence would bring the Israelites victory. The Israelites were defeated by the Philistines at Ebenezer, and the ark was captured. However, the Philistines soon found out that the ark was not quite the great battle trophy they expected. For God sent plagues upon every

Philistine city into which the ark was brought. Finally, the Philistines sent it back to Kiriath Jearim in Israel (1 Samuel 4:1-7:1).

4 Mizpah

The Israelites' defeat made them realize that God was no longer blessing them. Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and asked them to fast and pray in sorrow for their sins. The assembly at Mizpah was a tempting target for the confident Philistines who advanced for an attack. But God intervened and routed their mighty army. Meanwhile, Samuel was judging cases throughout Israel. But as Samuel grew old, the people came to him at Ramah (his home base) demanding a king in order to be like the other nations. At Mizpah, Saul was chosen by sacred appointment to be Israel's first king with the blessing, but not the approval, of God and Samuel (1 Samuel 7:2-10:27).

5 Gilgal

A battle with the Ammonites proved Saul's leadership abilities to the people of Israel. He protected the people of Jabesh Gilead and scattered the Ammonite army. Samuel and the people crowned Saul as king of Israel at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:1-15).

6 Valley of Elah

Saul won many other battles, but over time he proved to be arrogant, sinful, and rebellious until God finally rejected him as king. Unknown to Saul, a young shepherd and musician named David was anointed to be Israel's next king. But it would be many years before David sat upon the throne. Ironically, Saul hired David to play the harp in his palace. Saul grew to like David so much that he made him his personal armor-bearer. In one particular battle with the Philistines in the Valley of Elah, David killed Goliath, the Philistines' mightiest soldier. But this victory was the beginning of the

end of Saul's love for David. The Israelites praised David more than Saul, causing Saul to become so jealous that he plotted to kill David (1 Samuel 12:1-22:23).

7 The Desert

Even anointed kings are not exempt from troubles. David literally ran for his life from King Saul, hiding with his band of followers in the Desert of Ziph (where the men of Ziph constantly betrayed him), the Desert of Maon, and the Desert of En Gedi. Though he had opportunities to kill Saul, David refused to do so because Saul was God's anointed king (1 Samuel 23:1-26:25).

8 Gath

David moved his men and family to Gath, the Philistine city where King Achish lived. Saul then stopped chasing him. The Philistines seemed to welcome this famous fugitive from Israel (1 Samuel 27:1-4).

9 Ziklag

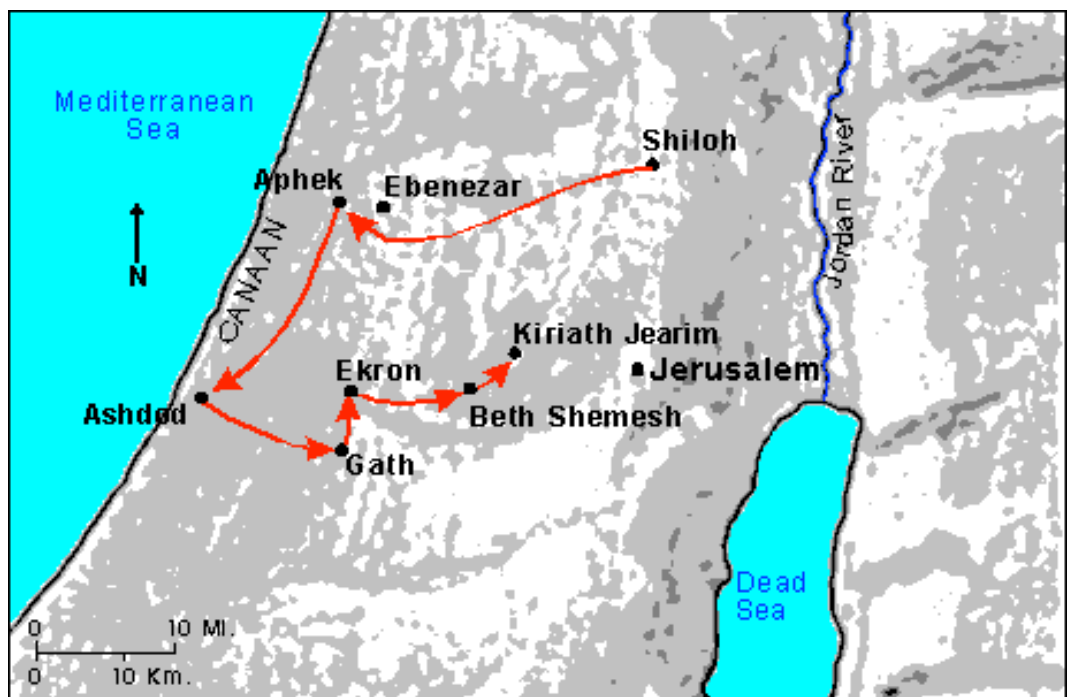
Desiring privacy in return for his pretended loyalty to King Achish, David asked for a city in which to house his men and family. Achish gave him Ziklag. From there David conducted raids against the cities of the Geshurites, Girizites, and the Amalekites making sure no one escaped to tell the tale (1 Samuel 27:5-12). David later conquered the Amalekites after they raided Ziklag (1 Samuel 30:1-31).

