

KINGS RULE

Joseph Dulmage

Ecclesiastes 8:4 *Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*

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Dedication

To the good kings of Judah *they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*. Nineteen kings ascended Judah's throne, God gave only six kings a good report card: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Two kings received mixed reviews: Joash and Amaziah. The northern kingdom, Israel, fared much worse. Out of nineteen kings, not even one king did that which was right.

Hosea 13:9-11 *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. 10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? 11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.*

2 Samuel 7:24 *For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.*

Numbers 23:9 *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

Introduction

Kings Rule looks carefully at Israel's divided monarchy, 975 BC – 582 BC. As both kingdoms' development unfurls, succeeding kings from Judah and Israel are studied in chronological order. Commentary, although thorough is not overly encyclopedic. Scripture interprets scripture, consequently, I have endeavored to let the Bible present its own story. Sermon and lesson helps occur frequently throughout the text.

Part Two offers a number of important studies concerning God's mystery relationship with Israel. Several parables present further explanation on the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. The work is designed for Bible students, teachers, and preachers.

The southern kingdom, known as Judah, retained Jerusalem as its capital. Judah's population largely derived from two tribes, Benjamin and Judah. Twenty monarchs ruled from Jerusalem, nineteen kings and one queen. Judah began with King Rehoboam and ended nearly four hundred years later with King Zedekiah.

The northern kingdom, known as Israel or the ten tribes, resided in the northern geographical regions. Israel's nineteen kings ruled mostly from Samaria. Israel's first king Jeroboam ruled from

Shechem; about two hundred fifty years later under King Hoshea, God removed Israel from the land.

Imagine facing God; and discovering your life story recorded in a book. Now imagine the book being read by millions of people. That's exactly what happened to the kings of Judah and Israel, and numerous other Bible characters. Their lives, through the power of God's words, help us deal with our own life journey. Their stories provide royal advice, blessings, and warnings. Heaven promises Christians an approaching adventure so miraculous we tremble with anticipation. Meeting Old Testament saints constitutes only one of heaven's wonders, meeting a king, an exceptional honor indeed.

Proverbs 25:6-7 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: **7** For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Psalms 90:9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

Give us a king

Before kings ruled in Israel, God governed his nation through prophets and judges. Ever since the days of Moses written laws and precepts guided his people. Israel existed nearly 1,000 years without a human king, but around 1095 BC, as the age of Judges came to a close, Israel wanted new government.

Bible students know the era of judges as a reckless period fraught with bizarre episodes and exciting stories. As if riding a spiritual rollercoaster, Israel served God for a while and then rebelled against him, over and over again. The people behaved lawlessly and often cruel; every man did what he felt like doing. Whether those actions hurt his neighbor or transgressed God's commandments mattered very little to them. The Book of Judges' concluding verse epitomizes the spiritual state of Israel; interestingly, the same judgment characterizes modern times.

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

Do not presume the verse implies God wanted kings to rule Israel. Undoubtedly, the passage indicates a morally bankrupt nation, but the lack of kings was not to blame. Sin moved the people so far away from God, they refused to

recognize their nation needed repentance, and a return to obeying the Lord. When it came to government, the people chose to be like the world and the nations around them. While a king's authority may affect the way people obey the law, kings do not guarantee a more secure or safe life. In fact, a bad king can make things worse. Nevertheless, the nation viewed their problems solvable only by a dictator or strong king. Governing through the rule of judges, seemed woefully inadequate. Reasons for the people's frustration merits worthy consideration:

- Many priests and temple leaders were incompetent and corrupt.
- People believed their present government unorganized and ill prepared to handle societal problems.
- Israelites feared the nations around them, and they envied other nations' abilities to make war, and take care of its citizens.
- They literally believed they had too much freedom; they willingly gave up some freedoms for the security of a monarchy.
- By having a king, the people hoped to deflect their own moral responsibility toward God.

Actually, the monarchy opposed God's plan for Israel. God viewed his people's request for a king as a rejection of himself. In fact, God sent Prophet Samuel to talk them out of the idea. *1st Samuel chapters 8–10* leaves no doubt, the Lord

opposed the people's request for a king. But in the end, God gave the people what they wanted, and thus began the era of kings.

1 Samuel 8:1-5 *And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. 3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: **now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.***

1 Samuel 8:6-7 *But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.***

1 Samuel 8:19 -22 *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. 21 And Samuel heard all the*

words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

1 Samuel 10:19 *And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.*

God honoring Israel's request for a king is remarkable. Not only did he accept the people's choice, he incorporates Israel's monarchy into his eternal plans. Of course God's foreknowledge knew his people would want kings, *Deuteronomy 17:14* but allowing man to do something which God adamantly opposed is amazing. The Lord even inspires kings to write significant portions of the Bible. Consider King David, the major contributor to the *Book of Psalms*, and King Solomon's *Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Song of Solomon*. Jesus Christ is King of kings, yet Israel's human monarchy continues throughout eternity. *Ezekiel 37:24-28; Jeremiah 33: 17-22.* (See Part Two)

Prophet Samuel and his two sons, Joel and Abijah served as Israel's last Judges in the Old Testament *1 Samuel 8:1-3*. So the era of judges closes down and the age of kings begins. And for

the next 120 years the nation held together, predominately under the rule of Israel's first three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon. Israel's first three kings ruled a united country, meaning they reigned over all twelve tribes. However, a seven year disruption occurred during David's rule when Saul's son, Ishbosheth, refused to surrender power. 1st and 2nd Samuel tells a century long back story to Israel's great divide.

- Saul, rules forty years.
- David, rules forty years. (Seven years he rules Judah from Hebron. And then rules all Israel for thirty-three years from Jerusalem)
- Ishbosheth rules at the same time as David; he rules a fractured Israel for two years. (2 Samuel 2:10-12; 3:1)
- Solomon, reigned forty years.
- Rehoboam, rules only a few months before Israel divides.
- Israel divides. Two nations: Southern kingdom called Judah. Northern kingdom called Israel.

Chapter Notes

Hosea 13:9-11 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. **10** I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? **11** I gave thee

a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

2 Samuel 3:1 *Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.*

Psalms 8:3-6 *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:*

God divides Israel

1st Kings 11

During King Solomon's early years Israel served the Lord. The kingdom peaked in national power and righteousness. Things went so well under Solomon's monarchy, it resembles Christ's Millennium more than any other period in Israel's history. Alas the era proved only a brief anomaly, and in the end, Solomon turned his back on God and Israel unraveled. In his later years, King Solomon embraced paganism, idolatry, and sexual sin; the people followed. These last, dark days of King Solomon provokes God to divide Israel into two kingdoms, ten tribes in the north and two tribes in the south.

King Solomon's descent into depravity

1 Kings 11:1-10 *But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his*

heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

God's decision to divide Israel.

***1 Kings 11:11-13** Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, **I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.** 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.*

Introducing Jeroboam

The servant to whom God refers in *1 Kings 11:11* is an extremely competent military man named Jeroboam. King Solomon observes Jeroboam's skills and appoints him commander overseeing the tribe of Joseph. After King Solomon, the first man to know God's decision to divide Israel is Jeroboam. Prophet Ahijah, explains in detail the Lord's plans to appoint Jeroboam as the northern kingdom's first king.

1 Kings 11:28-43 *And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. 29* *And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: 30* *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: 31* *And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32* *(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)* ***33*** *Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the*

children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. **34** Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: **35** But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. **36** And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. **37** **And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.** **38** **And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.** **39** And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam

When Solomon discovers God plans to make Jeroboam king of northern Israel, he seeks to kill him. Jeroboam flees for his life and remains exiled in Egypt until after the death of Solomon. With royal irony, history seems to repeat itself. Much like

God selects David during King Saul's reign, God appoints Jeroboam while King Solomon rules. In both instances, the existing kings sought to kill their replacements. Similarities continue when God offers Jeroboam nearly everything he offered to King David *1 Kings 11:37-38*. Had Jeroboam obeyed and served the Lord, his dynasty would continue throughout the ages; alas Jeroboam chooses a far different course. Once Jeroboam commits to being the Lord's enemy, he represents the exact opposite of King David.

1 Kings 11:40 *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. 41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.*

The final years of Solomon bring dark days. Israel's neighboring countries, predominately Egypt, prepare for war with Israel. King Solomon's legacy proves a worthy study, a life of wisdom, success, backsliding, rebellion, and finally repentance.

Rehoboam Judah's 1st King

- Judah's first King
- Rehoboam= *Enlargement of the people*
- Length of reign: Seventeen years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Solomon
- Mother's Name: Naamah, an Ammonitess; *2Ch 12:13*
- Prophets: Shemaiah, Ahijah
- Ruled during the reign of Israel's king: Jeroboam
- Claim to fame: First king under divided nation. Egypt desecrates Solomon's temple.
- Age at death: Fifty-eight
- Texts: *1 Kings Chapters 11-14; 2 Chronicles chapters 10-12*

King Rehoboam's outline

- Taxation leads to war
- Bad advice
- Lord's will be done
- Rehoboam serves himself
- Egypt desecrates the Temple
- Rehoboam repents
- Judah preserves all 12 tribes
- Rehoboam's death

After King Solomon's death, the nation prepares to make Rehoboam king. Although Rehoboam is the first king of Judah, he briefly rules all twelve tribes (probably only a few months.) But Solomon's final years left the country in an unsustainable economic condition. To support ambitious building projects, a decadent life style, and a sudden increase in wars- the king demanded more and more from the people. In short- taxes were killing them, and the people resented their leaders' immorality. 120 years after Israel's first king, the nation found itself facing civil war.

During Jeroboam's exile he found friendship and support with Shishak, king of Egypt. When Solomon died, the people notified Jeroboam and begged his return from Egypt. The popular military leader organizes a committee to approach their new king with the kingdom's grievances. King Rehoboam listens to the people's complaints and tells them to expect his decision in three days.

1 Kings 12:1-5 *And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) 3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, 4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous*

service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. 5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

Bad advice

What follows politically displays a classic example of listening to the wrong people. Rehoboam rejects wise counsel from mature advisors and listens to his younger buddies. Leadership stumbles in this area all the time. Many leaders surround themselves with sycophants (yes men) who say things agreeing with their leaders' ideas and plans no matter how problematic or stupid they may be. Misguided counsel often leads to the detriment of a nation, company, or even a local church. Wise counsel, which is often uncomfortable, goes rejected. Hence, it is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. Alas, for King Rehoboam, the foolish political counsel results in Rehoboam's decision to ignore the people. His decision splits Israel into separate states: Judah and Israel.

Even after the people's uproarious response, Rehoboam denies what's happening. Almost unbelievably, the young king reacts to the political crisis by ordering more taxes- the very thing precipitating the people's anger! Alas, the collection ends badly for the chief tax collector when citizens stone him to death, and full scale rebellion is

underway. This was not the time to take an offering no matter how familiar a practice. King Rehoboam runs for his life and escapes to Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:6-16 *And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? 7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. 8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: 9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 **And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook***

the old men's counsel that they gave him; 14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

1 Kings 12:18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

Lord's will be done

All Rehoboam's bad advice aside, Bible students need also consider God's directive will. Even in modern days, catastrophic governmental decisions seem inexplicable, unless we consider divine intervention. The Lord made it clear, once Israel's chosen path of rebellion and sin reached a

certain level, Israel's division was inevitable; and nothing was going to stop it. Men and women make decisions built on their beliefs, intellect, counsel, and political pressures; hence people remain responsible for their actions. This does not change the fact that spiritual forces influence and even direct human destiny more than we know.

Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

Daniel 2:21 *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

Daniel 4:17 *This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Determined to keep the country united, Rehoboam races to Jerusalem and organizes 180,000 warriors to fight the rebellious ten tribes.

At this point in the narrative, Rehoboam does not know Israel's division is God's intention. Thus far the only persons who know God's plan are Prophet Ahijah and Jeroboam. To stop the battle, God sends another prophet, Shemaiah, to Jerusalem and informs everyone that Israel's split is ultimately God's will. The Lord does not want civil war, but he does want two separate kingdoms. King Rehoboam obeys God and averts the battle. Israel remains a divided nation until Jesus puts the pieces back together just before his Second Advent.

1 Kings 12: 21 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. ***22*** But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ***23*** Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, **and to the remnant of the people, saying, 24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me.**

Rehoboam serves himself

King Rehoboam started out well. For three years he walked in the ways of David.

Governmentally, an able administrator, he fortified many cities and regions throughout the country. But Rehoboam's true character emerges after a few years. Like Solomon, he resorts to an abundance of wives and concubines, and he guides the entire country into paganism, idolatry and sexual sin. Disregarding *Deuteronomy 17:17* is a constant problem for kings. (It seems also a warning for us all? So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God, *Romans 8:8*.)

Deuteronomy 17:17 *Neither shall he (a king) multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

2 Chronicles 11:17 *So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.*

2 Chronicles 11:23 *And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.*

2 Chronicles 12:1 *And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.*

Egypt desecrates the temple

In response to Rehoboam's slide into decadence, God brought judgment by allowing Egypt to invade Judah. Only five years after the death of Solomon, Egypt invades Judah. Unfortunately, Jerusalem's temple suffers looting and vandalism, never to be restored to its former glory.

2 Chronicles 12:2-4 *And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, **3** With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians. **4** And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.*

1 Kings 14:25-26 *And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: **26** And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.*

Egypt recovers "borrowed" treasure:

During Israel's exodus from Egypt, observe scripture says Israel borrowed treasure from the Egyptians. *Exodus 12* contains an ominously veiled prophetic judgment. Although a spoil- God also used the words borrowed and lent. Over five hundred years later, the Egyptians re-take their treasure. It was indeed only borrowed treasure. Behold the patience of scripture; something borrowed needs returned. And Shishak repossessed Egypt's wealth.

1491 BC ***Exodus 12:35-36*** *And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.*

Rehoboam repents

In the midst of Egypt's invasion, Judah showed repentance and humility toward the Lord. Their prayer moved God to lessen the damage. Thankfully, God spared Judah a total defeat.

2 Chronicles 12: 5 *Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of*

Shishak. 6 Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous. 7 And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8 Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.

Observe *2 Chronicles 12:7*; when the word comes to Shemaiah that God is not going to totally destroy Judah, the prophet does not return and inform Rehoboam or the people, but that does not absolve Judah's responsibility to repent. While not knowing the full extent of God's judgment, Rehoboam leads his people to do the right thing. In other words, the king and country confess the Lord is righteous and admit they were wrong.

Modern day believers can learn a great spiritual truth from this account. No matter how backslidden or far down the path of disobedience a Christian may travel- the only way out is repentance and prayer. It's never too late to return to God. Earthly consequences can be terrible, but repentance while one lives, remains a far better choice than facing God after death at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Eternal security does not dismiss a

Christian's responsibility to live holy. Once someone shows humility and repentance, only God knows the extent of mercy shown. When a Christian falls, no matter how bad, it's never a waste of time to try again.

2 Samuel 12:22 *And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Colossians 3:23-25 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; **24** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. **25** But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

Death of Rehoboam

King Rehoboam dies at fifty-eight years old. He leaves behind a weakened nation in servitude to

Egypt. Unfortunately his repentance did not last long. Just thirty years earlier King Solomon ruled a God fearing and mighty Israel. Now they are a backslidden mess. God's awful final assessment of King Rehoboam- *And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.*

1 Kings 14:21-24 *And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. 22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. 24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*

2 Chronicles 12:1 *And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.*

2 Chronicles 12:13-16 *So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he*

*began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. **14 And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD. 15** Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. **16** And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.*

1 Kings 14:31 *And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijah his son reigned in his stead.* Remnant: Judah Preserves All Twelve Tribes

Remnant: Judah preserves all Twelve Tribes

The following commentary should be studied with King Jeroboam's satanic decision to replace Judaism. What happens here presents the most significant events of Rehoboam's reign. This also sets correct doctrinal interpretation concerning the twelve tribes' preservation; continuing through their Babylonian captivity, Israel's rebirth in 1948 AD, and even the Millennium. Bible commentators refer to the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel

as the two tribes in the south and the ten tribes in the north. And although this is true, Bible students need to understand God always preserved a remnant of the twelve tribes within Judah.

By geographic location and tribal membership, Benjamin and Judah stayed under the allegiance of Judah. In other words, no one had to relocate. A remnant from all twelve tribes, however, did leave home and property for sake of God. Careful reading of brief, yet salient passages reveals a faithful remnant from all twelve tribes left their homes and traveled to Judah. This remnant forsook land and property for sake of their faith, completely starting over in a new place. (See also Asa's Revival *2 Chronicles 15:8,9.*)

2 Chronicles 11:12-17 *And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side. 13 And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts. 14 For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: 15 And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. 16 And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God*

of their fathers. 17 *So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.*

In addition to Levi's migration, a remnant from the ten tribes relocated inside Judah's kingdom, a profound ensample of persons absolutely in love with God. Persons who forsake houses, property, and inheritance. No doubt many lost touch with family. Every now and then Christian missionaries come close to doing this, but even then, they usually derive some kind of support from back home. These volunteer refugees left their country for moral and religious principles. Jews fleeing Jeroboam gives us a glimpse of Jews at their best. While Christian historians often cite Jews for their rebellion, tremendous ensamples of selflessness and servitude toward God also exist. In spite of Israel splitting apart, this remnant represents believers totally dedicated to the Lord. Not many people voluntarily commit to such an undertaking. For those believers who do- God bless you.

God is no respecter of persons, but he is a great respecter of nations and Israel is his chosen nation. But being Jewish is no guarantee of personal salvation; that is a matter of choice and faith. No matter how backslidden Israel may be, a Jewish remnant chooses to serve God: Old Testament or New Testament, Church Age, or

Tribulation- scripture records a remnant who remain faithful to God. Currently, Christian Jews living in the present dispensation of grace represent this remnant;- even if they have no idea to which tribe they belong. They are God's treasure buried in the world. (See Part Two Parable Hidden Treasure)

Romans 9:27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

Romans 11:5 *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

Revelation 11:13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy*

*thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and
buyeth that field.*

Jeroboam, Israel 1st King

- Israel's first King
- Jeroboam= Let the people contend; he will multiply the people
- Length of reign: Twenty-two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Ephraim
- Father's name: Nebat
- Mother's Name: Zeruah
- Prophets: Ahijah the Shilonite; unnamed man of God
- Ruled during the time of Judah's kings: Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa
- Claim to fame: Establishes alternative religion. Sets up golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.
- Texts: 1 Kings Chapters 11:26-14:20; 2 Chronicles chapters 10-12

King Jeroboam's biographical outline:

- Solomon promotes Jeroboam
- God offers Jeroboam a continuing dynasty
- Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam
- Jeroboam exiled to Egypt
- Death of Solomon
- Jeroboam becomes king
- Sins of Jeroboam
- Unnamed Prophet

- Lying Prophet
- Jeroboam's child dies
- Death of Jeroboam

While Jeroboam is the first king of Israel, he is in many ways the most significant. Although some kings exceed Jeroboam in moral depravity, absolutely no one aspires or equals his evil ideas. Immediately after becoming king, Jeroboam worries about Israel re-uniting. Although Israel now exists as two separate kingdoms, all tribes remain unified through Judaism. All Jews worship God under the Levitical priesthood's direction, and participate in temple sacrifices in Jerusalem. This religious reality disturbs Jeroboam; he fears citizens will soon forget their differences and unite through worship. Astoundingly he disregards and dismisses God's promises to build him an everlasting dynasty. King Jeroboam rules for twenty-two years and dies during Asa's king of Judah, second year.

Solomon promotes Jeroboam

In the years shortly before King Solomon's death, Jeroboam served as a commander in the king's army. Jeroboam's overt managerial skills provoked King Solomon to promote him ruler over the entire tribe of Joseph. (See Chapter Introducing Jeroboam) Historical developments intertwine so intrinsically, Bible students need study both Rehoboam and Jeroboam simultaneously for thorough understanding.

1 Kings 11:28 *And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.*

God offers Jeroboam a continuing dynasty

God prepares to establish two kingdoms out of one, ten tribes in the north and two tribes in the south. God, appoints Jeroboam to rule as the northern kingdom's first king. Prophet Ahijah confronts Jeroboam and tells him that God plans to divide Israel. In a startling and unforgettable manner, Ahijah makes clear God's plans for Israel. Prophet Ahijah, explains in detail the Lord's decision to appoint him king over the northern kingdom.

1 Kings 11:29-38 *And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: 30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: **31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)** 33*

*Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. 34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. 36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. 37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. **38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.***

Jeroboam becomes king

At first King Rehoboam tries to stop Israel from splitting apart; however, when Prophet Shemaiah's announced to King Rehoboam Israel's division was the will of God, he withdrew any

attempt at reunification. From that moment Israel divided into two kingdoms. (See Chapter Rehoboam)

- Jeroboam rules from the city of Shechem. The kingdom known from this day forward as: Israel, northern kingdom, and the ten tribes.
- Rehoboam rules from Jerusalem. The kingdom known from this day forward as: Judah, southern kingdom, and the two tribes Benjamin and Judah. (and the remnant)

1 Kings 12:22-25 *But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, **23** Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, **and to the remnant** of the people, saying, **24** Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD. **25** Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.*

Sins of Jeroboam; Alternative Religion

What happens next defines Jeroboam as a type of antichrist. In many ways his evil genius goes unequaled in the Bible. The king erects two

golden calves, setting one in the city of Bethel and the other in Dan. He then devises religious festivals to replace religious temple activities and feast days in Jerusalem. Replacing God's Levitical priesthood's laws and regulations, this new religion promotes despicable, immoral persons into the priesthood, with the king himself acting as high priest. Religious festivals embraced idol worship, and fleshly indulgence, even incorporating sexual sin into worship services. He exchanged God's holiness for a Mardi-Gras type religious culture. King Jeroboam's plan worked so well it officially replaced Judaism in Israel. The nation embraced this wicked and idolatrous religion for 250 years; not one king ever repented or took down the golden cows! Seventeen times throughout Israel's history God directly references the *sins of Jeroboam* to depict and summarize the northern kingdom's idolatry and wicked behaviors.

However-It is very important to observe that not all Jews living among the ten tribes followed the counterfeit religion. A remnant refused to follow the crowd. (See Chapter Remnant: Judah Preserves All Twelve Tribes.)

1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. **26** And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: **27** If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at

Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Thought to ponder

Contemplating cows. When Moses delayed coming down from Mount Sinai, after receiving the Ten Commandments, the people made a golden calf to worship. More than 500 years later, after

Israel divided into two nations, King Jeroboam set up two golden calves, providing counterfeit religion that lasted 250 years. And even in modern times, Hinduism regards the cow as sacred. Dare to wonder why a giant statue of a bull stands on Wall Street (New York) majestically representing the world's most important financial district. The OX associated with the love of money is older than you might think. Perplexing as it may seem, the world has defaulted to an un-holy cow issue more than a few times in last 6,000 years; (inexplicable without the Bible) For in depth commentary, including observations on the anointed cherub's (Lucifer's) face of an ox. (See author's work Leviathan's Nightmare.)

Exodus 32:4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 12:28-29 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. **29** And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after,

they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Unnamed Prophet

1 Kings 13

(See also Chapter Abijah Unbelief; and Chapter Josiah)

Lessons and sermon points abound in *1 Kings 13*. As King Jeroboam offers upon the alternative altar in Bethel, God's answers Israel's apostasy. During the ceremony, a mysterious prophet appears who rebukes every aspect of Jeroboam's satanic religion. Scripture never identifies the prophet other than to call him a man of God (fifteen times). In no uncertain terms the man of God speaks directly to the king and the people. His speech begins by cursing the very altar on which Jeroboam performs offerings, invoking a damning prophecy. A king from the line of David named Josiah, will be born and offer the bones of Jeroboam's false priests on this altar. Quite a prediction because King Josiah did indeed fulfill the prophecy more than 300 years later, *2 Kings 23:15-20* (See Chapter Josiah)

The man of God's intrusion infuriates King Jeroboam. With a gesture of extending his hand, he arrogantly orders the prophet's arrest. But God defends his prophet, and King Jeroboam's hand cripples and withers in front of everyone. Next the

altar cracks in half and its ashes pour out. The dramatic and disturbing scene vindicates the man of God and ruins Jeroboam's ceremony.

1 Kings 13:1-5 *And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. 4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. 5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.*

Wisely King Jeroboam changes his tone and begs the prophet to intreat the Lord on his behalf. To this request, the man of God obliges the king and prays for Jeroboam. God restores his hand and the king tries a different tactic. Observe King

Jeroboam shows absolutely no fear of God whatsoever. After witnessing dramatic evidence of God's power, his evil character remains resolved. He deceitfully praises the prophet and even requests he accompany him back to the palace where pleasures and rewards abound.

1 Kings 13:6 *And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. 7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. 8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: 9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. 10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.*

False Doctrine

Although the man of God refuses Jeroboam's bribes, he tells the king more than he should by revealing God forbids him to eat or drink in Bethel. And he must return home via another route from whence he came. Such information seems unnecessary, especially since it was heard by

persons who seek the prophet's harm. Ultimately the disclosure becomes the man of God's undoing.
Proverbs 17:28

False prophets, God's enemies, and even backsliders populated Bethel's crowd that day. Some determined God haters, others just backslidden believers looking for an excuse to satisfy their flesh with religious approval. Such were the sons of an old backslidden prophet. The remaining narrative in chapter thirteen concerns Satan's strategies.

So the unnamed prophet delivers his message and leaves Bethel. By standing up to an evil king in front of an apostate crowd, he performed heroically. Few believers in any age manifest such bravery. But now the man of God grows tired, hungry, thirsty, and emotionally drained- and his mission is not complete until he leaves Bethel's city line. He leaves the city, but before clearing Bethel's boundary he sits down to rest. And precisely at this moment-Satan attacks.

The second lesson learned: (after talking too much.) Being physically tired is dangerous territory. Like Prophet Elijah's mountaintop victory, the unnamed prophet's successful mission leaves him exhausted and emotionally drained. Christians can make mistakes when they work themselves into exhaustion. (See Chapters on Elijah)

Lying prophet

As the man of God rests, scripture introduces a second unnamed prophet. Much consternation concerns this second prophet, and Bible students should observe several facts before making any conclusions.

- He is a prophet.
- He identifies himself as a fellow prophet.
- He convinces a believer that God spoke words that God did not speak.
- He is a liar.
- His teaching hurts a believer who is doing God's work.

When it comes to deceiving God's people:

The goal of all false doctrine persuades Christians to believe God said something that God did not say. The most effective teachers of false doctrine are not satanic kings like Jeroboam. Rather they are believers, who are themselves, persuaded of some lie. And almost always the root cause is rejection of God's words, even if it is only a few words.

1 Kings 13: 11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: ***the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.*** ***12*** And their father said unto them, What

*way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. **13** And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, **14** And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. **15** Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. **16** And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: **17** For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. **18** He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. **But he lied unto him.***

Let's suppose the lying prophet is a backslidden believer who truly does know the Lord. Perhaps he lied because he believes God forbidding the other prophet food or drink until he leaves Bethel- sounds ridiculous? Maybe he thinks the man of God must be mistaken about what God said? So the lying prophet makes up a story that he genuinely believes will help his fellow prophet. And no doubt he believes his interpretation is a more accurate rendering of what God actually said- originally? (See Chapter Unbelief)

The lying prophet is a kindred spirit to Balaam, *Numbers 22*, who devises ways to circumvent God's words. Thus he persuades believers to act in ways God forbids. Like Balaam, God also allowed the lying prophet to speak truth. When contemplating men like the lying prophet or Balaam, an immediate conclusion is they are lost false prophets. Another uncomfortable possibility (spiritual application) is they are believers who have been deceived concerning some of God's words. No one hurts Christians as effectively as other Christians. And the most successful false teachers are saved men who truly believe the lies they teach.

Numbers 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

Whatever the case, the lying prophet persuaded the good prophet that God changed his words about eating and drinking in Bethel. Do not dismiss the fact that eating and drinking is something the good prophet's flesh wants to do anyway. Thus any alteration of God's words which potentially gratifies a Christian's flesh- has a fighting chance of being trusted and believed. So the two men travel in agreement to the lying prophet's house for dinner.

Even before the meal is over, God suddenly forces the lying prophet to tell the truth. He admits his whole scheme to deceive the man of God. But the damage is done. God rebukes the man of God for disobedience and prophesies his untimely death results in an undignified burial away from home. No doubt the news ruined dinner. And then, in an apparent gesture of good will, the lying prophet saddles his own ass for the man of God to ride home. Another lesson learned: religious liars are often polite, generous, and even gracious.

1 Kings 13: 19 *So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. 20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: 21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, 22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. 23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.*

The story becomes more bizarre. Unhappily, the prophecy fulfills a short distance from the lying

prophet's house. A lion attacks the man of God and kills him. What happens next is peculiar. The lion does not eat the man, nor does it hurt the ass. Inexplicably the ass stays with the body and so does the lion. In fact the lion and the ass (supposedly natural enemies) seem part of the same team. So scripture draws an odd picture indeed: But not necessarily illogical?

Dead man, lion, and an ass. What's wrong with this picture? Travelers continue to use the road and witness the tragic yet curious spectacle. The story spreads through Bethel like wildfire. The man of God is dead, and something supernatural is happening on the road. Perhaps the people believe King Jeroboam victorious and his counterfeit religion is now endorsed by the gods?

For a spiritual application, the lion typifies the devil, and the ass typifies a lost man. Satan and the world often team up (get together) in a multitude of diverse causes for the sole purpose of disrupting Bible truth. And no disruption reaps more damage than getting a Christian to believe God said something that God did not say.

1 Kings 13: 24 *And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. **25** And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and*

they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. **26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD:** therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. **27** And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. **28** And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass. **29** And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. **30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!** **31** And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: **32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.**

In another statement of truth, the lying prophet declares God's judgment is due to disobedience to the word of the Lord *1 Kings 13:26*. And perhaps in an attempted act of repentance or

at least something to mitigate his sin, the lying prophet retrieves the body and buries him in his own sepulchre. Observe also he refers to the man of God as his brother. And for his last will and testament, dictates that his own body lay next to the man of God's body. Finally, he reiterates the prophetic truth against the altar and Israel's apostasy.

Once the whole tragic episode is over, King Jeroboam remains committed to his evil ways. Emboldened by the perceived victory, he continues perpetrating ideas which damns the entire northern kingdom, eventually corrupting even Judah.

1 Kings 13: 33 *After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34* *And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.*

In truth, God's judgment can be terrible and swift. As in the case of the unnamed prophet who believed an older prophet's lies concerning God's words. It is also true God's judgment may take a while? As in the case of God's longsuffering toward the same old lying prophet who Satan used to take a good man out. It would seem a happier ending if the lying prophet were killed by the lion. Alas, our

ways are not always God's ways. Trusting God is not always easy.

Romans 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

Isaiah 55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Exodus 13:13 *And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.*

Thought to ponder

Notice specifically in *1 Kings 13:11*, the lying prophet's sons told him about the words the man of God spoke to Jeroboam; therefore, the lying prophet knew the Lord forbid the man of God to eat or drink- even before the man of God told him. God's words are a battle ground. Be advised some Christian leaders, (be they college professors, pastors, writers, etc.) actively participate in

changing the Bible. Sadly, being born again, does not guarantee one believes all God's words- and it certainly does not guarantee one believes God preserves his Bible without error. Questions for any thinking Christian to answer:

- Do you believe God preserved his words without error?
- Do you believe the Bible is God's final authority?
- Which Bible is it?

Psalms 12:6-7 *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

1 Kings 14

While King Jeroboam's momentarily enjoys triumph with his godless cow religion, false doctrine has its limitations. Jeroboam's son suffers with a terminal illness. And sinners, like saints, love their children. The king remembers Prophet Ahijah; the one who brought him God's offer to be king over Israel and enjoy almost identical prosperity and blessing as David, *1 King 11:38*. An offer Jeroboam mocked and rejected.

Jeroboam sends his wife to Ahijah for a word of knowledge inquiring whether the boy recovers.

Notice Jeroboam believes the Lord's prophet knows the truth and the future. Jeroboam is a prime example of someone who holds the truth in unrighteousness, yet chooses to oppose the Lord, *Romans 1:18-19* Foolishly or desperately, he sends tasty foods as a sort of culinary bribe, and orders his wife to wear a disguise so she does not look like royalty.

The Lord precedes the visit and enlightens Ahijah by revealing Jeroboam's scheme. Although Ahijah is old and blind, he sees through the queen's disguise, and gives her the worst news a mother can hear; her child will die. In addition, the whole house of Jeroboam will be eradicated. Interestingly, God segregates the dying child from his deplorable family because in him God finds *some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel*. An encouraging verse and evidence of God's fairness and mercy. The nation mourns the child and he receives proper burial.

Thought to ponder

Many Christians experience an unbeliever requesting prayer for an ill or hurt family member. Never underestimate the power of a good testimony. Often, when lost individuals are hurting they turn to a true believer for help. The fact that even a man like Jeroboam turns to God's prophet over his sick child proves the point.

1 Kings 14:1-3 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. **2** And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. **3** And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child. **4** And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age. **5** And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman. **6** And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings. **7** Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, **8** And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; **9** But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to

*anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: **10** Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. **11** Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it. **12** Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. **13** And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. **14** Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. **15** For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. **16** And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin. **17** And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died; **18** And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.*

King Jeroboam's Death

So the man offered everything enters hell with nothing, leaving behind a legacy of lies and counterfeit religion. No king in the history of Israel or Judah compares to the evil genius of Jeroboam. His ideas typify satanic alternatives, mixing the God of the Bible with man-made alternative religion. By the way, the word Babylon means –to confuse by mixing.

Throughout the history of kings, when God levels his severest criticism, he mentions Jeroboam. Twenty-four times God uses the expression sins of Jeroboam. The satanic altars in Bethel and Dan remained throughout the entire history of Israel. Josiah, King of Judah tore them down over 325 years after they were set up. (See Chapter King Josiah)

1 Kings 14:9-10 *But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: **10** Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.*

1 Kings 14: 19 *And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20* *And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.*

2 Kings 17:22 *For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;*

Abijah, Abijam Judah #2

- Judah's second King
- Abijah= My father is Jah; also called Abijam
- Length of reign: Three years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Rehoboam
- Mother's Name: Maachah, *2 Chronicles 11:21-22*
- Prophets: Ahijah the Shilonite; Iddo
- Ruled during the time of Israel's king Jeroboam
- Claim to fame: Delivers tremendous speech; Leads battle against northern kingdom, inflicting greatest loss of life in their history, 500,000 men killed
- Texts: *1 King 14:31- 15:8; 2 Chronicles chapters 13*

Abijah's outline

- Ascends the throne
- War
- Great Sermon
- Horrific Battle
- Death

In the eighteenth year of Jeroboam, Abijah, (known also as Abijam) ascends Judah's throne. Scripture records King Abijah walked in all the sins of his father, not a good report card, but he begins with valiant effort. *1 Kings* articulates only a brief eight verse narrative, *2 Chronicles 13* contains more information. King Abijah's most noteworthy contributions: He delivers a tremendous speech and commands a battle against Jeroboam which basically destroys the northern kingdom for a generation; the largest loss of life for Israel in the Old Testament.

Abijah reigned for three years. He married fourteen wives and begat twenty-two sons and fourteen daughters. *2 Chronicles 13:21*. Like most kings he disregards *Deuteronomy 17:17*. Although Abijah's heart is not perfect with the Lord, he reigns effectively and decisively. Alas many able administrators deny the Lord. Walking in all the sins of his father declares he finished his course committed to idolatry and evil.

1 Kings 15:3 *And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.*

War

Almost immediately after becoming king, Abijah is thrust into war with Israel. It seems

Jeroboam waited for Rehoboam's death to wage a major attack. If he hoped for indecisive leadership from the new king, he made a serious mistake. At the onset of battle, King Abijah delivers an inspiring and righteous oratory. His speech begins in *2 Chronicles 13:4*. By invoking the promises of God toward David, Abijah makes a powerful case for God's words' defending Judah. The covenant of salt, *13:5* references *Numbers 18:19-21* which ties the permanency of God's inheritance to David and the Levitical priesthood. (See Chapter Notes) God preserves both Judaism and the Davidic line in Judah. King Jeroboam never listens, nor does he obey God's words. The horrendous battle begins.

2 Chronicles 13:1-3 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. **2** He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. **3** And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, **even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour.**

Abijah's Great Sermon

2 Chronicles 13:4-12 And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; **5**

Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord. 7 And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. 8 And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. 9 Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. 10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business: 11 And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him. 12 And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to

cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

Horrific Battle

Considering the loss of life, this is the most devastating battle in Israel's history. God supported King Abijah, and fought against Israel, destroying 500,000 chosen men. Scripture using the word chosen to identify the men God kills is interesting. 800,000 men populated Jeroboam's army, God marked 500,000 for death. The Lord is a man of war and righteous in judgment; nowhere in scripture is that more apparent than here. Scripture declares God honored Judah because they relied upon the Lord. Ostensibly, Jeroboam's golden calves did nothing but invoke God's wrath.

Jeroboam disregards the sermon and actually exploits the time Abijah spends talking by positioning his troops around Judah's flanks. Judah's army cries to God with shouts and trumpets. God answers their prayers and secures their victory. So devastating for Israel, Abijah even retrieved many cities from the northern kingdom, including Bethel, Jeshanah, and towns of Ephraim. Although Judah did not completely control those border territories, King Abijah made sure attacks from those regions were no longer possible.

2 Chronicles 13: 13-20 *But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. 14 And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. 15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand. 17 And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. 18 Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers. 19 And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Bethel with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof. 20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died.*

Abijah's death

King Abijah's reign concludes with a reference to Prophet Iddo, *2 Chronicles 13:22*. Compare to *2 Chronicles 12:15*. Apparently, Iddo the seer is also a scribe whose writings were assimilated into the narratives of *2 Kings and 2*

Chronicles. As were Prophet Shemaiah's. Verses like these are sometimes used to suggest the Bible has lost books. The accusation proven false by a little logical thinking, and most importantly by *Psalms 12:6,7; Revelation 22:18,19*.

2 Chronicles 13:21 *But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. 22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.*

2 Chronicles 14:1 *So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.*

Unbelief

(See also 1 Kings 13 Unnamed Prophet False Doctrine)

An interesting phenomena surrounds Christian scholarship and Abijah's great battle. The majority of commentaries, encyclopedias, Christian colleges, etc. do not believe Israel suffered the loss of 500,000 men. Nor do they believe scripture's accounting of either army's size is even close to accurate: Judah's 400,000 men or Israel's 800,000 men. Some texts go to great lengths explaining and apologizing for the alleged biblical mistakes.

Although this book's purpose is not to critique other commentaries, it's disturbing numerous scholars commit to persuading Christians that God did not really say these words. When the lying prophet heard the man of God say the Lord forbid eating or drinking until he left Bethel's boundary line, he, quite possibly, thought such an order was ridiculous. So he lied and said God told him eating and drinking was permissible. In much the same way many Christian leaders, especially those who educate younger Bible students, often pass judgment on scriptures which they feel are inaccurate. Many educators correct the Bible with their understanding of the supposed original languages and/or their own reasoning. (See *1 Kings 13*)

The point is many Christian educators discourage Christians who believe God preserved his words without error; they think such faith constitutes a bridge too far. And they convince Christians some scriptures are not preserved correctly, and sometimes they are just flat out wrong. The common declaration from Christian institutions about believing the Bible's inerrancy in the original documents, means very little because the "original documents" do not exist. Only copies of originals exist, which they do not believe are inerrant, and therefore subject to their scholarly correction. Think about that for a while.

Scripture moves through human history like the breath of God. The evolution of language does not render God's words fallible, nor does it negate his power to preserve. An inerrant Bible exceeds all doctrines of Christianity, transcending the deity of Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, his death, or his resurrection; for God's words bring these truths to us. God literally magnifies his written word above his name. God's words project himself. Inspiration without preservation would be worthless.

Psalms 12:6-7 *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

Psalms 138:2 *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*

John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

Chapter Notes

A covenant of salt- 2 Chronicles 13:5

Leviticus 2:13 *And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither*

shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

Numbers 18:19-21 *All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: **it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.** 20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

Asa, Judah #3

- Judah's third king
- Asa= Healer
- Length of reign: Forty-one years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Abijah
- Mother's Name: Maachah
- Wife: Azubah the daughter of Shilhi *2 Cr 20:31*
- Prophets: Azariah the son of Oded, Hanani the seer
- Ruled during the time of Israel's kings: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri
- Claim to fame: Two great battles, Removes images, Fires the queen, Tremendous revival; Backslides. Puts prophet in Jail, Foot disease
- Texts: 1 King 15:8-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16

Asa's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- First Battle
- Revival
- Asa's Covenant
- Second Battle
- Diplomacy

- Hanani the seer
- Puts Hanani the seer in prison
- Asa's mother

Ever since Solomon's final years, spiritual corruption remained the norm in the southern and northern kingdom. But with Asa, finally Judah gets a good king. The young king hits the ground running. Among his first recorded actions is the removal of sodomites from the land, along with idols, groves, and images; the very activities destroying the spiritual and moral fiber of Israel. In the Bible, sodomy connects specifically to religious rebellion as well as overt sexual behavior opposing God's righteousness. Sodomy and heterosexual prostitution seemed to celebrate rebellion and idolatry and even sought to pervert temple worship. (See Chapter Notes)

1 Kings briefly summarizes Asa's reign, *2 Chronicles* provides the most information. Always, Bible students need to consider Kings and Chronicles side by side. Asa rules forty-one years; six different kings from Israel rule consecutively throughout Asa's reign.

Ascends the throne

In the twentieth year of Jeroboam, Asa ascends the throne. Within his own family, Asa faced serious royal opposition. The kingdom's Queen, Asa's grandmother, (See Chapter Notes)

encourages idolatry. The fact Judah's established Queen Mother engages in such public rebellion, shows clearly the preceding kings, Rehoboam and Abijah, encouraged cult activities.

1 Kings 15:8-13 *And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. 9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. 10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. 11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. 12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.*

2 Chronicles 14

Although God gave Judah peace, they prepared for war by strengthening the military. The Middle East has always been a dangerous place. No doubt, the wise king saw trouble coming. For decades, Asa engages Judah in full scale building programs to restore and strengthen the kingdom. Construction included new fenced towns and vast fortification projects. The people built walls and

strong towers protecting their borders and established cities.

2 Chronicles 14:1-15 *So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God: 3 For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: 4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. 6 And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest. 7 Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.*

Asa's First Battle

When the Ethiopians invaded the region, Asa's defensive preparations proved invaluable. Still, the Ethiopian's military numbered over 1,000,000 troops. This million man army, commanded by Zerah, is the largest army recorded

in the Old Testament. With faith and prayer very similar to David going up against Goliath, King Asa cries unto the Lord. Being greatly outnumbered proved only how much the people needed to rely on the Lord. King Asa routed the million man army, leading his troops to a total victory. Tremendous spoil ensued; imagine the supplies an army of over one million needs to sustain itself. In a route everything gets left behind.

2 Chronicles 14:8 *And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour. 9 And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. 10 Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. 12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not*

recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil. 14 And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them. 15 They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

Asa's Revival

The victory brought great rejoicing among the people. Upon the battle's conclusion, prophet Azariah son of Oded delivered a thoughtful message. The prophet's congratulations contained a warning for Asa and his kingdom, reminding them of the past when the people abandoned the Lord and served false gods. But now- with King Asa firmly in control, Judah returned to God. The prophet admonished the kingdom to continue in their repentance and promised them serving the Lord unleashes blessings from heaven.

Encouraged with victory and the prophet's words, Judah's revival continued. In fact, Asa moved forward with tremendous zeal and purpose. The people entered into a covenant to seek God with all their heart and soul. So powerful was the revival, more Jews from northern kingdom left their homes and relocated in Judah, adding to God's remnant and ensuring all twelve tribes remained

preserved. (See Chapter Remnant: Judah Preserves All Twelve Tribes) The people removed any images, false gods, or groves still remaining in the land. Queen Maachah's idol and grove religion suffered extermination at this time. The only high places (false worship centers) not removed were high places throughout the nation of Israel. Judah's Kingdom was swept clean. (See Chapter High Places).

2 Chronicles 15

Asa's Covenant

Concerning the covenant the people made with God. Death for all Jews refusing the covenant seems extreme. But consider the times. Judah's monarchy is ordained directly by God. This is not modern democracy, nor is it Church Age doctrine. The Jews are the only people on earth whose constitution is written by God. Northern Israel, entrenched in satanic religion, constantly sought to replace Judaism, even using war to do it. Basically, not obeying God's commandments in the days of King Asa amounted to treason. No doubt Jews refusing to obey King Asa's covenant emigrated north, just as Jews who loved God relocated in Judah. Once Asa controlled the religious situation in Judah, the kingdom enjoys peace and prosperity. King Asa exemplifies the meaning of his name; he truly heals the kingdom. Furthermore a righteous Jewish king, from the seed of David, has authority

to rule the kingdom of heaven on earth, (See Part Two)

2 Chronicles 15:1-19 *And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. 4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. 6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded. 8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD. 9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. 10 So they gathered themselves*

together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. **11** And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. **12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;** **13 That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.** **14** And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. **15** And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

2 Chronicles 15:16-19 And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. **17** But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. **18** And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. **19** And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

2 Chronicles 16

Asa's Second Battle/Asa's Diplomacy

Twenty-five years after the Ethiopian battle, scripture records Asa's second great challenge. And compared against the way he handled the first battle, it reveals a gold mine for sermons.

At this time Baasha King of Israel attacked Judah economically. By building fortified cities, like Ramah, he put great restrictions on Judah. Israel hindered trade routes and controlled who could enter or leave Judah. Clearly these constituted acts of war. But Israel's harassment seemed much less threatening than the million Ethiopians twenty-five years ago. In addition, life today was good in Judah. Prosperity prevailed and the people had no interest in fighting a war. Thus King Asa came up with a very political, diplomatic solution.

He approached Benhadad, king of Syria, and reminded him that both their fathers signed a league (treaty), thus the agreement obligated the Syrians to help. Besides, the Syrian government needed money, and Judah would pay them. The Syrians agreed to do Judah's fighting for them. Asa financed the mercenaries with gold and silver from treasures in the Lord's Temple. In other words, Asa bought his way out of the crisis.