10 Mount Gilboa

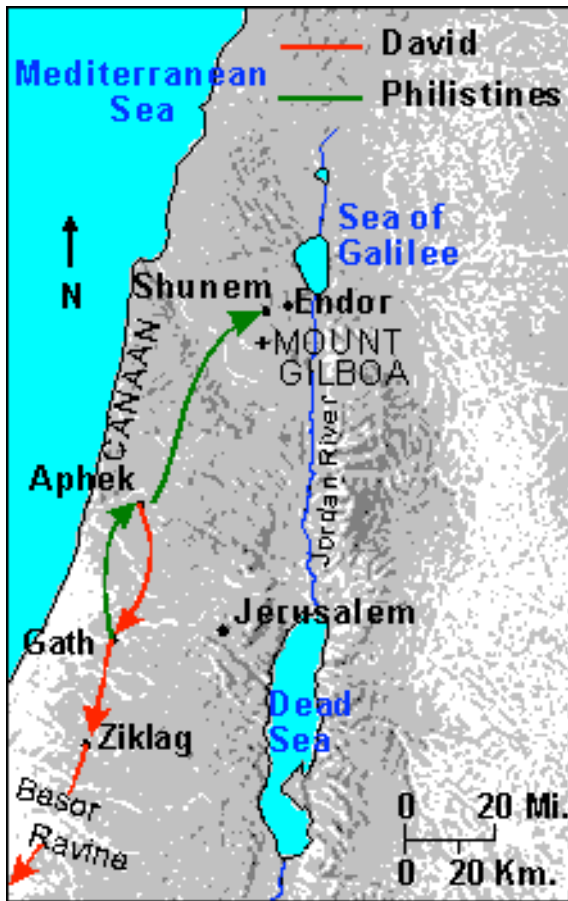
War with the Philistines broke out again in the north, near Mount Gilboa. Saul, who no longer relied on God, consulted a witch in a desperate attempt to contact Samuel for help. In the meantime, David was sent back to Ziklag because the Philistine commanders did not trust his loyalty in battle against Israel. The Philistines slaughtered the Israelites on Mount Gilboa, killing King Saul and his three sons, including David's loyal friend Jonathan. Without God, Saul led a bitter and misguided life. The consequences of his sinful actions affected not only him, but hurt his family and the entire nation as well (1 Samuel 28:1-31:13). §

The Ark's Travels

Eli's sons took the ark from Shiloh to the battlefield on the lower plains at Ebenezer and Aphek. The Philistines captured the ark and took it to Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. Plagues forced the people to send the ark back to Israel, where it finally was taken



by cattle-driven carts to Beth Shemesh and on to the home of Eleazar in Kiriath Jearim. §



The Battle at Gilboa

David pretended loyalty to Achish, but when war broke out with Israel, he was sent to Ziklag from Aphek. The Philistines defeated the Israelites at Mount Gilboa.

David returned to Ziklag to find that the Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag. So David and his men pursued the Amalekite raiders and slaughtered them, recovering all that was taken. §

Key Places in 2 Samuel

1 Hebron

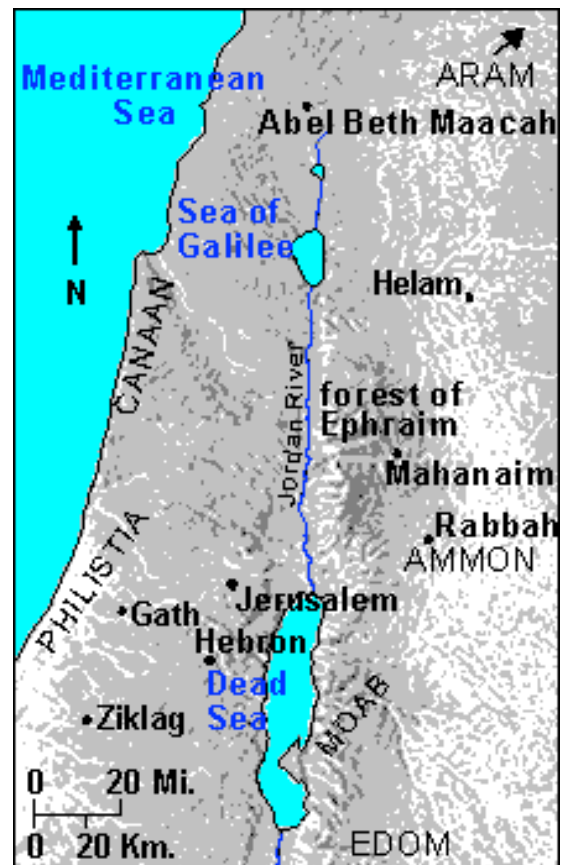
After Saul's death, David moved from the Philistine city of Ziklag to Hebron, where the tribe of Judah crowned him king at Mahanaim. As a result, there was war between Judah and the rest of the tribes of Israel until Ish-Bosheth was assassinated. Then all of Israel pledged loyalty to David as their king (2 Samuel 1:1-5:5).

2 Jerusalem

One of David's first battles as king occurred at the fortress city of Jerusalem. David and his troops took the city by surprise, and it became his capital. It was here that David brought the ark of the covenant and made a special agreement with God (2 Samuel 5:6-7:29).

3 Gath

The Philistines were Israel's constant enemy, though they did give David sanctuary when he was hiding from Saul (1 Samuel 27). But when Saul died and David became king, the Philistines planned to defeat him. In a battle near Jerusalem, David and his troops routed the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17-25), but they were not



completely subdued until David conquered Metheg Ammah (possibly near Gath) (2 Samuel 8:1).

4 Moab

During the time of the judges, Moab controlled many cities in Israel and demanded heavy taxes (Judges 3:12-30). David conquered Moab and, in turn, levied tribute from them (2 Samuel 8:2).

5 Edom

Though the Edomites and the Israelites traced their ancestry back to the same man, Isaac (Genesis 25:19-23), they were long-standing enemies. David defeated Edom and forced them to pay tribute also (2 Samuel 8:14).

6 Rabbah

The Ammonites insulted David's delegation and turned a peacemaking mission into angry warfare. The Ammonites called troops from Aram, but David defeated this alliance first at Helam, then at Rabbah, the capital city (2 Samuel 9:1-12:31).