From a political perspective, Asa's plan worked perfectly. The Syrians effectively defeated Israel and resolved the situation. Not one soldier from Judah participated in the battle. In fact, Asa's idea worked so well, they were able to spoil Israel's cities by removing stones and timber (always precious commodities in the Middle East.) Judah recycled the building materials into new and improved cities in Judah. With trade routes restored, Judah's kingdom enjoyed even more prosperity.

2 Chronicles 16:1-14 (see also 1 Kings 15:14-24) *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, 3 There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. 4 And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. 5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease. 6 Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the*

*stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof,
wherewith Baasha was building; and he built
therewith Geba and Mizpah.*

Hanani the seer

But the smoothest road to travel is not always the wisest route. Hanani the seer rebuked Asa for not depending on God. By relying on an old alliance from a godless country, Asa demonstrated lack of faith and a short memory. The Lord reminded Asa about the huge forces of Ethiopians and Lubims. And how, years ago, he led the nation to trust the Lord which resulted in military victory and tremendous spiritual revival.

Let us all heed the prophet's warning. Success and material wealth can be detrimental to serving God. All too often people living in comfort forget the Lord. Because Asa neglected the Lord, Hanani prophesized wars and trouble for the rest of Asa's rein.

2 Chronicles 16:7 *And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. 9 For the eyes of*

the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

Puts Hanani the seer in prison

Asa did not handle the Lord's rebuke well. Blaming the messenger for bad news, Asa put the prophet in Jail; facing the truth is sometimes infuriating. He also oppressed some of Judah's citizens. A backslider's rebellion always affects more than the backslider. Scripture records a curious health condition in Asa's latter years. A disease afflicting the King's feet became very disabling. Perhaps a spiritual application concludes King Asa's refusal to repent crippled his walk with God? Over all King Asa lived a good and righteous life, but in the end he failed by refusing to repent or admit he made a mistake. All too often able men and women serve God with honor, bravery and faith- yet in their own latter years stumble in some unfortunate but debilitating manner.

2 Chronicles 16:10-14 *Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time. 11 And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12 And Asa in the thirty and*

ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. 13 And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. 14 And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

Sermon/ Lesson

Considering Asa's good points: One of the Bibles' great iconoclasts, a preacher can deliver an effective sermon.

1. Define iconoclast- person who attacks icons- cherished beliefs or institutions. In Asa's days this meant he attacked idolatry and false religion.
2. A destroyer of images used in religious worship, in particular.

Numerous scriptures show King Asa taking down Judah's false images and doing all he can to eradicate false gods and religions. Although society loved their false doctrines and images, King Asa stood faithful and righteous. A strong leader makes a difference, especially a king. Judah prospered and rejoiced in the Lord. *2 Chronicles 14:1-5.*

Proverbs 29:2 *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.*

- Juxtapose the two battles especially the preparations. For the first battle Asa relies on God. For the second, he relies on money and worldly connections.
- Consider the aftermath of both battles. The spiritual significance for the people and the king.
- For dramatic effect. Begin sermon by producing a closed antique looking wooden box. Tell the congregation you have the one image that Asa forgot to take down. And this is no replica, this is the actual image.
- At the sermon's ending, overtly consult with an older saint, perhaps a deacon, in front of the church. Show him the contents of the box first before you show the class/ congregation. Publically ask if he thinks the people can handle seeing the image. Then remove a hand held mirror (s) and pass the mirror around the congregation so they may view the image King Asa neglected to eradicate, the image of one's self.

Romans 7:24-25 *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

High Places

High places were designated places for offerings and sacrifices. The people built them on top of mountains, hills, groves, or even in houses. Ever since Solomon built the Temple, God allowed sacrifices only in designated locations, and then only under careful control by the Levitical priesthood. Once God established temple worship in Jerusalem, God ordered the Jews to cease sacrificing in the high places.

This means whenever high places show up after God establishes Jerusalem for temple sacrifice, they are idolatrous and forbidden. In fact throughout the northern kingdom, Jeroboam set up high places to replace true worship in Jerusalem. In the days prior to Asa's reign, the people drifted away from worshiping God in the proper manner. Even worse, they worshipped false gods in high places. Thus the sins of Jeroboam infiltrated Judah. High places remain a constant problem throughout the history of both kingdoms. In Judah, a good king would take them down, but the people would rebel and re-establish them again. Making matters even more complicated, some people offered sacrifices to the true God, but in the wrong way and in the wrong place. They disregarded or never learned God established Jerusalem's temple as the only place for sacrifice, all alternative locations and altars were forbidden. In Israel, high places exist as

a permanent feature, especially in Bethel and Dan and Samaria.

Deuteronomy 12:13-14 *Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: **14** But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.*

Deuteronomy 12:5-6 *But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: **6** And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:*

1 Kings 12:31-32 *And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. **32** And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.*

Jeremiah 19:13 *And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah,*

shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

Leviticus 26:30 *And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.*

Chapter Notes

Asa's Mother

Does scripture refer to Asa's mother or grandmother? Observe the same name for Asa and Abijah occurs when discussing their mothers. Scripture may well be referencing the grandmother even though it called her Asa's mother, an acceptable title. However, observe *2 Chronicles 13:2* alerts Bible students that Abijah's mother has two names. Observe the word **also** in the text. Another possibility is a woman may have the same name as her mother-in-law, mother, or grandmother.

Considering her leadership status in cult worship, it's probably his grandmother. A dominant family personality legitimates the title. Critics of scripture, eager to pounce on apparent discrepancies, need to use common sense; especially in Kings and Chronicles. Numerous

unrevealed scenarios explain a difficult verse. A woman might die during childbirth and the grandmother raise her daughter's children, effectively becoming their mother. People may adopt or have stepchildren. Even today geologies can be difficult and complicated. Hence the warning given to Timothy, *1 Timothy 1:4*

God calls Judah's future kings sons of David, *2 Chronicles 32:33*. Abijah calls himself the son of David even though David was his great grandfather, *2 Chronicles 13:8*.

1 Kings 15:9 *And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. 10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.*

1 Kings 15:1-2 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. **2** Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. **And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.**

2 Chronicles 13:1-2 *Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.*

2 Chronicles 13:8 *And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.*

1 Timothy 1:4 *Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*

Sodomy

Ever since God destroyed the cities of the plain: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. Sodom epitomizes sin, especially rebellion. The first time scripture uses the words *sinner and wicked* the words connect with Sodom, *Genesis 13:13*. Notice also the words appear in verse thirteen. Many persons think only one thing when they remember Sodom and Gomorrah. But sins of Sodom include more than homosexuality. Prophet Ezekiel 16:49 provides a more complete assessment. Sexual abomination seems to be Sodom's final disregarding of God. In the Bible, sodomy connects specifically to religious rebellion and overt sexual behavior opposing God's righteousness. Sodomy and heterosexual prostitution celebrate around idolatry seeking to pervert Temple worship.

Nearly all things in the physical world represent some kind of spiritual truth. Notice the

comparison *even as* in *Jude 1:7*, to Sodom and Gomorrah. God compared certain aspects of *Genesis 6* to Sodom and Gomorrah. Going after strange flesh in *Genesis 6*- were male angels taking human women. In the days of Lot, strange flesh involved human males with human males. Thus sodomy pictures unholy cohabitation.

It is important to realize Jude is not commenting on the whole societal condition, but rather one element. God comparing evil angels to Sodom and Gomorrah compares the days of Noah to the final times close to Jesus' Second Advent. A thorough understanding of the days of Noah and the days of Lot become critical in understanding the signs of the times in one's own country. Jesus' prophecy corresponds directly with *Ezekiel 16:48-50*. Scripture makes it clear, many cities in Old Testament and New Testament became just as bad as or worse than Sodom.

Ezekiel 16:48-50 *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. 49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*

Matthew 11:23 *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

Genesis 13:13 *But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*
(See also Part Two Number Thirteen)

Genesis 18:20 *And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;*

Deuteronomy 23:17 *There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.*

Deuteronomy 29:23 *And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:*

1 Kings 14:24 *And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*

1 Kings 15:12 *And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.*

2 Kings 23:7 *And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.*

Isaiah 3:9 *The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.*

Jeremiah 23:14 *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.*

Luke 17:26-30 *And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and*

*destroyed them all. **30** Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

Nadab, Israel #2

- Israel's second king
- Nadab= The willing one
- Length of reign: Two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Ephraim
- Father's name: Jeroboam
- Ruled during the time of Judah's King Asa
- Claim to fame: Murdered in office- thus ending Jeroboam's dynasty
- Texts: *1 King 14:20; 1 Kings 15:25-31*

Scripture records very little about Israel's second king. Nadab takes over for his father, Jeroboam, in the second year of Asa. King Nadab rules Israel for only two years. He embraced all Jeroboam's sins, most notably the golden cows in Bethel and Dan. Jeroboam's dynasty ends with Nadab, thus fulfilling the prophecy delivered by Ahijah the Shilonite, *1 Kings 14:9-11*. A military man named Baasha conspired a coup destroying the entire house of Jeroboam. The murderous purge happened while King Nadab engaged in a siege against Gibbethon during the third year of Asa.

1 Kings 15:31 asks Bible students a question. *Are not more of Nadab's acts written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* At first glance

the verse seems to imply the Bible's Book of Chronicles contains more information. However the Bible does not present any more information on Nadab. Therefore the writers of 1 Kings either included those chronicled texts in 1 Kings- or the Holy Spirit elected not to declare those records in final holy canon, because in the Bible's, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, scripture is silent on Nadab. No part of God's word is missing.

1 Kings 14:20 *And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.*

1 Kings 15:25-31 *And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. 27 And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. 29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: 30*

*Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. **31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?***

Baasha, Israel #3

- Israel's third king
- Baasha= In the consumption; in the haste
- Length of reign: Twenty-four years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Issachar *1 Kings 15:27*
- Father's name: Ahijah
- Prophets: Jehu the son of Hanani
- Ruled during the time of Judah's king Asa
- Claim to fame: Destroys house of Jeroboam, Provokes King Asa
- Texts: *1 King 15:27-34; 1 Kings 16:1-8; 2 Chronicles 16:1-6*

Baasha's outline

- Takes the throne
- Baasha murders Nadab
- Destroys house of Jeroboam
- Baasha harasses Judah
- Baasha's judgment and death

Comes to power in the third year of Asa, king of Judah. In a military coup Baasha kills King Nadab and then exterminates any person related to the house of Jeroboam. This fulfills the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, *1 Kings 14:10*. Although God ushers in a new royal family, the same old story

persists. Idolatry and immorality remain status quo. King Baasha changes Israel's spiritual condition not at all- he continues in the sins of Jeroboam, and eventually suffers the same bloody end as the house of Jeroboam. Baasha's story largely intertwines with King Asa's second battle. (See commentary under Asa's second battle, *2 Chronicles 16*.) King Baasha rules Israel for twenty-four years from the city of Tirzah.

Baasha murders Nadab

1 Kings 15:27-28 *And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.*

Destroys house of Jeroboam

1 Kings 15:29-34 *And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: 30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. 31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did,*

*are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? **32** And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. **33** In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. **34** And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.*

Baasha harasses Judah (See also Asa's Second Battle)

At this time Baasha attacks Judah economically. By building fortified territories in Ramah, he hindered Judah's trade routes, Israel basically controlled who entered and exited the southern kingdom. This war on commerce infuriated King Asa. He called in some political favors and hired mercenaries to fight his battle; and the Syrians agreed to battle Israel. Judah's plan worked so well that Baasha abandoned his building projects. Judah actually confiscated and spoiled the territories that Israel intended to use against them. Baasha's whole plan ended up a colossal failure.

2 Chronicles 16:1-6 *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. **2** Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD*

*and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, **3** There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. **4** And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. **5** And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease. **6** Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.*

Baasha's judgment and death

Observe God ordained Baasha, *1 Kings 16:2*, to deliver judgment on the previous king, Nadab. God often uses Godless leaders, and enemy nations to render punishment and judgment. This does not negate anyone's responsibility for their own behaviors. But in the big scheme of things, God manipulates many events to accomplish his ultimate will and destiny. (See Chapter Notes)

***1 Kings 16:1-8** Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, **2** Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel;*

and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; 3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. 5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. 7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him. 8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

Chapter Notes

God uses world leaders to accomplish his will

Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

Job 12:19 *He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.*

Daniel 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

God declares the Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar his servant. At the time Nebuchadnezzar had no idea he was fulfilling God's intentions. The same is true for Pharaoh during the Exodus under Moses.

Jeremiah 25:9 *Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.*

Romans 9:17 *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

Elah, Israel #4

- Israel's fourth king
- Elah= A terebinth, an oak
- Length of reign: Two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Issachar *1 Kings 15:27*
- Father's name: Baasha
- Prophets: Jehu the son of Hanani
- Ruled during the time of Judah's King Asa
- Claim to fame: Drunk, Murdered
- Texts: *1Kings 16:6-14*

Elah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Zimri's conspiracy
- Elah's murder
- House of Baasha destroyed

Ascending the throne during the twenty-sixth year of Asa, Elah rules from Tirzah for only two years. The big story on Elah is his death, or rather the irony of his death. Just as his father, Baasha, murdered the family of Jeroboam, Baasha's family dies in like manner, for exactly the same reasons: Golden Cow worship headquartered in Bethel and Dan, rampant immorality, vanities, murders, and atrocities of all kinds. The coup that took his life ends the dynasty of Baasha.

Ascends the throne

1 Kings 16:6 *So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. 7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him. 8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.*

Zimri's conspiracy

Elah's murder

Zimri is a disgruntled military commander. Unhappy with his current position, he decides being king would be better than commanding a force of chariots. So he plots a small, but successful coup. Taking advantage of King Elah's drunkenness, Zimri attacks and murders his boss.

1 Kings 16:8-10 *In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. 9 And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah. 10 And Zimri went in and smote*

him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

House of Baasha destroyed

The Lord sometimes uses blunt and military style language when describing battle field judgments. Such is the case for the house of Baasha. All men, women, and friends suffered death. When God leaves no one alive and adds *not one that pisseth against a wall*. The phrase specifically refers to all males, and perhaps even the dogs suffered death. Judgement against the house of Baasha fulfills *1 Kings 16:3-4*.

Exodus 15:3 The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.

1 Kings 16:11 ***And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. 12*** *Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13* ***For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. 14*** *Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they*

*not written in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Israel?*

Zimri, Israel #5

- Israel's fifth king
- Zimri=My psalm
- Length of reign: Seven days
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Prophets: Jehu the son of Hanani
- Ruled during the twenty-seventh year of King Asa. 1 Ki, 16:15
- Claim to fame: Murders King Elah; Shortest rule; Burns palace, Commits suicide
- Texts: 1Kings 16:8-20

Zimri's outline

- Murders King Elah
- Murders whole house of Baasha
- Burns down palace
- Suicide

Zimri, a murderous discontented high ranking military officer who commanded half of Israel's chariots. He commits treason by killing King Elah, ending Baasha's dynasty. Zimri appoints himself king, but observe scripture also recognizes him as ruling Israel; thus legitimizing his reign. King Zimri achieves distinction by ruling the shortest period of time of any king in Israel or Judah. He rules only seven days. The brief lived king earns further notoriety by earning the wrath of Israel's

population. Apparently not all officers were as unhappy with King Elah as Zimri.

When the people heard of Zimri's treason, they made Omri, captain of the army, king of Israel. The empowered general led a determined company to Tirzah to put down the man who would be king. When King Zimri sees the people revolting against him, he executes two final acts of ignobility by burning down the king's residence in Tirzah and committing suicide. His epitaph could be, "if I can't live in this palace-nobody can."

Murders King Elah

1 Kings 16:8-20 *In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. 9 And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah. 10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.*

Murders whole house of Baasha

Judgement against the house of Baasha fulfills *1 Kings 16:3-4*. (See also Chapter Elah)

1 Kings 16:11-13 *And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his*

*throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. **12** Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, **13** For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.*

Burned Palace/ Suicide

***1 Kings 16:15** In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. **16** And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. **17** And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. **18** And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, **19** For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. **20** Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

Chapter Notes

Seven suicides in the Bible:

1. Judge Abimelech Judges 9:54
2. Judge Samson Judges 16:30
3. King Saul 1st Samuel 31:4
4. King Saul's armour bearer 1 Samuel 31:5
5. King David's friend and enemy Ahithophel 2 Samuel 17:23
6. King Zimri 1 Kings 16:18
7. Judas Iscariot Matthew 27:5

Omri, Israel #6

- Israel's sixth king
- Omri= My sheaf (as bound)
- Length of reign: Twelve years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Ruled during the thirty-first year of King Asa. 1 Ki, 16:15
- Claim to fame: Establishes Samaria as capital; Fathers Ahab
- Texts: 1Kings 16:16-29

Omri's Outline

- Takes the throne
- Civil war
- Omri rules all Israel
- Establishes Samaria Israel's capital
- Chronological issues

In the thirty-first year of Asa, king of Judah, Omri takes the throne. In the last thirty years Israel has endured three kings, two dynasties annihilated, and now faces civil war. Within this national instability steps Omri and another opportunistic leader named Tibni. The military proves largely behind Omri, eventually securing him the crown. The kingdom remained divided four years before Omri rules the whole nation. Since scripture never acknowledges Tibni as king, he may be viewed only as a leader of serious position, but not royalty.

Upon Tibni's death, Israel unifies and prospers under the last eight years of King Omri's reign.

King Omri takes Israel to a new level of competency and evil. Scripture declares Omri did worse than all the kings before him. He retains the sins of Jeroboam by keeping calf worship in Bethel and Dan and increases governmental support of idolatry. He cultivates a thriving culture opposed to the true God. With a keen eye for real estate, Omri buys the hill of Samaria and develops the region into the nation's capital. Samaria remains Israel's capital till their captivity, enduring for 175 years. Generations after Omri's death, Prophet Micah states the king's evil statutes still endure, *Micah 6:16*.

1 Kings 16:16-17 *And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. 17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.*

Micah 6:16 *For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.*

Israel's civil war/ Tibni

1 Kings 16:21-22 *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. 22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.*

Omni rules all Israel

1 Kings 16:23 *In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.*

Establishes Samaria as Israel's capital

1 Kings 16:24 *And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria. 25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him. 26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. 27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead. 29 And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of*

Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

Chronological issues

Omri took over Israel in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, the same year of Zimri's suicide. *1 Ki 16:15*. Why then does *1 Kings 16:23* state Omri began to rule Israel in the 31st year of Asa? The solution is as follows: The first four years of Omri's rule, some tribes followed Tibni. It took four years before Omri ruled the whole nation. When Tibni's opposition ceased, King Omri rules the whole kingdom unhindered.

Ahab, Israel #7

- Israel's seventh king
- Ahab= Brother of father
- Length of reign: Twenty-two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Wife: Jezebel
- Father's name: Omri
- Prophets: Elijah
- Ruled during the thirty-eighth year of King Asa and continues into King Jehoshaphat
- Claim to fame: Husband of Jezebel; Baal worship; confronts Elijah on Mount Carmel; Naboth's Vineyard
- Texts: 1Kings 16-21 2nd Kings 3:5; 2nd Chronicles 18,19

Ahab's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Most evil king thus far
- Baal Worship
- Queen Jezebel
- Unequally yoked
- Jericho
- Elijah and Ahab
- Showdown on Mount Carmel
- War with Syria
- Prophet confronts King Ahab
- Believing in God, while opposing him

- Naboth's Vineyard
- Elijah's prophecy dooms the house of Ahab

In the thirty and eighth year of Asa, Ahab begins to rule Israel. God describes Ahab much like Omri, but with compounding criticism. Ahab commits more evil than all the kings before him. Shameful and unpredictable, Ahab is Israel's best known king. The Bible records more about this wicked king than any other ruler in the northern kingdom. His notorious wife, Jezebel, perhaps even more infamous. Together they build the temple of Baal and cement Samaria as Israel's capital city and the most prominent religious center in the northern kingdom. Studying the life and times of King Ahab produces a wealth of sermons and Bible lessons. Prophet Elijah interacts with Israel during the reign of this wicked king, and in many ways is Ahab's nemesis. Ahab's life also intricately weaves with the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; consequently both kings should be studied together.

1 Kings 16:29 *And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.*

Most evil king thus far

1Kings 16:30 *And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*

Baal Worship

More than three hundred and fifty years has passed since the Bible mentions worship of the false god Baal. Now, Ahab and especially Queen Jezebel revive the ancient religion giving it prominent and national recognition. Baal's doctrines exceed the wickedness of Jeroboam's idolatrous cows; Baal ceremonies not only celebrated sexual promiscuity, perversion, and deviance, they also included human sacrifice. (See Chapter Human Sacrifice)

Jeremiah 19:5 *They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:*

Queen Jezebel

In many ways, Queen Jezebel defines King Ahab. When it came to wielding power and governing, Jezebel was the brains of this royal family. She dominated spiritual influence over the king and the nation.

1 Kings 21:25 *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*

Jezebel's very name means *non cohabitant or unchaste*. In modern times, her name still represents sexual sins, prostitution, fornication, and adultery. However, understanding Jezebel only on a sexual level is incomplete. Jezebel is religious as she is promiscuous and enforces her evil beliefs throughout Israel. Queen Jezebel becomes the embodiment of false doctrine and evil. Her rebellion and antigod practices survive across the centuries. Scripture establishes Jezebel as a type of the whore of Babylon, *Revelation 17*. God references Jezebel in his letter to the tribulation church in Thyatira, a future woman named Jezebel who continues the evil spirituality of Ahab's queen. Her strong influence upon true believers in Thyatira should serve as serious warning to Christians.

Revelation 2:18-23 *And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19 I know thy*

works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Unequally yoked

Even Ahab's marriage displays disobedience; he acquires Jezebel outside Israel, something God warned all Jews not to do. Israel's marriage laws served not to preserve racial purity as much as they meant to ensure unadulterated faith. God's commandments meant to preserve righteousness and pure faith. The surrounding nations opposed God on nearly every level. But Israelites, like believers today, often disobey. Choosing to yoke with unbelievers always ends in trouble. Jezebel served the false god Baal and persuaded King Ahab to do likewise. Spiritual application for Christians is

obvious; when choosing a spouse, select a Christian.

Deuteronomy 7:3-6 *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

Judges 3:6 *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.*

2 Corinthians 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

Leviticus 20:26 *And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

Jericho

An interesting prophecy concerning rebuilding Jericho fulfills during Ahab's reign. Nearly 500 years earlier, Joshua led Israel across the Jordan River into their promised land. Jericho was the first city the Jews encountered. The doomed city met God's judgment. When the walls fell, all inhabitants, including animals were killed. Only Rahab the harlot and her family obtained mercy and averted death. Joshua prophesized a curse on the man who restores the city, and even gave specifics identifying the person. The city's foundation would be laid during the time of the builder's firstborn child. And then the gates set up during the years of the builder's youngest son. Hiel the Bethelite, fulfilled this prophecy exactly. Although this is the only verse mentioning Hiel the Bethelite, no doubt God judged his actions. Considering Bethel's idolatrous history, Bible students infer Hiel's intentions purposely antagonistic toward the Lord.

Joshua 6:26 *And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.*

1Kings 16:34 *In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation*

thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

Prophet Elijah

1st Kings 17

1st Kings 17 introduces Prophet Elijah, so extraordinary a character his life dominates the next eight chapters of the Bible. Mighty in deeds and miracles, Elijah's ministry collides with Ahab and Jezebel on nearly every page. Prophet Elijah stands in powerful contrast to the sin and idolatry in Israel. Although Elijah authors no book in the Bible, his legacy serves Christians with enduring inspiration and life lessons. Prophet Elijah steadfastly warns Israel to repent from idolatry; and urges all Israelites to return to the one true God. Along with Enoch and Melchizedek, Elijah is one of only three men in the Old Testament who never died. God took him alive to heaven in a whirlwind. In the New Testament, Elijah and Moses stand with Jesus on a mountain top and witness the Lord Jesus' transfiguration, *Matthew 17:1-8*. Elijah is also one of the two witnesses killed by the antichrist during the Tribulation, *Revelation 11:3-12*.

Prophet Elijah's Outline

- Drought
- Brook Cherith
- Zarephath Widow
- Child's death and resurrection
- Behold Elijah is here
- Showdown on Mount Carmel

- Jezebel's Wrath
- Stress
- What doest thou here?
- Elijah's prophecy dooms the house of Ahab

Drought

Elijah's introduction finds Israel in spiritual decay with God's judgment about to fall. God commands no rain falls on Israel until such time as Elijah prays for the drought to end. Twice in the New Testament, Jesus reveals the drought lasts exactly three years and six months, a clear type of the forty-two months of great tribulation Israel endures during Daniel's Seventieth Week. Hence more scriptural indication that Elijah is one of the two witnesses killed by the antichrist.

1 Kings 17:1 *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*

Luke 4:25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;*

James 5:17-18 *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly*

*that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

Revelation 11:3 *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

Revelation 11:6 *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

Brook Cherith

Carefully examining episodes of Elijah's life provides a goldmine for sermons and life lessons, especially for believers going through tough times. Chapter 17 contains the fascinating story of Elijah being fed by birds during much of Israel's forty-two month drought. God commanded him to camp beside the brook Cherith, and ravens brought him bread and meat every morning and evening, a lonely existence camped by the water's edge. Actually, Elijah lived a life of solitude, and sorrow. He had no wife, nor does the Bible mention him having friends, while most fellow Israelites view him as annoying, if not an enemy. Elijah must draw sustenance from God alone.

1 Kings 17:2-7 *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, **3** Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. **4** And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. **5** So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. **6** And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. **7** And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.*

Zarephath Widow

1 Kings 17: 8-16 *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, **9** Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. **10** So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. **11** And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. **12** **And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son,***

*that we may eat it, and die. **13** And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. **14** For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. **15** And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. **16** And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.*

As the drought dragged on and on, the brook dried up and Elijah received orders from the Lord to move to a community named *Zarephath*. Several interesting observations may be made concerning Elijah's relocation:

1. Zarephath is a Gentile region.
2. The widow God uses to help Elijah is a Gentile.
3. The woman's New Testament parallel is found in *Matthew 15:22-29* ; *Mark 7:25-29*
4. Israel's relationship with God affects the Gentiles.
5. Zarephath's definition means- *place of refining; she hath refined.*
6. During the forty-two month drought (type of Tribulation) Gentiles who help Jews receive blessing.

7. More than 700 years later, Jesus uses the story to illustrate how Israel rejects him during his First Advent, *Luke 4:24-26*.

Luke 4:24-26 *And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*

This episode requires careful analysis. Considering Zarephath's meaning (she will refine) suggests Elijah needs the widow woman, as much as the widow woman needs the prophet. Elijah finds the woman in a truly dire situation preparing a last meal for herself and her son. Israel's stubborn resistance toward God results in drought bringing the entire region to starvation; yet regardless of her own circumstances, she obeys Elijah and uses her last pittance of flour and oil to prepare a meal for him. Truly, a remarkable act of faith to believe God will replenish her oil and flour if only she takes care of a Jewish prophet first. The widow's work of self-denial impressed Elijah. How humbling for Elijah to have his own life saved by a Gentile woman; especially after witnessing fellow Jews deny the Lord for years. Observe the woman's oath acknowledges Elijah's God is the Lord, *17:12*. Her attitude very similar to the Grecian woman in the

New Testament who also accepted Israel's preeminence. (See Chapter Notes.)

A child's death and resurrection

Like the Gentile woman in the New Testament, the widow's child is stricken. When the child dies the crisis deeply affects Elijah. Considering everyone in the house remains alive only due to supernatural providence, and everyone appears submissive to the will of God, this child's death seems unfair. It hugely upsets the mother and Elijah. As with many situations in life, tragedy seems inexplicable. What is God doing? The woman wonders if her own past sin has caused judgment. Such questioning of one's past is a common response to personal tragedy, but it's usually pure guess work when trying to make sense of heartbreak. Nevertheless the woman blames Elijah which amounts to blaming God.

Even Elijah questions the Lord. He takes the child to his room and lays him on his own bed. Elijah seeks the Lord by praying passionately for the boy's life. Stretching himself upon the boy's body manifests empathy, concern, and love for another human being; a rare display of social interaction for Elijah. Mercifully, God answers his prayer, and Elijah presents the restored child to his mother.

1 Kings 17: 17-24 *And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. **18** And she said unto Elijah, **What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?** **19** And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. **20** And he cried unto the **LORD**, and said, **O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?** **21** And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the **LORD**, and said, **O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.** **22** And the **LORD** heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. **23** And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, **See, thy son liveth.** **24** And the woman said to Elijah, **Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the **LORD** in thy mouth is truth.***

Chapter Notes

Two Gentile women

The widow of Zarephath and the Grecian woman in the New Testament foreshadows the

Church Age, Israel chooses to reject Jesus Christ and God offers salvation to the Gentiles. *Acts 13:46; Romans 11:25*. Observe the women acknowledge Israel as God's nation. *1 Kings 17:24; Matthew 15:27*.

Matthew 15:22-29 *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. 29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. (Compare also Mark 7:25-29)*

God resurrects five children in the Bible:

*Elijah 1 Kings 17: 17-24; Elisha 2 Kings
4:28-37; Jesus Mark 5:40-42 Jesus Luke 7:14,15;
Apostle Paul Acts 20:9-10*

Showdown on Mount Carmel

1st Kings 18

Behold Elijah is here

When God determines the drought to end he sends Elijah to meet Ahab. Elijah leaves the widow's house and travels into Israel, and reveals himself to Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house. As ordered by King Ahab, Obadiah has been scouring the countryside looking for Elijah. Nearly forty-two months has passed since Israel last saw rain. King Ahab hasn't seen Elijah since the day the drought began, *1 Kings 17:1*. At the time, he didn't take the prophet seriously, but he does now. With Israel in desperate famine, Ahab spends months searching everywhere for Elijah.

1 Kings 18:1-46 *And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. 2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. 3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: 4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)*

Obadiah is an unlikely person to hold a high position in the king's household. As a true believer in the Lord, he kept his faith undercover and secretly hides the Lord's prophets in caves. This revelation alerts us to how dangerous life has become for true followers of God in Israel. Some cults co-exist with other religions, but Baal worship demands total devotion and forbids worship of Jehovah. Believers in Jehovah were outlawed; hence the need for Obadiah to sustain the prophets in hiding. Prophet Elijah is public enemy number one and the most wanted man in Israel. The people, especially King Ahab and Queen Jezebel blame Elijah for turning off the water. They sought tirelessly throughout Israel and even other countries looking for him. Not surprisingly, Obadiah fears Elijah won't stay put long enough to see the King. After Elijah promises to remain; Obadiah summons King Ahab.

1 Kings 18: 5 *And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. 6* *So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. 7* *And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? 8* *And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, **Behold, Elijah is here.** 9* *And he said, What have I sinned,*

*that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? **10** As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. **11** And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. **12** **And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me:** but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. **13** Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? **14** And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. **15** And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.*

Showdown on Mount Carmel

When King Ahab finally meets his elusive nemesis face to face, Elijah orders a national confrontation on a mountaintop. A multitude of common Israelites, 450 Baal prophets, and 400 grove prophets meet together on Mount Carmel. After more than three years of no rain, everyone finally agrees to listen to God's prophet. Elijah orders the 450 Baal prophets to prove their god's

power by calling fire down from heaven. For hours these false prophets prayed and danced, begging Baal to prove his power with fire. Of course nothing happened because Baal existed only in the minds of the people. Elijah mocks the false prophets and warns the people to repent and return to the true God. He then repaired the Lord's altar and set the sacrifice in order. After soaking the sacrifice and the altar with water, Elijah prays God reveal himself. Instantly fire falls from heaven consuming not only the sacrifice, but the stone altar, all the water, and even the dirt on which the altar sits. Needless to say, this greatly impressed the spectators and many turned their hearts to the Lord of Israel. Elijah commands the 450 Baal prophets to be slain.

1 Kings 18:16-46 *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. 19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. 20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. 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. **22** Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. **23** Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: **24** And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. **25** And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. **26** And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. **27** And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. **28** And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. **29** And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was

neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. **30** And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. **And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.** **31** And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: **32** And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. **33** And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. **34** And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. **35** And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. **36** And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. **37** Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. **38** **Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.** **39** And when all the

*people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. **40** And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

Elijah prays for rain

Once the 450 Baal prophets are killed, Elijah prays for rain. God judged and killed 450 evil cult prophets. These same prophets murdered children as sacrifices to Baal. A revival in Israel commenced, and the drought ended. Observe 400 false prophets of the groves are still alive, *18:19*. These same 400 evil prophets live to fight another day. (See *1 Kings 22:6*) But for the moment, a great victory prevailed in Israel that day. The famine subsides and Israel begins to recover.

As the storm approached, Elijah ran ahead of Ahab to Jezreel. A distance of about fifteen miles. Hence we learn still another interesting characteristic of Elijah; he's a long distance runner. And considering Ahab rides in a chariot, that's quite a feat.

1 Kings 18: 41 *And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. **42** So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put*

*his face between his knees, **43** And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. **44** And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. **45** And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. **46** And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.*

Jezebel's Wrath

1 Kings 19

When Queen Jezebel hears Elijah killed her prophets, she went into a rage. She sends orders to find and kill Elijah. She vows all the nation's power and resources to accomplish her commands. One may expect after Elijah's extraordinary victory on Mount Carmel, Jezebel's threats would mean little. Just think about the tremendous miracles Elijah witnessed that day. Consider the power God gave him and the answered prayers. But after his courageous and emotionally charged mountain top experience, Elijah seems to collapse in fear and defeat. He runs for his life. Exhausted, lonely, and weary of circumstances beyond his control, he wants to quit and prays for God to take his life.

And herein we learn a tremendous spiritual lesson. Not only when things go badly do believers get in trouble, distress can happen after great success. In fact, success may be more dangerous than defeat.

1 Kings 19:1-4 *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which*

belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4
But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

No one in the Bible ever got more stressed out or more depressed than Prophet Elijah. Believers who reach their wits end can learn from this Old Testament saint. To be sure your own circumstances are not Elijah's situation, but your emotional and spiritual reality may be very similar? Stress, failure, success, exhaustion, loneliness, courage, and faith are some of the intense experiences comprising Elijah's high adrenalin life adventures. Anyone whose responsibilities become overwhelming or feels completely defeated, Elijah's bio is for you. (See Chapter Notes)

A law of physics states for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction (Sir Isaac Newton's third law of motion); this provides metaphor for a spiritual truth. When a believer or even a church experiences great victory- be on guard for a counter spiritual attack. Great spiritual successes and steps forward-outrage God's enemies. *Ephesians 6:12.*

Although the mountaintop victory exhilarated Elijah and started revival, it left him exhausted and

emotionally drained. Being overly tired and weary is a vulnerable time for any believer. Taking care of one's physical health can be important as prayer and doing the Lord's work. Many mistakes happen when Christians work themselves into exhaustion. Sometimes a good rest is part of what we need. The lessons from Elijah's life are many, but one (for sure) is a person must recognize human limits of physical capability. No one is too important or too successful to fail. When Elijah hears about Jezebel's intentions, he panics and runs away.

1 Corinthians 10:12 *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Elijah sat down beneath the Juniper tree, exhausted and weary, he prayed for God to take his life. Learn this Christian: Even though the prophet felt depressed and defeated, he kept communicating to God. Have you ever felt like Elijah? Tell God exactly how you feel, rehearse all your troubles. God listens to complaints.

God recognizes his child is emotionally falling apart. Elijah welcomes hearing God say *the journey is too great for thee*. God understands believers can become overwhelmed. Although Elijah sleeps- God stays awake and nurtures his servant. The angel of the Lord remains active and ministers even while the believer sleeps. The Lord provides Elijah support through much needed sleep and two meals

of supernatural food- which gives him energy for forty days.

1 Kings 19: 5-7 *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.*

In an ideal world, intimate attention from the Lord should be enough to get someone back on track; alas that's often not the case in reality. Elijah keeps heading in the wrong direction, withdrawing not only from service, but apparently trying to hide from God. When Elijah finally stops running he takes refuge in a cave. He feels all other believers abandoned the work of the Lord. Considering his life's work futile and a failure, he sits alone and dejected in a cave. Quite a picture isn't it? Have you ever been in Elijah's cave?

The stress of the job had been too much. No matter his accomplishments, it doesn't seem good enough; the people (even God) always seem to want more. The attacks just never stop. Have you ever felt like Elijah? After doing all you can, helping others to the point of personal exhaustion, only to witness ingratitude or indifference by friends, a

congregation, or even your own family? Perhaps, like Elijah, you're not aware of everything happening. Personal perceptions are not always reality.

What doest thou here?

The cave analogy suits many believers. Again let the reader observe the troubled saint never stops talking to God. Notice God respects Elijah's honest prayer. A Christian's way back to spiritual health is through prayer and honest conversation with the Lord. When God asks Elijah what doest thou here? It is like asking him, what's wrong? What problem has taken you off the battle field?

1 Kings 19: 8-14 *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. **9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and***

*brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: **12** And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. **13** And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, **What doest thou here, Elijah?** **14** And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; **and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.***

Elijah feels alone, abandoned, hurt

Finally, the depressed prophet opens up. He complains and explains to God exactly what's bothering him. Notice Elijah's complaints are remarkably up to date. He begins by stating how serious he is about serving the Lord, but then complains about the sins of his country. Next he tells God that he alone serves the Lord- no one else does anything. This is actually the second time Elijah complains no one else cares. He expressed this same concern on top of Mount Carmel, not to God but to the people of Israel. Listening to God often requires blocking out all the noise and distractions which surround us. Once Elijah is

positioned to hear, God asks him again, *What doest thou here, Elijah?*

1 Kings 18:22 *Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.*

1 Kings 19:10 *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

Elijah's answers remain consistent; he believes he is alone, no one else helps. This is the third time he brings this up! God addresses the complaint in a significant manner. God speaks in the quiet; God inhabits caves of loneliness. The Lord's answer is rather bitter sweet; he informs Elijah his work on earth is nearly complete (for the time being). The Lord also informs Elijah that he has been wrong in some of his conclusions.

Feeling like you're alone or the single most valuable person in God's army is self-deception. This common misperception persists amongst leadership, although rarely verbalized because it sounds so prideful; nevertheless, if the complaint fits you, listen closely to God's reply. No matter what it looks like, it is not even possible for you to

see all God's servants. The Lord's plans involve far more than events going on in your life. God informs his prophet that 7,000 persons in Israel serve the Lord. This information must have shocked Elijah, because he does not know even one of them, let alone what they're doing. Let the reader ponder 7,000 individual souls with lives and situations, and troubles of their own. God works with each one. When God reveals this knowledge to Elijah, it's rather like saying: Oh, by the way Elijah, I have 7,000 other believers so you can stop feeling like you are the only one.

Stressed out Bible saints have one thing in common (always), they never stop praying. Modern day believers take note. Over and over again God's people find themselves in trouble, in the midst of circumstances out of control. Suffering excruciatingly, they keep talking to God. Not with little scripted prayers, but with sincere honest, grief, hurt, and even frustrated anger.

Elijah gets moving

God gives Elijah three significant commands in the cave. He is to anoint two new kings and a prophet: Hazael, a military commander, to be king over Syria. Jehu will destroy the house of Ahab and be king over Israel. And Elisha, a young farmer, he anoints as Israel's next prophet. Elisha received all of Elijah's authority and commissions. The anointing's' of Hazael, and Jehu took place under

the ministry of Elisha, *2 Kings 8:8-15, 2 Kings 9:6*. Regarding Prophet Elisha himself, Elijah called him *1 Kings 19:19-21*. Although no verse depicts the anointing of Elisha, one may assume Elijah carried out God's order based on *1 Kings 19:16*.

1 Kings 19: 15-17 *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: **16** And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. **17** And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.*

Elisha's introduction

Elisha's call to service comes within a short time after Elijah leaves the cave. Quite possibly God previously communicated to Elisha that he was chosen to replace Elijah? In other words, he was probably expecting Elijah. Elisha hesitates a little before leaving the farm. Being his straightforward, curt self- Elijah tells him to do what he wants. Clearly, Elijah has no time for procrastination. If God calls you then obey, it's your choice. The passage correlates with Jesus' teaching, *Luke 9:59-62*. As to why Elisha boiled the oxen and provides a feast for the people. It speaks to the finality of his

decision to follow the Lord. The young farmer is not looking back and has no plans to return.

1 Kings 19: 18 -21 *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. 19* So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. **20** And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? **21** And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

Luke 9:59-62 *And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60* Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. **61** And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. **62** And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Chapter Notes: Pain is real. Whether it's physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual, suffering is a human condition, and its purpose is a human question. For further examination see this author's work [Distress of Souls](#).

Believing God, While Opposing Him

1 Kings 20

War with Syria

Throughout King Ahab's life, despite his disobedience, God continues to deal with him. Over and over the Lord proves himself. Yet Ahab opposes God and his prophets. Ahab epitomizes disobedient Israel.

Syria's King Benhadad starts a war with Israel and puts Samaria under siege. The war reaches a point where negotiations seem possible and Benhadad sends emissaries to King Ahab. Initially, Ahab misinterprets Benhadad's outrageous demands. He seems to think Syria proposes a forced alliance. When Benhadad says Ahab's family and wealth now belongs to him, Ahab understands the dialog without taking the words literally. He agrees to the terms thinking Benhadad refers only to his country's military superiority and future dominance of the region; today we call this a hegemony. But when King Benhadad sends the second message, it becomes clear his words are not merely political or metaphorical; the Syrian king wants total surrender and literally intends on spoiling Samaria. Once Ahab realizes the armies outside Samaria's walls anticipate full scale looting; he calls his advisors who understandably refuse Benhadad's demands. No matter the odds, Israel intends on fighting to the bitter end.

Vowing Israel's destruction (See Chapter Notes)

1 Kings 20:1-12 *And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. 2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, 3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. 4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have. 5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; 6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. 7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. 8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent. 9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I*

will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

Israel's refusal to surrender outrages Benhadad, and he vows to reduce Israel to handfuls of dust. King Ahab's response *20:11* remains proverbially wise even in present times. *Putting on one's harness* refers to a battle's commencement, and its removal equates with when the fighting ends. Ahab's point is that no one should boast about victory before a battle begins. *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18*

1 Kings 20:10 *And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off. 12* *And it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.*

The fact Benhadad is drinking when he makes bad decisions is almost too obvious for commentary, alas his stupid behavior simply adds to a never ending catalog of human miscalculations committed while drunk. *Proverbs 23:29-32*

God intervenes and fights for Israel.

An unknown prophet shows up announcing God means to help Israel. Notice in these desperate times, King Ahab is ready to listen to a real prophet from the Lord of Israel. However, the king seems a bit bewildered and unsure about being on the Lord's side. Nevertheless, King Ahab accepts the Lord's help and orders the battle. Syria suffers huge losses as Israel defeats her enemies. Benhadad escapes and lives to fight another day.

1 Kings 20:13-21 *And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; **and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.** **14** And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. **15** Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand. **16** And they went out at noon. **But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions**, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. **17** And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Benhadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. **18** And he*

said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive. 19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. 20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

King Benhadad survives

Benhadad escapes breathing hatred for Israel and vows to return and fight again. Idolatrous counselors convince King Benhadad he lost the battle only because Israel's gods were more powerful than Syria's gods. And this religious logic due to where they fought the battle geographically.

***1 Kings 20:22** And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. **23** And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. **24** And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: **25** And number*

*thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. **26** And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. **27** And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. **28** And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, **therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.** **29** And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. **30** But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.*

Believing in God, while opposing him

Meanwhile back in Samaria, a true prophet of the Lord warns King Ahab that Syria is regrouping for another battle, therefore Israel must

prepare for war. The prophet informs Ahab that God plans, once again, to prove himself in such supernatural ways Ahab will know the Lord. God says, *I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.* Without a doubt, scripture declares King Ahab knows the truth! See *1 Kings 20: 13, 28.*

At this point in the narrative, one needs to ponder God's direct dealing with King Ahab – Yet Ahab does not repent in anyway, but actually disobeys the Lord and ends up befriending the enemy. Throughout his life, Ahab sees God's power and truth displayed over and over. Ahab is truly a representative or type of the nation of Israel. Ahab also represents many people living in modern times, it's not that they don't believe in God; because they definitely believe. Rather they do not want him and choose to fight against him. Almost unfathomably, one can believe in God while opposing or even hating him. *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. James 2:19.* There is a long list of bible characters that fall into this category. To name a few, consider Cain who even in candid dialog with God chose to disobey and rebel; see *Genesis 4:7.* Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the days of Moses *Exodus 10:7-10; King Saul fighting David, etc.* In the New Testament, scripture tells of a past society who consciously and willingly chose to oppose God. Future peoples fare no better.

Romans 1:28 *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

Romans 1:32 *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Revelation 16:9 *And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*

Benhadad still alive

With total defeat certain, King Benhadad and his counselors devise a plan to survive. By pleading for mercy and faking humility they exploit weakness in King Ahab. Their scheme works perfectly, and they avoid God's judgment; Ahab disobeys the Lord and grants Benhadad mercy. King Ahab extending kindness to his enemies has more to do with opposing God than any noble act of character. From a spiritual perspective the Syrians hate God; therefore, Ahab instinctively has affinity with them. Ahab did not realize his failure to destroy God's enemies ensured Israel's future suffers endless wars with Syria.

1 Kings 20:31 *And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. 32* *So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother. 33* *Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. 34* *And Benhadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.*

Ahab's/ Israel's future foretold

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets *Hebrews 1:1* aptly illustrates the chapters' remaining verses. God, at times, uses interesting and illustrative methods to communicate. *1 Kings 20: 35-37* concludes with an elaborate and

dramatic prophetic announcement of King Ahab's approaching death.

1 Kings 20:35 *And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, **Smite me, I pray thee.** And the man refused to smite him. **36** Then said he unto him, *Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. **And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.****

In the name of the Lord, an unknown prophet instructs his neighbor to hit him. The neighbor disobeys and God kills him with a lion. A terrible, yet clear consequence for disobeying God. Sometimes God appears to let wayward behavior continue, other times seemingly small infractions of disobedience meet with swift and severe judgment. The lesson is clear enough. Don't rationalize disobedience (sin) with your intellectual reasoning or common sense. A Christian might minimize the behavior and defend the poor fellow killed by a lion as a person who simply refuses a very odd and uncomfortable request. Juxtapose the swift judgment of God upon him against the long-suffering God seems to manifest toward a wicked sinner like King Ahab. In other words some people get nailed for the smallest sins, while others appear to get away with murder. Behold the severity and goodness of God. Let us trust and

realize God handles each person appropriately and for the Lord's own reasons. The morale of this story: When God's word tells you to do something-do it.

Ecclesiastes 8:11-12 *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:*

Prophet confronts King Ahab by the side of the road

The same prophet finds another man and gives him the same order. This man wisely obliges the prophet by striking him so hard he wounds him. Next, the prophet discuses himself and sits by a roadside where he knows King Ahab travels. As the king passes, the prophet cries out and tells a short parable illustrating exactly what Ahab just did by letting Benhadad go free. Ahab believes the man's story to be actual events and pronounces the logical consequences to the story. In response, the prophet reveals himself and informs the king that because he spared Benhadad, God now requires Ahab's life, and he has doomed Samaria in judgment. King Ahab departs depressed and upset. Why? Because Ahab actually believes the Lord's

words even though he continues to be God's enemy.

1 Kings 20:37-43 *Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. 39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. 40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it. 41 And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets. 42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. 43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.*

Thought to Ponder

A king's decision, whether good or bad, has enormous consequences for a country, and sometimes even the world. How many wars

throughout history basically started because one (or a few) world leaders' wanted war? Unfair as it may seem, the higher a man's position of authority, the greater the consequences from sinful behavior. For a practical spiritual application consider- It's one thing for a ten year old child to get caught stealing an apple; it's quite another for his father who commits the same crime.

Ecclesiastes 8:4 *Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*

Proverbs 29:2 *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn....*

Proverbs 29:12 *If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.*

Chapter Notes

Vowing Israel's destruction: Benhadad's ravings reveal more than drunken lunacy. His boast about *Samaria (Israel) sufficing for handfuls of dust*, displays typical rants of tyrants who hate Jews. Such boasting and threats against Israel continue to exist through the centuries and into modern times. Satan is always behind attempts to abolish Israel and genocide Jews. Below are quotes from Middle Eastern rulers since 1948. (See Part Two The Mystery of Israel)

Syria

Syria's forces are "ready not only to repulse the aggression, but to initiate the act of liberation itself, and to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland. The Syrian army, with its finger on the trigger, is united.... I as a military man, believe that the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation." – Syrian Defense Minister Hafez Assad, May 20, 1967

"Our two brotherly countries have turned into one mobilized force. The withdrawal of the UN forces ... means 'make way, our forces are on their way to battle.'" – Foreign Minister Makhous on his return from Cairo

Iraq

"The existence of Israel is an error which must be rectified. This is our opportunity to wipe out the ignominy which has been with us since 1948. Our goal is clear – to wipe Israel off the map. We shall, God willing, meet in Tel Aviv and Haifa." – President Abdel Rahman Aref of Iraq, May 31, 1967

Palestinians

"This is a fight for the homeland – it is either us or the Israelis. There is no middle road. The Jews of Palestine will have to leave. We will

facilitate their departure to their former homes. Any of the old Palestine Jewish population who survive may stay, but it is my impression that none of them will survive." – Shukairy, June 1, 1967

"We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants and as for the survivors – if there are any – the boats are ready to deport them." – Shukairy, June 1, 1967, speaking at a Friday sermon in Jerusalem.

Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21

Study with Part Two Parable Vineyard's
Wicked Husbandmen

1 Kings 21:1-3 *And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. 3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*

A relative calm settles on Samaria after the war with Syria. Ahab retreats to one of his palaces to enjoy being king. But no one, it seems, ever has enough, not even a king. Directly beside Ahab's palace grew a delightful little vineyard. The only problem with the vineyard, it did not belong to him; still the king wanted the land so badly, he became obsessed. Ahab tried to buy the vineyard, but the owner of the property, Naboth the Jezreelite, refused to sell because the land was his family's inheritance. By law and custom, inheritance properties were to stay in the family. *Leviticus 25:13-28*. In times of economic stress the land could be temporarily sold (leased) only to return to

the original owners in the year of Jubilee. And not even kings and queens were to circumvent Israel's property laws. The whole point of Jubilee shows how important Israel's land is to a Jew.

The relationship between the Jew and his land requires serious contemplation. Naboth's vineyard illustrates the bond quite well. Even in the present times, Jews know instinctively the land of Israel (the vineyard) belongs to them. No amount of money, or alternative property can replace the land of Israel. The story illustrates exactly how God views his vineyard.

Isaiah 5:7 *For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.*

Ahab throws a pity party.

1 Kings 21:4-7 *And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? **6** And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give*

me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. 7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Besides being an immature spoiled brat, Ahab appears dominated by his wife. To say the least, he is not the man of his house. Sulking in his room and not eating because he didn't get his way reflects emotional dysfunction. King Ahab continually gets pushed around and intimidated by God's enemies: false prophets, Syrians, and Queen Jezebel. Sadly he won't learn anything from the Lord or his people. Lots of people behave like this, instinctively following the wrong crowd and eager to admire someone who opposes God. So as Ahab pouts in his room and refuses to eat because he didn't get his way, Jezebel springs into action. An additional practical lesson may be learned from this episode. If a leader ignores important responsibilities, someone else fills the vacuum.

1 Kings 21:8-16 *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to*

bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. 11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. ***12*** They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. ***13*** And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. ***14*** Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. ***15*** And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. ***16*** And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

The lies told about Naboth, and the royal conspiracy orchestrated by leadership foreshadow Israel's treatment of Jesus Christ. The type parallels the Lord's betrayal, trial and execution:

- A mock trial scheduled during a religious event.
- Elders and important national politicians complicit in the crime.
- Accused by two false witnesses.
- Charged with blasphemy and insurrection.
- Death sentence inflicted outside the city.
- Satan orchestrates the whole ordeal (or so he thinks)

Elijah's prophecy dooms the house of Ahab

Stealing Naboth's vineyard angers God; consequently, he sends Elijah to pronounce judgment. As with past encounters, Ahab views Elijah as his nemesis. Elijah represents God; therefore, Ahab dreads the very sight of him. In graphic terms, Elijah articulates the soon coming vengeance upon the king and queen of Israel. Almost as vindication for the brutal pronouncement, scripture segregates Ahab and Jezebel into a class by themselves. Compared to all Israel's kings and queens (thus far) they are the worst.

1 Kings 21: 17-29 *And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **18** Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. **19** And thou*

*shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. 21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, 22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. 23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. 25 **But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. 26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.***

God delays judgment

Once again Ahab proves he believes God without turning to him for salvation. But the mere

display of his remorse moves God to delay judgment for Ahab's house. In other words, God promises that Ahab will not eye-witness the total destruction of his dynasty, complete destruction happens after his death. And since Ahab typifies Israel, just the hint of repentance provokes God to extend mercy.

1 Kings 21: 27-29 *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.*

Psalms 86:15 *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*

Psalms 107:21 *Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Jehoshaphat, Judah #4

- Judah's fourth king
- Jehoshaphat= Jehovah is judge
- Length of reign: Twenty-five years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Asa
- Mother's Name: Azubah
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah *2 Cr 20:14,37*
- Ruled during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram
- Claim to fame: Teaches the Bible, Song service for the ages; Temporary king of Israel; Compromising values
- Age at death: Sixty
- Texts 1 Kings 15, 1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 17-20

Jehoshaphat's Outline

- Jehoshaphat begins to reign
- High Places Removed again
- The King who taught the Bible
- When Jews serve God- the world improves
- Jehoshaphat and Ahab
- Compromising Values

- I am as thou art
- Sitting with the enemy
- Four Hundred False Prophets
- A Lying spirit from God
- Consequences
- King Ahab's Death; ensuing confusion
- Jehoshaphat King of Israel
- Satan's scheme unfolds
- War with Moab and Ammon
- Song service for the Ages
- The valley of Berachah
- Final years

In the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat begins his rule over Judah. Jehoshaphat proves a good and successful king. His biography illustrates numerous life lessons. While 1 Kings records only a brief biographical summary, 2 Chronicles dedicates four chapters with considerable details. At thirty-five years old, Jehoshaphat rules competently and spends two decades strengthening and prospering Judah. For much of Jehoshaphat's tenure, he oversees Judah at the same time King Ahab rules Israel. Jehoshaphat makes peace with Israel. King Jehoshaphat interacts extensively with Israel during Ahab's last three years. During that time, Jehoshaphat establishes an alliance with Israel which produces devastating consequences for Judah.

The first thing God records about Jehoshaphat is that he strengthens himself against Israel. Recognizing Israel as a threat, he strengthens Judah's military and builds fences in all cities. Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord and obeys his commandments, an exact opposite behavior of Israel's kings. Scripture declaring such comparisons is extremely important because toward the end of Jehoshaphat's reign he paradoxically tries to unite the two kingdoms. Sadly, Israel's sins remained, God never approves of Jehoshaphat's efforts in joining forces with Israel.

Jehoshaphat begins to reign

1 Kings 22:41-45 *And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. 44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. 45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

2 Chronicles 17:1-4 *And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, **and strengthened himself against Israel.** 2 And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken. 3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of **his father David**, and sought not unto Baalim; 4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, **and not after the doings of Israel.***

Observe 17:3 lists King David as Jehoshaphat's father. David is actually Jehoshaphat's great, great, great Grandfather. All Judah's kings through bloodline are sons of David.

High Places Removed (again)

2 Chronicles 17: 5-6 *Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance. 6 **And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD:** moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.*

During the last three years of King Asa's forty-one year rule, the kingdom of Judah backslid. Although Asa was a good king, he had some spiritual problems right before he died. In his final years, high places reemerged and some of the

people resorted to worshiping in idolatrous groves. Not that Asa himself resorted to idolatry, but his departure from actively serving God left a spiritual vacuum, and the devil took advantage of Judah's lack of leadership. Making matters even more complicated, some people offered sacrifices to the true God, but in the wrong way and in the wrong place. They disregarded or never learned that God established Jerusalem's temple as the only place for sacrifice, all alternative locations and altars were forbidden. Jehoshaphat ended not only the idolatry in the high places but also the doctrinally incorrect procedures. Even after Jehoshaphat removes the high places they reappear during his tenure, *1 Kings 22:43*. How quickly old habits and sins return even after a lengthy period of faithfully serving God. This is true for individual believers as well as nations. High places are a continual problem throughout Judah's history. (See Chapter High Places)

Sacrifice and offering only in Jerusalem

Deuteronomy 12:11-12 *Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: **12** And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants,*

and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

Deuteronomy 12:13-14 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: **14** But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

The King who taught the Bible

Not only did Jehoshaphat strengthen Judah militarily, he taught his people the Bible. He sent princes, his own sons and royal family members with the Levites throughout the cities of Judah. Together this royal commission taught the people the Bible.

2 Chronicles 17: 7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. **8** And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. **9** ***And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went***

about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

Observe when Jerusalem and Judah are right with the Lord, the nations and kingdoms round about are greatly influenced; believers getting right with God affect the world. In a spiritual sense these scriptures provide a glimpse of the glorious effect the Jewish people bestow on Gentile nations. This represents a picture of things to come when a holy and righteous Jerusalem leads the world during the Millennium. (See Part Two)

Making a spiritual application for Christians. On an individual basis, Christians serving the Lord positively influence family, neighbors, their church, and their communities.

2 Chronicles 17: 10 *And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats. 12* *And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store. 13* *And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem. 14* *And these are the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah,*

*the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hundred thousand. **15** And next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand. **16** And next him was Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour. **17** And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand. **18** And next him was Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war. **19** These waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.*

Zechariah 8:23 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

Compromising Values

2 Chronicles 18; 1 Kings 22

Despite all King Jehoshaphat's success, he stumbles in his later years. And therein lies a great lesson for believers. Christians remain susceptible to mistakes at any time in life. Quite often mature Christians enjoy prosperity and comfort, still trouble finds them. Remember King Asa fell at the top of his game. King David failed not in battle or in Adullam's cave, but on a palace rooftop- he took his eyes off God. *1 Samuel 22:1-2; 2 Samuel 11:2*. For King Jehoshaphat, it wasn't carnal sins of the flesh, or anger, or greed that lured him away from God's word. He wanted desperately for bad people to be good. He dreamed of Israel and Judah together under the rule of God. But this dream is accomplished only in God's timing; not until the Tribulation- Millennium will all twelve tribes be one kingdom. To use a simple cliché Jehoshaphat put the cart ahead of the horse.

Compromising values and worldly alliances go hand in hand. Many Christians join forces with the world hoping to influence them in a positive way; convinced the end justifies the means kind of rationale. Never the less, it causes a lot of damage. If done by leadership, it can wound an organization, church, even a country. Studying King Jehoshaphat provides excellent information for those who backslide with good intentions.

King Jehoshaphat, remained a good king who loved the Lord. However, under threat of war, he made an agreement with Israel's wicked King Ahab. Originally the agreement designed as a temporary military alliance to defeat a common enemy. Jehoshaphat also hoped (naively) to persuade King Ahab to serve the true God. He wanted to be a good witness. Because both nations shared a common heritage, Jehoshaphat hoped to unite the countries.

Several generations earlier, God divided Israel into two nations, Israel and Judah. Since that partition, only Judah followed the Lord, while Israel fell into gross idolatry and grew steadily worse. King Ahab and his notorious Queen Jezebel served the false god Baal and sought to kill the Lord's prophets. Israel never intended to stop its evil ways. Any compromising in order to get along would be done by Jehoshaphat not Ahab.

Thought to ponder

2 Chronicles chapter eighteen lays out one of Satan's most successful strategies against the kingdom of heaven. What happens in this chapter nearly destroys Judah. King Jehoshaphat's bad decision plays the devil's hand. Even King Ahab's death serves Satan. In the coming decades, ramifications from this one ill-advised ceremony bequeaths tampering with the Messianic line so nefariously wicked it destroyed all but one son of

David's seed. When believers take their eyes off the revealed will of God, no matter the reason, they play a very dangerous game.

Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Colossians 2:8 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

I am as thou art

With everything prosperous and honorable, Jehoshaphat decides he wants to help Israel. Such a move seems reasonable but dangerous. And like all compromising there are reasons. Obviously a strong biological bond exists between Judah and Israel. Politically Israel's many enemies are also Judah's enemies. But when Jehoshaphat says, *I am as thou art, and my people as thy people*; we learn his true motive. Giving Jehoshaphat the benefit of doubt, he desperately wants King Ahab and his people to seek the Lord, thus his efforts were evangelical. However, the uncomfortable reality is neither King Ahab nor his people were like King Jehoshaphat and his people. No matter how much Jehoshaphat wanted them to be. Ahab was God's enemy; and the Israelites followed their king. They

gloried in idolatry, and reveled in sinful, false religion. Jehoshaphat deluded himself and created an alliance God opposed.

2 Chronicles 18:1-3 *Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab. 2 And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead. 3 And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, **I am as thou art, and my people as thy people;** and *we will be* with thee in the war.*

The spiritual application for Christians is obvious. The Bride of Christ should not join herself with the world to fight a common enemy. Nor should she pretend lost people are saved people. Compromising Christian convictions even for worthy motives like compassion for lost souls, or some other noble cause always hurts the church. Separation must be maintained. This does not mean we abandon the world. Nor do I imply we stop helping lost people, but we must never compromise what we know to be true. The pilgrim's walk in this world ever strives to not be of the world.

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of*

your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

John 17:16 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Sitting with the enemy

With a very royal and public ceremony, the two kings sat side by side. Jehoshaphat even endured listening to false prophets lie and encourage battle plans. The lesson learned from this fiasco - when Christians join forces with the world, it is Christians who compromise values- the world never does. Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab produces ramifications for the next century. Satan confused and mixed up Judah and Israel: politically, spiritually, and genetically.

2 Chronicles 18:4-9 *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. 5 Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand. 6 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him? 7 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil:*

*the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. 8 And the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla. 9 **And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in their robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.***

Sermon Idea: Compromising, pathway to disaster. Use this episode from Jehoshaphat's life to illustrate *Psalms 1:1* Walk, Stand, and Sit. The Christian with good intentions begins to **walk in the counsel ungodly**. He then **stands with the sinners** contemplating the world's logic. I am as thou art, we are in this together, we are all God's children, etc. Alas, finally **he sitteth in the seat of the scornful**. The believer sits down with the world.

***Psalms 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

Four Hundred False Prophets

Being a godly king inside a den of iniquity, Jehoshaphat meekly suggests they seek the Lord's blessing and guidance before rushing into battle.

King Ahab, always happy to indulge religion, calls four hundred false prophets for advice. The prophets agree 100%, God is for them; the battle should begin at once. Despite the prophets' unanimity, Jehoshaphat politely mentions that he meant a true prophet of God. With only good intentions, Jehoshaphat finds himself heading up an ecumenical council. He's trying to be everyone's friend, but suddenly finds himself face to face with four hundred priests/clergymen/Imams who do not serve Jehoshaphat's God. King Jehoshaphat may or may not recognize these religious charlatans as the survivors of Elijah's famous purge on top of Mount Carmel. It doesn't matter, he's in too deep to leave now. These false prophets are none other than the prophets of the groves which eat at Queen Jezebel's table. (See Chapter 1st Kings 18, Showdown on Mount Carmel)

To paraphrase what is going on here: Jehoshaphat says, "I don't mean to criticize your family's religion, I'm sure these fellows are good people, and we agree on several humanitarian problems, but don't you have any prophets that believe the Bible? Come on now brother Ahab, after all the compromising I've done to get along with you, can't you give me at least one of the Lord's prophets?"

Since the meeting is a huge diplomatic affair with visiting royal dignitaries from Judah, I presume Queen Jezebel sits beside King Ahab casting a wary

eye on Jehoshaphat. At the last big get together with one of the Lord servants (Elijah) she lost 450 Baal prophets.

Ahab fearfully glances at his wife and in a trembling voice says, "Well, there is one man, but I hate him because he tells the truth and never agrees with my beliefs. He always speaks God's words"

Here God exposes Ahab's main problem. And after all is said and done, it's the exact same reason why most men hate the Bible. The Bible tells the hard, unglamorous truth about people. Ironically, Ahab articulates his problem with great veracity. (See Chapter Notes, World's Epitaph)

2 Chronicles 18:7-10 *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, **There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil:** the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. **8** And the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla. **9** And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in their robes, **and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria;** and all the prophets prophesied before them. **10** And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus*

saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed. 11 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

Several important visuals occur in verse nine: Both kings dress in royal attire. Observe each king sits down on his own throne; accordingly thrones have been prepared for two kings. The well planned ceremony to entice Jehoshaphat gives the appearance of equality. Nothing like pomp and circumstance to flatter a king's ego. Even though God divided Israel, Satan deceives these kings into thinking they can put it back together. Satan's plan is working perfectly.

Scripture mandating the thrones sit in a void place manifests more than royal furniture residing in an empty area. Up to this point in the Bible, God uses the word *void* six times and in every case void means to cancel. And that's exactly what it means here. (See Chapter Notes) Any authority Israel enjoyed before God partitioned the country is long gone, ever since Israel embraced Jeroboam's cows. (See Chapter King Jeroboam) In other words, Israel as a place of authority is void. Samaria is not Jerusalem. God shows Jehoshaphat that he is out of bounds, the spectacle before him reeks paganism and idolatry. Jehoshaphat can either leave the party or stay and be compromised.

As the king's servants hurry off to retrieve Micaiah, the prophets of the grove promote their lying with theatrical antics. Intense emotion often accompanies religious lies. In a nod of recognition to Jeroboam's cow idols, one false priest makes a set of iron horns to illustrate how Ahab's army shall push the Syrians. These antics also acknowledging old ox face himself, the anointed cherub. Hence the quaint old saying, you mess with bull; you get the horns. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam, Alternative Religion)

2 Chronicles 18: 12 *And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good. 13* *And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak. 14* *And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand. 15* *And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD? 16* *Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.*

Ahab's servants find Micaiah quickly; notice the Lord's enemies know where to find the truth. They try and persuade him to agree with all the other prophets. No doubt they gush about good King Jehoshaphat taking part in the ceremony.

A Lying Spirit from God

As soon as Prophet Micaiah arrives in the void place, he sums up the situation. No one is interested in truth, everyone just wants to hear what they want to hear, yea, *they are* deceitful prophets of their own heart. Micaiah probably marvels Jehoshaphat is even present. At first he speaks insincerely, *sure go on to the battle, they enemy is yours.*

King Ahab observes Micaiah's nonchalant, sarcastic demeanor. The prophet's attitude angers Ahab; thus he commands him to speak in name of the Lord. Being a law abiding citizen of the kingdom, Micaiah obeys and launches into a truly extraordinary discourse. Verse sixteen predicates the battle as a disaster, Micaiah tells them since no one is in charge everyone may as well go home. This causes Ahab to interrupt and complain to Jehoshaphat. "See- what did I tell you? God never says anything good about me." But the Lord's prophet is now present, and these two kings and four hundred prophets of the grove are about to hear what God has to say.

2 Chronicles 18: 17-22 *And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? **18 Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD;** I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. **19 And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead?** And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. **20** Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? **21** And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so. **22 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee.***

The scene Micaiah describes takes place in the third heaven in the sides of the north; in the great city Zion wherein God sits on a literal throne in a literal temple. (See Chapter Notes) Not only do Bible students view an open window into the third heaven, God reveals an extraordinary method used against persons claiming to speak his words when he has not sent them.

Sitting on his throne with a host of spiritual beings before him, God discusses the very

ceremony Jehoshaphat attends. It's almost as if heaven views the scene like a movie. God asks the spirits in heaven who will entice King Ahab to fall. After some discussion one particular spirit volunteers to descend to earth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's false prophets. Behold his power; one spirit from God infiltrates the minds of four hundred false prophets. Behold also God agrees to send a lying spirit. So now all these false prophets lying about speaking God's words, suddenly truly do receive supernatural communication from God. Their problem is God fights against them.

An application for Christianity is obvious. Do not proclaim "thus sayeth the Lord" when God is not speaking through you. Religious imagination does not command God. When someone says thus sayeth the Lord, he is equating his words with scripture. Self-deceived religious hubris at best, devil possession at worst.

Jeremiah 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

2 Chronicles 18: 23 *Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the*

*Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? **24** And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. **25** Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; **26** And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace. **27** And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return in peace, then hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, Harken, all ye people.*

Micaiah speaking God's words arouses immediate hatred and scorn from the crowd. They abuse God's prophet and cart him off to prison. Micaiah's prophecy in verse 18:24 personally targets false prophet Zedekiah. King Jehoshaphat's reaction and inaction cannot be defended; he ignores the entire event as if it never happened. The good king witnessed the whole fiasco right before his eyes. He hears God's warning and clear disapproval of the coming battle, yet he still marches off to war with Ahab as if he saw and heard nothing. Why?

Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab is one of the most consequential backsliding events in the Bible. This momentary poor choice produces ramifications for the next century. Satan authored the entire affair, confusing and mixing up Judah

and Israel so effectively that even Bible historians have trouble sorting it all out.

In his zeal to defeat a common enemy, the first thing Jehoshaphat didn't see coming involved family. Accompanying Jehoshaphat during the notorious alliance ceremony was his son, Jehoram. Also in attendance, across the aisle, was Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah. Well- the sweet young Israeli princess fancied the handsome young prince from Judah. And after the flirting stopped, the true joining of nations took place. Nothing like forbidden fruit, especially when Satan orchestrates courtship for future kings and queens. More about this later. Meanwhile the battle rages. Thankfully, God protected Jehoshaphat.

1 Corinthians 10:12 *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Chapter Notes

God's Throne in the 3rd Heaven

Revelation 7:15 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

Revelation 11:19 *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were*

lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Isaiah 14:13 *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*

Psalms 48:2 *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*

Void

The first and primary definition of the word "void" in English dictionaries is to cancel out, make invalid, or annul. A secondary definition defines void as empty or without. Comparing scripture with scripture, let's examine the way God uses the word void. Of the 23 times God uses the word void- cancel or cancelled should be considered first. Even in today's modern times, if one makes a mistake writing a check or on a financial document, the bank's advice is to write VOID on it. And then write out a new document. The original, is replaced with a new. Consider the word *void* in Numbers 30. The scripture is discussing a woman making a vow. If the husband so determine, **he can make void her vow**. In other words, he can cancel it.

Numbers 30:10-13 *And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; **11** And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. **12** But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her. **13** Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.*

World's Epitaph, God's summary of the human race

Romans 3:10-18 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: **11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. **12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. **13** Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: **14** Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: **15** Their feet are swift to shed blood: **16** Destruction and misery are in their ways: **17** And the way of peace have they not known: **18** There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

King Ahab's Death; Ensuing Confusion

But in the meantime, the battle is upon them. Ahab took charge of all battle plans and instructs Jehoshaphat to dress in overt royal clothing, so all soldiers can easily identify him as king. While Ahab, himself, dresses in common soldier's attire. Clearly Ahab expects the Syrians to kill Jehoshaphat. How a smart, God fearing king like Jehoshaphat became so duped is quite fascinating. Perhaps Ahab's personality dominated him, or perhaps he pitched the plan so it made sense? Perhaps he traveled just too far down the road of compromise and crossed the point of no return? Who knows? Anyone can make a mistake. But any believer ignoring God's words is on dangerous ground. Believers do well to obey God always, even when circumstances seem to make compromising a good idea. Nevertheless, King Ahab's disguise proved useless and he was killed.

Ahab's death threw Israel into a state of confusion, especially since everyone saw only one king on the battlefield. *1 Kings 22* also records an account of the battle, but here the writer adds additional information including a political announcement for all soldiers to return to their respective countries, *1 Ki 22:36*

2 Chronicles 18:29-34 *So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. 29 And the king of Israel said*

unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle. **30** Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel. **31** And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him. **32** For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing him. **33** And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. **34** **And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the even: and about the time of the sun going down he died.**

1 Kings 22:29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. **30** And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the

*battle. **31** But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. **32** And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. **33** And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.*

***1 Kings 22:34** And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. **35** And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. **36** And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.*

Jehoshaphat King of Israel

Befuddling as it may seem, immediately following Ahab's death, Jehoshaphat actually assumed the role of Israel's king. If things had gone the way Ahab planned Jehoshaphat would

have gotten killed and Ahab would be king of Judah. With Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, married to Ahab's daughter- Ahab as father-in-law to a weak king of Judah should have no problem taking power. (Alas death often ruins one's plans, and ambitious schemes.)

Remember also the day of Ahab's death, Israel's army saw only Jehoshaphat dressed as king; and that spectacle was ordered by Ahab! Another factor involves Ahab's son, Ahaziah. Although eligible to be king, the prince has serious health problems. And since Jehoshaphat wanted the kingdoms together anyway, he stepped in and helped Israel through their difficult interim. Not to be forgotten, the real authority in Israel is Queen Jezebel who no doubt considered herself in charge, despite any title that scripture or politics labeled Jehoshaphat.

All though Jehoshaphat was Israel's king for only a short time, scripture declares it happened. Some commentators eagerly proclaim the King James Bible is mistaken in *2 Chronicles 21:2* which records Jehoshaphat as king of Israel. But the Bible is correct. A similar situation happens to Judah's King Ahaz. He too is called the king of Israel. (See chapter Ahaz king of Judah.)

2 Chronicles 21:2 *And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and*

*Shephatiah: all these were the sons of
Jehoshaphat king of Israel.*

*2 Chronicles 28:19 For the LORD brought
Judah low because of **Ahaz king of Israel**; for he
made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against
the LORD.*

Satan's Scheme Unfolds

Unbeknown to either king, Satan used them both in a supernaturally brilliant scheme. God declared Satan perfect in wisdom and the author of confusion; and the old serpent certainly earns his titles here, *Ezekiel 28:12-15*. Satan probably wanted Ahab dead; his big plans involved future generations.

Ever since King Jehoshaphat pretended Judah and Israel were the same, political and spiritual machinations worked to bring Israel and Judah under one roof. King Jehoshaphat's eldest son, Jehoram, marries King Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah. We don't know exactly when that marriage took place. In all likelihood the betrothal was an arranged marriage serving to unify the kingdoms. A royal union providing the appearance the twelve tribes were one nation-again. Such a mixed marriage between rival kingdoms puts a stamp of approval on the deal. Especially when God fearing King Jehoshaphat consents. With Jehoram as the future King, it

appears to Judah the seed of David stays secure. In reality, the house of Ahab had no intention of accepting the Davidic dynasty. Once in Jerusalem, they plan on killing every male in line for the throne. No one in Judah even dreamed Jehoram was complicit in the scheme; Jehoram's treason surpassed only by Judas Iscariot.

Possibly the wedding took place before King Ahab died in battle. Considering how the plan unfolds, it may have happened years earlier? Nevertheless whenever the marriage occurred Jehoshaphat's house legally joins with the house of Ahab. Do not forget God cursed the house of Ahab and promised to eradicate it. So now Judah is bound to a dynasty God promises to destroy. Think about that for a while. (See Chapter Naboth's Vineyard)

Elijah's prophecy fulfilled

1 Kings 22:38 reveals dogs licked Ahab's blood in the very place where Naboth was stoned. *Compare to 1 Ki 21:19* Jezebel and Ahab schemed to steal Naboth's vineyard via false accusations and murder. (See Part Two Parable Vineyard's Wicked Husbandmen)

1 Kings 22:37 *So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. 38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood;*

and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. 39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Chapter Notes

Mixing

Historically this mix and confuse method remains Satan's preferred plan of action. The Devil uses this tactic beginning with his conversation with Eve *Genesis 3:1-5* where he mixed up God's word's (just a little). The same nefarious policy implemented when evil sons of God married the daughters of men. *Genesis 6:1-4; 2 Peter 2:4-6, Jude 1:6,7.*

The 'mix-them-up' strategy used by Balaam when he counseled the Moabites and the Midianites to mix their idolatrous women in marriage with Israel's men. *Numbers 22-24 with Numbers 31:14-16; Joshua 24:9-10; with Micah 6:5-16; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14.*

The obvious example for today are bible versions. Satan added one word in Genesis 3, today there are hundreds of English bible versions. Which

translation did God preserve? Let us never forget
the definition of Babylon: To confuse by mixing.

King Jehoshaphat Returns Home 2 Chronicles 19

Upon returning home to Jerusalem, Prophet Jehu welcomes Jehoshaphat with a rebuke and the uncomfortable proclamation that he has angered the Lord. God makes his opinion concerning Jehoshaphat's compromising experiment with Israel very clear.

2 Chronicles 19:1-2 *And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. 2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.*

Fortunately for the backslidden king, God's mercy does not forget Jehoshaphat's many good works. And a momentary lapse in judgment does not undo his life's dedication to serving God. Wisely Jehoshaphat responds to the prophet's words by returning to his previous duty of strengthening Judah. The chapter shows the proper attitude and response for a believer chastened by the Lord. He does not mope or quit, but repents and serves God with all his strength. Jehoshaphat's warning to his countrymen *19:10* actually contains the lesson he just learned concerning God's wrath. If only kings and men would remain steadfast. *Psalms 51:5-10*.

Habakkuk 3:2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

King Jehoshaphat returns to doing the Lord's work

2 Chronicles 19:3 Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God. **4** And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers. **5** And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, **6** And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. **7** Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. **8** Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem. **9** And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. **10** And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment,

*statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass. **11** And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.*

Jehoshaphat Seeks the Lord

2 Chronicles 20

While Jehoshaphat engages the work of the Lord, the enemies of Judah, Moab and Ammon come against him with a huge force. So outnumbered, Judah can't win the battle without God's help, which is exactly where the Lord wants him. This chapter reveals Jehoshaphat at his best. He rallies the kingdom, proclaims a fast, and leads his people in prayer.

The three enemy armies, *Moabites*, Ammonites, and Sier. Nearly from their beginning, these peoples fought against Israel. Origin of the Ammonites and Moabites; Children of Lot; see *Ge. 19:30-38*. Origin of the children of Mount Seir - Children of Esau see *Ge.14:6, Ge 32:3, 36:1*

2 Chronicles 20:1-13 *It came to pass after this also, **that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon**, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. **2** Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi.*

Jehoshaphat's great prayer

Besides being tremendous oratory, Jehoshaphat's prayer provides a basic outline for petitioning the Lord. Observe the motivating force for the nation's prayer is fear. The crisis is similar in magnitude to the one his father, Asa, went through dealing with the Ethiopians. Many things in life make believers afraid, certainly one's country threatened by a superior military force is one of them. Recognizing human limitations is not weakness. Relying on God taps into strength outside ourselves. The second condition of Jehoshaphat's preparation is fasting, an often ignored practice or relegated only as antiquated behavior. (See Chapter Notes)

Next he acknowledges the greatness and power of God. Jehoshaphat recalls several of God's mighty works, and promises. He also defines the problem and- names enemies. Last of all- Jehoshaphat declares there is no hope unless God fights for them. King Jehoshaphat inspires the people to believe in God's mercies and deliverance, *without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6*

To deliver his prayer Jehoshaphat stands before the new court. *2 Chronicles 20:5*. Probably a restored priests' court which Solomon originally built nearly one hundred years earlier. *2 Chronicles 4:9*

2 Chronicles 20:3-13 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. 5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? 7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? 8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, 9 If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. 10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; 11 Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. 12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

13 *And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.*

God answers through his word

A repeating theme in the Bible shows believers pitted against overwhelming odds. Unless God intervenes the battle is lost. Most popular is the battle between David and Goliath, but there are many others: *David* and Goliath *1 Samuel 17*, Gideon fighting the Midianites *Judges 7*; King Asa and the Ethiopians *2 Chronicles 14*; King Hezekiah and the Assyrians *2 Kings 18,19*

2 Chronicles 20: 14 -19 *Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; 15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, **Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.** 16 To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.*

18 *And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. 19* *And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.*

As Jesus did for believers in the Old Testament, so he fights for us. And we can go through whatever battle comes our way. Know also that without Jesus- we can do nothing. *John 15:5-* Today, Christians fight battles in their own lives. If God be for us; who then can fight against us? *Romans 8:31*

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

1 Samuel 17:47 *And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.*

Battle hymn of Judah; Song service for the Ages

A song service for the ages. God informs Jehoshaphat that Judah's army must not engage in literal fighting; however, Judah remains on the battlefield, so they do face the enemy! Jehoshaphat commands his soldiers to sing, *Praise the LORD; for*

his mercy endureth for ever, and the king himself leads the choir. Just imagine what the Moabites and the children of Ammon thought as the first stanzas began wafting through their front lines. A small pitiful army facing certain death begins singing. No doubt they felt amused. But when God shows up everyone stops laughing. Not that anyone saw the Lord personally, but everyone witnessed God's actions. Different factions and battalions within the enemies' forces start fighting one another. And before long the Moabites, Ammonites, and the Edomites kill each other at a ferocious rate. Friendly fire definitely working in Judah's behalf.

2 Chronicles 20:20-24 *And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. 22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. 23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir,*

*utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. **24** And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.*

The Valley of Berachah

Taking away the spoil, simply means a victorious army confiscates any or all goods from the defeated army. Historically in wars spoiling involved taking whatever the defeated country had to offer, including its people! In the case of this battle, there were so many dead enemy soldiers, it took Judah's army three days to collect it all. Such a spoil includes more than personal properties like jewels, silver, and gold. An army's goods includes weapons, stockpiles of food, livestock and tents. Judah benefited from God's victory with a windfall blessing. The kingdom celebrated their good fortune by dedicating the fourth day to God and giving thanks in the valley of Berachah. Berachah means blessing or a place of blessing. After the prayers of thanksgiving concluded, the singing started once again. Modern day believers learn from this example: do not pray and praise God only when trouble abounds, pray when times are good and blessings flow. Do not let a Berachah go unappreciated; thank the Lord with prayers and praise and music.

2 Chronicles 20: 25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to **take away the spoil** of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. **26** And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in **the valley of Berachah**; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day. **27** Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies. **28** And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. **29** And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

King Jehoshaphat's final years

The passage in 2 Chronicles summarizes the reign of Jehoshaphat. Judah enjoyed relative peace; however the high places were a reemerging problem from time to time. (see High places in Chapter Asa)

2 Chronicles 20:30-33 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest

round about. **31** And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: he was thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. **32** And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the LORD. **33** Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers. **34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.**

The rest of Jehoshaphat's acts are recorded most completely in the Book of *2 Kings*. These acts include brief relationships with two sons of Ahab: Ahaziah and Jehoram. Both men ruled as kings in Israel. Ahaziah ruled for only two years, died a miserable death, and because he had no son, was succeeded by his brother Jehoram. King Jehoshaphat continued weak alliances with both kings. *2 Chronicles 19* These episodes of alliance covered in detail under Israel's kings Ahaziah and Jehoram.

2 Chronicles 21:1 Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

Chapter Notes

Prayer and Fasting

Ne 9:1; Es 4:3; Ps 35:13; Ps 69:10; Ps 109:24; Jer 36:6; Da 6:18; Da 9:3; Joe 2:12; Mt 15:32; Mt 17:21; Mr 8:3; Mr 9:29; Ac 10:30; Ac 14:23; Ac 27:33; 1Co 7:5

Ahaziah, Israel # 8

2 Kings 1

- Israel's eighth king
- Ahaziah= Possessed of Jehovah
- Length of reign: Two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Ahab
- Mother: Jezebel
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha,
- Ruled during the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.
- Claim to fame: Builds ships with Jehoshaphat; Falls through lattice; Encounter with Elijah
- Texts 1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:1-18; 2 Chronicles 20:35-37

Ahaziah's Outline

- Begins to rule
- Jehoshaphat joins with Ahaziah
- Ahaziah's accident and illness
- Encounter with Elijah
- Ahaziah's judgment confirmed

God summarizes Ahaziah's life as being evil. Ruling in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah is literally brother-in-law to the next King of Judah-Jehoram. King Ahaziah submits to all the false religious teaching of his parents, Ahab and Jezebel; therefore he is a Baal

worshiper. Additionally he incorporates the nefarious treachery of Israel's first king, Jeroboam. Ruling Israel for only two years, his life ends by an incurable disease.

1 Kings 22:40 *So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.*

1 Kings 22:51-53 *Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: 53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.*

(See Chapter Notes for chronicling difficulty)

Jehoshaphat joins with Ahaziah

2 Chronicles 20:35 *And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: 36 And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongeber. 37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD*

hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

1 Kings 22:48-50 *Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber. 49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.*

Why Jehoshaphat partnered with Ahaziah after God rebuked him for making an alliance with King Ahab remains largely a matter of inference? However several probable clues exist; let us connect the dots. Most obviously it's the economy. Observe *1 Kings 22:48* says he did it for gold. In other words, Jehoshaphat needed money, *1 Timothy 6:10*. Remember also after Ahab's death, Israel and Judah joined together via family ties. King Jehoshaphat's own son married King Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah. It appears Jehoshaphat felt responsibility to maintain the alliance. A tangled web of family relations wove these two kingdoms together for the next several generations.

Whatever Jehoshaphat's reasons, God cursed the whole endeavor. Good intentions do not absolve disobedience. Eliezer the son of Dodavah prophesied against Jehoshaphat. Once again God condemned the alliance with Israel, and he destroyed the ships constructed they needed to get

the gold. Even after God wrecked the ships, King Ahaziah tries to enlist Judah's support, but this time Jehoshaphat heeded the prophet's advice and refused to help Ahaziah a second time. *1 Kings 22:49.*

Ahaziah's accident and illness

***2 Kings 1:1-2** Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. **2** And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.*

Israel's persistent enemy, Moab, seized the disorderly days following Ahab's death to plot rebellion. Ahab's death left confusion in Israel. Ahaziah did not assume command immediately. Change in leadership always leaves some governmental disarray, and the Moabites challenged Ahaziah's competence. To make matters worse, King Ahaziah sustained serious injuries in a fall, which exacerbated his illness. Perhaps Ahaziah's poor health provides reason why Jehoshaphat serves as interim king of Israel? (See Chapter Jehoshaphat King of Israel)

Desperately trying to regain his health, Ahaziah sought help from a false god, Baalzebub. *2 Kings 1* is the only passage in the Old Testament

that mentions Baalzebub. Historians know little about the deity other than the name means Lord of the Fly and it was worshipped in the town of Ekron.

Encounter with Elijah

Ahaziah inquiring of Baalzebub angered the Lord. Time after time kings of Israel ignored the true God and worshipped worthless idols and false gods. These religions embraced sin and all manner of sexual gratification, opposing and even taunting Jehovah. Prophet Elijah intercepts Ahaziah's messengers in route to Ekron and delivers God's disturbing rebuke. King Ahaziah remains bedridden and dies from his disease. Apparently the men did not recognize Elijah, but his commanding demeanor convinces them to turn around. Prophet Elijah wields tremendous moral authority.

2 Kings 1:3-4 *But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? 4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. 5 And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? 6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say*

unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. 7 And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? 8 And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

Upon arriving back in Samaria, King Ahaziah wants to know why they return so quickly. When they tell about their encounter with a prophet, Ahaziah asks about the prophet's physical appearance. A hairy man wearing a leather girdle around his loins evokes an image of roughness, an outdoorsman. The description also identifies the prophet as Elijah.

Ahaziah takes the report seriously, and he sends a company of fifty soldiers to find Elijah. Perhaps he thinks a show of royal force from the king will provoke Elijah to reconsider the death sentence? Of course, the king makes a fundamental mistake about God's words. He believes Elijah pronounced the judgment. But it is not Elijah's decision; it is God's decree. The king of Israel makes the same mistake concerning God's words as do lost people in modern times. Everyone blames the messenger. Hating Christians for what the Bible says is misdirected wrath. God is responsible for his

words, not the preacher declaring them. It's not Christians who decided Jesus Christ is the only Saviour- or the only way to heaven; it is God's decree written in his word. If a person doesn't like the message, the person's issue is with God.

2 Kings 1:9-15 *Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. **10** And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. **11** Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. **12** And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. **13** And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. **14** Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. **15** And the angel of*

the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

King Ahaziah's arrogant captain of fifty troops locates Elijah sitting on top of a hill. He orders Elijah to come and see the king. Elijah replies if I'm truly a man of God let fire fall from heaven and consume you and your men. This happens immediately; fifty-one soldiers burn alive. Undeterred, King Ahaziah sends another captain with an additional fifty troops who repeats the order and suffers exactly the same fate. Still determined to see Elijah, the king sends a third group of fifty soldiers. Ponder King Ahaziah's total disregard for his troops. This group's captain wisely changes tactics for approaching Elijah. Asking mercy for his men, he humbly and politely requests Elijah to see the king. And the Lord grants Elijah leave to visit King Ahaziah.

Ahaziah's judgment confirmed

2 Kings 1: 16 *And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. 17* *So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. **And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second***

year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

But God does not change his mind or negotiate with pagan kings; the death sentence stands. No nation on this earth receives the attention and blessings from God like Israel. Over and over scripture declares God's love and affection for his favored nation. For a king in Israel to ignore God, let alone worship or seek help from false gods is judged very harshly. For some kings judgment came sooner than later. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God, but always the Lord is righteous. God's mercy and severity manifests today for persons engaged with sin, be they lost or saved. Do not taunt God; no one gets away with sin.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

King Ahaziah has no son, therefore his brother Jehoram becomes Israel's king. Observe Judah's and Israel's king have exactly the same name. A remarkable coincidence coming on the heels of Jehoshaphat's compromise. By the way Judah's King Jehoram is married to Athaliah,

Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter! The ramifications from Jehoshaphat's joining with the enemy now fully underway. Satan's scheme to confuse and confound history and truth is very, very successful.

Chapter Notes

Chronicling difficulty. A brief mention of a so called mistake in chronology for Ahaziah. The critical scholar's problem is scripture declaring Ahaziah became king in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat. When Jehoshaphat became king in the fourth year of Ahab (who rules for twenty-two years *1 Kings 16:29, 1 Kings 22:41*). Therefore, how does one reconcile Jehoshaphat's first four years added to seventeen years? While considering Ahab's twenty-two years. A casual accounting would seem to put Ahaziah's coming to power in Jehoshaphat's eighteenth or nineteenth year not his seventeenth. Answer if the chronicler did not count partial years, for Jehoshaphat's first, or Ahab's last year, there is no problem. In other words, Jehoshaphat comes to power in Ahab's fourth year, but there may have been only a few weeks left in that fourth year. Same could be true for Ahab's death year. There is no mistake. How God's chroniclers compute the reign of kings sometimes seems confusing, especially when we do not have all the information of the period.

1 Kings 16:29 *And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of*

*Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri
reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two
years.*

Jehoram, Israel # 9

2nd Kings 3

- Israel's ninth king
- Jehoram= Jehovah is exalted
- Length of reign: Twelve years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Ahab
- Mother's Name: Jezebel
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram kings of Judah.
- Claim to fame: Has no son, Continues alliance with Jehoshaphat; Elisha's miracle; Last king in Omri's dynasty.
- Texts 2 Kings 3-8

Jehoram's Outline

- Begins Rule
- Continues alliance with Jehoshaphat
- Prophet Elisha
- Moab sees a bloody mirage
- King Jehoram and Prophet Elisha

King Ahaziah has no son, therefore his brother Jehoram becomes Israel's king in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. Observe Judah's and Israel's kings have exactly the same name, thus Israel's Jehoram rules in the second year of Judah's Jehoram. This same name business seems an intentional satanic strategy, capitalizing on

Jehoshaphat's compromise. Consider also, Judah's King Jehoram marries Athaliah, Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter! The ramifications from Jehoshaphat's joining with the enemy begins in earnest.

Jehoram fails living up to the meaning of his name which means Jehovah is exalted; however, he's not as bad as his parents. Making a good start, Jehoram gets rid of Baal worship. But he retains Jeroboam's calf religion with all its deplorable doctrines. (See Jeroboam Chapter Alternative Religion) He moves no further toward Israel's true God.

King Jehoram develops a most curious relationship with Prophet Elisha. After their initial meeting taking place in 2 Kings 3, their lives interact at crucial points throughout Jehoram's reign. Bible students glean important lessons from the interactions between king and prophet.