7 Mahanaim

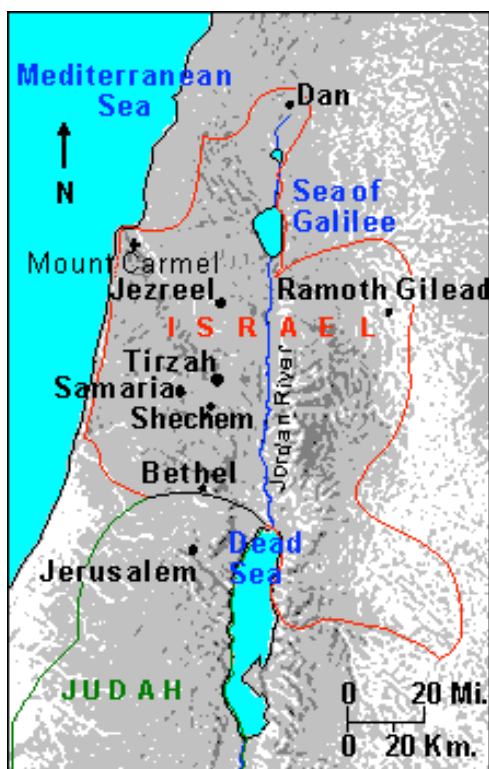
David had victory in the field, but problems at home. His son Absalom, incited a rebellion and crowned himself king at Hebron. David and his men fled to Mahanaim. Acting on bad advice, Absalom mobilized his army to fight David (2 Samuel 13:1-17:29).

8 Forest of Ephraim

The armies of Absalom and David fought in the forest of Ephraim. Absalom's hair got caught in a tree, and Joab, David's general, found and killed him. With Absalom's death, the rebellion died and David was welcomed back to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 18:1-19:43).

9 Abel Beth Maacah

A man named Sheba also incited a rebellion against David. He fled to Abel Beth Maacah, but Joab and a small troop besieged the city. The citizens of Abel Beth Maacah killed Sheba themselves (2 Samuel 20:1-26). David's victories laid the foundation for the peaceful reign of his son, Solomon. §



Key Places in 1 Kings

Solomon, David's son, brought Israel into its golden age. His wealth and wisdom were acclaimed worldwide. But he ignored God in his later years (1 Kings 1:1-11:25).

1 Shechem

After Solomon's death, Israel assembled at Shechem to inaugurate his son Rehoboam. However, Rehoboam foolishly angered the people by threatening even heavier burdens, causing a revolt (1 Kings 11:26-12:19).

2 Israel

Jeroboam, leader of the rebels, was made king of Israel, now called the northern kingdom. Jeroboam made Shechem his capital city (1 Kings 12:20,25).

3 Judah

Only the tribes of Judah and part of Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam. These two tribes became the southern kingdom. Rehoboam returned to Judah from Shechem and prepared to force the rebels into submission, but a prophet's

message halted these plans (1 Kings 12:21-24).

4 Jerusalem

Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah. Its temple, built by Solomon, was the focal point of Jewish worship. This worried Jeroboam. How could he keep his people loyal if they were constantly going to Rehoboam's capital to worship (1 Kings 12:26,27)?

5 Dan

Jeroboam's solution was to set up his own worship centers. Two golden calves were made and proclaimed to be Israel's gods. One was placed in Dan, and the people were told that they could go there instead of Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:28,29).

6 Bethel

The other golden calf was placed in Bethel. The people of the northern kingdom had two convenient locations for worship in their country, but their sin displeased God. In Jerusalem, meanwhile, Rehoboam was allowing idolatry to creep in. The two nations were constantly at war (1 Kings 12:29-15:26).

7 Tirzah

Jeroboam had moved the capital city to Tirzah (1 Kings 14:17). Next, Baasha became king of Israel after assassinating Nadab (1 Kings 15:27-16:22).

8 Samaria

Israel continued to gain and lose kings through plots, assassinations, and warfare. When Omri became king, he bought a hill on which he built a new capital city, Samaria. Omri's son, Ahab, became the most wicked king of Israel. His wife Jezebel worshipped Baal. Ahab erected a temple to Baal in Samaria (1 Kings 16:23-34).

9 Mount Carmel

Great evil often brings great people to oppose it. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal and Asherah at Mount Carmel, where he would prove that they were false prophets. There Elijah humiliated these prophets and then executed them (1 Kings 17:1-18:46).

10 Jezreel

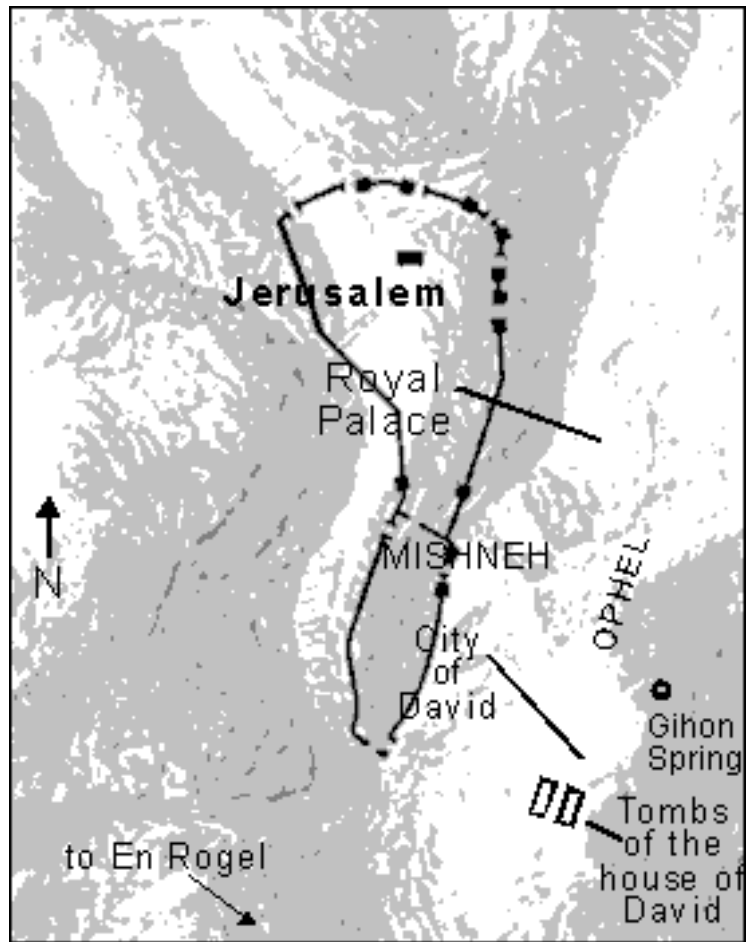
Elijah returned to Jezreel. But Queen Jezebel, furious at the execution of her prophets, vowed to kill Elijah. He ran for his life, but God cared for and encouraged him. During his travels he anointed the future kings of Aram and Israel as well as Elisha, his own replacement (1 Kings 19:1-21).

11 Ramoth Gilead

The king of Aram declared war on Israel and was defeated in two battles. But the Arameans occupied Ramoth Gilead. Ahab and Jehoshaphat joined forces to recover the city. In this battle, Ahab was killed. Jehoshaphat later died (1 Kings 20:1-22:53). §

Two Coronations

As David lay on his deathbed, his son Adonijah crowned himself king at En Rogel outside Jerusalem. When the news reached David, he declared that Solomon was to be the next ruler. Solomon was anointed at Gihon. It may have been more than coincidence that Gihon was not only within shouting distance of En Rogel, but also closer to the royal palace. §

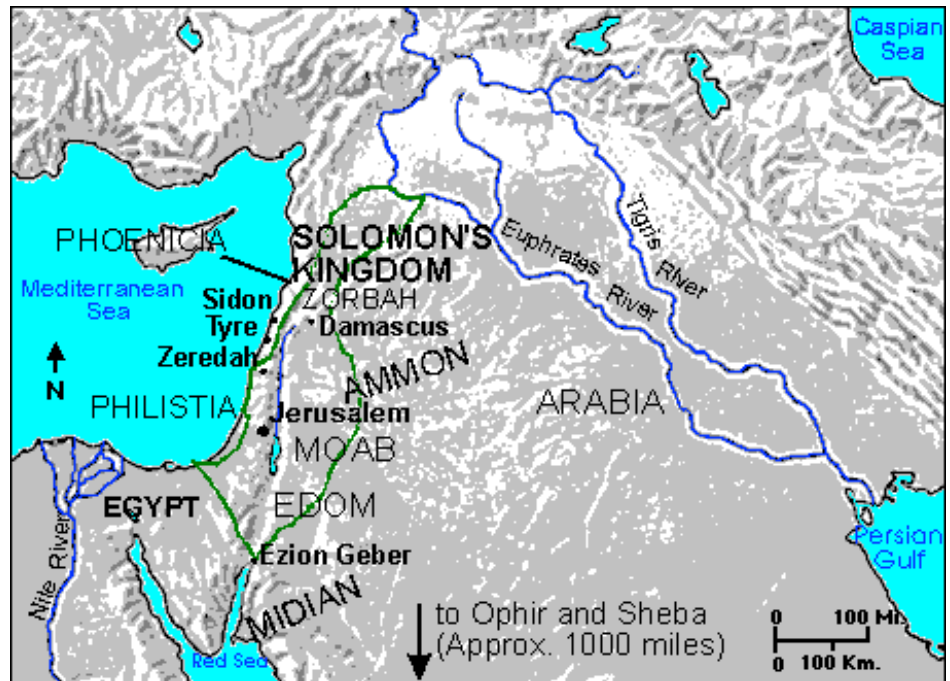


Solomon's Kingdom

Solomon's kingdom spread from the Euphrates River in the north to the borders of Egypt. The entire land was at peace under his rule. §

Friends & Enemies

Solomon's reputation brought acclaim and riches from many nations, but he disobeyed God, marrying pagan women and worshiping their gods. So God raised up enemies like Hadad from Edom and Rezon from Zobah (modern-day Syria). Jeroboam from Zeredah was another enemy who would divide this mighty kingdom. §



The Kingdom Divides

Rehoboam's threat of heavier burdens caused a rebellion and divided the nation. Rehoboam ruled the southern kingdom; Jeroboam ruled the northern kingdom. Jeroboam set up idols in Dan and Bethel to discourage worship in Jerusalem. At the same time Aram, Ammon, Moab, and Edom claimed independence from the divided nation. §

Key Places in 2 Kings

The history of both Israel and Judah was much affected by the prophet Elijah's ministry. He served Israel for 50 years, fighting the idolatry of its kings and calling its people back to God.

1 Jericho

Elijah's ministry had come to an end. He touched his cloak to the Jordan River, and he and Elisha crossed on dry ground. Elijah was taken by God in a whirlwind, and Elisha returned alone with the cloak. The prophets in Jericho realized that Elisha was Elijah's replacement (2 Kings 1:1-2:25)

2 Desert of Edom

The king of Moab rebelled against Israel, so the nations of Israel, Judah, and Edom decided to attack from the Desert of Edom, but ran out of water. The kings consulted Elisha who said God would send both water and victory (2 Kings 3:1-27).