2 Kings 1: 17 So he (Ahaziah) died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. ***And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah;*** because he had no son. ***18*** Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 3:1-3 *Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. 3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.*

Chronicling difficulty *2nd Kings 1:17 with 2 Kings 3:1.* How can Jehoram rule in the second year of Jehoram and in eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat? The fast answer is Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram rule briefly at the same time. Notice he only begins to reign in Samaria while Jehoshaphat was still alive. Add also the historical complications Jehoshaphat was king of Israel for brief time.

Jehoram continues alliance with Jehoshaphat

Historical sins repeat. Jehoshaphat falls into a very similar situation as he did with Ahab years ago, and more recently with Ahaziah. (See Chapter Compromising Values) No righteous reason for an alliance with Israel exists, but politics and family win the day. Jehoshaphat's own son and successor to the throne has married Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter; obligating a king of Judah to help in-laws. All this manifests a reaping of sown oats

during Jehoshaphat's first compromise with Israel. Jehoshaphat apparently ignored God's rebuke 2 *Chronicles 19:1-2*. Jehoshaphat obstinately gives the same explanation expressed in the same words as he did with Ahab. *I am as thou art, my people as thy people*. But the consistent reality remains Jehoshaphat's people were not like Jehoram's people. Jehoshaphat deluded himself again and continued an alliance God opposed.

2 Kings 3:4-9 *And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. 7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? **And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.** 8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. 9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: **and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.** 10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!*

So Judah's army joins forces with Israel and Edom and together they march through the wilderness toward war. Seven days later, the enemy has yet to be engaged, and they run out of water, not only for the troops but the cattle following them. Cattle were taken to provide food for the armies. Things looking desperate, Jehoram concludes God curses them and plans to give victory to the Moabites.

Prophet Elisha

Ever the optimist, Jehoshaphat suggests no one gives up hope until they enquire of the Lord. Consulting the true God, of course, is a completely foreign idea to Israel or Edom. Prophet Elisha happens to live near the camp, so the three kings go calling. But Elisha is not happy seeing Jehoram or the king of Edom. In fact, if Jehoshaphat wasn't present he wouldn't even talk to them. Once again we see the overall testimony of King Jehoshaphat remains in good standing.

2 Kings 3: 11-20 *But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. 12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. 13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel,*

*What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. **And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. 14** And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.*

King Jehoram immediately accuses the Lord orchestrated the three kings coming together only to destroy them. Of course Jehoram knows nothing; he speaks out of fear and circumstances (and perhaps a guilty conscience.) For Jehoram to inform Elisha anything about God seems almost amusing, alas King Jehoram is a fool. Nevertheless, Elisha dismisses the arrogant king and agrees to help. He orders a minstrel, a musician one who plays a musical instrument. Although this is the only verse in the Old Testament that mentions a minstrel, prophets evoking music prior to prophesizing was not uncommon. See 1 *Samuel* 10:5; 1 *Chronicles* 25:1-3.

Elisha informs the kings that God intends to end the drought by bringing water in a miraculous way. The armies, camped around a valley, are ordered to dig pits and shallow holes throughout the valley. And even though no storm approaches, not even the hint of rain or adverse weather, all those pits fill with water during the night. In just a

few hours the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom enjoy total victory over the Moabites.

2 Kings 3:15 *But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. 17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. 18 And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. 19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. 20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.*

Moab sees a bloody mirage

God messes with the minds of the Moabites who march toward the armies camped round the valley. As they gaze across valley, the morning sun glistens upon all those shallow grave-like holes filled with water. But the Moabites don't see water, they see blood. They conclude that Judah, Israel, and Edom have turned on each other in a hateful rage, and the water is actually the spilled blood of their enemies. In their misguided glee, they rush

toward the bloody mirage intending to spoil the dead bodies. Upon arriving in the valley's bottom, they realize the optical illusion, but too late. Judah, Israel, and Edom rush upon them from all sides. The ensuing route pushes the defeated Moabites back into their own country. Israel desecrates towns, farmlands, and forests as they follow Moab's retreat. In a final act of desperation, albeit demonic, Moab's king, sacrifices his own eldest son as an offering on a wall. The Moabites then retreat fully into their own country, filled with indignation against Israel.

2 Kings 3: 21-27 *And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. 22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: 23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. 24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country. 25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it,*

*and smote it. **26** And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not. **27** Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.*

The battle between Israel and the Moabites introduces King Jehoram to Prophet Elisha. No doubt Jehoram knew about Elisha before this pre-battle meeting *2 Kings 3: 11-20*, but the Bible does not record any previous face to face encounter. Remember the initial meeting does not go well for Jehoram. The king's arrogant manner, especially his ignorant statement about God's purpose angers Elisha. King Jehoram has no idea what God's intends, yet he corrects Elisha and asserts his own authority. Prophet Elisha informs King Jehoram in no uncertain terms that he knows nothing about God, and if Jehoshaphat wasn't present, he wouldn't even talk to him.

After the battle concludes exactly the way Elisha prophesied, King Jehoram seems to respect the prophet. This battlefield miracle deeply affects King Jehoram. Although the next four chapters deal mostly with Prophet Elisha, there are several brief encounters or references to King Jehoram that reveal a developing relationship between prophet

and king. Much like Ahab and Elijah, these two men keep running in to each other.

Prophet Elisha and King Jehoram

The popular and beloved Bible story, the great woman of Shunem, offers insight into King Jehoram's association with Prophet Elisha. The prophet so appreciates the woman of Shunem's hospitality, he wants to reward her. After consulting with his servant, Gehazi, he calls the woman and offers to speak to Israel's king on her behalf. Observe *2 Kings 4:12, 13*. The comment proves easy to overlook because the woman does not seem to hold an important position meriting a king's concern. However, the very offer to speak with the king says a great deal. No one just walks into a palace and speaks to a king; protocols must be followed. Elisha clearly enjoys a comfortable social level with the king to ask for personal favors. Ironically, years later Gehazi does indeed speak to King Jehoram concerning the woman of Shunem. (See *2 Kings 8:1-6*) Even Elisha's servant receives special status with Jehoram. Hence, this story bears great significance towards understanding King Jehoram. Compare Elisha's social dealings with kings compared to Elijah's interactions with Ahab and Jezebel.

Great Woman of Shunem

2 Kings 4:8-17 *And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in*

thither to eat bread. **9** And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. **10** Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. **11** And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. **12** And he said to Gehazi his servant, **Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.** **13** And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, **I dwell among mine own people.** **14** And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. **15** And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. **16** And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. **17** And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

The Woman of Shunem's Son

2 Kings 4:17-37 *And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. **18** And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. **19** And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. **20** And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. **21** And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. **22** And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. **23** And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. **24** Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee. **25** So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: **26** Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. **27** And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. **28** Then she*

said, *Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?* **29** Then he said to Gehazi, *Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.* **30** And the mother of the child said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.* **31** And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, *The child is not awaked.* **32** And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. **33** He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. **34** And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. **35** Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. **36** And he called Gehazi, and said, *Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.* **37** Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

A child's life restored

Elisha petitions a much higher authority than King Jehoram for the woman of Shunem. He asks God to give her a child. The Lord grants the miracle and all seems well until the child grows up and dies working in the field. Devastated by the child's death, the woman finds Elisha and pours out her heart. The prophet is perplexed and accompanies the woman to her home. Once in the home, Elisha preforms a memorable and astonishing miracle by restoring the child to life. Striking similarities to Elijah's miracle *1 Kings 17: 17-24*. As to the child sneezing- See Chapter Notes

- Both prophets are distraught learning the child dies
- Both mothers blame the prophet
- The prophets lay their bodies on the children
- God resurrects both children in prophets' room

Chapter Notes

As to the child sneezing seven times. I offer a guess. In the child's case, it seems almost like divine CPR, (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation) Sneezing causing one's chest muscles to vigorously contract, and then your throat muscles quickly relax. Thus air is forced out of your mouth and nose. In a series of sneezes this acts in rhythmic way. Biologically, Sneezing clears the nose of irritants and bacteria. When something enters your nose or you

encounter a trigger that sets off your "sneeze center" in your brain,

This is the only time scripture use the word sneeze. Another word for sneeze is neesing also used one time *Job 41:18* . In *2 Kings 4*, the sneezes coincide with a child's resurrection and the neesings in Job manifest a satanic characteristic. It seems unlikely the passage in Job sheds light on the child's resurrection.

Naaman the Leper

2 Kings 5

2 Kings 5:1 *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, **because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria:** he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.*

Right in the middle of Israel's history, God tells the story of Naaman the leper, a great military leader. Naaman serves as Syria's highest ranking official. Notice God gave deliverance unto Syria through Naaman and labels him an honorable man, even though Syria remains Israel's enemy.

Significant for several reasons, God deals with two kings in this extraordinary chapter: King of Syria and King of Israel. Although neither king is addressed by name, at this time Jehoram is king in Israel, and Syria's king is Benhadad. The story occurs during a rare era of peace between Israel and Syria. A profound example of mercy and redemption given to a Gentile who acknowledges Israel as the Lord's nation. Bible students should also ponder the role servants, especially unnamed servants play in this chapter.

- Naaman called the king's servant *2 Kings 5:6*
- Naaman's wife's servant, a little maid
- Elisha's servant

- Naaman's servants

Naaman's Wife's Servant Girl

2 Kings 5:2 *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*

Concerning his leprosy, Captain Naaman faces the tragic reality unless someone cures him-he dies a horrible death. He learns from his wife's servant girl that a prophet in Israel can cure leprosy. The king of Syria sends a letter imploring King Jehoram to heal his captain from the disease. He includes a substantial amount of money.

Audacious Letter

Of course, Naaman and the king get the message wrong. The little maid said nothing about seeing the king of Israel, she clearly said prophet. She also said nothing about money or payment of any kind, yet Naaman sets off with a fortune in silver and gold, and a wardrobe of clothing. The world hears what they want to hear. Big important men, like Captain Naaman, deal with kings. Surely everything important has a price? *Ecclesiastes 10:19.*

2 Kings 5:5-8 *And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*

When King Jehoram reads the letter, he is outraged. He believes Syria seeks a fight with Israel. The letter is so audacious, it must reflect evil political intentions. The king wisely confesses only God can deliver men from leprosy. Observe Elisha hears about the letter almost immediately. Whether the prophet or his servant were in the palace at the same time the king reads the letter, or whether the king sent word to him straightaway, we don't know. But the fact remains, Elisha offering counsel so soon, proves King Jehoram consults with Elisha. And he takes the prophet's advice. At least in this matter. Basically,

Prophet Elisha tells the king to calm down and send Naaman over to him; he'll handle the problem.

Elisha's servant addresses Naaman

2 Kings 5:9-27 *So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. **10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.** **11** But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. **12** Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.*

So Naaman comes to Elisha's house with all his servants and gifts, and stands at the door waiting. But Prophet Elisha doesn't even answer the door! Rather he sends a servant with very peculiar instructions. Basically he tells Naaman to jump in the Jordan River seven times, and then he'll be cleansed from leprosy.

Naaman views this as an insult. After all- he commands Syria's army. How dare some mere servant tell him to jump in the Jordan River? Human wisdom and pride mocks the remedy. Prophet Elisha

doesn't even respect him enough to answer the door and convey the stupid message himself. The important dignitary has no intention of jumping in the river once, let alone seven times. He expected Elisha should do some extraordinary, supernatural act that heals him in a spectacular manner, something worthy of his status and eminent reputation. Captain Naaman leaves Elisha's house in a humiliated rage.

Naaman's Servants

One can imagine the magnificent commander driving his chariot beside the Jordan River with his entourage of servants behind him. Perhaps he kept glancing at the water and shaking his head? Perhaps he slowed his chariot as God dealt with his conscience? And then an unnamed servant courageously gallops up beside him and says, *if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?* And thus Naaman's pride comes crashing down. He has no power to save himself; compared to God he is like a flea. When it comes to obeying the words of God, the Lord respects no man's status above another.

The chariot comes to a halt. A humiliated, sick and dying man gets off and wades into the river. He dips beneath the surface once, then twice- repeating the act five more times. Reemerging after seven times God heals Naaman. The leprosy is gone.

2 Kings 5:13 *And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14* Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Elisha sees Naaman

2 Kings 5:15 *And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, **Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel:** now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. 16* But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

Cured of disease and pride, Naaman returns immediately to Elisha's house to give thanks. This time the prophet speaks with Naaman face to face. Naaman confesses the God of Israel as the only true God in all the earth. Not only is this admission of faith spoken to Elisha, but it's done in front of Naaman's soldiers and servants. He urges Elisha to take some reward for God's mighty act of deliverance, but Elisha refuses ensuring Naaman understands his deliverance was an act of God's mercy and grace; God cannot be

influenced by worldly wealth. (Compare with *Luke 17:11-19*)

Once Naaman realizes Elisha refuses all reward, he makes an odd request. Why does Naaman request *two mules' burden of earth*? A few bags of dirt to take back to Syria. It appears he plans on making an altar from Israel's dirt on which to offer sacrifice. Perhaps he hopes Israel's earth, will sanctify a sacrifice offered outside of Israel? Admittedly this is speculation, but Naaman does declare that no longer will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord only; thus offerings are in the context. When he makes an offering to God in Syria, at least the altar's foundation will be land from Israel. Let the reader understand, this is not an endorsement of false doctrine, but merely an attempt to interpret what Naaman is thinking. Most importantly it's a Gentile acknowledging the land of Israel belongs to Jews.

More troubling is when Naaman asks Elisha's pardon for when he accompanies the King of Syria into a temple of a false god, the house of Rimmon. Because in the temple Naaman will bow giving the illusion he believes in a false deity. Many Bible students wonder why Elisha seems almost accepting of the request. But Elisha only says go in peace, he does not offer pardon. Nor does Elisha acknowledge Naaman's request for the dirt.

2 Kings 5:17 *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two*

*mules' burden of earth? **for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. 18** In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. 19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.*

Elisha's servant

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, witnesses all of this, and thinks to himself he could certainly use some of that Syrian money. So he devises a lie to achieve his goals. Waiting till Naaman gets a little ways down the road, he runs after him. Then he tells Naaman visitors just arrived at Elisha's house who need money and clothing. Of course, Naaman happily obliges and Gehazi returns home with a considerable fortune.

Whence comest thou, Gehazi? Asks Elisha as his servant steps into the house. Gehazi lies again, but he's caught. Prophet Elisha knows exactly what happened. Gehazi's deeds are judged harshly, the terrible disease of leprosy inflicted upon him and his children for ever.

2 Kings 5:20 *But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that*

which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. **21** So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? **22** And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. **23** And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. **24** And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. **25** But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, **Whence comest thou, Gehazi?** And he said, Thy servant went no whither. **26** And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? **27** The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Chapter notes

With powerful typology 2 Kings 5 draws a beautiful picture of New Testament truths. The spiritual interpretation of this chapter is impressive. Concerning Naaman's reaction to God's order on how to get cured. Have you ever observed the reaction the world has to the Gospel? Most folks think it silly to believe Jesus dying on a cross two thousand years ago can save them. Scripture proclaiming only the shed blood of Jesus Christ can save your soul- makes as much sense as jumping in a river.

Leprosy: The Bible presents two major metaphors or types of sin: leprosy and leaven. Everything in the physical world represents spiritual truth. Leprosy begins invisibly, the victim unaware of its presence. The Bible tells us it starts as a single spot somewhere on the body. The word spot also connects with sin. Remember God commanded that lambs or animals used for sacrifice were without blemish or spot! Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to keep his commandments without spot, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leprosy is further established as a type of sin in Leviticus 13. Observe scripture calls a leprous man unclean as opposed to being sick, 13:8.

Coincidentally, many interpret Leviticus chapter 14 wrong, the leper does not go to the priest for healing; he goes for cleansing. God performs the healing before the priest can cleanse the leprosy. Likewise no one can do anything to heal your soul

from sin except God. It is pure grace and mercy that heals. In the Bible, two powerful men get leprosy: Naaman and King Uzziah. One a Gentile, one a Jew. One gets healed, one does not.

- Leprosy equals sin: *1 Tim 6:14* keep commandments without spot.
- Leprosy attacks even clothing *Jude 23*
- Greatest enemies *2 Pet 2:13, Jude 12*
- Greatest proof *He 9:14 1 Pet 1:19*

Jesus offered himself, *He. 9:14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God. And then Jude 23 implores us toward evangelism by saying, Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

1 Peter 1:19 *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

The fact God highlights Leprosy in Leviticus chapter 13 is also significant. See Chapter on Number Thirteen.

Leprosy dealt with extensively in: *Le 13:2,4,19,23-26,28,39; Le 14:56; Nu 19:2; Nu 28:3,9,11; Nu 29:17,26; De 32:5; Job 11:15; Song 4:7; Eph 5:27; 1Ti 6:14; Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:19; 2Pe 3:14*

2 Kings 6

King Jehoram's interaction with Elisha continues in *2 Kings 6*. Like many people living today, Jehoram recognizes God and occasionally even shows respect; however, he never makes any real attempt to repent or commit his life to the Lord. When God's blessings flow Jehoram seems like a decent fellow, but when times are bad he turns on God and his people. Well has Isaiah said to all those who reject God: *Isaiah 26:10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.*

Elisha's relationship with kings occurs periodically, but predominately he serves as a prophet to Israel. Ever since he succeeded Elijah, he commands a following of young disciples, (*see 2 Kings 2*) Elisha serves as head instructor over one of the earliest group of Bible students. The chapter's opening verses record a fascinating story concerning him and his disciples. These *sons of the prophets* determined to increase the size of their living quarters and Elisha gave them permission to do so. In the construction process, an axe head flies off its handle and into a lake. The one responsible for the axe is upset because he borrowed the tool for the building project and now it's lost. Sharing his predicament with Elisha, the

prophet enables the iron axe head to float enabling the young man to recover it.

An axe head floats

2 Kings 6:1-7 *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. 2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. 3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. 4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. 5 But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. 6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. 7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.*

Such and such a place

2 Kings Chapter Six abounds with nuggets, sermon material, and life lessons. If you ever wondered the origin of the phrase "such and such a place" look no further.

Historically, the King of Syria pursues his usual hatred against Israel by seeking war. Yet his

battle ambitions are constantly thwarted by Israel's advance knowledge of the planned ambush. Realizing that no enemy could possibly know the location *of such and such a place* time after time, he suspects a spy within his own camp. But no spy exists; the Lord himself fights against Syria by alerting Prophet Elisha who warns King Jehoram of King Benhadad's every move and battle plan. Upon learning Elisha provides the intelligence to Israel, Benhadad sends out Special Forces to kill Elisha.

2 Kings 6: 8-17 *Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, **In such and such a place shall be my camp.** 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, **Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.** 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and*

chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

Spiritually, *such and such a place* is that place where people put their ambitions and hopes-everything planned out perfectly, but the place just never works out like you wanted. Something (or someone) always seems to ruin your *such and such a place*. The moral of this story is to ask yourself a question: Are my ambitions fighting against God? Perhaps, for the Christian, you try to do it alone, without God? Being saved doesn't mean your fleshly desires are dead! Or perhaps you expect just too much happiness and gratification from this fallen world? This world is not home, and God makes sure we don't get so comfortable we want to settle down.

Like the old chaplain told his congregation, everything in this world is overrated; and nothing delivers like you want it too. Stop blaming all your problems on someone else: a snitch or nark, or cop. Your problem is with God. You need to surrender to Jesus Christ and live for him. And until that happens *such and such a place* is a flat out figment of your imagination. And for the congregation that didn't get caught- there's an application somewhere in this paragraph for you too.

For the king of Syria, who refuses to repent, he makes plans to capture Elisha and sends a band

of soldiers (elite forces) to accomplish his goal. Of course this is beyond stupid to think you can get your own way by stopping God's words. Make no mistake Prophet Elisha speaks the Lord's words. Nevertheless, Syria sends troops to Dothan with ambitious plans of capturing or shutting down Elisha. And soon he has his enemy within striking distance, (or so it appears.) Such and such place explodes again.

God's Army- Gehazi's eyes opened

2 Kings 6: 15 *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16* *And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17* ***And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.***

Several thoughts to ponder: Elisha's servant rises early in the morning to see an encroaching Syrian army surrounding the city. There is no reason to suppose this servant is not Gehazi, which means even though stricken with leprosy, he still serves Elisha. Like the prophet, Gehazi has an enduring and fascinating relationship with King

Jehoram *2 Kings 8:1-6* (See Chapters Naaman the Leper, Woman of Shunem)

Seeing the Syrian forces, terrifies Gehazi. In an encouraging prayer for all saints, Prophet Elisha prays for God to open his eyes to see the armies of the living God. This is the Old Testament equivalent to *Romans 8:31*. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? Christians rest assured the Lord's armies remain in battle for us.

Psalms 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

Syrian eyes closed

In juxtaposition to God opening Gehazi's eyes, consider God closing the enemy's eyes. Syrian soldiers struck blind stops them instantly. *2 Kings 6: 19*. Making a spiritual application, blindness applies to people fighting against God. *And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city:*

Elisha leads the soldiers straight into Samaria where they regain sight only to discover themselves surrounded by Israel's army. Observe Jehoram happily obeys Elisha under the current circumstances; but whenever Elisha deals with the king's sinful behavior Jehoram hates him. But for the moment Jehoram is overjoyed. God teaches a

magnanimous lesson to Jehoram about treatment of prisoners. Bread and water provides needed sustenance to the captives before they march home. The statement: *So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel*, refers only to special forces intent on killing Elisha; it does not refer to the entire Syrian army which, except for rare moments, seems perpetually at war with Israel.

2 Kings 6:18-23 *And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. 19 And Elisha said unto them, **This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. 20** And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, **open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes**, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. 21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? 22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? **set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. 23** And he **prepared great provision for them**: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and*

they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

Cannibalism

The Syrian army surrounds Samaria with an impenetrable force. The siege lasts so long the people inside are starving. Literally, people cooked a donkey's head and doves' excrement into soup. Lest someone doubt the extreme literalness of interpretation, consider the next culinary horror. A mother cries out to Israel's king about an agreement between her and another woman to eat their children. After the women ate one child, the second mother reneged on her promise to eat her child, such was the dreadfulness of the famine. The passage proves painful to even read.

2 Kings 6:24-30 And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. 25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. 26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. 27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? 28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said

unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. 29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. 30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

Blaming God

Anguish and revulsion fills King Jehoram; he vows to kill Elisha. Gone is the fascination and interest in Elisha. Now the king feels only hate toward God and anyone who speaks his words. He completely ignores the real reason for the famine, Israel's sin. Elisha hears about the threat on his life and actually seems a bit taken aback. Perhaps he had some hope for Jehoram? Whatever the case, the bipolar king is back to his antigod, hateful self. Elisha's accusatory label to the king being the son of murderer, references his parents, Ahab and Jezebel. Elisha removes all doubt about who controls the famine. It is judgment from the God of Israel.

2 Kings 6:31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. 32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him:

*but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, **See ye how this son of a murderer** hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him? **33** And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; **what should I wait for the LORD any longer?***

2 Kings 7:1-20

Elisha prophesizes the famine ends

***2 Kings 7:1-20** Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. **2** Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.*

Reminiscent of Elijah praying to end the drought in Ahab's day, Elisha announces the end of the famine. *1 Kings 18:41*. In fact not only will the famine end, but food will be abundant and cheap! One of Jehoram's officers overhears Elisha and mocks him. His flippant response disdains Elisha, but he also evaluates the circumstances. With

Samaria surrounded, and the siege destroying Israel, why would the enemy leave? The statement "if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" proves the officer believes things are so bad not even God can fix the situation. Of course, smart aleck disbelief is never a good idea. Elisha responds with another enigmatic prophecy. The officer will see the famine end, but will never eat the food.

Four Lepers

Four miserable lepers sit outside Samaria's gates. With no help possible from Israel, they decide to throw themselves at the mercy of the enemy. Weighing their options, they conclude: starving where they sit or letting the Syrians kill them. What's the difference? So these four lepers go to beg help from the Syrians.

Unbeknown to the lepers (or anyone else) the Lord had already intervened ensuring a veritable banquet for Israel. God caused the Syrians to hear sounds of an attacking army, then he possessed their imaginations. They believed Israel hired a huge mercenary Hittite and Egyptian army, and they were charging in upon them. Fleeing for their lives, the Syrians left behind all supplies: weapons, food, money, and livestock.

2 Kings 7:3 *And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said*

one to another, *Why sit we here until we die?* **4** *If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.* **5** *And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.* **6** ***For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.*** **7** ***Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.*** **8** *And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.*

Arriving at the enemy's camp the lepers find it deserted, but with enough food and provisions for thousands of soldiers. Even horses and donkeys remain unattended. After searching only some of the camp, eating and drinking to their hearts' content, and hiding enough silver and gold to last

their lifetimes- their consciences provoke them and they remember Israel starves inside Samaria's walls.

Go and tell the king

The lepers worry God will curse them if they don't notify Samaria about the deserted camp. So they go and tell the city's guards. Awakened by his servants, Jehoram hears the lepers' incredible story. Suspecting a trap, the king sends out only a small scouting party. Ironically, royal leadership finds itself in the same situation as the four lepers. They have nothing to lose: Stay inside the city and starve or investigate the enemy's camp and hope for the best. Their investigation proves the lepers story true.

2 Kings 7: 9 *Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household. 10* *So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were. 11* *And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within. 12* *And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They*

know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. **13** And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:;) and let us send and see. **14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. 15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. 16** And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. **17** And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. **18** And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: **19** And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might

such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. 20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

The story reverberates throughout Samaria and the starving citizens begin streaming out to spoil the camp. Like a crowd running from a burning theatre or concert hall, they swell to an unmanageable mob trampling the very smart aleck who mocked Elisha. And thus fulfilled Elisha's odd prophetic declaration: *And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.* God provided so much flour, barley, and other provisions from Israel's enemy, not only did the famine end, but culinary options went from ass head/ dove dung soup- to a banquet costing exactly the price Elisha prophesied.

Only two chapters since Naaman the Leper *2 Kings 5* and the disease appears again. Leprosy and Syria remain reoccurring factors in King Jehoram's reign. Through God's words delivered by Elisha, King Jehoram's witnesses God's miracles of deliverance over and over again:

- Previously, Israel's enemies see water as blood, and rush to their defeat *2 Kings 3: 21-27*
- Heals Naaman the leper *2 Kings 5*
- Delivers blind Syarin army to Jehoram's doorstep. *2 Kings 6:*

- Uses four lepers to discover empty Syrian camp *2 Kings 7*

2 Kings 8

Consider with Chapter Great Woman of Shunem

Elisha's servant, deeply involved with the woman of Shunem, remains a consistent sub-story in many of Elisha's miracles. *2 Kings 4* Quite remarkably, Gehazi also exhibits a serious relationship with King Jehoram. Years later Gehazi enjoys a friendly conversation with King Jehoram. The King remains fascinated with everything Elisha does: King Jehoram asks Gehazi, *Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.* This conversation all the more amazing, considering Gehazi is a leper, and King Jehoram seems not the least bit bothered! Why this conversation is important: Years previously, Elisha forewarned the woman of Shunem a famine was coming, and for her to leave the area and live somewhere else. She left and dwelt in the land of the Philistines for seven years. Upon returning home, she finds her home and property occupied by squatters. At the very moment, when Gehazi converses with King Jehoram telling the story about Elisha restoring her son to life, the woman shows up at the king's house to request help. Realizing the woman's appearance at that precise moment constitutes yet another miracle, he dispatches a military officer to restore all that was hers'.

2 Kings 8:1-6 *Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. 2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. 3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. 4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. 5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life. 6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.*

Thought to ponder

Several kings exhibit striking similarities to Herod the tetrarch in the New Testament. Consider

Herod's relationship with John the Baptist. Herod feared John the Baptist, and recognized his holiness. He even looked forward to listening to John's sermons. But when it came to doing what John said regarding repentance and/or serving the Lord, Herod never put his affections into practice. In fact, when Herod met Jesus, he mocked and taunted the Lord with huge disrespect. Thus we learn men like Herod and King Jehoram, do not fear God. Rather they fear men. As great as John the Baptist and Prophet Elisha were- they were only men. Fearing or worshiping men gets a person nowhere but hell. (See also Jehoash king of Israel)

Psalms 36:1-2 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD. The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*

Elisha's and Elijah's prophecy concerning Hazael

The prophecy concerning Hazael delivered through Elisha fulfills Elijah's earlier prophecy. *1 Kings 19:14-17*. Although Elisha prophesizes primarily in Israel, here he deals with a Gentile high official named Hazael about Syria's king. One may speculate that Naaman the Leper's testimony affected quite a few people in Syria. The Syrian king shows respect toward Elisha.

While visiting Syria, Elisha receives an inquiry from King Benhadad. The king suffers from an illness and wants to know if he recovers from his sickness. Sending his trusted official Hazael with a vast array of presents. With forty camels loaded with goods, the king hoped to buy good news. Hazael's inquiry reminds us of a previous high Syrian commander, Naaman the Leper, who also approached Elisha bearing a multitude of gifts. *2 Kings 5*. The reference to King Benhadad being Elisha's son (*8:9*) constitutes a gesture of respect and humility. By calling himself a son, the king acknowledges Elisha's moral authority as a son does his father, Elisha is not King Benhadad's biological father.

Elisha delivers a two-edged sword prophecy. No the sickness won't kill the king, but he still dies. Elisha's prophecy continues revealing Hazael becomes a ruthless Syrian king who does horrible things to Israel, so terrible Elisha weeps knowing Israel's future. No doubt alarmed that Elisha knows all his ruthless ambitions, Hazael simply plays dumb and denies it all. He returns to Syria and informs Benhadad not to worry, his sickness will not kill him. Alas the treacherous Hazael suffocates King Benhadad that very night. Hazael commands such military power in Syria the people accept him immediately.

2 Kings 8: 7 *And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it*

was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. **8** And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? **9** So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, **Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?** **10** And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. **11** And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept. **12** And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. **13** And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria. **14** So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover. **15** And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

Complicated historical royal truths

Bible students observe several convoluted historical truths: In Jehoram's, king of Israel fifth year, Jehoshaphat rules Judah. At the same time Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, begins to reign in Judah. Therefore Jehoshaphat and Jehoram reign together as dual kings of Judah. Also Jehoram (sometimes spelled Joram) rules in Israel. Consequently, two different men with the same name rule at the same time. One in Judah. One in Israel. Furthermore Judah's king is married to Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter.

Satan has launched quite the assault on the kingdom of heaven. While Ahab's son, Jehoram rules as Israel's king- Ahab's son-in-law, Jehoram rules as Judah's king. To make matters even more complicated, *2 Chronicles 21:2 titles Jehoshaphat king of Israel*. This means after King Ahab's death, for an unspecified duration, Jehoshaphat ruled as king of Judah and king of Israel simultaneously! (See Chapter Ahab's Death, ensuing confusion)

2 Kings 8: 16 *And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, **Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. 17** Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. **18** And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab*

*was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. **19** Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children.*

2 Chronicles 21:2 *And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these were the sons of **Jehoshaphat king of Israel.***

War

In King Jehoram's (Judah) days Edom revolted from their tributary status. Following suit, Libnah revolted and the Middle East erupted in hatred against Israel and Judah. In other words the entire region hated the Jews and fought against them. Nothing new under the sun. Remaining verses 8:24-29 provide a fast narrative summary. It also introduces Ahaziah.

2 Kings 8: 20 *In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. **21** So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. **22** Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. **23** And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they*

not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 8: 24-29 *And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. 25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. 26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. 27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab. 28 And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.*

Jehoram, Judah # 5

2 Chronicles 21

- Judah's fifth king
- Jehoram=Jehovah is exalted
- Length of reign: Eight years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jehoshaphat
- Wife: Athaliah (Daughter of Ahab and Jezebel)
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha
- Ruled during reign of Jehoram king of Israel.
- Age at death: Forty
- Claim to fame: Married Jezebel's daughter; Ruled conjointly with Jehoshaphat, Same name as king of Israel, Kills brothers; Elijah's letter, Bowel disease.
- Texts: 2 Chronicles 21; *2 Kings 8: 16-29*

Jehoram's Outline

- Begins to rule
- Murders his brethren
- Marriage Hell Approved
- Undoing Jehoshaphat's good
- Writing from Elijah
- Death of Jehoram

Jehoram becomes king at thirty-two years old. Jehoram's wife is Athaliah (Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter) whom he may have met during the infamous void place ceremony. (See Chapter Compromising Values). And much like Jezebel influenced his father-in-law, Jehoram's wife intimidated him. King Jehoram is a murderous, Baal worshipping, wretched king. He restores high places and compels Judah's citizens to commit idolatry.

As previously discussed Jehoram served as king alongside his father, Jehoshaphat for an unspecified period of time. *2 Kings 8:16-17*. Observe also Jehoshaphat actually assumes the role of Israel's king immediately following Ahab's death. In addition, the same era witnessed Israel and Judah merge through marriage when Jehoram married Athaliah. (See Chapter Ahab's Deaths, Ensuing Confusion.

2 Kings 8:16-17 *And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. 17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.*

2 Chronicles 21:1-3 *Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son*

*reigned in his stead. 2 And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: **all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.** 3 And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he was the firstborn.*

Murders his brethren

As Jehoshaphat prepares for death, he distributes vast wealth among his sons. Knowing the monarchy succeeds to his first born and recognizing the family isn't exactly close, he probably hopes the money and gifts mitigate any bad feelings toward Jehoram. Don't forget his in-laws are Baal worshipers. But it appears Jehoram and his wife (Queen Athaliah) hate everyone. They inflict horrendous damage on both Judah and Israel.

2 Chronicles 21: 4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel. 5 Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of

Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD. 7 *Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.*

Marriage Hell Approved

By *2 Chronicles 21:4*, Jehoram ferociously tries to destroy the seed of David, with the ultimate goal of preventing the Messiah from ever being born. Notice also he kills many of Israel's princes. Jehoram's wrath and murderous goals rampages through both kingdoms. No earthly logic explains Jehoram's motives. Satan tries to destroy all Israel's twelve tribes. Actually, Jewish extermination proves satanically logical; if all Jews die Satan beats God. Hence the explanation for every pogrom, the holocaust, and the coming Antichrist's final solution in the future.

Undoing Jehoshaphat's good

2 Chronicles 21: 8 *In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. 9* *Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. 10* *So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this*

*day. The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. **11** Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.*

Edom maintained a dependency on Israel from King David till Jehoshaphat. David militarily imposed Edom's servitude and ever since they existed under an uneasy alliance- (see *2 Sam 8:14, 1Ch 18:13*) *1 Kings 22:47 There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.* But with both Judah and Israel in decline, they achieved independence. Basically the Lord weakened Judah due to their ever increasing backsliding. Manifestly, Jehoram began restoring high places and forced the citizenry toward idolatry. Fornication refers to idolatry as well as sexual sin. (See Chapter Notes Idolatry and sexual sin)

Writing from Elijah

2 Chronicles 21: *12 And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy*

*brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: **14** Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: **15** And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.*

Critical Bible scholars rush to criticize and correct the King James Bible in *Chronicles 21:12* -- alleging the name Elijah is a scribal error and should be Elisha. Their contention presumes Elijah is already raptured. But the scholars are in error, not the Bible.

Consider Elijah's detailed encounter with king of Israel Ahaziah in *2 Kings 1*. Ahaziah dies during the 2nd year of King Jehoram. King Jehoram's murderous rampage against his brethren happens soon after he succeeds the throne; therefore, Elijah is still on earth during the early years of Jehoram's rule. The name Elijah is correct. Elijah's writing took place soon before his rapture. As to the contents of Elijah's letter, Jehoram's whole world is about to crash and burn. Judgment for killing his brothers and leading the kingdom into idolatry comes within a few years.

2 Kings 1: 16-18 *And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to*

*inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. 17 So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. **And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah;** because he had no son. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

***2 Kings 2:1** And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.*

Death of Jehoram

A devastating plague from God hits the kingdom. Invasions by the Philistines and the Arabians ravage the country and kill most his family. God promises a hideous bowel disease which kills him tortuously slow, taking two years culminating with his intestines literally falling out. Not surprisingly, Judah's citizens care little for their king, and his death is met without ceremony or mourning. The people denied King Jehoram a burial in the sepulchres of the kings.

***2 Chronicles 21: 16** Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: 17 And they came up*

into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. 18 *And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19* *And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. 20* *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.*

Chapter Notes

Idolatry utilizing sexual terminology

Everything in the physical world represents spiritual truth. God uses the terms adultery, fornication, and whoredom numerous times throughout the Bible to describe Israel's idolatry and backsliding. Adultery exemplifies the highest act of treason a person can commit against her/his spouse. Nothing crushes an innocent and loving wife/husband as does this sin. Nor is there anything that so jeopardizes a relationship; thus, God chose this sin to metaphorically describe his own feelings when believers step out on him. By this I mean

when believers love or worship people or things more than God. Not to be overlooked is the fact that the consequence for such actions provoked God's divorcing Israel. (Temporarily)

2 Chronicles 21: 13 *But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab,...*

Jeremiah 3:8-9 *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.*

Ahaziah, Judah # 6;

2 Chronicles 22

- Judah's sixth king
- Ahaziah= Possessed of Jehovah
- Length of reign: One year
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jehoram
- Mother: Athaliah (daughter of Ahab and Jezebel)
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Jehoram king of Israel.
- Claim to fame: Mother is Athaliah; Killed by Jehu
- Age at death: Forty-three
- Texts 2 Kings 8:24-29 ,2 Chronicles 22:1-12

Ahaziah's Outline

- Begins to rule
- Ahaziah joins with Joram King of Israel
- Evil and judgment
- Jehu kills Ahaziah

After Jehoram's death, Judah's kingdom exhibited a state of confusion and political disarray.

Mixing Israel and Judah turned things into a religious/political mess. Both kingdoms unravel at a rapid pace. Idolatry, sin, and wars took their toll. In his short one year reign, Ahaziah does nothing positive for Judah, he perpetuates destruction and death.

The big news about Ahaziah does not concern his life accomplishments or lack thereof, it is all the commotion over his age when he takes the throne. Is Ahaziah twenty-two or forty-two years old? Compare *2 Chronicles 22:1-2* with *2 Kings 8:26*. This commentary deals with the age difficulty in Chapter Notes.

2 Chronicles 22:1-2 *And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. **2** Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.*

2 Kings 8:24-27 *And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. **25** In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king*

*of Judah begin to reign. **26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.** And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. **27** And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab.*

Ahaziah's mother is Athaliah, Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter, (Granddaughter to Omri.) Observe Ahaziah is son in law to the house of Ahab, not Ahab himself. Actually, Ahaziah is the grandson in law to Ahab. As Queen Athaliah dominated her husband (Ahaziah's father, King Jehoram) likewise she influences her son King Ahaziah.

Ahaziah joins with Joram King of Israel

***2 Kings 8:28-29** And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. **29** And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.*

Both Judah and Israel are allies. After the death of his father, King Ahaziah is totally dominated by Israel, now being run by Jezebel. The

house of Ahab has become King Ahaziah's family, friends, and counselors. When the king of Israel, Jehoram was wounded in battle and became ill, King Ahaziah goes to check on his ally and friend. Sickness after battle wounds, usually infection, is a common occurrence.

2 Chronicles 22:3-6 *He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counseller to do wickedly. 4 Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction. 5 He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramothgilead: and the Syrians smote Joram. 6 And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.*

By 2 Chronicles 22: 5-7 the confusion of mixed families and same names is very apparent. The Bible student's reading becomes tedious, fascinating but tedious. Azariah is another name of Ahaziah. Joram is another spelling for Jehoram probably inserted by the chronicler to ease the difficulty in distinguishing the two kings of the same name in the same verse. (Either 2 Chronicles 22: 6

simply calls Ahaziah by the name Azariah, or he is another prince of Judah.)

Jehu kills Ahaziah (See also commentary in Chapter Jehu King of Israel)

2 Chronicles 22:7 *And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. 8 And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. 9 And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.*

Chapter notes

Concerning Ahaziah's age

Ahaziah being King Jehoram's youngest son, and being forty-two years when he takes the throne- while his father King Jehoram dies at forty years old, Compare 2 Chronicles 21:20; 22:1-2 with 2 Kings 8:26- a conundrum for sure. Let us do

the math without correcting the Bible. Context and comparing scripture with scripture must be applied carefully.

Observe 2 Chronicles 22:2 (a) contains the word "was" in italics meaning an honest translator added the adverb. 22 (b) uses the word "also" *His mother's name also was Athaliah...* Why is God using the word "also" ? It seems the focus is on Athaliah rather than Ahaziah.

Consider this theory: Read the verse without the word was. Someone is forty-two years old, and Ahaziah begins to rule. His mother's name was also Athaliah. The chronicler uses the word "also" because the emphasis is on Athaliah. In other words, not only is she forty-two years old, she is also the king's mother. Therefore Ahaziah was twenty-two and his mother was forty-two. Athaliah merits extraordinary emphasis because of her horrific evil importance in Judah's history.

*2 Chronicles 22:1-2 And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. 2 Forty and two years old **was** Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also **was** Athaliah the daughter of Omri.*

Another convoluted possibility:

Consider this convoluted possibility: Athaliah is indeed a first generation daughter to Omri, thus she is also sister to Ahab. And she becomes Aunt to the Jezebel's daughter, thus aunt and niece each have the same name. A very common family custom honoring younger generations with traditional family names. Exploring this possibility further, suppose the first Athaliah was an arranged marriage to Jehoram and she already had a son named **Ahaziah**, whom becomes Jehoram's step son through marriage. He is now in line to be king of Judah. His chronological age could be similar age (perhaps older) to his stepfather Jehoram. Thus Ahaziah being forty-two years old is not a mistake.

The king's mother Athaliah, granddaughter of Omri and daughter of Jezebel and Ahab. As we have already observed scripture may refer to children as a son or daughter even if the child is actually a granddaughter or grandson- or even a son or daughter in law.

Athaliah Judah's Queen

2 Kings 11; 2 Chronicles 22-23

- Judah's Queen
- Athaliah= Due season for Jah
- Length of reign: Six years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Ahab
- Mother: Jezebel
- Husband: King Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Jehu king of Israel
- Claim to infamy: Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter; Sovereign Queen of Judah. Destroys all but one of David's seed.
- Texts. *2 Kings 11; 2 Chronicles 22-23*

Queen Athaliah's Outline

- Takes the throne
- Grandma from hell
- Joash's preservation
- *Jehoiada conspires to kill Athaliah*
- King Joash revealed
- The Killing of Athaliah
- Priest Jehoiada renews the kingdom

Takes throne

With King Ahaziah's death, Athaliah takes immediate action. Her scheme to kill all the seed royal is much more than political strategy, Satan's hand directs these actions. His ultimate goal- to stop the coming Messiah. (See Part Two Mystery of Israel) Her diabolical reign lasts six years.

Thought to ponder: Elijah's prophecy damned the entire house of Ahab, *1 Kings 21:17-29* (See Chapter Naboth's Vineyard) Being Ahab's and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah should be in the house of Ahab. However, since Jehoshaphat's compromising alliance with Israel, his son Jehoram married Athaliah, and thereby legally transferred her status to the house of Jehoshaphat. Remember the infamous words: *And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, 1 Kings 22:4.* Well herein is the end game of the deal. Satan successfully mixes a cursed house with a blessed kingdom. The evil woman's sons are legally in line for the thrown of David. And in the second generation Athaliah now a grandmother to the line of David's children.

Grandma from hell

If ever lived a grandma from hell, Athaliah earns the title. As soon as her son, Ahaziah is dead she murders every male grandchild and any male from the seed of David. Her attempts succeeds for all but one infant. God intervenes and saves one child, Joash. Not until King Herod murders all

children under two years old in Bethlehem (700 years later) will such a nefarious attack on the line of David take place. *Matthew 2:16*

2 Kings 11:1 *And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.*

Joash's preservation

Jehoshabeath (also spelled Jehosheba) risked her life to save the king's baby son, Joash. The courageous woman is Joash's aunt, and the wife of priest Jehoiada. Another heroine is the baby's nurse who also works against Athaliah and helps save Joash. For six years they hide the child in the house of the Lord. Thus priests took care of the future king for six years. Most likely the baby's mother, Zibiah of Beersheba *2 Chronicles 24:1*, was killed by Athaliah. During this time there was no king in Judah; Queen Athaliah ruled the kingdom.

2 Kings 11:2-3 *But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, **even him and his nurse**, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. **3** And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.*

2 Chronicles 22: 11 *But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, **the wife of Jehoiada** the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. **12** And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.*

Priest Jehoiada conspires to kill Athaliah (See also 2 Kings 11)

For more than six years the priest Jehoiada oversaw Joash's wellbeing while keeping him hidden in the Lord's house. Year after year he strengthened the conspiracy to overthrow the wicked Athaliah. Levites and chiefs from Israel pledged secretly to reestablish a son of David on Judah's throne. Finally, they set a date for Joash's coronation; the day coincides with killing Athaliah. Surrounded with God's providence, dedicated priests, and soldiers- Jehoiada brings seven year old Joash into the open and anoints him King of Judah.

2 Chronicles 23:1-21 *And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and*

*Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him. **2** And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. **3** And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David. **4** This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors; **5** And a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. **6** But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. **7** And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out. **8** So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. **9** Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God. **10** And he set all the people,*

*every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about. **11 Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.***

King Joash's revelation

Presenting the child king with the testimony is interesting, *2 Chronicles 23:11* probably a scroll containing the Law of Moses or the Ten Commandments. Perhaps even the ark itself containing the testimony was shown to Joash as Jehoiada anoints him king, *Exodus 25:16*. Joash's appearing brings great joy to the people, who till this moment, believed all David's seed had perished.

The Killing of Athaliah

The ranks of citizens loyal to Jehoiada swell and their enthusiasm is uncontained. Athaliah hears all the commotion and soon learns the reason. When she sees the child king, she knows her reign is finished. Trying to muster support to stop the conspiracy, she finds very little. Jehoiada's well prepared troops stop any opposition. He orders Athaliah taken to where the horses enter the city and kill her there. He wants no temple grounds

polluted with the wretched woman's blood. Better to mingle it with horses' dung.