3 Shunem

Elisha cared for individuals and their needs. He helped a woman clear a debt by giving her a supply of oil to sell. For another family in Shunem, he raised a son from the dead (2 Kings 4:1-37).

4 Gilgal

Elisha cared for the young prophets in Gilgal--he removed poison from a stew, made a small amount of food feed everyone, and even caused an axhead to float so it could be retrieved. It was to Elisha that Naaman, a commander in the Aramean army, came to be healed of leprosy (2 Kings 4:38-6:7)

5 Dothan

Although he cured an Aramean commander's leprosy, Elisha was loyal to Israel. He knew the Aramean army's battle plans and kept Israel's king informed. The Aramean king tracked Elisha down in Dothan and surrounded the city, hoping to kill him. But Elisha prayed that the Arameans would be blinded, then he led the blinded army into Samaria, Israel's capital city (2 Kings 6:8-23).

6 Samaria

But the Arameans didn't learn their lesson. They later besieged Samaria. Ironically, Israel's king thought it was Elisha's fault, but Elisha said food would be available in abundance the next day. True to Elisha's word, the Lord caused panic in the Aramean camp, and the enemy ran, leaving their supplies to Samaria's starving people (2 Kings 6:24-7:20).

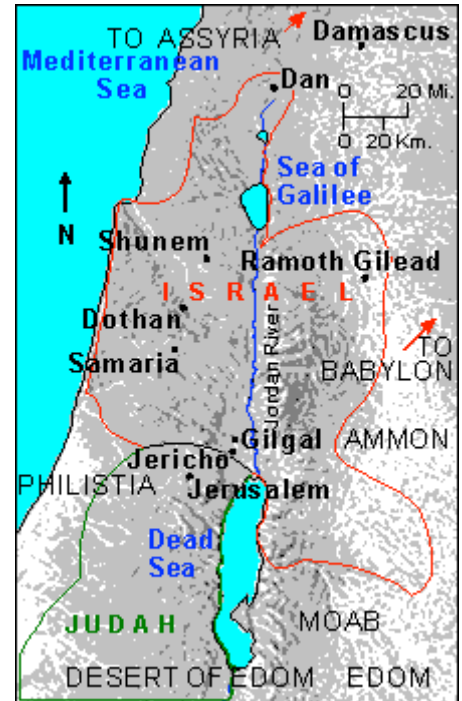
7 Damascus

Despite Elisha's loyalty to Israel, he obeyed God and traveled to Damascus, the capital of Aram. King Ben-Hadad was sick, and he sent Hazael to ask Elisha if he would recover. Elisha knew the king would die, and told this to Hazael. But Hazael then murdered Ben-Hadad, making himself king. Later, Israel and Judah joined forces to fight this new Aramean threat (2 Kings 8:1-29).

8 Ramoth Gilead

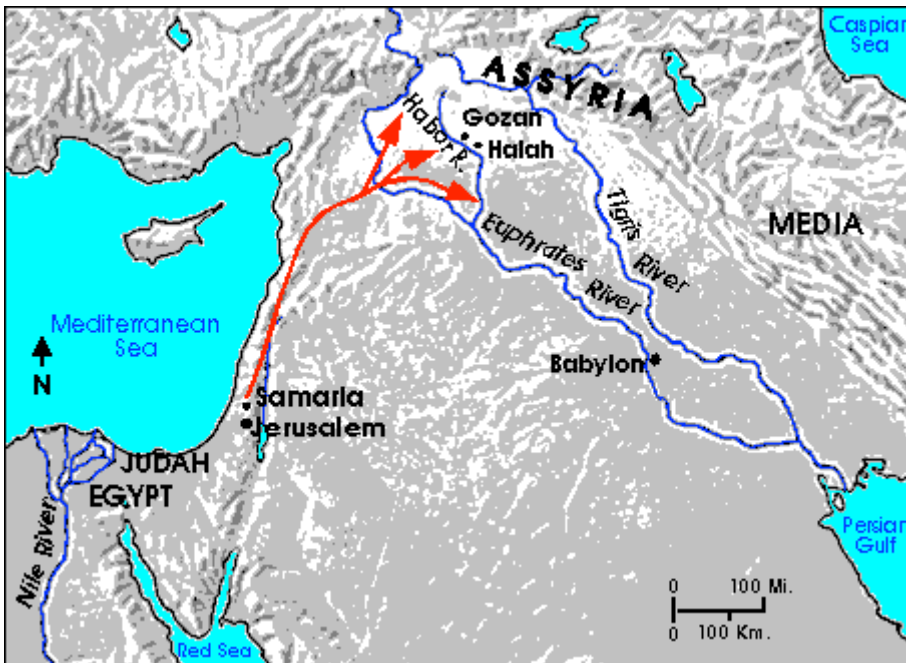
As Israel and Judah warred with Aram, Elisha sent a young prophet to Ramoth Gilead to anoint Jehu as Israel's next king. Jehu set out to destroy the wicked dynasties of Israel and Judah, killing kings Joram and Ahaziah, and wicked Queen Jezebel. He then destroyed King Ahab's family, and all the Baal worshipers in Israel (2 Kings 9:1-11:1).

9 Jerusalem



Power-hungry Athaliah became queen of Judah when her son Ahaziah was killed. She had all her grandsons killed except Joash who was hidden by his aunt. Joash was crowned king at the age of seven and overthrew Athaliah. Meanwhile in Samaria, the Arameans continued to harass Israel. Israel's new king met with Elisha and was told that he would be victorious over Aram three times (2 Kings 11:2-13:19).