2 Chronicles 23:12-15 *Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD: **13** And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of musick, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason. **14** Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges: and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the LORD. **15** So they laid hands on her; and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there.*

2 Kings 11:15-16 *But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. **16** And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.*

Jehoiada renews the kingdom

The passage testifies just how bad things deteriorated in Jerusalem and the entire kingdom. Temple worship had been largely replaced by Baal worship. And the people's first act of repentance tore down the house of Baal; his images and altars destroyed. The head Baal priest, Mattan, slain before the idolatrous altars.

2 Chronicles 22: 16-21 *And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, **that they should be the LORD'S people.** 17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18 Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David. 19 And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in. 20 And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD: and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. 21 And all the people of the land rejoiced: and the*

city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

2 Chronicles 23: 7 *For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim.*

Priest Jehoiada takes charge of Judah

Priest Jehoiada takes charge of Judah. He serves as an extremely able leader in the aftermath of Athaliah's ruin. He begins the kingdom's restoration where all backsliders and sinners need begin- in repentance and prayer. He leads the people in a covenant committing themselves to serving the Lord. *that they should be the LORD'S people.* This remains a valid prayer for Christians today. If we say the Lord is our God, let us act like we believe.

True temple worship according to the words of the Lord commenced immediately. Jehoiada educated the priests and the people; the kingdom's return to God was thorough and ongoing. He safeguarded the temple according to the law. Revival spread and the kingdom enjoyed peace and quiet.

Jehu; Israel # 10

2 Kings 9

- Israel's tenth king
- Jehu= He shall be
- Length of reign: Twenty-eight years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father: Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi:
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Queen Athaliah, Joash king of Judah
- Claim to fame: Kills whole house of Ahab, including Jezebel. Kills King Ahaziah. Eradicates Baal worship from Samaria; Succumbs to the sins of Jeroboam
- Texts: *2Kings 9-10; 2 Chronicles 22:7-12*

Jehu's Outline

- Anointing Jehu
- Jehu's ambitious wrath
- Jehoram's and Ahaziah's death
- Jezebel's death
- Jehu's purge continues
- Jehu kills Ahaziah's brethren
- Jehonadab the son of Rechab
- Worshipers of Baal
- Jehu continues the sins of Jeroboam
- Death of Jehu

Jehu takes the throne through a coup approved by God. A military officer with an intimidating personality; he is forceful and demanding. Jehu's name means *he shall be* and for his early years the zealous king served as God's sword of judgment. King Jehu performs the word of the Lord by slaying the whole house of Ahab and destroying Queen Jezebel, effectively ending Omri's dynasty: Omri-Ahab-Ahaziah-Jehoram-So pleased with Jehu's execution of judgment, God promised him a four generation dynasty, *2 Kings 10:30*. Jehu came as close to being a good king as Israel ever obtained, but in the end, he succumbed to idolatry and the sins of Jeroboam. He ruled during the times of Queen Athaliah and Joash King of Judah.

This chapter begins fulfilling Elijah's damning prophecies on the house of Ahab, *1 Kings 21:17-29*. (See Part Two Naboth's Vineyard)

Anointing Jehu king of Israel

Elisha sends a young prophet to Ramothgilead into a meeting of King Jehoram's military officers. Telling the young man to "gird up thy loins" equates with encouraging him to be brave. Just imagine walking into a meeting of high ranking military officers who serve a nation of Baal worshippers. The young man tells an army captain named Jehu that God has a secret message for him. Jehu enters a private room where the prophet anoints him king of Israel in the name of the Lord.

Further instructions command Jehu to destroy the whole house of Ahab. The prophet's message is short, yet epochal. Once delivered the young prophet runs away.

2 Kings 9:1-10 *And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead: 2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; 3 Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. 4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. 5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. 6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel. 7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in*

Israel: 9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah: 10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.

Although Jehu's anointing took place in a private room without ceremony, the other officers certainly knew something important happened. Evidenced by their reactions, the mysterious prophet inspires all the soldiers' curiosity. When Jehu returns to the meeting they ask what the crazy young preacher said. At first Jehu avoids answering, but the men's questioning persists, so Jehu reports exactly what took place. Although Jehu's officers initially acted as though God's prophet meant little to them, they believe the announcement without reservation. By placing their garments under him *2 Kings 9:13*, they show submission and immediate allegiance to Jehu. With trumpets blaring, the news reverberates through Israel, Jehu is king.

***2 Kings 9: 11** Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication. **12** And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. **13** Then they hasted, and took*

every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

Jehu's ambitious wrath

2 Kings 9: 14 *So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. **15** But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.*

Immediately Jehu begins carrying out God's judgment on the house of Ahab. King Joram (Jehoram) was staying in Jezreel rehabbing from battle wounds, Ahaziah king of Judah is visiting him. As word of conspiracy spread through the kingdom, Jehu warns the town of Jezreel that anyone with King Joram is doomed. Jehu rides into town ready for a showdown. The town's watchman sees him coming, and sends riders out to inquire his intentions. In no uncertain terms, Jehu tells them and the riders defect into Jehu's ranks.

2 Kings 9: 16 *So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. **17** And there stood a watchman on the*

*tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace? **18** So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. **19** Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. **20** And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.*

Jehoram's and Ahaziah's death

Jehu's very demeanor brings terror to both kings; negotiations fail. They turn their chariots around and run for their lives. Jehoram dies first. His body taken to the field of Naboth. Fulfilling *1 Kings 21: 17-29*.

***2 Kings 9: 21** And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. **22** And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What*

peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? 23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah. 24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. 25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; 26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

King Ahaziah's death

2 Kings 9: 27 *But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. 29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.*

Judah's King Ahaziah just happens to be visiting Jehoram. Some suggest that when Jehu slew Judah's king, he carried his purge of the house of Ahab too far. But remember since Jehoram is Ahab's son- King Ahaziah's mother is Ahab's daughter- thus Ahaziah is Jehoram's nephew. And since Ahaziah is also Jehoshaphat's grandson he remains genetically related to David. Oh what a tangled genealogical web- sin doth weave. God appointed Ahaziah to destruction. Jehu is doing the Lord's will by killing Ahaziah.

2 Chronicles 22:7-9 And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: *for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. 8 And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. 9 And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.*

Jezebel's death .

Jehu now turns his wrath on Jezebel. With heavy makeup and tired hair, the evil queen hopes to project a royal, alluring aura. Perhaps Jehu would spare her life? Next she mentions the history of Zimri whose overthrow of King Elah ended badly. But Jehu remains unpersuaded. Before bursting into the palace, he calls out for anyone who wants to help him. Three eunuchs wisely oblige the new king of Israel by throwing Jezebel out a window to her death. With God's judgment done (for the day) Jehu eats and drinks before deciding he should bury the queen. Searching for the body, they find only skull and hands and feet. This gruesomely fulfills Elijah's prophecy. *1 Kings 21:23* .

2 Kings 9: 30 *And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. 31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? 32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. 33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. 34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. 35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. 36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is*

*the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: **37** And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.*

***1 Kings 21:23** And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*

Jehu's purge continues

News of Jehu's takeover shook the kingdom. Israel's mainstream government located in Samaria waited nervously to see what the new king would do next. Jehu sent a letter taunting Samaria to reassert one of Ahab's sons on the throne, and dared putting together an army to resist him. But no one in Israel wanted to face the ferocious king. Attempting to stop the carnage, all persons in authority sent word the entire kingdom stood ready to obey only Jehu; they awaited his commands.

2 Kings 10

***2 Kings 10:1-5** And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying, **2** Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there*

Saare with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; 3 Look even out the best and meekest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. 4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? 5 And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

As King Jehu continues purging all persons pertaining to Ahab, his next letter calls for beheading Ahab's seventy sons. (Remember kings have multiple wives, concubines, and harems) Samaria's elders and great men proved eager to prove their alliance by straightaway killing the seventy princes and packing their heads in baskets. The heads sent special delivery to Jezreel and piled in two gruesome heaps at the city's gates. The city Jezreel was an additional royal dwelling resort for King Ahab. So favored, he built a palace there and killed Naboth for his vineyard. Clearly the hideous piles of human heads, announced the fulfilling of Elijah's prophecy (*1 Kings 21: 17-29*) and announced a horrific warning to anyone opposing Jehu.

2 Kings 10:6-11 *Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if*

ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up. 7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel. 8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. 9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these? 10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah. 11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

Jehu kills Ahaziah's brethren

Israel and Judah were so socially intermingled that Judah's royal family and friends routinely enjoyed fellowship and festivities with the house of Ahab. Such were the plans of the group Jehu encountered at a shearing house. Apparently,

God's judgment transpired so quickly, not everyone in Judah knew what was happening. After identifying the travelers, Jehu wasted no time in killing Ahaziah's brethren.

2 Kings 10:12-14 *And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the shearing house in the way, **13** Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. **14** And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men; neither left he any of them.*

Some Bible students believe these particular killings unnecessary because Ahaziah's brethren were not the house of Ahab. But as we have already acknowledged, King Ahaziah's mother was Ahab's daughter- thus Ahab was his grandfather! Ahaziah was also King Jehoram's nephew. Thus Ahaziah's brethren are arguably part of the house of Ahab. Confusion always remains Satan's forte. (See also *2 Chronicles 22:7-9*)

Jehonadab the son of Rechab

2 Kings 10:15-17 *And when he was departed thence, **he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he***

saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. 16 *And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. 17* *And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.*

Jehonadab the son of Rechab, appears a popular and honorable figure in Israel. A rare person of integrity considering he serves the true God. Joining hands with Jehonadab performs a shrewd political move, giving perceived moral high ground to Jehu. As if to say, look who rides in my chariot? With such a man alongside me, who can doubt my righteousness? Even today politicians cherish celebrity association. (Whether today's celebrity endorsements provide moral high ground for anyone is another matter entirely.)

More than 200 years later, scripture references Jehonadab in a very honoring manner; see whole chapter *Jeremiah 35*. The sons of Jehonadab obeyed their ancestral father for generations by not drinking wine, building houses, or vineyards. They lived as strangers in Israel. Perceiving themselves as outsiders, probably due to the Lord's estrangement of the northern kingdom.

God contrasts the *house of the Rechabites'* obedience to the disobedience of Judah and Israel.

Jeremiah 35:15-16 *I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. **16** Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:*

Jeremiah 35:18-19 *And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: **19** Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.*

Worshippers of Baal

As Israel reels from Jehu's slaughter, people wonder what he's going to do next. They need not wait long. The king calls for a national celebration of Baal. Many citizens sense relief. They now

believe Jehu simply rebelled against the house of Ahab for money and power; just the everyday common military coup. No one suspects Jehu is an instrument of God's holy judgment. Jehu schedules a magnificent ceremony. The whole priestly structure and all Baal worshipers look forward to the extravagant event. *But Jehu did it in subilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.*

King Jehu's plan is simple but effective. Security meets all attendees at the temple's door with a beautiful new vestment. The real purpose for the costume marks the worshippers for death, rather like a logger puts an X on a tree for the crew behind him to chop down. Jehu and Jehonadab actually enter into the house of Baal, and address the crowd telling them to make sure no servants of God are among them. Superbly deceived, the Baal zealots believe King Jehu is totally on their side and he hates the Lord God.-as do they.

Once the priests complete the sacrifices. Jehu sends in eighty soldiers with orders to kill everyone wearing the identifying vestment. He also commands if anyone escapes, the soldier responsible pays with his life. When the killing ends, soldiers burn all images of Baal, and break down the temple. What's left of the house of Baal Jehu turns into a public bathroom. *Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*

2 Kings 10:18-28 *And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much. **19** Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. **But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. 20** And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it. **21** And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. **22** And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. **23** **And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. 24** And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him. **25** And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they*

*smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. **26** And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. **27** And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. **28** Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*

Jehu continues the sins of Jeroboam

Inexplicably King Jehu's service to the Lord does an about face. Although he ended Baal worship, he continues in the sins of Jeroboam and serves the religion represented by the golden cows in Bethel and in Dan. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam; Alternative Religion) Still the Lord acknowledged Jehu's service by stating his dynasty lasts four generations. Alas Jehu came close to being a good king, but in God's final report card *Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.*

2 Kings 10:29 *Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan. **30** And the LORD said unto Jehu, **Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast***

done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin. **32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; 33 From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. 34** Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? **35** And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. **36** And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

Under the rule of Jehu, it seems Israel reached a breaking point with God. In other words, the nation went into serious decline. Although they continued to exist for another 100 years, they became a second rate power, asserting less and less influence over the region.

2 Kings 10:30 *And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine*

heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

Thought to ponder

One can be God's enemy serving God's purpose:

Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

Isaiah 10:5-6 *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.*

Joash, Jehoash Judah # 7;

2 Chronicles 24; 2 Kings 12

- Judah's seventh king
- Joash= Jehovah has become man
- Length of reign: Forty years
- Spiritual condition: Good then evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Ahaziah
- Mother: Zibiah of Beersheba
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Jehu king of Israel.
- Claim to fame: Youngest king, Chest of Joash; Murdered Jehoiada's sons; Murdered in office.
- Age at death: Forty-seven
- Texts 2 Kings 12 ,2 Chronicles 24

Joash's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Chest of Joash
- Extraordinary dedication and charity
- Death of Jehoiada; Decline of Joash
- Murders Zechariah the son of Jehoiada
- Judgment

Joash ascending the throne at the age of seven distinguishes him as the youngest person in Judah (or Israel) to inherit the throne. After his

grandmother, Queen Athaliah, murders all his siblings, he survives as the only male seed of David. For the first six years of his life, Queen Athaliah ruled Judah. In order to stay alive, Joash spent those years hidden on the temple grounds. From an infant, Joash was raised by his aunt and a very savvy priest named Jehoiada. (See Chapter Athaliah) The wise priest acted as the boy's father, and chief advisor. Obviously, a young child requires someone to lead in his behalf, it took years before Joash assumed control of Judah. Joash rules forty years and dies at forty-seven years old. Scripture sometimes spells his name Jehoash.

As to King Joash being good or bad, he gets mixed reviews. As long as priest Jehoiada was alive, he rules well and serves the Lord. But after Jehoiada dies the young king goes astray. Hence the spiritual tragedy of not maturing in the Lord and always letting someone else be your moral compass. Sooner or later the Lord tests your metal letting you discover what you're made of; albeit God already knows, but you don't. *Psalm 119:71-73; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18*

2 Chronicles 24:1-3 *Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3 And Jehoiada took*

for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

2 Kings 12:1-3 *In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3 But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.*

Under the previous administrations of Jehoram and Athaliah, high places reemerged throughout Judah. By the time Joash reigned in power, high places were again entrenched in Judah's culture, even Jehoiada couldn't end the practice; King Joash didn't even try. (See Chapter High Places)

Chest of Joash

King Joash's greatest accomplishments came in his twenty third year. Due to previous administrations abandonment and abuse, the temple suffered serious decay. The young king rallied the priests and citizens to restore the Lord's house. Righteously, he rebukes the Levites who took too long carrying out his orders (*2 Chronicles 24:5*). So scrutinizing was the king's oversight, the Levites not only postponed taking money for themselves, they feared being responsible for the

money to repair the house (*see 2 Kings 12:7,8*). Thus Jehoiada assumed responsibility for the funding.

Many a local New Testament church finds inspiration in the chest of Joash. A literal chest with hole in the top where parishioners drop money, usually for mortgage payoffs, building projects and/or repairs toward repairing the church house. Where the word of a king is, there is power. And Joash got the job done.

2 Chronicles 24:4-9 *And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. 5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. **Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.** 6 And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? 7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. 8 **And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.** 9 And they*

made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

2 Kings 12:4-10 *And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD, 5 Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. 6 **But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.** 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. 8 And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house. 9 **But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.** 10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that*

the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

Extraordinary dedication and charity

When leadership serves God with genuine enthusiasm their behaviour inspires the people. Truly the proverbs declare *Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. And Proverbs 19:12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.*

King Joash not only provoked the priesthood to do right, he rallied Judah's citizens as well. The people worked and gave abundantly to repair the house of the Lord. A spiritual application for the church age is when congregations seem to emulate the attitudes and behaviors of those over them, especially the pastor. The same principle manifests even in national governments. An able prime minister or president inspires the nation to reflect his agenda-be those ambitions good or bad, his works are replicated by the people.

2 Chronicles 24:10-14 *And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. **11** Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of*

*the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. **12** And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD. **13** So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it. **14** And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.*

2 Kings 12:11-16 *And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, **12** And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it. **13** Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of*

gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD: 14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD. 15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully. 16 The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

Death of Jehoiada; Decline of Joash

Concluding verses to Joash's biography prove painful to read. *But Jehoiada waxed old*, begins the narrative of Joash's tragic fall. The old priest dies being hundred and thirty years old. So respected and honored the people buried him in Jerusalem among the kings. Now Joash was truly alone.

Without question Jehoiada stabilized and kept the king on track. With him, Joash led the nation decently enough, but as the priest aged he exerted less and less influence. Jehoiada's death left a vacuum surrounding a weak minded king. Like vultures circling over a dying animal in the desert, God's enemies swooped in as soon as Jehoiada died. They knew Joash needed guidance to rule and bending him to their objectives proved easy. They flattered and adored Joash away from the words of God. However, excuses don't explain everything. In the final analysis people do what

they want to do. It's always easy to blame others for one's own sin. Joash following the evil princes of Judah only revealed his heart's desires.

2 Chronicles 24:15 *But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. 16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house. 17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.*

Zechariah the son of Jehoiada

Backsliding returned abundantly inside Judah. Just a few years after citizens contributed enthusiastically to the chest of Joash, they now bowed before groves and idols. God's mercy sent prophets to warn the people, but few listened. The kingdom's moral descent continued unabated. God sends Jehoiada's son, Zechariah, to warn Joash and his mob of counselors. Alas the Lord's words fell on stopped ears and furious rebellion ensued. Joash orders *Zechariah stoned to death*. Notice more sons of priest Jehoiada's are murdered at the hands of Joash, *2 Chronicles 24:25*. Tragic irony abounds here. Joash murders the sons of the very man who

loved and saved him from a woman who hated the words of God. Now it is Joash rejecting the Lord's words.

2 Chronicles 24: 19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. 20 *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. 21* *And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. 22* *Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. **And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.***

Judgment

Transgressing God's words never stops God's words. A small Syrian force attacks and defeats Judah's much larger army and kills all Joash's miserable, sycophant princes. Joash pillages the Lord's house for gold and treasure to buy off Hazael king of Syria preventing total destruction. When the Syrians finally leave, God afflicts him with *great diseases*. How long Joash suffers with these

diseases is unknown. Eventually, his own servants conspire and murder the king in his own bed, a just judgment for the murder of Jehoiada's sons. Thus ends the tumultuous earthly life of King Joash, forty-seven years old. Forty years as king. Although he rebuilt the Lord's house, he neglected his own heart. And no chest of money, no matter how big, can repair a man's heart. For that kind of maintenance, it takes faith in God, the words of God, and repentance.

2 Chronicles 24: 23-27 *And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. 24* *For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. 25* ***And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings. 26*** *And these are they that conspired against him; Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess. 27* *Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the*

burdens laid upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 12:17-21 *Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. **18** And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem. **19** And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? **20** And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla. **21** For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.*

Amaziah, Judah # 8

2 Chronicles 25

- Judah's eighth king
- Amaziah= Strength of Jah
- Length of reign: Twenty-nine years
- Spiritual condition: Good then bad
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Joash
- Mother: Jehoaddan
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Israel's kings Joash and Jeroboam the second.
- Claim to fame: Accepts prophet's rebuke, repents; Turns away from God- Bows to false gods, Thistle parable; Murdered
- Age at death: Fifty-four
- Texts: 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25

Amaziah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Mixed reviews
- Judges according to God's law
- Amaziah hires Israel
- Amaziah repents
- Children of Seir
- Consequence of bad decision
- Amaziah bows before false gods
- Parable of the thistle

- War
- Amaziah's final sad years

Amaziah is twenty-five years old when he ascends the throne. Ruling for twenty-nine years God's says he does right; however, but adds a disclaimer *but not with a perfect heart*. Rather like his father, Joash, he gets a mixed review. Bible students should ponder God's assessment carefully. Making spiritual application, how many Christians fit this appraisal? How many Christians do well, but then hold back some part of their life, refusing to follow Christ 100%? In other words, *not with a perfect heart*.

2 Chronicles 25:1-2 *Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.*

2 Kings 14:1-3 *In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. 2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did.*

The scriptural record from Kings adds he does right *yet not like David*. David's walk impressed the Lord. God's epithet to David is important. Although David's life suffered several setbacks and even serious sin, something about the way David handles repentance, humility, and commitment should be carefully studied. God makes numerous favorable moral comparisons to David throughout scripture.

- At least twenty times God calls David *my servant* a title unique among Israel's or Judah's kings.
- *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, Acts 13:22, 1 Samuel 13:14*
- King David authored a large portion of the Psalms, which reveal his whole heart, devotion, and love toward God.
- In eternity God makes David king of Israel for ever. *Ezekiel 37:24-25* (See Part Two Chapter David)

Amaziah judges according to God's law

Amaziah's first governing action is severe. He puts to death the royal servants responsible for murdering his father, Joash. However, his judgment did not go beyond the law. Only those men directly responsible. Thus he consulted and obeyed the words of the Lord. *Deuteronomy 24:16*. One can imagine this took some courage because the

conspirators responsible of Joash's demise certainly expanded beyond the 'trigger men'. In other words, many people who disliked the royal family still remained. Amaziah's observing the law stopped short of removing the high places.

2 Chronicles 25:3-4 *Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. 4 But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.*

2 Kings 14: 4 *Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.*

Amaziah hires Israel

Facing a threat from the Edomites, the king's next decision organizes and builds his military. Even with improved conditions, Amaziah feels he needs more troops so he hires one hundred thousand soldiers from Israel. Once again, the old we are all God's children card is played. *I am as thou art, and my people as thy people.* A card that nearly destroyed the entire kingdom of Judah. (See Chapter Compromising Values.)

2 Chronicles 25:5-6 Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield. **6** He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver.

Amaziah repents

Accepting rebuke and correction from God's prophet displays the high point in Amaziah's reign. After learning he made a mistake in hiring Israel, he obeys God and sends Israel home. A wise decision considering God promised him defeat unless he obeyed. Not only does the decision infuriate the mercenaries, it was expensive. Amaziah paid for Israel's services up front. Nevertheless, King Amaziah did the right thing which exhibits obedience, and good sense.

2 Chronicles 25:7 But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim. **8** But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down. **9** And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for

*the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this. **10** Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger. **11** And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. **12** And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces.*

Children of Seir

In the ensuing battle Judah defeats the children of Seir, slaying twenty thousand Edomites. Seir is the country of Edom *Genesis 32:3*. The father of Edom is Esau. In Genesis we learn the patriarchal brothers Jacob and Esau, lived acrimoniously- at best. Now, more than 1,000 years later, as developed nations, Israel and Edom continue their strained and troubled relationship. Executing ten thousand prisoners by throwing them over a cliff demonstrates excessive cruelty, especially against an enemy that God still considers family. Compare Elisha's orders for Syrian captives in a previous battle *2 Kings 6:21-23*.

Genesis 32:3 *And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom*

Deuteronomy 23:7-8 *Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.*

2 Kings 6:21 *And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? 22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? **set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. 23 And he prepared great provision for them:** and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*

Consequence of bad decision

2 Chronicles 25:13 *But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Bethhoron, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.*

When Amaziah accepted the prophet's advice and told Israel's mercenaries to return home, they left extremely angry. Even though Amaziah paid the army one hundred talents of silver, Israel felt as if they had been betrayed. Military pay was fine, but what soldiers really looked forward to was the spoil from battle. So as the soldiers traveled homeward, and knowing Judah's army was busy fighting the Edomites, Israel attacked and plundered Judah's defenseless cities. Killing three thousand men in the process. This outrageous cowardly attack deeply affected Amaziah even turning him away from God. It's a classic case of "no good deed goes unpunished" at least that's the way Amaziah felt. Remember when Amaziah informed the prophet he already paid for Israel's alliance to fight the Edomites. The prophet responds:

2 Chronicles 25:9 *And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.*

No doubt Amaziah expected God to bless him financially. He certainly didn't expect to suffer devastating attacks killing citizens and spoiling Judah's cities. The spiritually immature Amaziah probably felt abandoned (perhaps betrayed) by God. He seems to have adopted the position: If this is my reward for obedience, then I'll not serve the

Lord at all. Admittedly these thoughts are this author's inference, but from this attack till the end of his life, Amaziah is a different man. No more taking advice from God's prophets; in fact, he becomes God's enemy. In reality when believers sin and then repent, yes their fellowship with God is restored. But mistakes have consequences. Israel's anger and ensuing rampage against Judah was not God's fault.

Amaziah bows before false gods

King Amaziah returns from battle victorious, yet he brings the false gods home with him. Turning his back on the Lord, he sets up idols and worships them. God, in righteous anger, sends a prophet who asks the logical question, *Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?*

Compared to his previous encounter with a prophet, the king displays an opposite attitude. Instead of obedience and humility, he displays arrogance and defiance. Basically he rebukes the prophet with, "who asked you to be my counsel? Either shut up or be punished." The prophet realizes Amaziah is committed to his rebellion and pronounces God determines to destroy him.

2 Chronicles 25:14 *Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of*

*the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. **15** Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? **16** And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.*

Parable of the thistle (See also 2 Kings 14: 9-17)

Scripture declaring Amaziah took advice begs the question: from who? In the preceding passage Amaziah shuts down the Lord's prophet, so we know he's not taking any advice from God. The foolish king must be listening to some counselor as backslidden as himself. Amaziah's remarks to Joash king of Israel delivers a threat. *Come, let us see one another in the face*, serves a bold challenge to battle. The king of Israel mocks Amaziah with the 'thistle -cedar' parable.

2 Chronicles 25:17 *Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of*

*Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face. **18** And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah saying, **The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.** Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldst fall, even thou, and Judah with thee? **20** But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.*

Interpreting the parable: Joash likens Amaziah to a thistle, a lowly bush or scrub weed. In contrast the mighty cedar tree refers to Joash, king of Israel; hence Joash belittles his challenger. The thistle requesting the cedar's daughter for a wife probably references the audacious challenge itself. The very idea a thistle could mate with a cedar is ridiculous. Much like a peon little king thinking his family could intermarry with Israel's mighty dynasty. Now what Joash means by the wild beast is more difficult. Likely, in continued mockery, Judah is so inferior to Israel that Joash plans on hiring a second rate Gentile army to defeat Judah.

An unhappy historical interpretation also fits quite well. Remember years earlier Jehoshaphat king of Judah literally requested (and received) the daughter of Ahab king of Israel for the wife of his son. And consequently Jehoram married Athaliah. After the death of her son, Ahaziah, the wicked Queen literally becomes a beast (name of Satan) who crushes the kingdom of Judah by killing all but one of David's seed.

War

Determined to get revenge, Amaziah goes to war with Israel. The battle ends just as the prophet warned, *2 Chronicles 25:14 -16*. Judah loses and Amaziah is captured. Joash brings his royal POW to Jerusalem to witness the plundering of Judah's capital and the temple. Joash removes an untold number of Judah's citizens. About this time Joash dies, and his son Jeroboam takes the throne. Fortunately for Judah, the new king of Israel seems less inclined to pursue a prolonged war.

2 Chronicles 25:21 *So Joash the king of Israel went up; and they saw one another in the face, both he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Bethshemesh, which belongeth to Judah. 22 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent. 23 And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Bethshemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall*

*of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. **24** And he took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obbededom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.*

Amaziah's final sad years

After Judah's devastating defeat, Amaziah remained king (in theory) over a disgruntled and angry kingdom. He never regained the people's confidence and actually fled Jerusalem. He lived exiled in Lachish, a smaller town in remote Judah. Eventually, the conspiracy to punish Amaziah reached Lachish where he was slain.

***2 Chronicles 25: 25** And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. **26** Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? **27** Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. **28** And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.*

***2 Kings 14 18-22** And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the*

*chronicles of the kings of Judah? **19** Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. **20** And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. **21** And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. **22** He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.*

Jehoahaz, Israel #11;

2 Kings 13:1-9

- Israel's eleventh king
- Jehoahaz= Jehovah is taker-hold
- Length of reign: Seventeen years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Jehu
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Joash and Amaziah kings of Judah,
- Texts 2 Kings 13
- Claim to fame: Prays and moves God to send a saviour

Jehoahaz's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- The Lord sends a saviour
- Israel's refusal to repent
- Death

After Jehu dies, God significantly reduces Israel's size and influence throughout the region. Jehu's son, King Jehoahaz continues the status quo in Israel's procession of evil kings. The ubiquitous sins of Jeroboam's remain. A draining, devastating war with Syria marks his entire seventeen year reign.

2 Kings 13:1-3 *In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah*

Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. 3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

The Lord sends a saviour

***2 Kings 13:4-5** And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.*

An extraordinary passage. An evil king beseeches the Lord and moves him to answer his prayer. The ponderous situation involves God's mercy and judgment simultaneously. Previously God ordained Syria would afflict judgment on Israel, *2 Kings 8:12* yet, because of Jehoahaz's prayer God softens the blow, at least he spreads the punishment over time, seemingly giving Israel every opportunity to repent. As to the Lord giving them a saviour. The saviour remains unnamed, thus he invokes our curiosity. We witness Israel's next king delivers the nation three times from the

rampages of Syria. These military deliverances connect with a visit to Elisha, (See Chapter Jehoash) although scripture does not declaratively identify the saviour, King Jehoash is a good guess.

2 Kings 13: 25 *And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.*

Israel's refusal to repent

In spite of God's mercy, Israel remains true to rebellion. Alas, never does Israel remove themselves from the sins of Jeroboam. Never do they abandon the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan. Their capital city Samaria, keeps its central grove. As usual, Israel mocks God's mercy and refuses to obey his laws. King Jehoahaz dies leaving the kingdom in the same spiritual mess he found it.

2 Kings 13:6 *Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)* **7** *Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.* **8**

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoash, (Joash) Israel #12

- Israel's twelfth king
- Jehoash or Joash= Jehovah hath founded
- Length of reign: Sixteen years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Jehoahaz
- Prophets: Elisha
- Ruled during the reign of Joash and Amaziah kings of Judah.
- Claim to fame: Meets with dying Elisha; Delivers Israel three times
- Texts 2 Kings 13:9-13- 2 Kings 14

Jehoash's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Jehoash visits the terminally ill Prophet Elisha
- The miracle of Elisha's bones
- Deliverance from the Syrians
- Death of Jehoash King of Israel

Jehoash rules Israel for sixteen years. Like his fathers before him he commits to the sins of Jeroboam. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam; Alternative Religion) Once again two kings with the same name rule at the same time: Joash in Israel and Joash in Judah. (*See 2 Kings 1:17 for Jehoram and Jehoram*) No these are not titles of future law firms in New York. They are the actual names of

Jewish kings ruling Israel and Judah in the complex narrative of Israel's history. Since Judah's King Joash is ruling in his thirty-seventh year, the confusing same name business continues for three years (*2 Chronicles 24:1*) Thus it behooves Bible students to read carefully lest we incorrectly attribute actions to the wrong king. Observe also that scripture sometimes spells Jehoash as Joash. Next the king of Israel rules parallel Amaziah King of Judah for his remaining years in office. Although the passage summarizes King Jehoash's bio quickly, it does not end with verse thirteen. The Bible continues the narrative by presenting Jehoash's visit to terminally ill Elisha.

Ascends the throne

***2 Kings 13:9-12** And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead. **10** In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years. **11** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein. **12** And the rest of the acts of **Joash**, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? **13** And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his*

throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Jehoash visits the terminally ill Prophet Elisha

Jehoash's final encounter with Elisha demonstrates important symbolism. Shooting the arrow with the prophet's hands on the king's hands gives profound meaning to the metaphor. The arrow shot toward the east represents the direction of the coming battle. It symbolizes the straight, fast, and true deliverance from Israel's constant enemy, Syria. Next Elisha instructs Joash to take a handful of arrows and strike them upon the ground. This to represent Israel's zeal and commitment to totally defeating their great enemy. Joash obeys but strikes the ground only three times, manifesting a lack of effort toward obliterating Syria. The King's anemic response infuriates Elisha; hence explains his pronouncement that Syria suffers less than total defeat. Instead Israel prevails only in three battles. Syria remains Israel's constant enemy- throughout the centuries till this very day!

2 Kings 13:14 *Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. 15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. 16 And he said to the*

*king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. **17** And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. **18** And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. **19** And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.*

The whole episode presents a remarkable picture indeed. Clearly King Joash loves Prophet Elisha. His passionate address "*father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*" *2 Kings 13:14*, occurs only twice in the Bible. This exact expression used by Elisha as he witnessed the rapture of Elijah, *2 Kings 2:12*. The endearing label reveals deep affection and respect, recognizing not only the prophet's authority, but his very presence being the protection of Israel.

Unfortunately, Joash's affection never translates into repentance or love for God. Observe how a person can deeply respect a messenger delivering God's words, yet never respects God. This equates with a person believing the Bible,

while never taking the step toward believing in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Thought to ponder

King Joash's New Testament parallel is Herod the tetrarch. Consider Herod's relationship with John the Baptist. Herod feared John the Baptist, and recognized his holiness. He even looked forward to listening to John's sermons. But when it came to doing what John said regarding repentance and/or serving the Lord, Herod never put his affections into practice. In fact, when Herod met Jesus, he mocked and taunted the Lord with huge disrespect. Thus we learn men like Herod and King Joash, do not fear God. Rather they fear men. As great as John the Baptist and Prophet Elisha were- they were only men. Fearing or worshiping men gets a person nowhere but hell. (See also Israel's King Jehoram)

Romans 3:18 *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

Mark 6:20 *For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

Luke 23:11 *And Herod with his men of war set him (Jesus) at nought, and mocked him, and*

arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

The miracle of Elisha's bones

2 Kings 13: 20 *And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. 21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.*

Elisha's miracles continue even after his death. *At the coming in of the year* is in spring around the time of Passover, *Exodus 12:2, 18; Leviticus 23:5*. An anonymous group of men are burying a man. Apparently alarmed by invading Moabites, they abruptly cast (dropped or tossed) a dead body into Elisha's sepulchre wherein the dead body touched Elisha's bones and came back to life. Now why they were burying the man in Elisha's tomb is a good question. Likely the famous prophet's grave would be a known location. Perhaps they hoped for such a miracle? Yet the accounting seems to suggest an accidental touching. Whatever the case, the miracle happened.

The passage below reminds readers Syria warred against Israel all the years of King

Jehoahaz, largely as an instrument of punishment for Israel's constant idolatry. Yet God remembers his promises to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and delays judgment. King Joash serves as Israel's deliverer fulfilling Elisha's prophecy. *2 Kings 13:5 compare also 2 Kings 13:9*

2 Kings 13: 22 *But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 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. 24 So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.*

Joash defeats Amaziah *2nd Kings 14:1-20*
See King Judah's King Amaziah; (Chapter Parable of the Thistle) *also 2 Chronicles 25:17*

Death of Jehoash King of Israel

2 Kings 14:15 *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of*

*Israel? **16** And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead. **17** And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.*

Jeroboam the 2nd Israel #13

- Israel's thirteenth king, great grandson to Jehu
- Jeroboam= Let the people contend
- Length of reign: Forty-one years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Joash (Jehoash)
- Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Jonah
- Ruled during the reign of kings of Judah: Amaziah and Uzziah
- Claim to fame: Israel's longest ruling king, 13th King, Beginning of the end
- Texts: 2 Kings 14:23-29; Book of Amos

Jeroboam 2nd Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Bethel's evokes God's anger
- Prophet Amos

Jeroboam is the thirteenth king of Israel, the third son in the dynasty of Jehu. (King Jehu-Jehoahaz-Jehoash-Jeroboam 2nd) When Jeroboam takes the throne, Amaziah king of Judah still has a few years to live. Ruling forty-one years, Jeroboam is the longest reigning of Israel's kings. In spite of his long rule, Kings records very little concerning Jeroboam 2nd. The Book of Amos adds much depth and understanding to the period. For most his reign, King Uzziah rules Judah. Coinciding prophets include Amos, Hosea, and Jonah.

Prophet Amos interacts extensively with Israel in the days of Jeroboam 2nd; therefore, Bible students should read carefully the prophet's description of the northern kingdom. Truly, the reign of Jeroboam 2nd is the beginning of the end for the northern kingdom. Within fifty years of Jeroboam's death, the northern kingdom will cease to exist as God scatters his disobedient people throughout the region.

2 Kings 14:23-29 *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years. 24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher. 26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. 27 And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. 28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the*

*chronicles of the kings of Israel? **29** And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.*

Militarily, King Jeroboam ruled with competence and distinction. Leading Israel's armies he regains some of the territories lost under previous kings. Although the Lord begins to *cut Israel short* *2 Kings 10:32*, God extends mercy and pleads with Israel to repent and turn to him. Sad to say, the regained territories and delayed judgment go unappreciated.

Spiritually, Jeroboam 2nd is a miserable leader. He even elevates the false gods in Bethel, by refurbishing its temple and establishing the priest, Amaziah, as a primary counselor to his throne. Scripture designates Bethel as the *king's chapel and the king's court*, an illuminating, albeit damning declaration.

Amos 7:13 *But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court*

Reading Amos one senses God's frustration, grief, and anger toward his favored nation. (*Deuteronomy 4:7; 2 Samuel 7:23; Romans 11:26-27*) Amos describes the moral conditions of the day. Throughout the book of Amos, God expounds Israel's increasing and grievous sins. God lays out

indictments against his people much like a judge reads charges against an accused man.

God reasons with Israel juxtaposing his great blessings and mighty works with their constant sinful rebellious acts. Not one king from the northern kingdom served the Lord with any consistency. Not one king acknowledges the special relationship God bestows upon them. They mock God's laws and shut out his words by silencing the Lord's prophets. While Bethel serves as the epicenter for false religion, a culture of sin and rebellion manifests throughout the land. Disregarding and even abusing the poor, making money at the expense of foregoing righteousness, and sexual immorality are normal behaviors.

Amos 3:1-2 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, **2** You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Amos 2:6-8 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they **sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; 7** That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: **8**

And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

Amos 2:9-13 *Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. **10** Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. **11** And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD. **12** But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not. **13** Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.*

Bethel's evokes God's anger

Amos 3:13-15 *Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, **14** That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. **15** And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.*

Amos 4:1-13 Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, **which oppress the poor, which crush the needy**, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. **2** The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. **3** And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the LORD. **4** Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: **5** And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Zachariah, Israel #14

- Israel's fourteenth king
- Zachariah= Remembered of Jehovah
- Length of reign: Six months
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Jeroboam 2nd
- Prophets: Hosea, Jonah
- Ruled during the reign of Uzziah King of Judah:
- Claim to fame: Rules six months, Last of Jehu's dynasty, Murdered in a coup by Shallum
- Texts 2 Kings 14:29; 15:8-12

Jeroboam 2nd Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Murdered in a coup

Zachariah continues in the sins of Jeroboam. No noteworthy battles or political upheavals take place, with the obvious exception of the coup which takes his life. Scripture states a conspiracy destroyed him "smote before the people". This seems to be a public assassination. Apparently Zachariah was not highly favored among Israel's citizens.

King Zachariah's evil rule coincides with King Uzziah's thirty-eighth year in Judah. Although Zachariah reigns only six months, it is not a king's

shortest tenure. Zimri ruled only seven days. And King Zachariah's successor (and murderer) rules for only one month. Nevertheless, a good memory aid associates him with kings who rule for less than one year. Consequently, scripture's narrative on Zachariah is short. His six month reign concludes the dynasty of Jehu. Thus fulfilling *2 Kings 10:30* which promises Jehu's children to of the fourth generation will sit on Israel's throne. Jehu's dynasty lasted 102 years: Jehu-Jehoahaz-Joash-Jeroboam 2nd-Zachariah.

Ascends the throne

2 Kings 14:29 *And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.*

2 Kings 15:8-12 *In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*

Murdered in a coup

2 Kings 15:10 *And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. 11* *And the rest of the acts of*

*Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. **12** This was the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.*

Shallum, Israel #15

- Israel's fifteenth king
- Shallum= Requitall, restitution
- Length of reign: One month
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Jabesh
- Prophets: Hosea
- Ruled during the reign of Uzziah King of Judah:
- Claim to fame: Murders King Zachariah, Rules one month, Murdered in coup
- Texts 2 Kings 15

Shallum's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Murdered in a coup

In the thirty-ninth year of King Uzziah, Shallum takes the throne. Shallum leads a conspiracy and revolt against the king of Israel. The military coup culminates with the public murder of Zachariah. Shallum takes the throne by force. While scripture does not declare Shallum an evil king, by assessing his actions we may conclude he fared no better than those who came before him. He rules only for one month before Menahem led a revolt against him. Menahem's coup ends with the murder of Shallum. What goes around comes around.

Like his predecessor, scripture records very little on his tenure. He is one of Israel's three kings who rule less than one year. Zimri rules seven days; Zachariah rules six months.

2 Kings 15:13 *Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. 15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.*

Menahem, Israel #16

- Israel's sixteenth king
- Menahem= Comforter
- Length of reign: Ten years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Gadi
- Prophets: Amos
- Ruled during the reign of Uzziah King of Judah:
- Claim to fame: Murdered King Shallum; Ripped up pregnant women
- Texts 2 Kings 15:14-22; Book of Amos

Menahem's Outline

- Overthrows King Shallum
- Cruel and ruthless
- Buys political alliance
- Death

Before becoming king, Menahem likely served as a military officer to Zachariah. Although the idea is speculation, it seems probable. Whatever his position before becoming king, he rallied an army and avenged Zachariah's murder by overthrowing Shallum. After enduring two incompetent and disliked kings, Israel's government was falling apart. Ruthless and brutal, Menahem held the nation together by suppressing all opposition. Any city that balked at Menahem's

authority suffered horrible consequences. The wily evil king reigned for a decade.

Overthrows King Shallum

2 Kings 15:14-18 *For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. 15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 16 Then Menahem smote Tiphseh, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up. 17 In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. 18 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*

Cruel and ruthless

Ripping up women with child is terrible as it sounds, an act of overt terrorism inflicted upon the nation's most innocent and vulnerable population. The region bearing King Menahem's wrath was Tirzah, a location outside Shechem. Historically, before Omri built Samaria, Tirzah served as the

northern kingdom's capital, providing royal residence for Jeroboam 1st, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, and Zimri. *1 Kings 14:17, 16:6*. With the kingdom in its present distress, Menahem wanted no resurgence from a previous capital challenging his authority. Therefore he made horrific and cruel examples of any rebellion. In allegiance to the sins of Jeroboam, King Menahem guided the nation in established idolatry and immorality.

Buys political alliance

2 Kings 15:19-22 *And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. 20 And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. 21 And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.*

An Assyrian invasion provoked Menahem to buy off the enemy through taxing the rich a thousand talents of silver, *Ecclesiastes 10:19*. And then enlisted the Assyrians to strengthen his own monarchy. Literally enlisting Israel's enemy to force his own citizens to accept him as king. Thus King

Menahem ruled Israel with an iron fist. His death left the monarchy stable enough to seat his son, Pekahiah on the throne.

Notes

Amos 1:13 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.

Pekahiah, Israel #17

- Israel's seventeenth king
- Pekahiah=Opening of Jah
- Length of reign: Two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father: Menahem
- Prophets: Amos, Hosea
- Ruled during the reign of: Azariah (Uzziah) king of Judah
- Claim to fame: Murdered in his own palace
- Texts 2 Kings 15:22-36

Pekahiah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Murdered in his palace

Upon King Menahem's death, his son, Pekahiah, ascends the throne. The Menahem dynasty does not last long. Reigning only two years, King Pekahiah is victim of a conspiracy. One of Pekahiah's own military captains organized a coup and murders him in his own palace. Among Israel's military, loyalty to their king has a dismal record. King Pekahiah's short tenure showed nothing remarkable other than continuing in the sins of Jeroboam and earning the familiar assessment "*he did that which was evil*".

2 Kings 15:22-36 *And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. **23** In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years. **24** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **25** But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. **26** And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.*

Pekah, Israel #18

- Israel's eighteenth king
- Pekah= Opening
- Length of reign: Twenty years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Remaliah
- Prophets: Amos
- Ruled during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz kings of Judah
- Claim to fame: Murdered King Pekahiah; Israel's scattering begins, Murdered by Hoshea
- Texts 2 Kings 15:25-32

Pekah's Outline

- Takes the throne
- Murdered

Pekah takes the throne, quite literally, by murdering King Pekahiah. It's the last year Uzziah rules in Judah. As usual, the new King of Israel honors the sins of Jeroboam. He rules for twenty years and witness city after city, tribe after tribe, conquered by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria; the people taken captive to Assyria. The end for the northern kingdom well under way. Conspiracy befalls the former conspirator and *Hoshea the son of Elah murders King Pekah.*

2 Kings 15:25-32 *But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. 26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. 28 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. 30 And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. 31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.*

Hoshea, Israel #19

2 kings 17

- Israel's nineteenth king
- Hoshea= To save
- Length of reign: Nine years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Father's name: Elah
- Prophets: Amos
- Ruled during the reign of kings of Judah Ahaz, Hezekiah
- Claim to fame: Israel's last king. Israel's scattered throughout Assyria
- Texts: 2 Kings 17

Hoshea's Outline

- Takes the throne
- Servant to the enemy
- Israel carried away
- Tragic Commentary
- God's indictments against Israel
- Gentiles inhabit Israel

The northern kingdom's last king, Hoshea, gains Israel's throne in the usual manner by murdering the sitting king. In his case Hoshea kills King Pekah. King Hoshea rules Israel as a subordinate puppet king for Shalmaneser king of Assyria. His term of monarchy seems to start and stop at the whim of Shalmaneser. His nine year

reign does not compute in a straight line. He spends three years in prison and witnesses Israel's total demise. (See Chronology Chapter Notes)

Taken with a historical grain of salt, *2 Kings 17:2* provides a near compliment for a king of Israel. Not that King Hoshea was good, but God says he was simply less evil than those who came before him.