Following Elisha's death came a series of evil kings in Israel. Their idolatry and rejection of God caused their downfall. The Assyrian empire captured Samaria and took most of the Israelites into captivity (2 Kings 13:20-17:41). Judah had a short reprieve because of a few good kings who destroyed idols and worshiped God. But many strayed from God. So Jerusalem fell to the next world power, Babylon (2 Kings 18:1-25:30). §



Israel Taken Captive

Finally the sins of Israel's people caught up with them. God allowed Assyria to defeat and disperse the people. They were led into captivity, swallowed up by the mighty, evil Assyrian empire. Sin always brings discipline, and the consequences of that sin are sometimes irreversible. §

Judah Exiled

Evil permeated Judah, and God's anger flared against his rebellious people. Babylon conquered Assyria and became the new world power. The Babylonian army marched into Jerusalem, burned the temple, tore down the city's massive walls, and carried off the people into captivity. §





Key Places in 1 Chronicles

The genealogies of 1 Chronicles present an overview of Israel's history. The first nine chapters are filled with genealogies tracing the lineages of people from the creation to the exile in Babylon. Saul's death is recorded in chapter 10. Chapter 11 begins the history of David's reign over Israel.

1 Hebron

Although David had been anointed king years earlier, his reign began when the leaders of Israel accepted him as king at Hebron (1 Chronicles 11:1-3).

2 Jerusalem

David set out to complete the conquest of the land begun by Joshua. He attacked Jerusalem, captured it, and made it his capital (1 Chronicles 11:4-12:40).

3 Kiriath Jearim

The ark of the covenant, which had been captured by the Philistines in battle and returned (1 Samuel 4-6), was in safekeeping in Kiriath Jearim. David summoned all Israel to this city to join in bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, it was not moved according to God's instructions, and as a result one

man died. David left the ark in the home of Obed-Edom until he could discover how to transport it correctly (1 Chronicles 13:1-14).

4 Tyre

David did much building in Jerusalem. King Hiram of Tyre sent workers and supplies to help build David's palace. Cedar, abundant in the mountains north of Israel, was a valuable and hardy wood for the beautiful buildings in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 14:1-17:27).

5 Baal Perazim

David was not very popular with the Philistines because he had slain Goliath, one of their greatest warriors (1 Samuel 17). When David began to rule over a united Israel, the Philistines set out to capture him. But David and his army attacked the Philistines at Baal Perazim as they approached Jerusalem. His army defeated the mighty Philistines twice, causing all the surrounding nations to fear David's power (1 Chronicles 14:11-17). After this battle, David moved the ark to Jerusalem (this time in accordance with God's instructions for the transportation of the ark). There was great celebration as the ark was brought into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:1-17:27). David spent the remainder of his life making preparations for the building of the temple, a central place for the worship of God (1 Chronicles 18:1-29:30). §

Key Places in 2 Chronicles

1 Gibeon

David's son Solomon became king over Israel. He summoned the nation's leaders to a ceremony in Gibeon. Here God told Solomon to ask for whatever he desired. Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge to rule Israel (2 Chronicles 1:1-12).

2 Jerusalem

After the ceremony in Gibeon, Solomon returned to the capital city, Jerusalem. His reign began a golden age for Israel. Solomon implemented the plans for the temple which had been drawn up by his father, David. It was a magnificent construction. It symbolized Solomon's wealth and wisdom, which became known worldwide (2 Chronicles 1:13-9:31).

3 Shechem

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam was ready to be crowned in Shechem. However, his promise of higher taxes and harder work for the people led to rebellion. Everyone but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin deserted Rehoboam and set up their own kingdom to the north called Israel. Rehoboam returned to Jerusalem as ruler over the southern kingdom called Judah (2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16). The remainder of 2 Chronicles records the history of Judah.

4 Hill Country of Ephraim

Abijah became the next king of Judah, and soon war broke out between Israel and Judah. When the armies of the two nations arrived for battle in the hill country of Ephraim, Israel had twice as many troops as Judah. It looked like Judah's defeat was certain. But they cried out to God, and God gave them victory over Israel. In their history as separate nations, Judah had a few godly kings who instituted reforms and brought the people back to God. Israel, however, had a succession of only evil kings (2 Chronicles 13:1-22).

5 Aram

Asa, a godly king, removed every trace of pagan worship from Judah and renewed the people's covenant with God in Jerusalem. But King Baasha of Israel built a fortress to control traffic into Judah. Instead of looking to God for guidance, Asa took the silver and gold from the temple and sent it to the king of Aram requesting his help against King Baasha. As a result, God became angry with Judah (2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14).

6 Samaria

Although Jehoshaphat was a godly king, he allied himself with Israel's most evil king, Ahab. Ahab's capital was in Samaria. Ahab wanted help fighting against Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat wanted advice, but rather than listening to God's prophet who had promised defeat, he joined Ahab in battle (2 Chronicles 17:1-18:27).

7 Ramoth Gilead

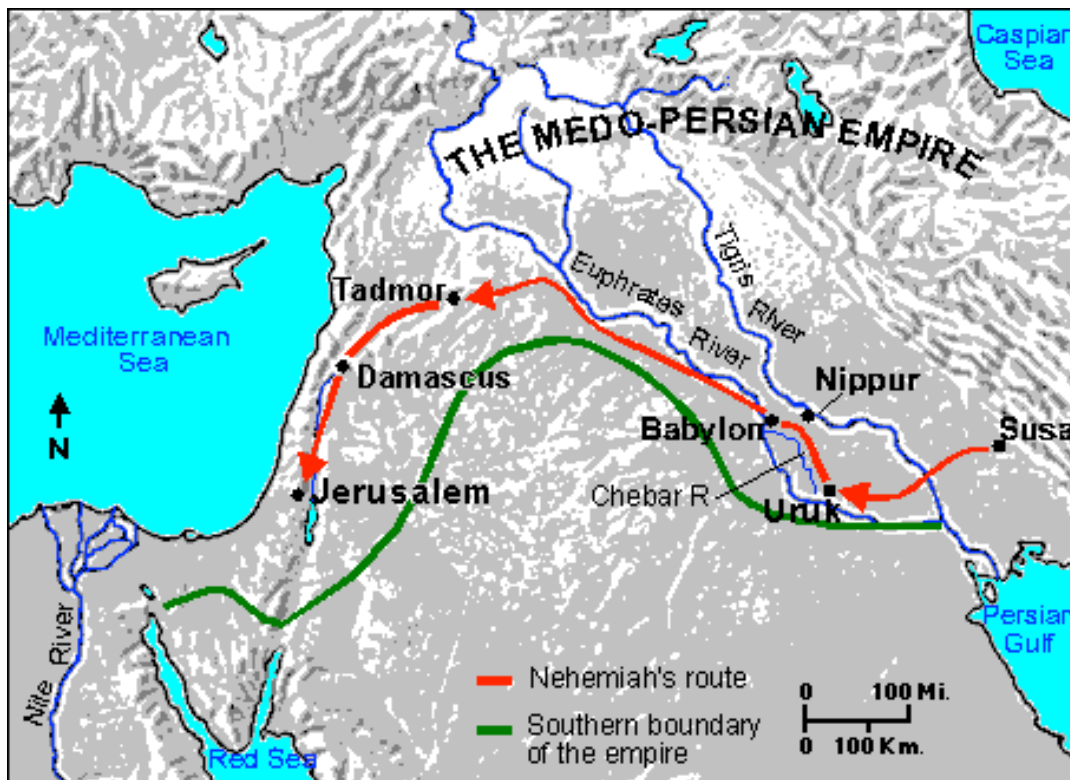
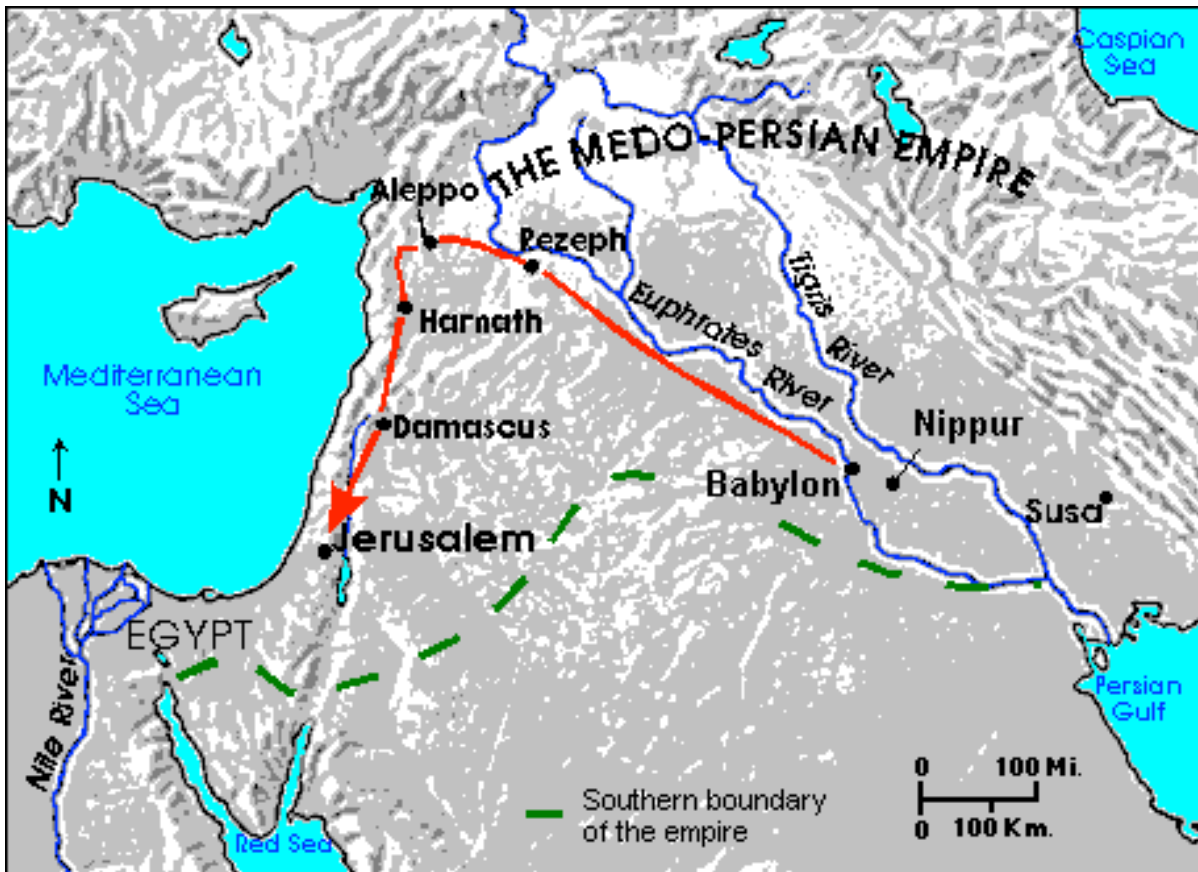
The alliance with Israel against Ramoth Gilead ended in defeat and Ahab's death. Although shaken by his defeat, Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem and to God. But his son Jehoram was a wicked king, as was his son Ahaziah, and history repeated itself. Ahaziah formed an alliance with Israel's King Joram to do battle with the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. This led to the death of both kings (2 Chronicles 18:28-22:9).