2 Kings 17:1-2 *In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.*

Servant to the enemy

Basically, King Hoshea served as subordinate king to his enemy, Shalmaneser king of Assyria. What little authority he retained, he secured only by bribes and gifts. After learning Hoshea communicated with Egypt, Shalmaneser suspected a conspiracy and threw Hoshea into prison. When it comes to rulers trusting each other in the Middle East, nothing ever changes. Even in modern times. Consider this complaint from a frustrated (anonymous) Middle Eastern military official.

"Honestly, with all this conspiracy and lying how does an aspiring military officer hope to murder the king?"

2 Kings 17: 3 *Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. 4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.*

Israel carried away

Assyria waged war defeating Israel and taking the people captive, relocating them into Assyrian cities. *and carried Israel away*, thus records God's awful judgment. God removes the northern kingdom from their land. Not to return until God restores them again during the Tribulation and Millennium. (See Part Two Chapters Diaspora; Jews Return to the Land Unconverted) Restoration prophecies aside, it's important to remember centuries earlier God retained all twelve tribes within Judah at the same time the nation divided. A remnant from each tribe left their inheritance and moved into Judah's jurisdiction, (See Chapter *Remnant: Judah Preserves All Twelve Tribes*)

2 Kings 17: 5-6 *Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed*

them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Tragic Commentary

The remainder of chapter seventeen ranks among the most tragic passages in the entire Bible. God provides summary and explanation for the plight of his people. Much like Steven's sermon in *Acts 7*, the chapter articulates a heart wrenching review, clearly putting centuries of history into context. Compare also God's concluding remarks on Judah's captivity, *2 Chronicles 36:10-23* (See Chapter Zedekiah)

2 Kings 17:7 *For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. 10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: 11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before*

them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: 12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. **13** Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. **14** Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. **15** And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

God's indictments against Israel

Again and again throughout Kings, we see God referencing the calves set up by Jeroboam. But the Israelites added to their sins by worshipping Baal and astrology. Child sacrifice became common; they deliberately strayed further and further away from God until there was no hope.

2 Kings 17:16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, **even two calves**, and made

*a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. **17** And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. **18** Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.*

Judgement documented

Observe Northern kingdom Jews never departed from the alternative religion established by Jeroboam. Over two hundred years earlier, King Jeroboam set up the two golden calves in Bethel and Dan as a mock substitute to true worship. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam; Alternative Religion) These calves never taken down, still being worshiped when the Assyrians took Israel away.

2 Kings 17:19** Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. **20** And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. **21** For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. **22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of

Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

Gentiles inhabit Israel

A common practice for a conquering nation replaces its own people in the cities of their defeated enemies. Thus Assyria placed persons from their own lands in the cities of Samaria. At the same time, the Israelite captives relocated into Assyria. The goal of this forced immigration and emigration was to absorb the enemy within a generation. And to expand their own territories. But the practice encountered supernatural resistance.

God defended his land from Gentiles, he sent lions among the people. No doubt this terrified the new residents living in Israel. In an attempt to appease God, they placed a Jewish priest in Israel to teach the people how to worship the true Lord. An amazing acknowledgment of the true God, by the Assyrians. However, the Gentile immigrants proved no better than the Jews. They soon abandoned any knowledge of the true God, and dedicated all Israel's high places to various pagan gods, even restoring human sacrifice.

2 Kings 17:24-31 *And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. **25** And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them. **26** Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. **27** Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. **28** Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. **29** Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. **30** And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, **31** And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to*

Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

2 Kings 17:32 *So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.*

God sums up the moral condition of Israel in much the same way, he concluded the Book of Judges. Every man served their own gods, as everyman did that which was right in his own eyes. The sins of Jeroboam never left. Including making the lowest of society their leaders and clergy. The disturbing statement, *They feared the LORD, and served their own gods*, merits careful consideration. To fear God while continuing to serve false gods requires a powerful spiritual resistance. Lest we judge to quickly, methinks this is a common human disorder. People today are not so far away from this condition. Knowing the truth does not persuade the world. Believing in God is one thing. Doing what God says is quite another. Consider these New Testament parallels:

James 2:19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

Romans 1:32 *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

2 Timothy 3:4-5 *Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

2 Kings 17:34 *Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; 35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: 36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. 39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. 40 **Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former***

manner. 41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

Chapter Notes

Chronology problems: Hoshea's monarchy starts and stops at the whim of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. He spends three years in prison. His nine year reign does not compute in a straight line. He begins to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham, probably for only a month or two (See Chapter Jotham.) He resumes another term in office during the twelfth year of Ahaz. And finally nears conclusion early in the reign Hezekiah. Ahaz rules for 16 years; therefore, in the fifth year of Hezekiah Israel suffers the final wave of captivity from Assyria.

2 Kings 15:30 *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.*

2 Kings 17:1-2 *In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.*

2 Kings 17: 4 *And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers*

to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

2 Kings 18:1 *Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.*

Uzziah (Azariah) Judah #9

2 Chronicles 26

- Judah's ninth king
- Uzziah= My strength is Jehovah
- Length of reign: Fifty-two years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Amaziah
- Mother: Jecholiah
- Prophets: Isaiah, Amos
- Ruled during the reign of Jeroboam the 2nd, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah-kings of Israel.
- Age at death: Sixty-eight
- Claim to fame: Sixteen years old; Built and restores Eloth; Loved husbandry; Usurped the priesthood; God struck him with leprosy.
- Texts: *2 Kings 15:1-8 ; 2 Chronicles 26*

Uzziah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Zechariah
- Military campaigns
- Weapons of war
- But when he was strong-
- Leprosy -Uzziah's last years

After King Amaziah's murder, the people made his sixteen year old son, Uzziah king. Becoming king at age sixteen, makes Uzziah Judah's second child monarch: Joash at age seven was the first *2 Chronicles 24:1*. Uzziah rules for fifty-two years, the longest tenure for any king thus far. Only Manasseh rules longer with fifty-five years. Scripture also identifies Uzziah by a second name, Azariah.

King Uzziah is a tragic figure. King Uzziah served the Lord and governed wisely. He strengthened the kingdom militarily and modernized cities. But after forty-eight years of being king, Uzziah decided he would also be a priest. For usurping the priesthood, the Lord punished him with leprosy. Prophets Amos, and Zechariah correlate King Uzziah's tenure with a great earthquake. (See Chapter notes)

God's official assessment of Uzziah *he did that which was right according to all that his father Amaziah did*. The statement provides only measured praise, because the Lord gave his father mixed reviews. Remember Amaziah, served the Lord but not with a perfect heart, *2 Chronicles 25:2*. Neither did King Uzziah stop the forbidden sacrifices in the high places, *2 Kings 15:3-4*. To Uzziah's credit, he never succumbed to idolatry. He also accepted rebuke from God. Up until his rebellion in the temple, he was a very good king.

Ascends the throne

Scripture citing Uzziah builds and restores the city Elath, and then immediately announces his death is an interesting narrative. It seems more like a conclusion rather than an introduction. Elath, an extremely important port city that often changed hands ranks as Uzziah's greatest military achievement. Elath is located on the Red Sea: *Deuteronomy 2:8 1kings 9:26, 2 Chronicles 8:17.* Today the city is identified as Aqaba-and remains a contentious and strategic waterway.

2 Chronicles 26:1-4 *Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. 2 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. 3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.*

2 Kings 15:1-4 *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. 2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;*

4 Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

Zechariah

Uzziah's best years happen when he's under the influence of a counselor and teacher named Zechariah (not the prophet who wrote the book Zechariah). God gave Zechariah wisdom in understanding visions of God, and he appears to have positive influence on the king. When Uzziah seeks the Lord, he prospers and Judah does well.

2 Chronicles 26:5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

Military campaigns

King Uzziah performs proficiently as a warrior king, defeating Judah's enemies on every front. His military leadership and ability to delegate authority is superb. Not only does Uzziah defeat his enemies, he rebuilds the land and strengthens the nation everywhere he goes. Building fortifications, digging wells, and cultivating the land to raise cattle. King Uzziah loved husbandry (farming, gardening) and improves land for crops and beauty. His fame and conquest reached to Egypt.

2 Chronicles 26:6-10 *And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. 7 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. 8 And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly. 9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.*

Weapons of war

King Uzziah's military developed machines capable of shooting arrows and hurling enormous stones; accordingly the Jews invent the catapult. Man's genius to invent ever better ways to kill one another has a long history. Military strength made Uzziah famous. But success on the battlefield precipitated King Uzziah's demise. Confidence in his own abilities overtook him, and pride went before destruction.

2 Chronicles 26:11-15 *Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war*

*by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. **12** The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred. **13** And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. **14** And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. **15** And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.*

But when he was strong

Not content with being king, Uzziah coveted the priesthood. Forbidden by law, he did it anyway. King Uzziah's rebellion met with immediate rebuke from Levite priests. The chief priest, Azariah and eighty fellow priests defied Uzziah in defense of God's law. The Lord judged straightaway, striking Uzziah with leprosy until the day of his death. No doubt the scandal devastated Judah's populace. King Uzziah was a competent and beloved king; his actions disappointed a lot of people. The only other king to usurp the priesthood was King

Saul, the very first king of united Israel. (See Chapter Notes)

2 Chronicles 26:16-20 *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. **17** And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: **18** And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. **19** Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. **20** And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.*

Leprosy -Uzziah's last years

The king lived with leprosy four years. Uzziah's son, Jotham, stepped in as acting king immediately, and when Uzziah died he was officially

declared king. Again Judah has two kings alive at the same time. (See Chapter Jotham)

Banished from his royal palace, Uzziah spent those anguishing last years in an isolated dwelling called a several house. The term several house appears only twice in the Bible, and both passages concern Uzziah, *2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chronicles 26:21*. Persons with leprosy lived severed (cut off) from mainstream society. Even after death, Uzziah's body was interned in a segregated burial field cut off from the traditional tombs of monarchs. *2 Chronicles 26:23*. Over confidence and hubris destroyed Uzziah. God's proverb analyzes and provides the ultimate diagnosis.

Proverbs 16:18 *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

2 Chronicles 26: 21-23 *And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. 22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. 23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.*

2 Kings 15:5 *And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.*

Leviticus 13:45-46 *And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. 46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.*

Chapter Notes

Understanding leprosy as a type of sin (See Chapter Naaman the Leper)

King Saul: The very first king over Israel's United Kingdom forfeited his dynasty by acting as a priest. While Saul performed his offering on a battlefield, the episode cost him dearly. And led to God's appointment of King David. Bible students should compare these two acts of royal rebellion. See Book of 1st Samuel, especially chapter thirteen. God takes the laws of priesthood very seriously.

1 Samuel 13:10-14 *And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. 11*

*And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; **12** Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. **13** And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. **14** But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.*

The Earthquake

The earthquake references are interesting. Zechariah 14 deals with Tribulation and moves into the Millennium, hence God establishes a correlation. Compare to Revelation 16:18-21. Integral to the texts provide information on the plague God inflicts upon the man and beasts. The Tribulation plague is probably leprosy.

Zechariah 14:5 *And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee,*

like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Zechariah 14:12 *And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.*

Revelation 16:2 *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

Amos 1:1 *The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.*

Revelation 16:18-21 *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. **19** And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to*

*give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

Revelation 11:13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

Jotham Judah #10

- Judah's tenth king
- Jotham: Jehovah is perfect
- Length of reign: Sixteen years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Uzziah
- Mother: Jerusha
- Prophets: Isaiah
- Ruled during kings of Israel Pekah, Hoshea
- Age at death: Forty-one
- Claim to fame: Rules as a judge four years, Prepares to serve the Lord, Fails to remove high places
- Texts: 2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27

Jotham's Outline

- Begins to rule
- Ascends the throne
- Building projects
- Prepares to serve God

Although King Uzziah still lives, leprosy laws forbid him from performing as king. Jotham takes over as acting king. (Not the first time when two kings are recorded in office at the same time.) Jotham proves to be a good king and emulates the positive behaviors of his father. However, he is

unsuccessful at ridding the high places in Jerusalem and the people still disregarded the legal manner for sacrifice, hence scripture comments the people did yet corruptly *2 chronicles 27:2*. King Jotham commits to numerous building projects and leaves his architectural mark throughout Judah. Overall a successful king, Jotham dies when he's forty-one years old.

Begins to rule- chronicling issues

Considering *2 Kings 15:30* declares Hoshea reigned in the twentieth year of Jotham. While *2 Chronicles 27:1* says Jotham rules sixteen years in Jerusalem. But how can anything happen in Jotham's twentieth year, when he only rules sixteen years?

The answer: King Uzziah's defiant behavior in the temple took place in his forty-eighth year. Although Uzziah was not dead, leprosy disqualified him from finishing his term- so his son takes over the throne. Observe Jotham was over the king's house and judged the land. Exactly four years later Uzziah dies and Jotham officially succeeds the monarchy. Therefore: Joash begins to rule when he is twenty-one years old. At twenty-five years old, his father dies and Jotham is officially sworn in as king. He rules another sixteen years in Jerusalem and dies at age forty-one.

2 Kings 15:30 *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the **twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.***

2 Chronicles 26: 21 *And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: **and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.***

2 Chronicles 26:23 *So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.*

Ascends the throne

2 Chronicles 27:1-9 *Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. **2** And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly.*

Jotham repairs the Lord's House and expands building projects

Much like his father, Jotham demonstrates great skills in building and architecture. He makes repairs to the established landmarks in Judah and builds new cities and castles. Retaking territories from the Ammonites, Jotham puts a tax upon them. During King Jotham's reign, Judah expands and increases in strength.

2 Chronicles 27:3 He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much. ***4*** Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. ***5*** He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year, and the third.

Prepares to serve God

Christians find worthy spiritual application in *2 Chronicles 27:6*, good memory verse. Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord. Successful Christian living can be traced to preparation. Our ways should be predicated and established by prayer, Bible study, and commitment before we act. Ignoring spiritual preparation, prepares for disappointment and failure. Passage can be used with *Ephesians 6:13-*

18, putting on the whole armor of God. King Jotham's spiritual foundation was rock solid.

2 Chronicles 27:6 *So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.*

Proverbs 24:27 *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.*

Ephesians 6:13-18 *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Ahaz; Judah #11

2 Chronicles 28

- Judah's eleventh king
- Name meaning: Possessor
- Length of reign: Sixteen years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jotham
- Prophets: Oded, Isaiah
- Ruled during the reign of Pekah, king of Israel.
- Age at death: Thirty-six
- Claim to fame: Receives virgin birth prophecy *Isaiah 7:10-15*, Human sacrifice. Declared king of Israel
- Texts: 2 Kings 16 ; 2 Chronicles 28, Isaiah 7

Ahaz's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Human sacrifice
- God reacts to Judah's sin
- Oded the prophet
- Ahaz encounters Prophet Isaiah
- Virgin birth prophecy
- More trouble for Ahaz
- Ahaz king of Israel?
- Covets Damascus' altar

- Ahaz's death

At twenty years old Ahaz receives the crown. Almost immediately the young king proves to be the most satanic monarch thus far in Judah's history. Following the kings of Israel he makes images for Baalim. Worst of all he institutes human sacrifice at the royal level. King Ahaz does everything he can to turn Judah away from God. The nation is plagued with wars and defeats his entire tenure. Ruling for sixteen years, Ahaz dies at thirty-six years old. Despised by Judah's citizenry, they refuse to bury him in the sepulchres of the kings.

Ascends the throne

2 Chronicles 28:1-4 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father: **2** For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. **3 Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.** **4** He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

Human Sacrifice

By implementing human sacrifice in Judah, Ahaz takes rebellion and idolatry to its most outrageous level. Although heathen nations surrounding Jerusalem practiced human sacrifice, the Jews in Judah did not. King Ahaz instituted the abomination into the state's religion. Cults worshipping Molech and Baal included child sacrifice. Every time scripture discusses human sacrifice it is always the murder of children. Tribal people, no matter how depraved, seem to recognize the innocence of children. Not only do children represent humanity's most vulnerable and pure, sacrificing a child exhibits great loss to the society for sake of their god. Therefore it provides the ultimate proof of their devotion. This helps explain the depraved religious logic of child sacrifice, be those murders in antiquity or modern times. God declares abhorrence to the murders:

Leviticus 18:21 *And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to **Molech**, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.*

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, **11** Or a charmer, or a*

consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Leviticus 20:2-3 *Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, **that giveth any of his seed unto Molech**; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. **3** And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because **he hath given of his seed unto Molech**, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.*

Molech, Hinnom, Tophet

Molech is a false god worshipped by giants and peoples influenced by giants. Molech demanded child sacrifice. When God speaks about Molech, he seems to be speaking about an actual person as opposed to just an idol.

Consider also Hinnom. A mysterious character mentioned as the father of the person named for the valley of the giants. **The valley is not called after Hinnom, but after his giant son.** The valley remains a focal point for the horrible giant rituals of child sacrifice. The name Hinnom is in the Bible thirteen times. Hinnom interpreted means "*to make self-drowsy: behold them*". In theory Hinnom could be one of the sons of God in Genesis 6.

Another name associated with Hinnom is **Tophet**. Indeed, Tophet is the high place or worship center inside the valley of the son of Hinnom. Tophet was the actual place where they slaughtered children. From *Isaiah 30:33*, we learn Tophet is an ancient king whom God meets in judgment. Tophet interpreted means "*spitting: object of contempt*".

Jeremiah 32:35 *And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.*

Genesis 6:4 *There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.*

Joshua 18:16 *And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel,*

2 Chronicles 33:6 *And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of*

the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Jeremiah 7:31-33 And they have built the ***high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom,*** to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. ***32*** Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. ***33*** And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

Isaiah 30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

(Further study on this topic see Angels, Giants, and Things under the Earth)

God reacts to Judah's sin

God reacted quickly to King Ahaz's murderous regime. Judah's citizens' willingness to

participate in the perverse religious slaughter and idolatry made them culpable as well. God's punished Judah severely. God declares, *because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.* *2 Chronicles 28: 6.*

2 Chronicles 28: 5-8 *Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. 6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king. 8 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.*

Syria attacked Judah, carrying away captive great numbers of its citizens. Simultaneously, God used Israel to punish Ahaz; consequently Judah suffered one of its largest battlefield losses in history, 120,000 men fell in one day. Among those killed was King Ahaz's own son, and Judah's top rulers. In addition, they lost another 200,000 men women and children taken as slaves to Israel. The

kingdom also lost vast amounts of treasure and spoil to Samaria.

Oded the prophet

Although God used Judah's enemies as instruments of judgment, Israel overplays the opportunity. Defeating Judah on the battlefield was one thing, but taking fellow Jews as slaves was quite another. God sends the Prophet Oded and commands them to release the captives immediately or face the wrath of God themselves. Israel commits plenty of its own sins for which to answer.

Key leaders in Israel exhibit a rare attitude of fearing God and common sense, and they convince their countrymen to obey the Lord. For the people to openly admit Israel's own sins displays an exceptional moment indeed. *2 Chronicles 28: 12-13*. Wisely, Israel obeys Oded and follows the leadership of certain leaders from the tribe of Ephraim, freeing the captives and providing them safe passage to Jericho.

2 Chronicles 28: 9-15 *But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven. **10***

*And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God? **11** Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you. **12** Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, **13** And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel. **14** So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. **15** And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.*

Ahaz encounters Prophet Isaiah

Early in King Ahaz's rule, Syria and Israel joined forces and threatened to conquer Judah. As

the war dragged on feelings of hopelessness gripped the nation. God sent Prophet Isaiah to meet with Ahaz. Isaiah addresses the people's fear and assures them God intends on preserving Judah, for the time being anyway. No doubt the news set King Ahaz at ease. Isaiah informs him within sixty-five years God destroys Ephraim. Consequently, the northern kingdom will no longer even exist.

But the message does not stay comforting and Isaiah suddenly gets personal. *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* An accusing statement with immediate application for King Ahaz, Judah, and all human beings. Too crudely paraphrase the text, if anyone does not believe God's words, that person is going nowhere-but down.

Most importantly, the passage precedes what is arguably one of the most significant prophecies in the entire Bible. God promises a virgin will conceive and birth a son; the Son will be God himself. This of course fulfills when Mary conceived via God the Holy Ghost- and gave birth to God the Son, Jesus Christ. *Luke 1:26-37.* Bible prophecies concerning Jesus Christ are not hard to understand, they are hard to believe. Hence, *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* Applicable to all mankind.

Isaiah 7:1-9 *And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah,*

king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. **2** And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. **3** Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; **4** And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. **5** Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, **6** Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: **7** Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. **8** For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. **9** And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. **If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.**

Virgin birth prophecy

(See also Chapter Virgin Birth necessary for Messiah)

When Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask God for a sign, the king's pretended respect toward the Lord reeks hypocrisy. His response *I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD* - apparently intends to intimidate Isaiah. King Ahaz disregards Isaiah's authority and his answer blatantly disobeys God's command. Isaiah interprets Ahaz's disobedience correctly. It is one thing to disobey men, but quite another to mock God. Next Prophet Isaiah delivers the greatest promise in the word of God. Ironically, Judah receives the prophecy at the kingdom's lowest moral condition in history.

Isaiah 7:10-15 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, **11** Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. **12** But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. **13** And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? **14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. **15** Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. **16** For before the child shall know to refuse the evil,

***and choose the good, the land that thou
abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.***

Immanuel means God with us. Notice the Lord gives the sign to Judah and Israel. God will live among the Jews in human form, born of a virgin woman. Observe God does not say when the virgin conceives, but the prophecy does specify before the Messiah is old enough to know *to refuse the evil, and choose the good* (which basically means that before Messiah is an adult) and the land of Israel will be forsaken of kings. The prophecy fulfills nearly 700 years later at a time when Judah and Israel are totally subjugated by Gentile powers, and consequently, neither do they have kings.

Why Ahaz, of all people, hears this prophecy before anyone else is ponderous indeed. The contrast between King Ahaz sacrificing his son *to devils 2 Kings 16:3*, and God giving his only begotten Son to pay for the sins of the whole human race couldn't be more stark-*1 John 2:2*. With his constant rebellion, and child sacrifice, Ahaz is the worst king to ever rule Judah or Israel (so far). While the prophesized child born of a virgin is heaven's Lord of lords, and manifestly Israel and Judah's King of kings.

Judgment promised

Although Syria's and Israel's alliance to attack Judah comes to nothing, eventually Judah remained in big trouble. God promises to send Assyrian armies to devastate both Judah and Israel. Judah's wealth and comfortable life styles will soon be gone. In just a few years Assyria completely conquers Israel while her soldiers and hired mercenaries plague the land of Judah like swarms of flies and bees.

Isaiah 7:17 *The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. 18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. 19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes. 20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; 22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. 23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand*

*silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns. **24** With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns. **25** And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.*

More trouble for Ahaz

New problems down south plague Ahaz; Edomites and the Philistines attacked numerous cities and take away even more captives. In spite of all the nation's woes, they still do not repent or forsake their idols. King Ahaz continues making wrong choices and heads in the wrong spiritual direction. He seizes money from the house of the Lord to try and buy mercenary services from Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, but the plan failed. By this time Assyria does exactly what it wants with Israel and Judah.

2 Chronicles 28:16-21** At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. **17** For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. **18** The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there. **19 For the LORD

brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD. 20 *And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. 21* *For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.*

Ahaz king of Israel?

2 Chronicles 28:19 needs be addressed at some length. This is the second time scripture calls a king of Judah the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat briefly wore the title, *2 Chronicles 21:2*, however Jehoshaphat is far less problematic than Ahaz. King Jehoshaphat actually aligned with Israel politically, militarily, and through royal marriage. After Ahab's death, Jehoshaphat stepped in as king for both kingdoms. (See Chapter on Jehoshaphat) But in the case of Ahaz, Judah and Israel are bitter enemies entangled in war. The only alliance between the two kingdoms is their idolatry and evil religious practices. The common denominator is Israel's temporary absence of a king.

Israel's King Pekah is one king before Israel's final monarch. Observe Hoshea kills Pekah in the final year of Jotham, but he does not begin his rule until the twelfth year of Ahaz. It's during this time

that God considered Ahaz king of both Judah and Israel.

2 Kings 15:30 *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.*

2 Kings 17:1-2 *In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.*

Hoshea is the next King to reign over Israel (Not Judah). He begins in Ahaz's twelfth year. Now, Pekah was said to have reigned for twenty years (*2 Kings 15:27, 32*) which would have taken him into the third year of Ahaz. This leaves a gap between the two Kings of Israel of nine years. This whole gap is covered by Ahaz, King of Judah, thus making him Israel's interim king via permission of Assyria- if not appointment. (*2 Chronicles 28:19*). Notice scripture declares Ahaz's idolatry ruined all Israel- not just Judah. The ruin of all Israel provides more evidence that one king presides over all 12 tribes.

2 Kings 15:27 *In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.*

2 Kings 16:1-9 *In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.*

2 Chronicles 28:23 *For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. **But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.***

Hoshea kills Pekah and does not begin to reign over the house of Israel for another nine years. Inside that nine year interim Ahaz rules Israel and Judah. The question remains, why does Hoshea wait nine years to take Israel's throne? The answer is that Assyria gives the orders for both kingdoms. Both Ahaz and Hoshea declare themselves servants to the kings of Assyria, Tiglathpileser and his son Shalmaneser.

Since Ahaz willingly submits to Assyria- it is Assyria setting the agenda. With Ahaz a puppet king for Assyria, he orchestrates the necessary steps toward absolute subjugation of the northern kingdom. No doubt when King Ahaz saw no king on Israel's throne, he viewed it as an opportunity to destroy his enemy; therefore he willingly colludes with Assyria to destroy Israel. Ahaz's alignment with Assyria is therefore the ruin of all Israel.

2 Kings 16:7-8 *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up*

2 Kings 17: 3 *Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.*

Covets Damascus' altar

While visiting *Tiglathpileser*, king of Assyria, Ahaz covets an altar in Damascus. Not only does he seek to flatter his boss, by building a similar altar in Jerusalem, it is yet another opportunity to prove his satanic disdain for God. King Ahaz overtly corrupts Jerusalem's temple architecture to satisfy the whims of the King of Assyria.

Ahaz meticulously records the altar's design and sends the blueprints back to Jerusalem. An accomplice to his sacrilege is the priest Urijah, who eagerly builds the new altar to impress Ahaz. Upon seeing the new altar, Ahaz's excitement is uncontained, he actually makes offerings to his false god upon it.

2 Kings 16:10 *And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. **11** And Urijah the priest built*

*an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. **12** And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. **13** And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.*

Corrupts divine layout of Temple

2 Kings 16:14 *And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. **15** And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by. **16** Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. **17** And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. **18** And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and*

*the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria. **19** Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? **20** And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.*

Ahaz's death

***2 Chronicles 28:24-27** And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. **25** And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers. **26** Now the rest of his acts and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. **27** And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.*

Hezekiah; Judah #12

2nd Chronicles 29

- Judah's twelfth king
- Name meaning= Strengthened of Jehovah
- Length of reign: Twenty-nine years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Ahaz
- Mother: Abijah
- Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah the Morasthite,
- Ruled during the reign of Hoshea
- Age at death: Fifty-four
- Claim to fame: Restored temple; Removes high places; Leads revival, Holds Passover; Answered prayer adds fifteen years of life
- Texts: 2 Chronicles 29-32; 2 Kings 18-20; Isaiah 38-39; Jeremiah 26; Hosea;

Hezekiah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Repairs the Lord's House
- Addressing the past
- Hezekiah's Covenant
- Judah worships the Lord
- The Song of the Lord

- Congregation more upright than the priests
- Nehushtan/ High Places
- Hezekiah holds the Lord's Passover
- The Postman Cometh
- The Greatest Passover not according to the law
- Full Scale Revival
- Congregation more upright than the priests
- Sennacherib, King of Assyria, typifies the Antichrist
- Rabshakeh typifies of False Prophet
- Prophet Isaiah
- Blasphemous letter
- Assyria's destruction
- Hezekiah's sickness
- God extends Hezekiah's life
- Hezekiah asks for a sign
- Babylonian Ambassadors
- Death

At twenty-five years old Hezekiah ascends the throne. King Hezekiah and his father, Ahaz, are polar opposites. The kingdom of Judah went from experiencing the worst king in their history to having their best king since David. Scripture actually compares King David's good works and character to Hezekiah. The sheer volume of Bible reveals Hezekiah's importance: Four chapters in 2 Chronicles, three chapters in 2 Kings, four chapters in Isaiah. In addition God mentions him in

Jeremiah, Proverbs, and in the Book of Micah. In many ways Hezekiah serves like a pastor king. Scripture declares *he trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.* Hezekiah removes all the high places and all the groves throughout Jerusalem and Judah. (See Chapter Notes)

After the death of King Ahaz, Assyria levered a crushing position over both northern and southern kingdoms. God's judgment fully underway, in less than ten years, God removes Israel from the land.

Regions of Judah also suffer captivity. Sadly, Judah abandoned temple worship replacing it with human sacrifice and a multitude of cultic religions. Needless to say, Judah was a spiritual and governmental disaster following lockstep after Israel. In desperate need of leadership, Judah needed a good king to stop the bleeding. God appoints Hezekiah for the job.

Ascends the throne

2 Chronicles 29:1-2 *Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2 And he did that which was right*

in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

Repairs the Lord's House (compare with 2 Kings 18)

At twenty-five years old Hezekiah served the Lord and led his people with maturity and wisdom beyond his years. Recognizing the nation's imminent spiritual danger, he also ruled with urgency. In his first month he repairs the house of the Lord and orders all Levites (not just priests) to a meeting in the east street. He reminds them of their God ordained responsibilities, and commands them to sanctify themselves. His order to remove the filthiness from the house of the Lord, no doubt refers to Ahaz's apostate altar and other Damascus inspired architecture erected by Urijah the priest. (See Chapter Ahaz: Damascus Altar, *Corrupts divine layout of Temple*)

2 Chronicles 29:3-5 *He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. 4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, 5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.*

Addressing the past

Observe the reference to *our fathers in 29:6*. King Hezekiah clearly and justly condemns the older generation for abandoning God. It seems King Ahaz led the entire previous generation away from the Lord. The influence of leadership, be it good or bad, cannot be overstated. However the people all too eagerly followed their leaders into moral disaster.

As Israel well knows, scripture teaches the Lord holds a nation responsible for sin. Any country that sets itself against righteousness may expect judgment. Even when kings or legislatures sanction (legalize) sinful behaviors, people's evil practices are not condoned by God. Simply because people seem to be getting away with sin for a season, does not mean the Lord doesn't notice, nor does it mean he excuses their sin.

2 Chronicles 29:6-7 *For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. 7 Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel.*

Proverbs 29:2 *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.*

2 Chronicles 29:8-9 *Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. 9 For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.*

Ecclesiastes 8:11 *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

Hezekiah's Covenant

Interestingly, all this repentance and rededication takes place during Passover; although, Judah won't celebrate the Passover until the second month because no one is ready. King Hezekiah's covenant inspires the people. The Levites responded first by remembering their calling before the Lord. Christians can make an important spiritual application on the passage. God saves us to serve him, let us not be negligent to our responsibilities. Does your country suffer due to sin? What can you do to turn it around? Observe the speed which Hezekiah responds to Judah's emergency. Everything accomplished thus far happened in

sixteen days! Compare verses: *2 Chronicles 29: 3, 17, 36.*

2 Chronicles 29:10-11 *Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. **11** My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense. **12** Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah: **13** And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah: **14** And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel. **15** And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. **16** And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron. **17** Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in*

eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

Judah worships the Lord

Once Hezekiah cleansed the temple making it operational, he led his people in a steady stream of offerings; (Levite priests literally performing the sacrifices.) The offerings coincided with much celebration and loud music. The Lord references King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel (*2Sa 23:1*) several times in the passage. Music held a prominent place in Old Testament worship. The Jews played numerous instruments as well as congregational singing as they worshipped the Lord. The entire chapter resounds with music.

2 Chronicles 29:18-26 *Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof. 19 Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the LORD. 20* Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. ***21*** *And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of*

*Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD. **22** So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. **23** And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them: **24** And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. **25** And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. **26** And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.*

The Song of the Lord

The song of the LORD began with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. (29:27) The only time the exact phrase the song of the Lord occurs in the Bible, however, methinks the chronicler references *1 Samuel 22:1-51*. Scripture says David spake "the words of this song." The song also embodies *Psalms*

18, the day the LORD delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. One can empathize the emotional connection Hezekiah feels with David.

2 Chronicles 29:27-33 *And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. **And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel.** 28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. 29 And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. 30 **Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.** 31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings. 32 And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33 And the consecrated*

things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep.

2 Samuel 22:1,2 *And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.*

Citizen Responsibility

Judah's previous king left the nation filled with God's enemies, and incessant war from Assyria and Israel. His satanic father, King Ahaz, even sacrificed Hezekiah's own brothers and sisters to false gods. (*2 Chronicles 28:3*) The darkness Hezekiah fought was a cultic/cultural nightmare. (See Chapter Human Sacrifice)

Not enough priests able to perform their duties tells the story on Judah's ecclesiastical leadership; it's bad. While their previous king was an idolater and scoundrel, this did not exempt the priesthood from individual responsibility. The fact the Levites as a group were ready speaks well of the congregation. God directly juxtaposes their moral standing to the priests. Making a spiritual application for Christians: If leadership within a local church fails or lacks righteousness, this does not give a congregation license to sin.

2 Kings 16:3 *But he (Ahaz) walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to*

pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

2 Chronicles 29:34-36 *But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. 35 And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36 And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly.*

Nehushtan/ High Places

2 Kings 18:4 *He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.*

Simultaneously with cleansing the temple, Hezekiah removes the high places and all the groves throughout Jerusalem and Judah. One of the groves incorporated the brazen serpent Moses set up in the wilderness, *Numbers 21:6-9*.

Astoundingly, the Jews kept this artifact for 770 years! The brazen serpent never possessed any power in itself- Moses made the object uniquely for the people bitten by a fiery serpent; their obedience and faith healed them. Moses never intended the brass serpent to be worshipped. In fact, Judah's worship of Nehushtan epitomized breaking the first and second laws of the Ten Commandments.

Jesus referenced the event as a type of his crucifixion. The Jews worshipping the brazen serpent is the New Testament equivalent of Christians worshipping the cross on which Jesus died instead of worshipping Jesus Christ. Or worshipping the printing press which produces the Bible. King Hezekiah demeaned the cult by naming it Nehushtan which means "a bit of brass."

John 3:14-16 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Exodus 20:4-5 *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God,*

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Numbers 21:6-9 *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

Thought to ponder

Curiously, in modern times the common symbol or image associated with hospitals, ambulances, doctors, etc. is a serpent wrapped around a pole or two serpents wrapped around a pole. Why? The Rod of Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicinal arts in Greek mythology, is sometimes theorized to be the origin of the modern use of the symbol; however, Moses lifting up the brass serpent on a pole for the people's healing happened nearly one thousand years before

the Greek myth. No doubt the etymology for its use is found in Exodus. Why institutions use the serpent on a pole to symbolize healing is biblically logical, but also seems closely aligned with an unconscious rebellion toward God.

2 Kings 18:1-8 *Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. 2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. 3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. 5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. 6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. 7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. 8 He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.*

2 Chronicles 30

Hezekiah holds the Lord's Passover

The Jewish law commands Passover to be held in the first month, *Exodus 12, Leviticus 23:5*. But due to Judah's sudden emergence from abject idolatry, the nation was not prepared; therefore Hezekiah ordered the Passover held during the second month. This was the only time in history Israel or Judah celebrated Passover in the second month.

2 Chronicles 30:1-4*And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. 2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. 3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. 4 And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.*

The Postman Cometh

Witnessing the northern kingdom's total subjugation by Assyria, King Hezekiah tries to strengthen those who remain, he offers hope to survivors. He reaches out and pleads with fellow

Jews to return to God, and come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. As he did in Judah, Hezekiah condemns the previous generation for their rebellion, but announces God's mercy and grace to all who return and worship the Lord.

2 Chronicles 30:5 *So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. 6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. 9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his*

*face from you, if ye return unto him. **10 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.***

Observe 30:6, *So the posts went with the letters from the king.* Not only were ancient letters nailed to community posts where all could read: printed on wood planks, cloth, or papyrus. Here we see Judah's mail service quite up to date; and the reason today we still call letter-carriers postmen. Consider also the terms: Post Office, postal workers, postscript and the most current mail delivery system of all -the Facebook/ Twitter Post. An even earlier mention of post mail found in *Job:9:25.*

In spite of Hezekiah's love for his countrymen, most Israelites viewed the special letters as junk mail, laughing and scorning the men who delivered the message. An obvious spiritual application for the church age= witnessing the world disdain and reject gospel invitations delivered by Christians. Numerous verses depict modern man rejecting the Lord as did those Old Testament Israelites, listed here are but a few.

Acts 2:13 *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

Jude 1:18 *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.*

Not all reject

Not all people rejected Hezekiah's invitation to the Lord's Passover. Israelites from across the country responded; God always has a remnant of believers. Added to the Jews in Judah, the believers formed a great assembly. Inspired by the feast and their renewed faith, the people eradicated all the groves, idols, and false altars from Jerusalem and disposed them in the brook Kidron.

2 Chronicles 30:11 *Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. 12 Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD. 13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. 14 And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.*

The Greatest Passover not according to the law

The passage below records a remarkable pardon by the king, and a reasonable God. The Passover Law is rigid and dictates specific procedures, yet God allows King Hezekiah to mitigate the rules. Not only was the Passover being celebrated in the wrong month, many of the people were not sanctified or cleansed properly according to the law. Hezekiah prays that God accepts the people's worship and blesses their eating of the Passover Lamb. This circumventing of the Law is worthy of scrutiny.

2 Chronicles 30:15 *Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. 16 And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites. 17 For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD. 18 For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. **But***

Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one 19 That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. 20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

The king of Judah praying for the people demonstrates a very big deal. Where the word of a king is there is power *Ecclesiastes 8:4*. As an obedient and righteous Jewish king from the line of David, God gives Hezekiah authority to rule the kingdom of heaven on earth. Not only does Hezekiah have authority, he knows the Lord and understands the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. Therefore, under righteous circumstances, God extends mercy and forgiveness within the rigidity of his law. Somewhat paradoxically the text also implies punishment (judgment) for the people breaking the law. But then immediately heals them because King Hezekiah prays. (20)*And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.* (See Part Two Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God)

Truly God's words describe Hezekiah as a role model for his people, and an inspiration for God's people in the future. *2 Kings 18:5 -6 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the*

LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

Full Scale Revival

Jews from Israel and Judah filled Jerusalem, even strangers joined in praising the God of Israel. The exact number of participants is difficult to determine but 2,000 bullocks and 17,000 sheep butchered throughout fourteen days of religious celebration is quite a banquet- it takes more than a few people to eat that many lamb chops and that much beef. People confessed sins to the Lord; Levites provided Bible instruction for all. King Hezekiah ordered the proverbs of Solomon copied out and taught the people, *Proverbs 25:1-2*.

Not since the days of Solomon was there such a Passover. Jerusalem rang loudly with instruments and choirs. Full scale revival broke out, starting in Jerusalem. For scripture to compare Hezekiah's Passover with the days of Solomon is extraordinary. In the days of Solomon, Israel was at her zenith in wealth, power, and peace. The times in which Hezekiah ruled, were tumultuous and filled with trouble, yet he still orchestrated one of the greatest events for God in all of Israel's history. Even after the Passover revival concluded, the people determined to serve the Lord with actions as well as praise. Israelites scoured the

cities of Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh eradicating the countryside of idols, groves and images.

King Hezekiah continued to oversee the nation's rededication to God. He made sure the Levites performed their religious duties throughout the kingdom. Refugees from Israel, now living in Judah, served the Lord, *32:6*. Truly Hezekiah encouraged the people in the Lord and served as a living ensample. Hezekiah was Judah's pastor king. (see all of *2 Chronicles 31*)

2 Chronicles 30:21 *And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. 22 And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. 23 And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness. 24 For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of*

*Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. 26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: **for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.** 27 Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.*

2 Chronicles 31:1-21 *Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.*

2 Chronicles 31:20 *And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. 21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.*

Chronology Issues

Chronology problems: Hoshea's monarchy starts and stops at the whim of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. He spends three years in prison. His nine year reign does not compute in a straight line. He begins to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham, probably for only a month or two (See Chapter Jotham.) He resumes another term in office during the twelfth year of Ahaz. And finally nears conclusion early in the reign Hezekiah. Ahaz rules for 16 years; therefore, in the fifth year of Hezekiah Israel suffers the final wave of captivity from Assyria.

2 Kings 15:30 *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.*

2 Kings 17:1-2 *In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.*

Sennacherib and Rabshakeh

2 Kings 18-19

2 Kings 18: 13-37, chapter 19, 2 Chronicles 32, reports the same history. *Isaiah chapters 36-39* also covers these events almost verbatim. However, distinctive words added by God via different writers should always be considered. The sheer volume of scripture devoted to these events proves their content's value. These chapters introduce two men typifying the coming antichrist and his false prophet, and the god they serve, Nisroch, typifies Satan. Together they manifest a type of the satanic trinity.

- Sennacherib, King of Assyria, typifies the Antichrist.
- Rabshakeh who serves as Sennacherib's chief spokesman, typifies the false prophet.
- Assyria's unseen god, Nisroch, typifies the dragon in the second heaven (Satan).

The only other Bible texts displaying Satan's trinity (in type) this clearly is *Numbers 22-24*. Therein Balak typifies Antichrist, Balaam typifies the false prophet, and Baal the dragon. A Bible student's knowledge of the satanic trinity doctrine adds substantial enhancement to the passages; however, spiritual application does not detract from

historical, doctrinal facts concerning these real life actors.(See Part Two Mystery of Iniquity)

Scripture further establishes *the Assyrian* as a type of Satan. The term "the Assyrian" is in the Bible 13 times. As numerology shows, the number thirteen often manifests nefarious associations. (See Part Two Chapter Number Thirteen)

Study *Ezekiel 31:3-9* where the serpent in Eden's garden of God is called the Assyrian. Consider also God calls the Pharaoh who oppresses the Jews in Egypt the Assyrian, *Isaiah 52:4*. God also calls that same Pharaoh the great dragon. *Ezekiel 29:3*

Isaiah 52:4 *For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.*

Ezekiel 29:3 *Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.*

Revelation 16:13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

Rabshakeh type of False Prophet

Since Hezekiah ascends Judah's throne during the last king of Israel's third year, *2 Kings 18:1* and this is now Hezekiah's fourteenth year, Assyria has conquered the northern kingdom. Pride filled King Sennacherib turns his ambitious plans toward Judah, fully expecting to defeat the southern kingdom. In fact, Sennacherib's expectations are reasonable since he's already taken Judah's walled cities outside of Jerusalem. Needless to say, Hezekiah's fourteenth year is tumultuous, a horrific era in Judah's history. Gone are the glorious, mountain top feelings of revival, but spiritual courage and power earned during those earlier years sustains the remnant of believers in Jerusalem.

2 Kings 18:13-16 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. **14** And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. **15** And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. **16** At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which

Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Realistically, Judah's tiny army does not compare to Assyria's forces. Although King Hezekiah never considered surrender, he does try diplomacy and political acquiescence. He apologizes to Sennacherib for anything he may have done to offend him, and then gives him considerable silver and gold. In other words, he tries to buy off Sennacherib. The deal seems to have bought Judah some time, which Hezekiah uses to prepare for war. Observe in *2 Chronicles 32:3-4* Judah's military engineers curtail the water supply by stopping wells and apparently redirecting some of the rivers. No small feat, which not only took time, but proves Hezekiah expected to fight Assyria. He also repaired the old walls and built new ones, made military equipment, and prepared his people for the coming war.

2 Chronicles 32:1-8 *After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself. 2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, 3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. 4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all*

the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? 5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. 6 And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, 7 Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: 8 With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

Rabshakeh's Blaspheme:

The scene makes a good visual; one that many a Hollywood movie's director has adopted. Top commanders from opposing kingdoms face one another outside a besieged city's wall. Satanic Rabshakeh confronts King Hezekiah's godly advisors. The contrast could not be starker. Good guys versus bad guys.

2 Kings 18: 17-18 *And the king of Assyria sent Tartan Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to*

*Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. **18** And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.*

For the next two chapters Rabshakeh delivers the most blasphemous oratory in the word of God. Remember this is Sennacherib's main spokesman whose only goal is to glorify his master. (Rabshakeh's name literally means cup bearer) Just as the false prophet glorifies the antichrist during the Tribulation, *Revelation 13:11-18* Speaking in behalf of his master, he rails against Hezekiah and God. Ever confident King Sennacherib wins, his hubris compares with Lucifer's boasting, *Isaiah 14:2-14*. The Assyrian's spokesman directly attacks the kingdom of heaven. The speech begins by implying Hezekiah may have an alliance with Egypt, but it quickly escalates to attacking God.

***2 Kings 18:19** And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? **20** Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. **Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? 21** Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it*

will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

Rabshakeh turns his speech toward heaven. He challenges those who trust in the Lord by asserting Hezekiah took away the Lord's altars and his high places. This accusation ingeniously plays on people's religious desires and their propensity toward high places. Indeed some Jews had been worshiping God from the high places. But that was either an ignorant mistake or an act of disobedience. King Hezekiah rightly corrected the people's errors by eliminating high places and directing the people to the temple, God's only acceptable altar for sacrifice.

Rabshakeh fully takes on the role of false prophet when he declares God sent him. (*Compare Daniel 7:25*) He promises reward and kindness for all who disobey Hezekiah and sin against God. Judah's soldiers may anticipate only good things from the Assyrian once they surrender, including horses to ride.

2 Kings 18:22-25 *But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? 23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set*

riders upon them. **24** How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? **25** **Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.**

2 Kings 18: 26-28 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. **27** But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? **28** Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

Hezekiah's officers entreat Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian language; obviously they do not want soldiers on the wall to understand their conversation. Perhaps this expectation was customary when opposing officers discussed pre-battle conditions? Whatever the reason for the request, it only inspired Rabshakeh to yell louder in fluent Hebrew. Overtly vulgar dialog in *18:27* reveals disdain for Hezekiah as well as predictions

for any who refuse Rabshakeh's terms for surrender.

Sennacherib's boasting accelerates sacrilege. Let not Hezekiah deceive you, he cries to the soldiers. The God of Judah is incapable of defeating Assyria. Look at all the nations' gods already crushed by the great king of Assyria. Surely you do not expect your Lord to be greater than Sennacherib? King Hezekiah deceives you all. You are doomed unless you surrender.

Obediently, Judah's soldiers remain silent, and loyal to Hezekiah. No doubt the speech disturbed them; they knew how powerful the Assyrian proved in battle. Israel and numerous other nations had already fallen to his overwhelming power. Judah, however, served the true Lord, all the gods Rabshakeh boasted about defeating were nothing before the Lord God Jehovah.

2 Kings 18: 29-37 *Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: **30** Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. **31** Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig*

*tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: **32** Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. **33** Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? **34** Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? **35** Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? **36** But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. **37** Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.*

2 Kings 19

Prophet Isaiah

As *2 Kings 18:37, 19:1* makes clear, King Hezekiah was not in hearing range of Rabshakeh's speech. His officers relay the ominous threats. We may assume the King received an exact reporting. Recognizing Judah's only hope is God's deliverance,

King Hezekiah brings the nation's anguish to the Lord. He sends his officers to Isaiah, while he prays in the temple. *Observe* only a remnant of Judah's population remains, 19:4

2 Kings 19:1-5 *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. 3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. 4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left. 5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.*

God's Response

Isaiah delivers good news. God orchestrates distractions that temporarily takes Assyria's forces away from Jerusalem. While absent Rabshakeh sends a letter reiterating the Assyrian's greatness and his disdain for God; he expects to return shortly, finish off Hezekiah, and take Jerusalem.

However, the Lord has other plans. Within a few months, the blasphemous Rabshakeh, dies in battle.

2 Kings 19:6 *And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. 8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.*

Blasphemous letter

The blasphemous letter again drives King Hezekiah to his knees. The king's prayer is reminiscent of David's response before his battle with Goliath, *1 Samuel 17:43-48*. (Albeit David exhibits more confidence; that's David for you.) With the letter spread before the Lord, Hezekiah prays.

2 Kings 19: 9 *And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, 10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem*

*shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. **11** Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? **12** Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? **13** Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? **14** **And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.***

***2 Kings 19:15-19** And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. **16** LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. **17** Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, **18** And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. **19** Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.*

Isaiah responds

Several verses throughout the passage reveal God speaks directly to Sennacherib. God has a one sided conversation asking three rhetorical questions and making numerous condemning statements. Clearly the writing intends to engage Sennacherib. This means Isaiah' words were delivered to the King of Assyria. *Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,..? 2 Kings 19:22.* God addresses Sennacherib's audacity and hubris by degrading his victories. Defeated countries were weak and ready to fall. Any of his supposed accomplishments were orchestrated by the Lord. God's message condemns him and forecasts Assyria's defeat.

2 Kings 19:20 *Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.*
21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; *The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.* **22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,** *and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.* **23** *By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am*

*come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel. 24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. 25 Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. 26 **Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up. 27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. 28** Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

Hezekiah assured of deliverance

In 2 Kings 19:29 the narrative departs from addressing Sennacherib to assuring King Hezekiah. Although the siege on Jerusalem results in the people surviving two seasons on the present year's harvest, within three years life returns to normal.

God promises to preserve a remnant in Judah that again thrives and bears fruit.

2 Kings 19:29-31 *And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. 30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.*

Assyria's destruction

Concerning Hezekiah's most urgent problem, a hostile army preparing to attack Jerusalem, God promises immediate relief. Sennacherib's army won't even get close enough to shoot an arrow. *19:34* promises God, himself, defends the city for his own sake and for David's sake. Observe yet another complimentary scripture in behalf of David and Jerusalem, the city of the great king, *Matthew 5:35*.

That very night God sends his angel, and kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. In the morning, survivors find their comrades dead. The huge troop loss decimates Sennacherib and thwarts all plans of attacking Jerusalem. Humiliated, Sennacherib

returns to Assyria where he is soon murdered by his own sons.

2 Kings 19:32 *Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. **33** By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. **34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 35** And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. **36** So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. **37** And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.*

Hezekiah's sickness

2 Kings 20

2 Kings 20:1 *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, **Thus saith***

the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Simultaneous with Sennacherib's threat to invade Jerusalem, we learn Hezekiah deals with a terminal illness; apparently it comes on suddenly. This startling development injects a profound dilemma for the great king. It also presents information for Bible students to ponder God's will versus a believer's own will. Christians often agonize over trying to discern God's will in their own lives. Ideally Christians commit to seek God's will. That is they don't want their actions to oppose the Lord. Realistically, however, Christians' behaviors, frequently conflict with God's will. In the case of Hezekiah's illness, things are very clear. When Prophet Isaiah comes to him and says, *Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.* Readers may be quite sure God's will was for Hezekiah to die.

2 Kings 20:2-3 *Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, **3** I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.*

But Hezekiah does not accept Isaiah's message. Empathize with Hezekiah to consider the reasons he desired God to let him live. To begin with Judah was under siege and in danger of being

attacked. Hezekiah wanted to see this crisis through to conclusion. Not only that, Hezekiah was only thirty-nine years old, *2 Kings 18:2; with 18:13*. And considering Hezekiah's son Manasseh began to rule at twelve years old, it appears he did not yet have a son to succeed his monarchy, *2 Chronicles 33:1*. Nevertheless God's specified Hezekiah to die, while Hezekiah saw no just reason for this to happen. In fact he puts his prayer in writing. He prays fervently for God to change his will and let him live. Isaiah 38 records Hezekiah's writing.

Isaiah 38:9-19 *The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: 10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. 11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. 12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. 13 I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. 14 Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. 15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my*

*soul. **16** O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. **17** Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. **18** For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. **19** The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.*

God extends Hezekiah's life

Hezekiah's answered prayer gives immediate blessings: his healing, fifteen more years of life, and he sees the defeat of Sennacherib. But he does not see the future. Those added fifteen years also produce his biggest failures. Not the least of which is he begets a son, who becomes the absolute worst king in the history of Judah or Israel. But hindsight is always 20/20. I suppose the conclusion of the whole matter remains God knows best. If a believer chooses to oppose God, be advised the road one chooses guarantees trouble. Many of us (perhaps all) insist on getting our own way now and then?

***2 Kings 20:4** And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, **5** Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people,*

Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. 7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

Hezekiah asks for a sign

Even though Isaiah informs Hezekiah God promises healing, he requests a sign. Asking for a sign (which God provides) is one of those peculiar privileges provided to Jews. *1 Corinthians 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:* The sun dial of Ahaz, probably highly visible architecture located in a courtyard or garden, allowing the king to view the sun's shadow. Isaiah asks the king if he wants the sun's shadow to move forward or backward ten degrees (forty minutes). Hezekiah opts for the sun's shadow to reverse its normal movement as this would indicate a more overt miracle. The Bible records two times God honors a Jew's request to alter the sun's movement. The first recorded in *Joshua 10:12-14.*

2 Kings 20: 8-11 *And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of*

*the LORD the third day? **9** And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? **10** And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. **11** And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.*

***Isaiah 38:7-8** And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; **8** Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.*

Babylonian Ambassadors

Soon after Hezekiah recovers from his illness, emissaries from Babylon arrive in Jerusalem bringing letters and a present. The Bible gives several reasons for this allegedly goodwill visitation. The ambassadors announce they heard about Hezekiah's sickness and they are happy for his recovery. Politically, however, let us read between the lines. It makes good sense for Babylon to check out the region. After Israel's recent defeat and ensuing captivity, and Sennacherib's devastating loss of 185,000 soldiers, there is an unexpected

power vacuum in the area. All these sudden developments are not unobserved by Babylon. Such are the ever changing fortunes of war in the Middle East.

2 Kings 20: 12 *At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. **13** And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. **14** Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. **15** And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. **16** And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. **17** 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. **18** 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.

Astronomy

Scripture alludes to another reason for the visit as well. The Babylonians were quite knowledgeable in astronomy. Undoubtedly they observed the sun's phenomenon backing up ten degrees. Their scientist also heard about Hezekiah's request for a sign and Ahaz's sun dial. Those wonders needed investigation.

2 Chronicles 32:31 *Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

Unwisely, King Hezekiah is delighted with Babylon's visit. Considering his recent deliverance from Sennacherib and his miracle healing, the king is riding high waves of ego. He takes the Babylonians on a kingdom tour, showing them all Judah's wealth, possessions, and military capabilities. Such blind trust and pride represents an uncharacteristic moment for Hezekiah. (The American English idiom "loose lips sink ships" expresses this age old mistake quite well. The phrase was used on posters by the United States Office of War Information during WW2.)

When Isaiah enquires about the Babylonian visit, Hezekiah reveals everything he told them. In no uncertain terms, Isaiah tells Hezekiah that he made a foolish mistake. The current blessings of Judah are short lived, and the information divulged to the ambassadors taken and utilized against Judah by Babylon's future invasion.

The greatest king since David definitely made a mistake. But he learned and repented. Great as Hezekiah was- he was a mortal man. However, Hezekiah serves us all an example, a lesson about making a mistake. Further explanation recorded in 2 Chronicles.

Hezekiah accepts rebuke

2 Kings 20: 19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

2 Chronicles 32:25-26 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. **26** Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah

Death of Hezekiah

2 Chronicles 32:22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side. **23** And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

2 Chronicles 32:27 And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; **28** Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. **29** Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much. **30** This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. **31** Howbeit in **the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.**

2 Chronicles 32:32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the

*son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. **33** And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.*

***2 Kings 20: 20** And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? **21** And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.*

Chapter Notes

***1 Corinthians 10:11-13** Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. **12** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. **13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

Manasseh; Judah # 13

- Judah's thirteenth king
- Name meaning= Causing to forget
- Length of reign: Fifty-five years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Hezekiah
- Mother: Hephzibah
- Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah
- Age at death: Sixty-seven
- Claim to fame: Most evil king, Human sacrifice, Longest reigning king, Gets saved before he dies.
- Texts: 2 Kings 21:1-18; *2 Chronicles 33:1-20*

Manasseh's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Human sacrifice
- Temple desolation
- The worst guy in the Bible gets saved
- Manasseh's repentance
- King Manasseh's Legacy

Becoming king at twelve years old marks Manasseh as the third youngest king in Judah's history, only seven year old Joash *2 Chronicles 24:1*, and eight year old Josiah were younger, *2 Kings 22:1*. Ruling for fifty-five years he is the longest reigning monarch. Fittingly, Manasseh is

Judah's thirteenth king. The number thirteen represents rebellion: (*See Part Two Number 13*) Manasseh is absolutely the most rebellious, evil king ever to reign over Judah, Israel or the surrounding pagan nations. This includes the nations living in Canaan before Israel took possession of the land.

A thought to ponder: Since Hezekiah begat Manasseh three years after being healed from his sickness, had he accepted Isaiah's prophecy about his coming death Manasseh would never have been born. *Isaiah 38:1-5*. This also suggests Hezekiah did not have any sons before Manasseh. Admittedly this is speculation, but usually a monarchy passes to a king's first born son.

Ascends the throne

2 Chronicles 33:1-5 *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: 2 But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for*

ever. 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

Most Evil King in history (see also 2 Kings 21)

These passages provide summary for Manasseh's sins. He is the worst, most wicked king in history, surpassing even his grandfather, King Ahaz. This assessment includes comparing him to all Israel's kings as well as other heathen nations' monarchs. Taking idolatry to its most sacrilegious level, he installs altars, groves, and idols in the Jerusalem's temple and courtyards.

Human Sacrifice

Following Ahaz's lead, he reinstates human sacrifice, he offers his own son (and other children) to Moloch in the valley of the son of Hinnom, which proves he practiced human sacrifice religiously as did the giants. (See Chapter Human Sacrifice)

Using astrology, channeling spirits, and witchcraft Manasseh seduces the entire nation of Judah toward devil possession. King Manasseh, personally consults with a demonic spirit. Murdering his own people, he fills Jerusalem with innocent blood *from one end to another*, God declares Manasseh took Judah to a place more debased and wicked than the nations which he cast out before

Israel took possession of the land, some 800 years previously.

2 Chronicles 33:6 *And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.*

2 Kings 21:6 *And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.*

2 Kings 21:16 *Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*

Temple Desolation

By setting a graven image inside the temple, Manasseh foreshadows the antichrist's abomination of desolation, *Daniel 8:13; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4 Revelation 13:15*. Hence, it seems, the 13th King of Judah takes his rebellion as far as he can go. Remember King Ahaz also put an idol in the Lord's house and practiced human

sacrifice. This may indicate the Antichrist's desolation of the temple during the Tribulation incorporates human sacrifice into religious services. Antichrist sacrifices human lives that do not worship his image. Remember the image is in the temple. Giving weight to this ominous interpretation, God's startling comments in the next verse:

2 Chronicles 33:7 *And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:* **8** ***Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.***

2 Kings 21:7 *And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:*

God suddenly mentions his promise to Israel and their ownership of the land. One can only conclude the land of Israel belongs irrevocably, and forever to the Jews. However, considering Judah

teeters on the verge of going into captivity, reiterating the promise at this time is curious. Paradoxically, the northern kingdom already suffers captivity, and Judah will soon be removed to Babylon. The most drastic departure from the land takes place in 70 AD after Jews reject their Messiah Jesus Christ. Why then does God say: *Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers...* Answer: The verse is prophetic with doctrinal fulfillment in the future. Once Jews accept Jesus Christ, God never removes them from the land again. This happens during the Tribulation. At that time, the false prophet sets up an image of the beast in the temple, followed shortly by the ultimate abomination of desolation, the Antichrist sets in the temple and declares himself God.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

Daniel 12:11 *And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

Revelation 13:15 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause*

that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

The worst guy in the Bible gets saved

After warning Judah and King Manasseh over and over, God finally drops the hammer. God uses the Assyrians to capture Manasseh and take him to Babylon. In great affliction Manasseh turns to the Lord; and the worst guy in the Bible gets saved. An astounding conversion no one saw coming but God. Nevertheless God saves sinners and when King or pauper puts personal trust and hope in the Lord, they find acceptance. His Gentile parallel is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who also comes to know the Lord, (See Daniel 4.) The only comparable (somewhat) New Testament's conversion is Apostle Paul, *Acts 9*.

2 Chronicles 33:9-13 *So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. 10 And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. 11 Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and*

heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he *was* God.

Manasseh's repentance

How long Manasseh remained in Babylon is not revealed, but the Lord restores him to Jerusalem and his throne. Once returned, Manasseh immediately puts action to his faith. He removes the idol in the temple, and takes away false altars and gods throughout the city. He fortifies the city of David with walls, and dispenses military to protect fenced cities of Judah. After repairing the true altar of the Lord, he commands the people serve the Lord God of Israel, and him alone. No doubt this shocked many people who knew Manasseh before he knew the Lord. The high places, forbidden by God, were back in use. For now at least some of the people sacrificed only to the Lord God of Israel. High places were a constant problem throughout Judah's history. (See Chapter High Places)

2 Chronicles 33:14-20 Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. **15** And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in

*Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. **16** And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. **17 Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only. 18** Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. **19** His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers. **20** So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.*

King Manasseh's Legacy

Although King Manasseh purposes to reverse the horrendously evil course he set the kingdom on previous to his conversion, not all damage can be undone. And herein is an important lesson. Sin has consequences. Near the end, Manasseh gave his life to God, but salvation is a personal commitment and no one, not even a king, can believe to save the soul of a nation. King Manasseh's previous reign of evil set the kingdom on an irreversible course toward destruction. Not that he alone is responsible

for Judah's sin, but his influence cannot be overstated.

2 Kings 21:10-17 *And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, **11** Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: **12** Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. **13** And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. **14** And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; **15** Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. **16** Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. **17** Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

2 Kings 23:26-27 *Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27* And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

Jeremiah 15:1-4 *Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. 2* And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. **3** And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. **4** **And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.**

Thought to ponder

Working as a chaplain in prisons, I have known prisoners come to Christ who committed extremely heinous and disturbing crimes. Some of these men are in maximum prisons and they will die there. So monstrous are their crimes, in fact, that other Christians (in free church) upon hearing about their salvation were actually disappointed or refused to believe such a despicable person got saved. Every now and then, a high profile prisoner: someone like Son of Sam, or Jeffery Dahmer, becomes a Christian, but this does little to change their reputation. Although prisoners like these men are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, they will forever in this world be defined according to their crimes. This, I think, comes close to the way history remembers King Manasseh. The truth is God saves sinners. And some sinners find forgiveness and mercy from no one- but God. That's Jesus for you.

Amon; Judah #14

- Judah's fourteenth king
- Amon=To nourish
- Length of reign: Two years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Manasseh
- Mother: Meshullemeth
- Prophets: Jeremiah
- Ruled during the northern kingdom's captivity
- Age at death: Twenty-four
- Claim to fame: Returned to Manasseh's evil ways; Murdered
- Texts: 2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33:20-25

Amon's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Returns Judah to Manasseh's evil ways
- Murdered in own house

The son of Manasseh, Amon succeeds the throne at age twenty-two. Disregarding his father's repentance, he returns Judah to idolatry. He walks in all Manasseh's evil ways which means he is despicable. Worshipping idols and forsaking the Lord, once again becomes the national direction. King Amon does not last long. After ruling only two years, his own servants conspire against him, murdering the

king in his own house. Scripture does not mention any direct confrontation with prophets.

As to serving the idols and carved images his father constructed. Manasseh made a serious effort at removing these abominations, *2 Chronicles 33:14-20*. But remember Manasseh served Satan for nearly half a century before he knew the Lord. It seems he had time to saturate Judah with idols and groves. Numerous idols and images survived. And these King Amon worshipped.

2 Kings 21:18-26 *And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. 19 Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. 21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: 22 And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD. 23 And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. 24 And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. 25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in*

the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

26 *And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.*

2 Chronicles 33:20-25 *So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. 21 Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; 23 And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. 24 And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house. 25 But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.*

Josiah; Judah #15

2nd Chronicles 34

- Judah's fifteenth king
- Josiah= He will be sustained of Jehovah
- Length of reign: Thirty-one years
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Amon
- Mother: Jedidah
- Prophets: Huldah the prophetess, Jeremiah; Zephaniah
- Ruled during the northern kingdom's captivity
- Age at death: Thirty-nine
- Claim to fame: Finds the Bible, Fulfilled prophecy of burning bones, Holds greatest Passover in history, Removes high places, Judah's last good king
- Texts: 2 Kings 22-23 ; 2 Chronicles 34-35

Josiah's Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Repairs the Lord's House
- Josiah finds the Bible
- Huldah the Prophetess
- Huldah prophesizes Josiah's death
- The greatest Passover
- Burning priests' bones

- Repentance-Revival -Restoration
- Tophet-Baal- Hinnom
- Josiah's death

At eight years old, Josiah another child king, only Joash at seven years old was younger, *2 Chronicles 24:1*. In many ways Josiah resembles (even parallels) his great grandfather, King Hezekiah. He loves the Lord and serves him with all his heart. After waging successful war against idolatry, he leads a tremendous spiritual revival, repairs the Lord's House, and orchestrates a great Passover. Josiah rules for thirty-one years and dies at age thirty-nine.

Within four generations, Judah experienced its two worst kings: Manasseh and Amon; and two great kings: Hezekiah, and Josiah. Historically, out of nineteen kings, Judah sees only six good monarchs: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Josiah is Judah's last good king.

2 Kings 22:1 *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.*

Ascends the throne, See also 2 Kings 22

Josiah ascends the throne at only eight years old. He received godly nurturing from undisclosed

elders, but probably his mother, Jedidah. Interestingly her name means beloved which is the same definition for David. Within the first three verses, scripture likens Josiah to David twice. Although a name's meaning is not conclusive evidence for the way a person lives, it is always something a Bible student should consider. In most cases, the meaning of a name adds information; especially for character assessment on persons other than kings.

Speculation aside, whoever raised Josiah did a good job. At only sixteen years old he began to seek the Lord. Not since Samuel did such a young child exhibit such a predisposition toward the Lord. At twenty years old, Josiah ruled fully in charge and he was spiritually mature.

2 Chronicles 34:1-7 *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. 4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the*

carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

By twenty years old Josiah begins to undo the damage done by his father. He destroys the high places and groves. Wood and molten idols are burned or pounded into dust, and all the altars of Baalim cut in pieces. King Josiah oversees the purging operation himself. He even takes the idols' dust and spreads it over the graves of those who had worshipped the false gods. When it comes to serving God, Josiah isn't fooling around.

2 Chronicles 34: 5-7 *And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.*

Josiah takes his purge into Israel's territories. Although Assyria had destroyed Israel and taken the majority of people captive, small numbers remained in the land. Even after God's judgment the remaining Israelites persisted in idolatry. Josiah determined to correct their abominations by destroying all their idols, altars, and groves. Any

false priests found were killed and their bones burned on the altars. When Josiah finished purging Israel he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah repairs the Lord's House (see also *2 Kings 22:3-7*)

Josiah is twenty-six years old when he turns his attention to repairing the Lord's house. By this time, Josiah surrounds himself with likeminded men determined to serve the Lord. Observe remaining Jews from Israel and Judah also contribute financially toward the Lord's House. Josiah exemplifies a remarkable king who inspires people to serve God. Many of Judah's citizens contribute toward restoring the nation. Throughout all Judah's and Israel's history, no matter how dark, God always preserves a remnant who love Him. (See Chapter Remnant: Judah Preserves all Twelve Tribes)

2 Chronicles 34:8 *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and*

of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. 10 And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: **11** Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. **12** And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. **13** Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.

Josiah Finds the Bible

(See also 2 Kings 22)

2 Chronicles 34:14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, **Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16** And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought

*the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. 17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, **Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.** 19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. 20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, 21 Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.*

As Josiah's officers cleaned and prepared the Lord's House, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses. This definitive description means they found an intact, flawless copy of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The reason the book was hidden requires some logical speculation. Bible students may assume during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, any scrolls or scriptures readily accessible would be destroyed. We may also speculate that God fearing Levite scribes hid scrolls and books to

preserve the Lord's words. Ultimately God preserves his own words, but uses human resources to do it. Any attempt from Satan, kings, governments, churches, pastors, teachers, colleges, professors, or writers to get rid of God's preserved Bible always fails. *Psalms 12:6,7.*

Psalms 12:6-7 *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

Implicit in King Josiah's reaction proves he is seeing the book of the law for the first time in his life. Not only does he immediately order a scribe to read it aloud, but after hearing the words, the king rends his clothes, meaning he shows huge emotional reaction! He then orders his officers to inquire a prophet about the words. This is not a response of a man who already owns a copy of the words of the law. Furthermore, if Josiah had a copy of the law he would have certainly obeyed *Deuteronomy 17:18-20* which commands kings to write themselves a copy of the law! Observe the law commands the king, not the Levite. It is inconceivable a king like Josiah neglects this command.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20 *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book*

*out of that which is before the priests the Levites:
19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read
therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to
fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this
law and these statutes, to do them: **20** That his
heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that
he turn not aside from the commandment, to the
right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may
prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his
children, in the midst of Israel.*

Josiah knew the fundamentals of Judaism especially temple worship, the Ten Commandments, and oral instructions from good priests and prophets. Even today Jews, no matter how secular, know these religious facts. Never before had Josiah possessed a complete copy of the Law of Moses. The king now reads for himself the words of the Lord he loves. This would be similar to a devout Christian receiving his first Bible in his own language; although he is familiar with major doctrinal truths, to read God's words himself is a tremendous experience. And upon reading the Bible the Christian encounters much more information. From this day forward, King Josiah is an avid Bible reader.

Numerous passages within the five books of Moses alarm Josiah. Especially since the king knows the Jews tendency toward disobedience and idolatry, dare to mention a king whose own Daddy and Granddaddy implemented human sacrifice.

When his scribe reads *Deuteronomy chapters 11-13*, no doubt Josiah begins to panic. By the time he hears *Deuteronomy chapter 28*, true desperation hits good king Josiah. (See Chapter Notes)

Huldah the Prophetess (See also 2 Kings 22: 14-20)

Josiah sends his officers to Huldah the prophetess. All we know about Huldah is she was married, dwelt in the college in Jerusalem, and she was the keeper of the wardrobe. She probably took care of the king's royal apparel and clothing for palace officers.

2 Chronicles 34:21-22 *Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. 22 And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that effect.*

A prophetess is rare in scripture. God calls only ten women a prophetess: Miriam (Moses sister) *Exodus 15:20*; Deborah the judge *Judges 4:4*; Noadiah *Nehemiah 6:14*; Mrs. Isaiah; *Isaiah*

8:3 Anna *Luke 2:36*; Philip's four virgin daughters *Acts 21:8-9*. Hannah prophesizes but scripture does not declare her a prophetess 1 *Samuel 2:1-10*. The same is true for David's wife, Abigail, 1 *Samuel 25:24-31*. And Elizabeth and Mary *Luke 1:41-55*.

Huldah's Prophecy

Prophetess Huldah's using the word *curses* in verse 24 confirms King Josiah definitely read the concluding chapters of *Deuteronomy*. God uses the word *curses* eight times in the Bible; seven of those occur in *Deuteronomy chapters 28-34*. All those curses deal with Israel's judgment. Hence King Josiah confirms his worst fears.

2 Chronicles 34:23-25 *And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, 24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: 25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.*

Huldah prophesizes Josiah's death

God's judgment on Judah remains unstoppable. But God acknowledges King Josiah's humility and sincere heart. God promises Josiah will not see all the evil poured upon Judah. King Josiah will die before it happens.

2 Chronicles 34:26-28 *And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard; 27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.*

Thought to ponder

Consider Josiah's parallel with Hezekiah. God used prophets to inform both kings they would die an early death. Had King Hezekiah accepted the Lord's will, he would have died at age thirty-nine *Isaiah 38:1*. Hezekiah prayed and God granted him another fifteen years, thus he died at age fifty-four. King Josiah receives a very similar prophetic death

sentence, yet Josiah accepts God's will; ironically he dies at age thirty-nine.

Josiah reacts to Huldah's prophecy

After reading *Deuteronomy 28:15-68*, *Deuteronomy 30: 1-4, 17-20*. And contemplating Prophetess Huldah's message, Josiah sets course for the remainder of his life. He sees the Lord's curses being fulfilled all around him. But as in all perceptive Bible study, one also sees hope from a merciful and holy God- (not to be confused with tolerance and compromising.) King Josiah knows much of God's curse is already underway. In response, Josiah commits to wise and responsible action: continue national repentance, obey the law, and pray for God's mercy. As King Solomon said, who knows the times of the Lord? *Ecclesiastes 9:12* *For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*

Far from bemoaning the bad news about Judah's future and his own impending death, Josiah determines to serve God with a fervor surpassing even his previous zeal. As far as Josiah knows, he may not have tomorrow. King Josiah calls all people together to witness him making a covenant before God. King Josiah (himself) reads the recently found Bible aloud to all citizens. His remaining years are

spent preaching God's words, and inspiring Judah to serve the Lord. King Josiah is a tremendous example of a believer doing exactly what he should. Reminiscent of Job, Josiah trusts in the Lord no matter his circumstances.

Job 13:15-16 *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. 16 He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.*

2 Chronicles 34:29-33 *Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. 31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. 32 And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33 And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve*

the LORD their God. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

The Greatest Passover

2 Chronicles 35

Like his great grandfather, King Hezekiah, Josiah sets out to worship God with the best Passover he can possibly put together. Following scripture to the letter he rallies the nation to learn and celebrate the Lord's Passover.

2 Chronicles 35:1-5 Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. **2** And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD, **3** And said unto the Levites that all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, **Put the holy ark in the house which taught Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,** **4** And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. **5** And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites.

Mysteriously, this is the first mention of the ark since the days of Solomon, *2 Chronicles 8:11*. And historically, it's the last mention of the ark in the Old Testament. Prophet Jeremiah discusses the ark's purpose (or lack thereof) in the future, *Jeremiah 3:16*. The Book of Hebrews reviews the ark's contents in the days of Moses, *Hebrews 9:4*; During the Tribulation, the ark is in the temple in the third heaven. Whether the ark in heaven is the same ark that was on earth is a topic of much debate. *Revelation 11:19*. This author's opinion asserts -since the tabernacle was a figure of the true temple in heaven, then the ark made by Moses was also a figure of an ark made by God. *Hebrews 9*. If that position is correct, then the earth bound ark's whereabouts remains a mystery-for now.

With the ark in place, and all the Levites positioned, King Josiah commences to orchestrate the greatest Passover ever celebrated in the history of Israel from the time of judges throughout kings.

Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

2 Kings 23:21-22 *And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. 22 Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the*

judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

2 Chronicles 35:6-19 *So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 7 And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance. 8 And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen. 9 Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen. 10 So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment. 11 And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them. 12 And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. 13 And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy*

offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people. **14** And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. **15** And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them. **16** So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. **17** And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. **18** **And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** **19** In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

Burning priests' bones

Josiah holds the Passover in the eighteenth year of his reign; he is twenty-six years old. From Huldah's prophecy he knows time is short, but he still has today. Unhesitatingly King Josiah continues his commitment to purge the whole land of Israel. Finally the altar at Bethel is taken down. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam, Alternative Religion) For three centuries it stood as an alternative religion to Judaism from which Israel never recovered. Three hundred years earlier a prophet predicted Josiah as the one to take down the abomination. *1 Kings 13:1-2*. Perhaps the book of the Lord found hidden in the temple included parts of Israel's early kings' history? Imagine Josiah's thrill as he reads his own name as the king who finally eradicates the idolatrous scourge at Bethel. The prophecy found in *1 Kings 13* given 300 years before Josiah was born.

1 Kings 13:1-2 *And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; **Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.***

2 Kings 23:15-18 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. **16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.**

Recognition for the unnamed man of God.
See Chapter Unnamed Prophet

2 Kings 23:17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? **And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.** **18** And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. **19** And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. **20** And he slew all the priests of the high places that were

there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Repentance-Revival -Restoration

The passage below articulates the extent of Judah's entrenched satanic culture. A half century of Manasseh's reign cultivated a cesspool of cults and fleshly rebellion.

2 Kings 23:4-8 *And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. 5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. 6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. 7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove. 8 And he brought all the*

priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

Topheth-Baal- Hinnom- valley of giants

Josiah destroys Topheth in the valley of the giants or the valley of the son of Hinnom. The religious center epitomized human sacrifice and satanic worship of Molech. *Joshua 18:16* , 2 *Chronicles 281-3*. (See Chapter Human Sacrifice)

2 Kings 23:9 *Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. 10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. 11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12 And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake*

them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

Startling information declared in *2 Kings 23:13*. Observe high places constructed in the days of King Solomon (300 years ago) still operate in Judah! Perhaps these particular high places were such magnificent structures that previous kings decided not to tear them down? (King Solomon never did anything less than extravagant.) Or perhaps they used them to worship the true God? Although that, too, would be serious error. As previously discussed, the Jews utilized high places throughout history. (See Chapter High Places) Whatever the reason, they remain a disgrace. King Josiah, more than any other king, handles the high places correctly.

2 Kings 23:13 *And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. 14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.*

Josiah's death

In the last year of Josiah's reign, he fights a battle with Necho king of Egypt. Necho battles against Assyria for the ever changing power vacuum in the region. With Israel in captivity and Judah but a remnant, opportunities abound. For whatever reason, Josiah chooses to side with Carchemish on the Assyrian side. Necho actually tries to dissuade King Josiah from the battle; basically telling him the fight is none of his business.

2 Chronicles 35:21 is an interesting verse. The Egyptian king alleges God commanded him to fight with Carchemish, and advises Josiah not to meddle with God's orders. He even warns Josiah that God will destroy him, should he ignore this counsel. Whether or not God truly spoke to Necho, I have no idea, but everything the Egyptian says may well be true? Remembering Huldah's prophecy, Josiah, knew his death was eminent. As do all saints till this very day. And in the end, something kills us, be that disease, war, or accident. King Josiah dies from wounds incurred in the battle. God gathers Josiah's soul to heaven.

2 Chronicles 35:20 *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but*

against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. ***23*** And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. ***24*** His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. ***25*** And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. ***26*** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the LORD, ***27*** And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Scripture testifies to the great King Josiah

2 Kings 23:25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul,

and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. 26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. 28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Chronicles 35:25-27 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. **26** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the LORD, **27** And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Jehoahaz; Shallum Judah #16

- Judah's sixteenth king
- Jehoahaz= Jehovah is taken hold
- Length of reign: Three months
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father: Josiah
- Mother: Hamutal
- Prophets: Jeremiah
- Ruled during Israel's captivity
- Age at death: Twenty-three
- Claim to fame: Rules only three months; Taken prisoner to Egypt
- Texts: 2 Kings 23:30-37; 2 Chronicles 3

Jehoahaz Outline

- Ascends the throne
- Dismal Eulogy

Anointed king at twenty-three years old. King Jehoahaz is evil, and immediately returns Judah to rebellion and sin after his father's death. How Josiah's son turns out so bad is a wonder. A parent's faithfulness influences and guides, but no parent's faith can force children to love the Lord. No one can fake loving God or the Bible (At least not very well; not very long) Like an old deacon once told me, "Do the best you can raising your kids, but in the end every tub sits on its own bottom."

Jehoahaz rules only three months before he's taken prisoner to Egypt. Understandably, Egypt's King Necho, did not trust King Josiah's replacement. Remember, Necho tried to talk Josiah out of fighting with him, alas to no avail. Egypt's king replaced Jehoahaz with his half- brother, Eliakim. No doubt someone more easily controlled. At this point, the kingdom of Judah poses only minimal threat, but Necho isn't taking any chances. Jehoahaz dies in Egypt; how long he lived is undisclosed. Prophet Jeremiah calls the king by another name, Shallum. God provides a rather dismal eulogy in *Jeremiah 22:10-12*. (See Chapter Notes).

2 Kings 23:30-37 *And his servants carried him (Josiah) in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. 31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33 And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. 34 And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of*

Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

2 Chronicles 36:1-23 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. **2** Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. **3** And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. **4** And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

Dismal Eulogy

Jeremiah 22:10-12 Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. **11** For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more: **12** But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

Jehoiakim, Eliakim Judah #17

- Judah's seventeenth king
- Jehoiakim=Jehovah will set up
- Length of reign: Eleven years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Josiah
- Mother: Zebudah
- Prophets: Jeremiah
- Ruled during Israel's captivity
- Claim to fame: Egypt's puppet king
- Texts: Texts: 2 Kings 23:34-37; 24:1-6; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8; Jeremiah 22

Eliakim's Outline

- **Put on the throne**
- Egypt's puppet king
- Pays taxes to Egypt
- Prisoner in Babylon
- Death

Eliakim is half-brother to Jehoahaz. He becomes king at age twenty-five and rules eleven years as a weak, inept monarch. Corrupt and evil in character, he follows the wicked kings of the past. Egypt's King Necho literally puts him on the throne, no doubt because he's more subservient (easily controlled) than Jehoahaz. Remember, only 100 days earlier Judah was battling Egypt; the same battle wherein King Josiah lost his life. Necho

changes Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Judah, now a conquered state, pays taxes to Egypt. Primarily, Jehoiakim's purpose serves Egypt as their royal tax collector.

Within a few years, Babylon pushes Egypt out of the region and Judah gets a new landlord. Once again, powerful nations posture themselves to control the Middle East. The Middle East has always been a graveyard of empires. Alas, the more things change, the more things stay the same. For three years King Jehoiakim serves Nebuchadnezzar, but then rebels. God continues judgment on Judah by sending numerous renegade countries to pillage the land. Again the Lord cites the sins of Manasseh for justification. Judah's last three years under Jehoiakim sees the beginning preparations for their captivity. Finally, Jehoiakim is taken captive to Babylon when he is thirty-six years old.

From Prophet Jeremiah we learn Jehoiakim apparently died in Babylon and his body returned to some cemetery used for animal remains. The ignoble spectacle probably a political statement publically advertised by Babylon to dissuade any future Jewish rebellion. From the Lord's perspective it simply declares disgust.

Jeremiah 22:18-19 *Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not*

lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! 19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Put on the throne

***2 Kings 23:34** And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.*

Pays taxes to Egypt

***2 Kings 23:35** And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh. **36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.** And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. **37** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.*

Taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar-

***2 Kings 24:1-6** In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became*

his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. **2** And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. **3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; 4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. 5** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? **6** So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 36:5 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. **6 Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. 7** Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. **8** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of

Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Daniel 1:1-3 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

Death

The Lord's evaluation of this king attests to loathing.

Jeremiah 22:18-19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Jehoiachin; Jeconiah and Coniah Judah #18

- Judah's Eighteenth king
- Jehoiachin= Jehovah will establish
- Length of reign: Eight years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jehoiakim
- Mother: Nehushta
- Prophets: Jeremiah
- Ruled during the ongoing Babylonian invasion.
- Claim to fame: Virgin birth prophecy,
- Texts: 2 Kings ; 2 Chronicles

Outline for Jehoiachin's rule

- At eight years old, Jehoiachin officially (ceremoniously) becomes king.
- His mother, Queen Nehushta rules Judah until he is eighteen.
- When Jehoiachin is eighteen, he begins to rule again.
- Three months later Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem
- When King Jehoiachin is twenty-six years old, Nebuchadnezzar takes him and his mother prisoner to Babylon.
- After being prisoner for thirty-seven years in Babylon, he is set free. He is

then sixty-three years old. He remains in Babylon until he dies.

- Virgin birth necessary for Messiah

Jehoiachin's name is so close to his father's name (Jehoiakim), Bible students can easily confuse the two. His actual birth names were Jeconiah and Coniah *see 1 Chronicles 3:16 with Jeremiah 22:24*. Knowing these additional names becomes imperative when considering biographical events. Most importantly the name Coniah corresponds to a prophecy about the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Multiple names aside, he is popularly known as Jehoiachin, an evil king.

Jehoiachin is only eight years old when he officially becomes king. Some consideration must be given to the king's age, because of an apparent paradox. Difficulties with Jehoiachin's age concern *2 Chronicles 36:9* compared to *2 Kings 24:8*. With *2 Kings 24: 11*. Is he eight or eighteen years old? Actually, it's both.

2 Chronicles 36:8-10 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. ***9 Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. 10*** And

when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Kings 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. *And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.*

2 Kings 24: 11 *And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: **and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.***

We cannot count Jehoiachin's eight years of ruling from his initial swearing in when he was only eight years old, because that would make him sixteen when Nebuchadnezzar takes him to Babylon. And we know he began to rule again in Jerusalem when he was eighteen.

I offer a suggestion on the age conundrum. With the loss of his father, Jehoiakim, to satisfy the rules of monarchy, Jehoiachin is ceremonially sworn in as king at eight years old. Logically, his mother, Nehushta, reigns as queen while her son is a child.

Several scriptures recognize Nehushta as ruling queen. There is another ceremony when Jehoiachin turns eighteen. At that point the king takes full control. After Jehoiachin rules for three months and ten days, Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem. Meeting on the battlefield, Judah's leadership comes to terms with Nebuchadnezzar. From this point on, Jehoiachin serves subservient to Nebuchadnezzar. For whatever reasons, Nebuchadnezzar allows him and the queen to remain in Judah. Then in the eighth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar removes them to Babylon, Jehoiachin is twenty-six years old. Notice in *Jeremiah 29:2*, Nebuchadnezzar takes the king and queen in a later group of captives. It's important to consider Judah's Babylonian subjugation has begun. It happens in stages as opposed to all at once. At the same time, Nebuchadnezzar appoints his uncle, Mattaniah, (Zedekiah) king in his stead.

Queen Nehushta

Nehushta, Jehoiachin's mother, is Judah's queen. The queen's name strongly implies she participates in the idolatrous cult of Nehushtan. (See Chapter on Nehushtan/ High Places.) Prophet Jeremiah recognizes Judah's queen among the captives.

Scripture with scripture proves Jehoiachin is also named Jeconiah; see *Jeremiah 29:1-2 with 1 Chronicles 3:16*. Notice God declares in

chronological order Judah's last three kings:
Jehoiakim-Jeconiah-Zedekiah.

Jeremiah 29:1-2 *Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; 2 (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)*

1 Chronicles 3:16 *And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.*

Jeremiah 13:18 *Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.*

2 Chronicles 36:10-23 *And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and **made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.***

2 Kings 24:17 *And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah **his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.***

Jeremiah 22:24-26 *As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; 25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.*

2 Kings 24:6 *So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt. 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took*

him in the eighth year of his reign. 13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. **14** And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. **15** And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. **16** And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. **17** And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

2 Kings 25:27-30 **And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; 28** And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; **29** And changed his prison garments: and he did

*eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. **30** And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.*

Jehoiachin set free (house arrest)

Although Jehoiachin never returned to Judah, he did receive preferential treatment in Babylon. After thirty-seven years in captivity, Jehoiachin is Sixty-three years old. The king of Babylon released Jehoiachin from prison and let him live a privileged life for the remaining of his days.

Jeremiah 52:31 *And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, **32** And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, **33** And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. **34** And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.*

Virgin Birth Required for Messiah

Further substantiating Prophet Isaiah's virgin birth prophecy, scripture declares God intends to miraculously supply Judah's Messiah. According to lineage, Jesus Christ is in the line of David. But to fulfill *Isaiah 7:14* he must be virgin born. Observe no man coming from Coniah's flesh seed shall prosper or rule on the throne of David. So then, although one can trace Joseph (Jesus' step father) all the way back to Jehoiachin and on through David. The prophecies forbid Messiah from being human seed. However according to the law, the lineage must still be in the line of David. Jesus Christ is legally the son of Joseph. Biologically, Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Observe also Prophet Jeremiah declares his prophecy to the whole earth! Not just to Judah and Israel. An often overlooked fact is God ordains Jeremiah a prophet unto the nations. What Jeremiah says is hugely important to Gentiles. Notice in *Jeremiah 22:29* -the prophet cries out earth three times! Therefore the whole world needs to pay attention.

Jeremiah 1:4-5 *Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, **5** Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, **and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.***

Jeremiah 22:28-30 *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? 29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. 30 Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*

1 Kings 9:5 *Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.*

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

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Luke 1:30-35 *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God*

shall give unto him the throne of his father David: **33** And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. **34** Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? **35** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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

Jesus' lineage according to the flesh.

Matthew 1:6-16 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; **7** And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; **8** And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; **9** And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; **10** And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; **11** And Josias begat Jechonias

*and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: **12** And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; **13** And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; **14** And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; **15** And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; **16** And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Zedekiah; Mattaniah, Judah #19

- Judah's nineteenth king
- Zedekiah= Righteousness of Jehovah
- Length of reign: Eleven years
- Spiritual condition: Evil
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jehoiakim
- Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk
- Ruled during the onset of Babylonian captivity
- Claim to fame: Judah's Last king; Blinded by Nebuchadnezzar
- Texts: 2 Kings 24, 25 ; 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 52

Zedekiah's Outline

- Nebuchadnezzar puts Zedekiah on the throne
- Blinding Zedekiah
- The end of the beginning

Zedekiah is Judah's last king. Being Jehoiachin's father's brother, makes his father Jehoiakim. King Nebuchadnezzar sets him on Judah's throne, thus he is subservient to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar hopes Zedekiah remains easy to manage as Babylon seeks control over the region. Increasingly however, Zedekiah becomes more and more of a problem. After eleven years,

Nebuchadnezzar finally has enough of King Zedekiah. He takes Judah's remaining leaders, and any person of influence captive to Babylon. Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel add extensive information about these last days of Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar puts Zedekiah on the throne

2 Kings 24:17-20 *And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. **18** Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. **19** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. **20** For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*

Blinding Zedekiah

The Babylonian empire pursued in a campaign to conquer the whole Mesopotamian region was primarily concerned with subduing Egypt. Having already handled Judah, Nebuchadnezzar expected Zedekiah to behave. Alas Judah proved itself a continual thorn in Nebuchadnezzar's side, and in Zedekiah's ninth year, things came to a breaking point. Foolishly,

King Zedekiah believed he could withstand the Chaldean empire. He fortified Jerusalem and was able to keep a minimal force of enemy soldiers at bay outside the walls. Nebuchadnezzar moved in more troops and for two years, sealed off Jerusalem. Eventually the siege produced famine and panic. Under the cover of night, King Zedekiah and a small force of soldiers left the city and tried to escape. Nebuchadnezzar's army caught up with them in the plains of Jericho.

The Chaldean army brought King Zedekiah to see Nebuchadnezzar in the city of Riblah. Needless to say, Nebuchadnezzar was furious with his defiant subject. Years earlier, Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel delivered prophecies that until this moment seemed paradoxical. God warned Zedekiah he would be caught in a trap and taken captive to Babylon where he would die without ever seeing the physical land. The enigmatic prophecies manifested clearly when Nebuchadnezzar passed judgment on Judah's troublesome king. He forced Zedekiah to witness the killing of his sons, and then ordered Zedekiah's eyes put out. The blinded king, haunted by his last visual memory, then taken (in chains) to Babylon where he eventually died.

Ezekiel 12:13 *My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.*

Jeremiah 32:1-5 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. 2 For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. 3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; 4 And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; 5 And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper?*

2 Kings 25:1-30 *And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by*

the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about;) and the king went the way toward the plain. 5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. 6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. 7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

The End of the Beginning

For nearly a thousand years the Jews inhabited the land of Israel: *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy, 2 Chronicles 36:16.* When the age of kings concludes Israel is a spiritual disaster. God follows through on his warnings and removes his people from the land. Israel's and Judah's monarchies dissolve into Gentile captivity. But this is not the end of Israel; this is only the end of their beginning.

Around 600 BC, God used the Gentile nations Assyria and Babylon to invade and conquer Israel, scattering the Jews throughout the Mesopotamian region. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, sacked Jerusalem and burned the temple to the ground. He took a remnant of surviving Jews captive back to

Babylon. Seventy years later, a remnant returns to Israel, without a king, and rebuilt their temple. For the next 500 years Israel exists as a colony controlled by a succession of Gentile superpowers: Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. Not until New Testament times does the idea of reestablishing the monarchy even get considered.