8 Jerusalem

The rest of Judah's history recorded in 2 Chronicles centers on Jerusalem. Some kings caused Judah to sin by bringing idol worship into their midst. Others cleaned up the idol worship, reopened and restored the temple and, in the case of Josiah, tried to follow God's laws as they were written by Moses. In spite of the few good influences, a series of evil kings sent Judah into a downward spiral that ended with the Babylonian empire overrunning the country. The temple was burned, the walls of the city were broken down, and the people were deported to Babylon. §

The Journey Home

The vast Medo-Persian empire included all the area on this map and more. A group of exiles began the long trip back to their homeland. Many exiles, however, preferred the comfort and security they had in Babylon to the dangerous trip back to Jerusalem, and so they decided to stay in Babylon. §



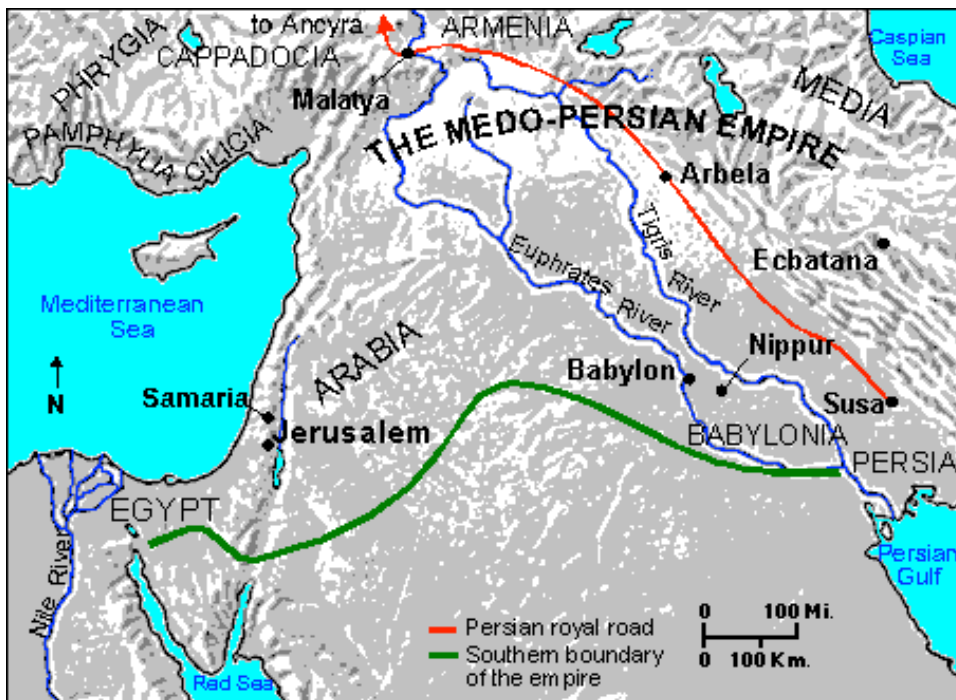
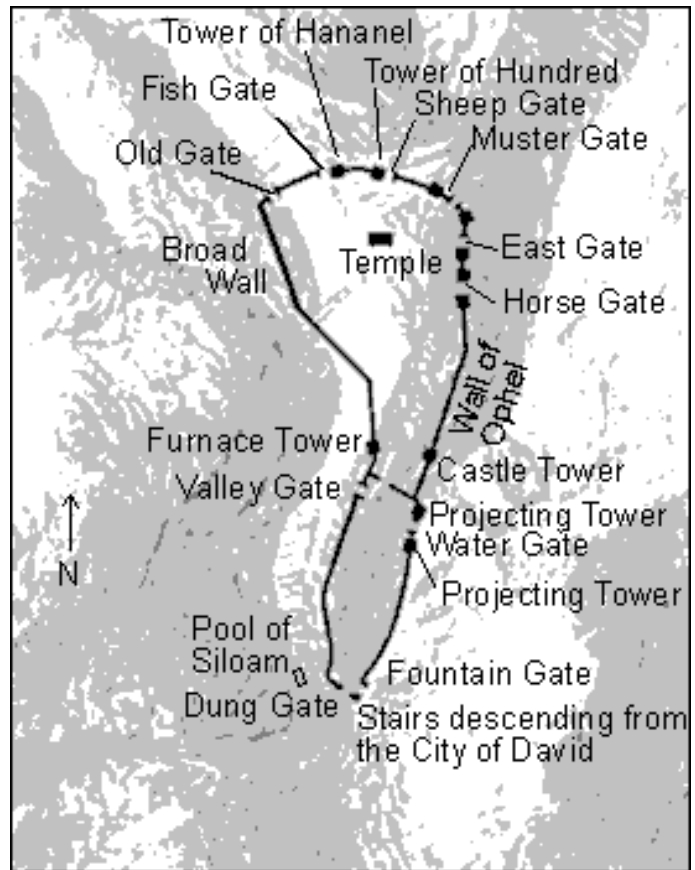
Nehemiah Goes to Jerusalem

Nehemiah worked in Susa as a personal assistant for the king of the vast Medo-Persian empire. When he heard that the rebuilding projects in Jerusalem were progressing slowly, he asked the king if he could go there to help his people

complete the task of rebuilding their city's walls. The king agreed to let him go; so he left as soon as possible, traveling along much the same route Ezra had taken. §

The Restoration of the City Walls

Nehemiah takes us on a counter-clockwise tour around Jerusalem (beginning with the Sheep Gate). He describes for us each section, gate, and tower on the wall and who worked to rebuild it. §



The World of Esther's Day

Esther lived in the capital of the vast Medo-Persian empire, which incorporated the provinces of Media and Persia, as well as the previous empires of Assyria and Babylon. Esther, a Jewess, was chosen by King Xerxes to be his queen. The story of how she saved her people takes place in the palace of Susa. §