Thought to ponder

It is interesting to compare God's concluding remarks on Judah with God's remarks on Israel. *2 Kings 17:7-41 with 2 Chronicles 36:10-23* (See Chapter Hoshea Tragic Commentary)

2 Chronicles 36:10-23 *And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem. **11** Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. **12** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. **13** And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. **14** Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and*

*polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. **15** And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: **16** But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. **17** Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. **18** And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. **19** And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. **20** And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: **21** To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

See also 2 Kings 25

Jeremiah 52:1-34 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. **2** And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. **3** For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. **4** And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. **5** So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. **6** And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. **7** Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain. **8** But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. **9** Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. **10** And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew

also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. **11** Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death. **12** Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, **13** And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: **14** And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. **15** Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. **16** But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen. **17** Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon. **18** The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. **19** And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of

gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away. **20** The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. **21** And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow. **22** And a chapter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chapter was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like unto these. **23** And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about. **24** And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: **25** He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. **26** So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. **27** And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. **28** This is the people whom

*Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty: **29** In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons: **30** In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.*

Chapter Notes

Amos 9:8-9 Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. 9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

Jeremiah 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to **this place**.

Deuteronomy 4:27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

Hosea 13:9-11 *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. **10** I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? **11** I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.*

Part Two

The Mystery of Israel

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

God's relationship with Israel stands as one of the great Bible mysteries. Israel may be viewed as a prototype of the kingdom. A prototype serves as an original model on which the coming final product is built. The kingdom of heaven's capital is Jerusalem. And the kingdom's managers and leaders will be Jewish. This explains why Satan periodically influences world leaders like Pharaoh, Ahasuerus, Hitler, and scores of others to try and exterminate the Jew. In theory, if Satan annihilates all Jews, God's kingdom could not exist. But, of course, nothing stops God's eternal intentions. Even before Israel existed, God ordained his kingdom according to his predestinated plan for Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:8 When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

2 Samuel 7:23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God

went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

Numbers 23:9 *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

God's kingdom contains two major human components, the Church and the nation of Israel. Both groups consist of individuals, and all these individuals are citizens in the kingdom. But just as we make a difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, we must also make a difference here. Unlike the Church, one cannot join Israel by believing in Jesus Christ. To be an Israelite one must be physically born a Jew. The only biblical exceptions are when a Gentile woman marries a male Jew, and even then law must concur. Approved Gentile women who married Israel's men assimilated into Israel and were considered Jews. For example Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Ruth, Bathsheba, etc.-were all Gentiles who became legally Jewish by marriage and absorbed into their husband's tribe. Even the Church; the Gentile Bride of Jesus Christ, becomes Jewish. When Christians (Bride of Christ) marry the Lord

Jesus Christ at heaven's Marriage of the Lamb- they join the tribe of Judah.

However, being a citizen of Israel does not guarantee personal salvation. In other words, for an individual to be saved, faith in Jesus Christ is necessary.

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Kingdom of God
Kingdom of Heaven

Mark 4:30 *And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the **kingdom of God?** or with what comparison shall we compare it?*

Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.*

Matthew 13:35 *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*

Parables describe and illuminate God's kingdom building plan. Jesus' parables expound on different elements or dimensions of God's kingdom. Jesus uses the term kingdom of heaven, other times he uses kingdom of God, and still other times he says only kingdom. Why does the Lord do this? What are the differences? The Bible uses discriminating language for significant reasons. Since Jesus uses parables to describe his kingdom, let us strive to understand his vocabulary.

**What is the difference between
kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God?**

A fast answer is the kingdom of God is spiritual while the kingdom of heaven is physical; however, there are overlapping similarities. As one begins to consider the differences, a good starting point observes the kingdom of God dwells inside you. It is also the invisible moral righteousness of God. The kingdom of heaven is outside you. It is the tangible, visible elements in God's government; and Israel is center stage. During Jesus' earthly ministry, he offered the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God to Israel. In the Church Age only the kingdom of God is offered.

Of course the context of Bible passages need always be considered, but usually when God employs just the word kingdom, he refers to its complete holistic form, including kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Psalms 45:6 *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*

The phrase *kingdom of heaven* is in the Bible thirty-two times; it appears only in Gospel of Matthew. Israel remains a constant factor in understanding the kingdom of heaven. On earth, the kingdom of heaven cannot exist apart from the nation of Israel.

The term kingdom of God is in the Bible sixty-nine times. Numerous parables which seem to be identical, but one gospel uses the term kingdom of God while another gospel uses kingdom of heaven. A discriminating reader learns they are not synonymous. Although similar- and sometimes identical characteristics are present, distinctions must be made. Letting the Bible interpret itself, consider these defining scriptures dealing with the kingdom of God.

Luke 17:20-21 *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: **21** Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

Romans 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

These two verses equate the kingdom of God with salvation. In other words, when one believes the gospel it is not heaven that saves a soul; it is God. The kingdom of God is not something physical or tangible. The kingdom of God is spiritual, an invisible realm dealing with moral righteousness. We see the results of righteousness, but we cannot touch it with our hands. It is like the wind. The wind, itself, is invisible, but its strength bends mighty trees,

or as the hurricane moves an ocean, only then do we view its awesome power.

God's spiritual righteousness exists even if we can't see it. A good analogy for the kingdom of God is air. Air is invisible, but air is accomplishing many things. Air is also inside a person keeping him alive. Compare this to a person not breathing, no air inside; that person is dead. The person not breathing corresponds to a person without God's spirit; such a person is dead spiritually. In this sense, the kingdom of God inside a Christian is salvation. Now consider two people standing side by side; one is a Christian with the kingdom of God inside him, the other is an unbeliever; and therefore, does not have the kingdom of God inside him. However, (and here it gets a bit complicated) the soul saving air surrounds them both. But only one is born again, because only one chooses to believe. For another comparison consider a local church where the Gospel is preached. Many people inside the church are saved, but not everyone. They are all in the building- but not all believe. So we begin to understand the discriminating separations, and the overlapping similarities of different kingdom descriptions; it is not always easy.

The kingdom of heaven, however, is always physical. It is the observable, political form of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is not inside you. It consists of actual thrones and political offices. It is the tangible structure of God's kingdom.

Consider the Second Coming- Jesus Christ returns with heaven's armies. Here we definitely observe or see a physical kingdom. One can literally understand the Second Coming as God bringing heaven's government to earth.

In a strictly doctrinal understanding, the kingdom of heaven cannot exist without the nation of Israel. When Jesus ministered on earth, he offered both the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. When Jesus speaks to Israel all kingdom descriptions are in play. The kingdom of heaven's capital is Jerusalem. And the kingdom's managers and leaders will be Jewish.

Today- in the Church Age, only the kingdom of God is offered. Christians live in the spiritual environment (*kingdom of God*) And we wait for the physical (*kingdom of heaven*) to arrive.

Thy Kingdom Come

Matthew 6:10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

The Bible tells the story of the kingdom, its past, present, and future. Just like a book's cover encloses each individual page, the concept of God building a kingdom encloses every truth in scripture, from the creation of Adam and Eve, to the future creation of a new heaven and a new earth, from the deity of Jesus Christ to Lucifer's damnation. God's

kingdom includes heaven, hell, angels, men, women, Israel, the Church, and anything else in existence. Looking at God's program from this perspective, one sees a constant logical plan steadfastly moving toward completion. Although it may be a gross oversimplification, the Bible can be viewed as a huge kingdom building political campaign.

Psalms 22:28 *For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.*

God's kingdom is a theocracy. In other words, it eventually becomes a perfect government with the Lord as King. Nearly all the prophets, in some way or another, forecast this government. Isaiah sets forth a particularly clear declaration. The scripture below remains the greatest political campaign promise ever stated.

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,** upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Isaiah (speaking around 700 BC) informs the world a child will be born who bears the world's government on his shoulders. Observe the child is called: The everlasting Father and The mighty God. The child is Jesus Christ who rules with judgment, justice, and peace. God establishes the government on the throne of David. Israel subsumes all national world governments, consequently Israel increases in size forever- eventually expanding into the universe. Ultimately this means the vast, vast majority of people going to heaven are yet to be born!

Comparing Isaiah's prophecy to God's original plans for Adam and Eve we see profound similarities. God created the first man and woman and ordered them to populate the earth, making them the first human rulers of his kingdom. Observing God's original intention provides an interpretation of the future. In Adam's dispensation of Innocence, the spirit world and physical world jelled together. Can you imagine a better heaven than Adam's and Eve's world before they fell? A sublime existence, no death, pain, or sorrow- God even selected one's perfect spouse! And with continued child birth, God planned to populate the universe. God has not changed his mind or his plan.

Genesis 1:28 *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl*

of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Isaiah 45:18 *18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.*

Israel populates outer space

Unlike the Church, the nation of Israel continues to increase in size forever and ever. Consider the promise given to Abraham some 4,000 years ago concerning population increase. These prophecies coincide perfectly with *Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end...*

Genesis 15:5 *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

Gen 22:17 *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;*

Isaiah 45:18 *For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the*

earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

To be numbered as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea demand more room than the earth can hold. When Abraham looked toward heaven, he viewed the kingdom of heaven's destiny.

Do not confuse Israel's population expansion with the Christian Church. In the future, a huge difference between Israel and the Church is men and women in Israel continue getting married and having children, whereas men and women in the Church do not reproduce. The Bride of Christ (Christians) whole population can live in New Jerusalem (a small planet) It takes an infinite universe to house Israel. No other nation receives this promise of expansion. Israel stumbles much on her journey to the stars, but her backsliding is only temporary. In righteous anger, God scattered Jews among all nations, but He has not cast away his people or withdrawn his promises. (see also Romans 11).

King David's seed and the Levites also promised infinity reproduction. Observe Jeremiah made the prophecy four centuries after David died.

1 Chronicles 27:23 *But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under:*

*because the LORD had said he would increase
Israel like to the stars of the heavens.*

Jeremiah 33:22 *As the host of heaven
cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea
measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my
servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

Thought to ponder

An estimated number of the grains of sand
on earth: 7.5×10^{18} grains of sand, or seven
quintillion, five hundred quadrillion grains. The stars
in heaven number higher, much higher.

We have no king but Caesar

Rejecting Jesus Christ

Consider with Parable Unmerciful Servant

In the first century AD, a minority of people (aware of Bible prophecies) discerned the signs of the times. Jesus' birth disturbs both the spirit world, and the political world on planet earth. Remarkably, Gentiles inquire first about Israel's coming king. Wise men traveling from the East arrive in Jerusalem and ask King Herod where the Jewish King lives. The question troubles Herod and the people. Much like the news of Jesus' Second Coming troubles the world today.

Nevertheless Jesus had arrived, and he would soon present himself to Israel as their king. For forty-two months Jesus proved himself to Israel; but Israel refused to believe. Once again the words of God go unheeded and ignored. Jesus' ministry reaches a breaking point when Pontius Pilate directly asks the Jewish people what they want him to do with their king. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* All creation waits for Israel to receive Jesus Christ.

Matthew 2:1-3 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to*

Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

John 19:14-16 *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

Hosea 10:3 *For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?*

Isaiah 7:13-14 *And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Zechariah 9:9 *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

Isa 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne** of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Matthew 21:4-5 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, **5** Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

Luke 9:22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Thought to ponder:

Juxtapose Israel's rejection of Jesus offering the kingdom in the New Testament; to Israel's rejection of the Lord's warning against asking for a human king in the Old Testament. One thousand years earlier, Israel rejected the words of God. When Israel refuses Jesus Christ they reject the Word of God. By crying out we have no king but

Caesar- History repeats itself. (See Chapter Give us a king)

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:10-11 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

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

1 Samuel 8:6-7 *But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.***

1 Samuel 8:19 -22 *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. 21 And*

Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to `Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Diaspora

After Israel rejected Jesus Christ, God scattered the Jews around the world. Jewish history refers to that scattering as the Diaspora. About thirty-five years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A great political rebellion took place in Jerusalem. Fed up with trouble in the Middle East, Roman Emperor Vespasian commanded his army to destroy Jerusalem. Rome literally dismantled the temple stone by stone, an exact fulfillment of prophecy, see *Matthew 24:2*. And by the year 135 AD, Israel was no longer even recognized by its biblical name. In a futile effort to eradicate Jewish nationalism, the world referred to Israel as Palestine, and so it remained until 1948 AD

In great sorrow, Jesus spoke these prophetic words over Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41-44 *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench*

*about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, **44** And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

***Luke 21:23-24** But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. **24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

***Deuteronomy 28:63-65** And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. **64** And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. **65** And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:*

***Zechariah 7:14** But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no*

man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate..

Amos 9:9 *For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain Fall upon the earth.*

Jews Return to the Land Unconverted

Consider with the Parables Hidden Treasure, Ten Virgins

As the Church Age comes to a close, Jews began returning to the land of Israel. Careful reading of prophecy reveals the Jews must return to Israel in an unconverted spiritual condition; a significant prophetic point. The Jews turn to God after they are in their land. Present day Israel (2010 AD) does not accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah, but they soon will. Observe the Lord gathers his people to the land of Israel twice. The first time was when the Jews returned to Israel after their Babylonian captivity. The second time started in 1948 AD.

Isaiah 11:11 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

In the past, young children sometimes sang a little song. Perhaps, you know the lyrics? *The foot bone connected to the anklebone, and the anklebone connected to the leg bone, the leg bone is connected to the hipbone etc.?* The inspiration behind that little

jingle is Prophet Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. The prophet witnessed a vision of bones joining back together, and then skin covering the bones. Ezekiel 37 predicts Israel getting back together as a nation, and then accepting the Lord as their Saviour.

Ezekiel 37:1-4 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Whenever possible let the Bible interpret itself. For example, someone asks, What are these bones? And what is Ezekiel talking about? Verse 11 answers those questions.

Ezekiel 37:11-12 *Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.*

The Bible tells us the bones are the whole house of Israel. (all twelve tribes) This chapter is more difficult than previous texts, and requires some interpretation, but by proceeding logically, and letting scripture interpret scripture truth is realized. Also, we build on knowledge already learned about the Jews being scattered.

The graves are the Gentile nations where God scattered the Jews. Notice the bones come together, and sinews and flesh are put on- and they return to the land of Israel; **but the body is not breathing.**

***Ezekiel 37:7-8** So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.*

Remember the body represents the nation of Israel. So the nation is intact just before it comes to spiritual life. God presents us with an analogy, a perfectly reasonable way to communicate. Breath causes a body to live. And until a person, (any person Jew or Gentile) accepts Jesus Christ as LORD, they are considered spiritually dead. Observe before the bones come back together, a noise and a shaking happens. This event takes place just before the nation of Israel comes back into existence. In my

opinion, the noise and shaking was World War Two, that war forced Israel into existence.

Ezekiel 37:6 *And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

Summary

Prophets predicted Israel's dispersion throughout the Middle East hundreds of years prior to the actual event. These scatterings are referred to as Diasporas. The first scattering happened around 600 BC when Babylon conquered Israel and took a remnant captive to Babylon. The second scattering happened in 70 AD.

- Prophets predict the nation Israel to be conquered, temple destroyed, and the people dispersed throughout Gentile nations.
- Prophets predict Israel returns to the land and rebuilds the temple. Fulfilled around 500 BC.
- Prophets and Jesus prophesy Israel endures a second Diaspora (scattering). This happened 70 AD- 135 AD
- Prophet Ezekiel prophesizes Israel returns to their land in an unconverted spiritual condition. Fulfilled 1948 AD
- Prophets predict Jerusalem returns to Israel. Fulfilled 1967 AD

- Jews predicted to receive Messiah Jesus in their own land. This prophecy awaits fulfillment.

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

Romans 11:25-29 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:** 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

Gentile Future

Ironically, the Jewish Diaspora is the key for interpreting the Gentiles' future. God is no respecter of persons, but he is a respecter of a nation, and Israel is a nation formed and shaped by God. Indeed, the future is written and settled. All Gentile nations end. The word of God sets in order things to come. Gentile nations continue to exist even beyond the Millennium, walking in the light of New Jerusalem *Rev. 21:23-24*, but this does not alter the prophecies. Gentile nations come to an end in the distant future. For wherever God scattered the Jew (and the scattering was to all nations) that nation ends. Eventually, Israel absorbs all saved Gentile nations.

Jeremiah 46:28 *Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; **for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee:** but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.*

Jeremiah 30:11 *For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: **though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee:** but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.*

Isaiah 40:17 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

These Gentile Nations are not part of the Christian Church. The Bride of Christ is a separate entity. Although the Bride is an integral part of God's kingdom, she has her own glorious future and is not being discussed in this chapter. Do not confuse saved Gentile nations in the Millennium, with the Christian Bride of Christ.

God's Abrahamic promises transferred to chosen seed. In other words the covenant went from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. Jacob's name changed to Israel and the promise dispensed to his twelve sons, the twelve tribes of Israel.

Genesis 32:27-28 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. **28** And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

During the Millennium, Israel becomes an absolute hegemony, and Gentiles receive blessings through the Jew. Gentile nations submitted to Israel's authority are subsumed in the Abrahamic covenant. They receive inheritance with Israel and assigned a tribe. Nations that do not submit to Israel face destruction. If all this sounds disturbing remember, at this time, Jesus Christ rules the world

from Jerusalem; Jews are servants and ambassadors for God. Refusing Israel, is the equivalent of refusing Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 60:12 *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.*

Zechariah 8:22-23 *Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. 23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

Genesis 12:2-3 *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Even today Jews are natural born leaders; however, without Jesus Christ their effectiveness and abilities diminish greatly. Christians often misappropriate *Matthew 5:13-14* to the Church. One may apply the passage to the Church in a spiritual or moral sense, but the doctrinal fact remains- Jesus said it to Israel who largely rejected him. Jews are the salt of the earth, not Christians.

All creation waits for Israel to receive Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Matthew 5:13-14 *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

Gentile Nations in the Millennium

At the beginning of the Millennium, Jesus Christ judges the world's nations determining which Gentile nations even enter the kingdom, (See Parable Sheep and Goats.) By the end of the Millennium those remaining nations are reduced even further. A great war takes place after Satan's release from the pit. He agitates the world against Jesus Christ and mounts his final attack on the kingdom of heaven. Almost unfathomably, Gentile nations surround Jerusalem and attempt to overthrow Jesus Christ. (See all Revelation 20)

Revelation 20:7-9 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the*

beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Israel absorbs all peoples

The absorption of Gentiles into specific Israeli tribes takes place at the end of the Millennium. More accurately, the legal designation and/or assigning of tribes happen at that time. Ultimately, every saved human being becomes Jewish. Prophet Ezekiel deals with Gentiles in detail. Ezekiel Chapters 40-48 records tremendous information on the Millennium Kingdom of heaven. The Millennium prophecy below provides more evidence for Israel subsuming Gentiles. The strangers are the few remaining Gentiles living in the end of the Millennium. These believing Gentiles are physically assimilated into Israel.

Ezekiel 47:21-23 *So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. 22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and **to the strangers that sojourn among you**, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. 23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.*

Isaiah 14:1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: **and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.**

Isaiah 54:3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; **and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles,** and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

Zechariah 2:11-13 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. **12** And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. **13** Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, **but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms,** and it shall stand for ever.

Num 15:15 One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for

ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.

Isa 26:15 *Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.*

Jeremiah 30:11 *For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: **though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee:** but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.*

Read Moses' address in Deuteronomy 29 carefully. Moses actually references promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Ponder the prophetic weight. Give scrutiny to the stranger who receives covenant promises verse 15. Those who are *not here with us this day* are future saved Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 29:10-15 *Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, **11** Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: **12** That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: **13** That he may establish thee to day for a people unto*

*himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. **14***

Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; **15** But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: **2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: **3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Millennium Segue to Eternity

What Christians call the Millennium, the Bible refers to as the **regeneration**. It is also called the **the rest, and the times of refreshing**.

Considering what the earth has endured over the last 6,000 years, these are well earned adjectival nouns.

Indeed this old earth, ravished by abuse; requires some serious rest and relaxation. God begins a process of restoration. And as the word regeneration implies, this old earth starts to heal. During the Millennium, God causes tremendous geographic change. God literally re-sculptures the planet, beginning the moment Jesus Christ returns to earth. His feet touch down on Mt. Olivet and a great geographic upheaval begins, the earth opens revealing a huge new valley exposing a large portion of the nether earth. Glorious treasures buried inside will once again be visible and accessible for all God's people. This wondrous opening of the earth is prophesied by Isaiah and Zechariah. Observe the Twelve Apostles sit on thrones during this era, not as kings but as judges.

Matthew 19:27-28 *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*
28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, **in the regeneration** when the Son of man shall sit in the*

throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the **times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

Isaiah 28:12 *To whom he said, This is **the rest** wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

Hebrews 4:9 *There remaineth therefore **a rest** to the people of God.*

When Jesus touches down on the Mount of Olives, the earth's regeneration begins *Mt. 19:28*. The times of refreshing arrive *Acts 3:19* Israel becomes the head of nations *Ro. 11:12*.

Zechariah 14:4 *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

Isaiah 45:3-8 *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

As the geographical regeneration continues; the changes are staggering. At this time God sets the city Zion and his Temple in Jerusalem. Presently, (2016 AD) God's Temple resides in the third heaven, but its permanent location will be planet earth. Quite literally, earth's Israel becomes the location of heaven's Jerusalem. Jesus Christ rules the Kingdom of Heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords from Jerusalem. Remember, *Isaiah 9:7* told us the government increases in size forever. Earth, then, is only the beginning.

Notice how God actually transplants geography and architecture from the third heaven and places them in Israel.

Ezekiel 43:7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, **where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever**, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.

Ezekiel 37:26-28 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, **and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them:** yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **28** And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Isaiah 2:1-5 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. **2** And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; **and all nations shall flow unto it. 3** And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the

*LORD from Jerusalem. **4** And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. **5** O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.*

Zechariah 14:9-10 *And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. **10** All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.*

Psalm 48:1-2 *A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. **2** Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*

Hebrews 13:14 *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

Rightly divide the age

Remember during the Millennium: the new earth (and New Jerusalem) are not even created. After the rapture, Christians live in the third heaven

for only a few years. Although Christians receive incorruptible bodies, and are married to Jesus Christ, they return to earth with Christ at his Second Coming. They live on this earth for 1,000 years, before moving to New Jerusalem. New Jerusalem is a 1,000 year anniversary present for the Christian Church, the Bride of Christ.

River of Life

The earth's regeneration is largely a consequence of the river of life emanating from the throne of God. Everywhere the water flows it heals and restores. When the supernatural water touches salt water, the water becomes fresh and fish live abundantly. Along the banks of Zion the tree of life grows in orchards. As one contemplates the river of life, the word regeneration perfectly describes what's happening to the planet. Do not confuse this eternal city of Zion with New Jerusalem.

The Christians' eternal home (New Jerusalem) is described very meticulously in Revelation 21. Remember God's Throne sits in his Temple and there is no Temple in New Jerusalem, *Revelation 21:22*. God's throne is on earth. God finished describing New Jerusalem in chapter 21. That's why the chapter ended. In chapter 22, God describes Jerusalem on the earth.

Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Revelation 22:1-3 *And he shewed me a pure river of **water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.** 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

Ezekiel 47:1-11 *Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, **behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward:** for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. 2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. 3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles. 4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to*

the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. **6** And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. **7** Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. **8** Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, **the waters shall be healed.** **9** **And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.** **10** And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. **11** But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt..

Beulah Land

Isaiah 62: 4 *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*

- **Beulah defined means married.**
- **Hephzibah defined means my delight is in her"**

Everything in the physical world represents spiritual truth. God uses the terms adultery, fornication, and whoredom numerous times throughout the Bible to describe Israel's idolatry and backsliding. Adultery exemplifies the highest act of treason a person can commit against her/his spouse. Nothing crushes an innocent and loving wife/husband as does this sin. Nor is there anything that so jeopardizes a relationship; thus, God chose this sin to metaphorically describe his own feelings when believers step out on him. By this I mean when believers love or worship people or things more than God. Not to be overlooked is the fact that the consequence for such actions provoked God to divorce Israel. (Temporarily)

God the Father refers to the land of Israel in female gender. The Jews, collectively, God calls his wife, albeit an adulterous one. God sets aside his wife but one day he reinstates his marriage.

(Carefully reading all texts reveal God never divorced the remnant preserved in Judah.)

In the Millennium the Jews are married to God the Father. Not to be confused with God the Son's marriage to the Christian Church; Israel is not the Bride of Christ. Beulah land is not the Christian's New Jerusalem. Beulah land is a redeemed Israel living in a regenerating earth. Things different are not the same.

When the Jews receive Jesus Christ, the land itself regenerates.

Isaiah 62:1-6 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. **2** And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. **3** Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. **4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 5** For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over

***thee. 6** I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,*

But until Israel receives Jesus Christ her marriage to God is set aside

***Jeremiah 3:8-9** And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

***2 Chronicles 21: 13** But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab,...*

This estranged marriage interrupts quite emotionally with Israel taken captive and dispersed throughout Assyria. And then, quite specifically, when Judah begins her Babylonian captivity. Again, notice God refers to the land of Israel in female gender.

***2 Chronicles 36:20-21** And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: **21** To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths:*

for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Mysteriously, the land itself is sacred. Observe the language interplay concerning Israel, the land, and an adulterous wife.

Jeremiah 3:1-11 *They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. 2 Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. 3 Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. 4 Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? 5 Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest. 6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.*

Jeremiah 3: 8 *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9* And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. **10** *And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. 11* And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

Jeremiah 3: 12 *Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. 13* Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. **14** Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: **15** And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. **16** And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the

*LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. **17** At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. **18** In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. **19** But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.*

Jeremiah 3: 20 *Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. **21** A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God. **22** Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. **23** Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. **24** For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth;*

*their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. **25** We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.*

David King of Israel

- Israel's king
- David= Beloved
- Length of reign: For ever
- Spiritual condition: Good
- Tribe: Judah
- Father's name: Jesse
- Prophets: All of them
- Rules during the Rest-Eternity
- Claim to fame: Killed Goliath, Wrote Psalms, Rules during Millennium-Eternity
- Texts: *Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 37:21-28, Psalms 89*

David's Outline

- **Rightly dividing thrones**
- David's throne
- God chooses David forever
- God promises David's seed to increase forever

David's walk impressed the Lord. God's epithet to David is important. Although David's life suffered several setbacks and even serious sin, something about the way David handles repentance, humility, and commitment should be carefully studied. God makes numerous favorable moral comparisons to David throughout scripture.

- At least twenty times God calls David *my servant* .
- *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, Acts 13:22, 1 Samuel 13:14*
- King David authored a large portion of the Psalms, which reveal his whole heart, devotion, and love toward God.
- In eternity God makes David king of Israel for ever. *Ezekiel 37:24-25*

Rightly dividing thrones

In the Millennium God relocates heaven's Temple on earth. Inside the Temple is God's Throne. An important distinction of the historical Jewish temples built on earth by human hands-is no throne exists inside earth's temples. All of Judah's kings sat on a throne, but their thrones were not in the temple, they were in a palace. Likewise in the Millennium, David rules as a king, from a throne in a palace. King Jesus Christ rules from God's Throne inside the Temple.

Ezekiel 43:7 *And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.*

Zechariah 6:12-13 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: **13** Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Psalms 48:2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Psalms 11:4 The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Revelation 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

David's throne

Historically, the throne of David represented earth's ruling power of the kingdom of heaven. Of course Israel's government never even came close to fulfilling its destiny. Nevertheless God's anointed Jewish kings held legal rights to rule the world. HOWEVER an important contingency need manifest! The Lord demanded Israel's kings' absolute submission to God's holy law. And to that end Israel's monarchy failed miserably. By the Millennium, Israel receives Jesus Christ, and the Jews prepare for their role as custodians for the kingdom of heaven.

In the future the throne of David will be occupied by the Lord Jesus Christ, *Isaiah 9:7; Psalm 132:11* But this does not mean David never sits on a throne again. Of course David lives in eternity, and God gives him another throne beneath the King of kings.

Psalms 132:11 *The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

God chooses David

God's kingdom exists on a Jewish platform, but a Jewish platform that acknowledges Jesus Christ as Messiah. Jesus Christ rules Israel and the entire kingdom of heaven. But remember, Jesus is King of kings; therefore other kings sit beneath him. Observe hundreds of years after David died, God promises David lives and rules again. God appoints David a king of Israel. God promises David a throne forever.

Jeremiah 30:9 *But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.*

Ezekiel 37:21-28 *And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: **22** And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; **and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23** Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: **so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24** And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall*

have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. **25** And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: **and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.** **26** Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, **and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.** **27** My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **28** And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

When Ezekiel wrote, King David had been dead for several hundred years. The passage concerns the future. God resurrects David to be Israel's prince and rule forever. (See also 2 Samuel 7:8-19)

David's seed promised to increase for ever

Just as God promised Abraham, he promises King David's progeny to increase surpassing the number of the stars. These prophecies coincide perfectly with *Isaiah 9:7, of the increase of his*

government and peace there shall be no end.. To be numbered as the stars and the sands of the sea demand more room than the earth can hold. When Abraham and David looked toward the heavens, they viewed the kingdom of heaven's destiny. The Jew populates heaven.

Jeremiah 33:22 *As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

1 Chronicles 27:23 *But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens.*

Genesis 15:5 *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

Psalms 89:3-4 *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

Isaiah 45:18 *For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.*

Future Judges

With all the history and developments under kings, it's easy to forget about judges, but Isaiah informs Israel God plans to restore judges in his coming kingdom. Calling Jerusalem the *city of righteousness* and the *faithful city* identifies the age as the Millennium. 700 years after Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus identifies those judges. When the apostles ask about their future, Jesus informs them they rule as judges in the age to come. *Matthew 19:27-28; Luke 22:28-30*

Before Jesus left earth, the apostles wondered when the kingdom comes; they anticipated with great excitement their new positions. Imagine knowing exactly what your job is in heaven. Peter and the apostles were being responsible when they realized they had to replace Judas Iscariot. Since Jesus promised 12 thrones, and now there were only 11 apostles- there was no doubt what the first order of business had to be.

Isaiah 1:25-27 *And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: 26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. 27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*

Matthew 19:27-28 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? **28** And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, **ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Luke 22:28-30 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. **29** And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; **30** That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, **and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Acts 1:6-9 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? **7** And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. **8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. **9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Kings' Chart: At a Glance

Kings rule in Judah and Israel simultaneously. The chart below provides an approximation for historical context.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| 2909 years since Adam | | | | |
| United Israel | | | | |
| Saul rules forty years | | | | |
| David rules forty years | | | | |
| Solomon rules forty years | | | | |
| | | | | |
| 3029 years since Adam | | | | |
| Divided Israel | | | | |
| Judah | Reigned | | Israel | Reigned |
| 1. Rehoboam | 17 years | | 1. Jeroboam I | 22 years |
| 2. Abijah | 3 years | | 2. Nadab | 2 years |
| 3. Asa | 41 years | | 3. Baasha | 24 years |
| | | | 4. Elah | 2 years |
| | | | 5. Zimri | 7 days |
| | | | 6. Omri | 12 years |
| 4. Jehoshaphat | 25 years | | 7. Ahab | 22 years |
| 5. Jehoram | 8 years | | 8. Ahaziah | 2 years |
| 6. Ahaziah | 1 years | | 9. Joram | 12 years |
| Queen Athaliah | 6 years | | 10. Jehu | 28 years |
| 7. Joash | 40 years | | 11. | 17 years |

| | | | | |
|----------------|----------|--|-----------------|----------|
| | | | Jehoahaz | |
| 8. Amaziah | 29 years | | 12. Jehoash | 16 years |
| 9. Uzziah | 52 years | | 13. Jeroboam II | 41 years |
| | | | 14. Zechariah | 6 mo |
| | | | 15. Shallum | 1 mo |
| | | | 16. Menahem | 10 years |
| | | | 17. Pekahiah | 2 years |
| 10. Jotham | 16 years | | | |
| 11. Ahaz | 16 years | | 18. Pekah | 20 years |
| 12. Hezekiah | 29 years | | 19. Hoshea | 9 years |
| | | | Captivity | |
| | | | Captivity | |
| | | | Captivity | |
| | | | Captivity | |
| 13. Manasseh | 55 years | | Captivity | |
| 14. Amon | 2 years | | Captivity | |
| 15. Josiah | 31 years | | Captivity | |
| 16. Jehoahaz | 3 months | | Captivity | |
| 17. Jehoiakim | 11 years | | Captivity | |
| 18. Jehoiachin | | | Captivity | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|--|-----------|--|
| 19. Zedekiah | 11 years | | Captivity | |
| Captivity | | | | |
| Captivity | | | | |
| Captivity | | | | |
| | | | | |

| |
|------------------------------------------|
| The Millennium |
| <i>Jesus Christ King of kings</i> |
| David |
| Twelve Apostles Judging Israel |
| |

Parable Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

Elements needing definition:

- Man
- Treasure
- Field

Analysis and interpretation:

Finding the correct explanation begins by building on what we already know, and asking questions we need to ask. What is the treasure? What made the field cost so much? Why did the man hide his treasure? In every parable in Matthew 13, the man typifies Jesus Christ, and the field represents the world.

A common mistake makes the man a lost person, thus concluding the treasure is personal salvation. Several problems dissuade such an interpretation. The main problem is one cannot buy salvation; salvation is a free gift. Secondly, salvation is not hidden away. The proper behavior for Christians announces salvation to the world. Witnessing about getting saved is the exact opposite

of hiding it. Remember- correct interpretation never violates correct doctrine.

The Bible leaves no doubt as to the treasure's identity; the treasure is Israel. God did indeed purchase Israel and the Church. This further proves the man is Jesus Christ. The transaction's cost was the highest price possible; heaven affords no more. The price paid: Jesus' crucifixion- the shed blood of the Son of God.

Psalms 135:4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his **peculiar treasure**.

Exodus 19:5-6 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a **peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth is mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:6-7 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? **is not he thy father that hath bought thee?** hath he not made thee, and established thee? **7** Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Analysis and interpretation continued:

As to why Jesus buried Israel: The act of burying Israel typifies God scattering Jews in the world. Israeli historians call this the Diaspora. For nearly 2,000 years Israel remained buried in the world. Presently (2010 AD), Israel as a nation exists again, but the identity of Israel's twelve tribes remains mostly hidden; only God knows their location.

With Israel's return in 1948 AD, God began unearthing his buried treasure. A day is coming when all Israel accepts Jesus Christ as their Messiah. And every individual tribe returns to the land God gave them. The prophecy literally fulfills in the Tribulation period when 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe, return to the land *Revelation 7:4-8*. God warns the Gentile church, in no uncertain terms, God is not done with Israel. His hidden treasure once again proves to be the apple of God's eye. *Deuteronomy 32:9-10. Romans chapter 11.*

Deuteronomy 28:63-65 *And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. 64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease,*

neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 *And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, **2** And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; **3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. **4** If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: **5** And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. **6** And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.***

Zechariah 12:10-11 *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: **and they shall look upon me whom they have***

*pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. **11** In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.*

***Romans 11:25-27** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **26** And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: **27** For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

Elements defined:

- **Man:** Jesus
- **Field:** World
- **Treasure:** Israel
- **Purchase price:** The blood of Jesus Christ

***1 Peter 1:18-20** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

Parable Vineyard's Wicked Husbandmen

Matthew 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19

Consider with Naboth's vineyard. 1st Kings 21

Matthew 21:33-45 *Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: **34** And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. **35** And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. **36** Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. **37** But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. **38** But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. **39** And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. **40** When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? **41** They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. **42***

*Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? **43** Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. **44** And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. **45** And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.*

Elements needing definition:

- Householder
- Vineyard
- Winepress
- Tower
- Husbandmen
- Far country
- Servants
- Other husbandmen
- Fruit
- Householder's Son
- Another Nation

Analysis and interpretation:

Several elements interpreted in previous parables remain consistent: The certain householder remains God the Father. His only beloved son is

Jesus Christ. God is represented by two elements in this parable, the householder and the son. Ironically, this parable is directed squarely at Israel's leadership who steadfastly reject the triune God.

Israel is the vineyard-always. Throughout Israel's Old Testament Israel's husbandmen (Jewish rulers) were responsible for the vineyard. God hedges- or fortifies and provides Israel with divine protection. The tower is the highest visible structure in a city. In the parable it represents the power and proclamation of God. In other words, all the nations see or hear God's name going forth from Israel, thus the tower typifies God's words.

The label House of Israel is in the Bible 146 times. The vineyard analogy for Israel is well established in the Old Testament. The metaphor correlates with Isaiah's parable. Examine Isaiah's parable side by side with Matthew's.

Isaiah 5:1-7 *Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have*

*been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? **5** And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: **6** And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. **7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.***

When the householder goes away to a far country (heaven), he keeps an eye on his property by sending numerous servants to give instructions to the husbandmen. Although God commissioned husbandmen to maintain his nation, (like kings) they often failed and eventually succumbed completely to sin and idolatry. Over and over God sent prophets (servants) to correct and encourage his people to repent. And over and over again husbandmen abused and ignored them. Last of all God the Father sent his only beloved Son, whom Israel rejected and killed.

Because God sends his only son last of all- we know all the previous activity took place in Old Testament times, and concludes in the era of the

First Advent . In fact, one of the last prophetic rebukes Israel receives during Jesus ministry- from the Lord himself. Talking face to face with the Pharisees, priests, and scribes:

Mt 21:39 directly equates with Jesus' crucifixion. The consequence of Israel rejecting Christ displayed in Mt. 21:43-45, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Romans.

The Vineyard's Wicked Husbandmen parable reveals a very dark truth about Israel's leadership during the earthly ministry of Christ. Rejecting Jesus Christ was not just a mistake or simply failing to identify the Messiah. Observe *Matthew 21:38-39* they recognize Jesus as the Father's Son. No doubt many of the common people were ignorant, but not the scribes and Pharisees. They knew Jesus was the Messiah, and nefariously rallied the people to reject and crucify him. Their actions were satanic. These particular husbandmen are at war with God (like King Ahab). To further substantiate this fact, Jesus brings up *Psalms 118*, and identifies himself as the head cornerstone, the most important part of a building. In spite of the Jewish leaders' rebellion, Jesus continued to plead with them even after his crucifixion and resurrection through the ministry of the Apostles. But Israel's national leadership never did produce any fruit. They continue in the same pattern as the Old Testament kings of Israel.

Matthew 21:38 *But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39* *And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.*

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

The parable finished in *Matthew 21:40*, when Jesus asks people to think about the story. Jesus asks, *What shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?* It is the people who answer, *Matthew 21:41* The husbandmen who eventually bear fruit in their seasons are saved Jews during the Tribulation, thus the Bible student observes Jesus talks about both the First and Second Advent in the same passage.

In-between the First and Second Advent is the Church Age, the mystery revealed by Apostle Paul. Because Israel's rejects Jesus Christ, God temporarily entrusts Israel's spiritual rights (righteousness, and evangelizing) to another nation. Observe the kingdom of God is given to the other nation-not the kingdom of Heaven. This does not mean Christianity replaces Israel; it means the Church operates within the kingdom of God proving that Jesus is indeed the Christ, and communicating the way of salvation to all persons. The Church produces fruit for the next 2,000 years.

Matthew 21:43 *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

Israel remains uniquely responsible for the kingdom of Heaven:- past, present, future. If the reader is not familiar with the differences between the two kingdoms, see chapter Kingdom of God; Kingdom of Heaven. Israel as a nation temporarily loses its commission to run the kingdom. God restores Israel to full operational status in the Millennium.

Another Nation is the Church, the Bride of Jesus Chris

1 Peter 2:9-10 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: **10** Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

Romans 11:25-26 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **26** And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written,*

There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

Tower

God hedges- or fortifies and provides Israel with divine protection. The tower is the highest visible structure in a city. In the parable it typifies power and proclamation of God. In other words, God's name goes forth from Israel. And Jerusalem is the city of the great king, Jesus Christ. The whole world sees the high tower in Israel. All people hearing the name Israel think about the Bible and God. This constant omnipresent witness typifies the words of God, which continually identifies the Lord Jesus Christ

Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

2 Samuel 22:3 *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.*

2 Samuel 22:51 *He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.*

Psalms 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

Husbandmen

Jesus declares history and the future directly to Israel's leadership. The wicked husbandmen typify Jewish leaders prior to and during Jesus' 1st Advent. The husbandmen who bring forth fruit in their season represent Jews in the Tribulation. The Lord's scathing rebuke found in Mt. 23 is very close to an interpretation of the parable.

Matthew 23:29-33 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, **30** And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. **31** Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. **32** Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. **33** Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

Servants

Throughout the Old Testament, God sends prophet after prophet, and even several good kings to plead with his people to repent and serve him. God consistently looks for good fruit from his favored vineyard. Israel's history manifests brief periods of righteousness, but usually the people continue to rebel producing wild grapes. In spite of this backsliding, God hedges Israel with supernatural protection. Outside God's providence, there is no reasonable explanation why Israel still exists. After everything the nation experienced, Israel should be long forgotten. But Israel survives! Soon the winepress of tribulation will turn Israel to their Messiah.

Matthew 23:34-39 *Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: **35** That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. **36** Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. **37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! **38** Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. **39** For I say unto you, Ye shall*

not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Historical summary: Acts 7(whole chapter) helps interpret the parable with detailed historical analysis. Consider the parable as you read the closing lines of Steven's great sermon preached to Israel's leaders.

Acts 7:51-53 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Elements defined

- **Householder:** God
- **Beloved Son:** Jesus Christ
- **Vineyard:** Israel
- **Winepress:** Process to produce Fruit (persecution)
- **Tower:** means to manifest God. God's words
- **Husbandmen:** Jewish leadership throughout history.
- **Far country:** Heaven
- **Servants:** Prophets to Israel/Judah

- **Other husbandmen:** Jewish leaders in Tribulation
- **Fruit:** God's righteousness, holy good works
- **Another Nation:** The Bride/Christian Church

Parable Unmerciful Servant

Matthew 18:23-25

Matthew 18:23-35 *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity*

*on thee? **34** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. **35** So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

Elements needing definition

King
Wicked Servant
Fellow servant
Sorry servants
10,000 talents
100 pence
Debt
Prison
Tormentors

Analysis and interpretation

The parable portrays Israel's constant ingratitude toward God, as well as their treatment of fellow countrymen. A doctrinal mandate for Jews is forgiveness of one another. God does not grant forgiveness to a Jew unless the Jew forgives his brother. This is a unique doctrine given to Israel; it is not Church Age doctrine. Although Christians should forgive one another, and not doing so will adversely affect them at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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

Mark 11:25-26 *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. **26** But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

Throughout the centuries, Israel rode a roller coaster of righteousness and backsliding. During the period of judges, Israel persisted in a constant cycle of rebellion and then repentance. God forgives and restores them, only to see Israel return to disobedience. God used Gentile nations to punish Israel over and over again.

In the age of kings, things were not much different. Israel split into two nations, Judah and Israel. Northern Israel's ten tribes never once repented of the sins of idolatry. (See Ten Virgins parable) God finally had enough and used Assyria to conquer and disperse the Jews throughout the region. Judah served the Lord erratically, but eventually succumbed to idolatry. God used Babylon to conquer and enslave Judah. God forcing Jews to live among Gentiles is called the captivity.

In the New Testament, the Samaritans were the remains of the scattered ten tribe nation of Israel. The Jews refused to acknowledge Samaritans as fellow Israelites. Remember God gave the wicked servant responsibilities to minister to the nation of Israel! Priests and Pharisees' actually denied religious participation to many of their fellow Jews. Even after all the forgiveness and mercy God bestowed upon them, they refused to forgive their own brothers. They also refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Just as God used Babylon in 586 BC to conquer, disperse, and enslave the Jews, God had Rome judge Israel in 70 AD.

Tormentors and Prison: Tormentors are the Gentiles throughout history, past, present, future. Gentile nations tormented Jews in the Diaspora .This torment continues right through the Church Age.

The captivity is Jews being imprisoned in Gentile nations. The Jews endured captivity and torment for 2,500 years at the hands of Gentiles. Consider the constant pogroms, the holocaust, and even current terrorism going on today. If the Jew is not in the land of Israel, he is in captivity.

Jeremiah 29:17-20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them

*like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. **18** And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: **19** Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD. **20** Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon:*

***Isaiah 42:24-25** Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. **25** Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.*

Deuteronomy 28:15-20** But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: **16** Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. **17** Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. **18

Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. 20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

Torments describe Israel's suffering. But, just as the parable predicts, these torments will end. At that time the Jews, both Judah and Israel, unite into one nation. And then finally Israel becomes the head of all nations in the kingdom of heaven. When Israel acknowledges Jesus Christ as Messiah, the Millennium dawns upon mankind and the Jews become world leaders.

Israel's debt will indeed be satisfied:

***Deuteronomy 30:1-6** And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have*

compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. **4** If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: **5** And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. **6** And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Zechariah 8:13-16 And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. **14** For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: **15** So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. **16** These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

Zechariah 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that

is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

All the servants, in this parable, represent Israel, more precisely individual Jews: (wicked servant, fellow servant, sorry servants) Christians are also called servants, but rightly dividing this parable puts these servants in the Tribulation as they wait for Jesus' Second Advent. Israel as a nation enjoys favor with God, but that does not guarantee an individual's salvation. God is no respecter of persons, although he is a great respecter of nations, especially Israel. Some servants are saved some are not.

Isaiah 41:8-10 *But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. 9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. 10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Isaiah 44:21-23 *Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. 22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. 23*

Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Since the parable discusses three types of servants; it is necessary to identify each group. The wicked servant has the greatest responsibility and debt; therefore, he holds the highest ruling position. Debt represents the amount of sin for which the servants are guilty. The wicked servant typifies leadership of Israel- the Pharisees, priests, scribes, Sadducees, lawyers, etc. Specifically, the wicked servants are the self-righteous leadership alive at the First Coming of Jesus Christ. These leaders were unforgiving and severe to their own people. John the Baptist continually urged them to repent. Both Jesus and John recognized these wicked servants' authority, but warned them of their sin. The wicked servant is in desperate need of forgiveness from the Lord. In the verses below, notice how Jesus separates the leaders from regular citizens.

Matthew 23:1-5 *Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on*

men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Matthew 3:5-8 *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

Wicked Servant owing 10,000 talents:

The money owed represents debt impossible to pay; with the greatest debt attributed to the wicked servant (leadership). The judgment on leadership is severe. The more a man has- the more God expects from him. Debt is not the price of anyone's salvation! It has to do with expected duty and responsibility.

Fellow servant owing 100 pence: The fellow servant typifies another Israelite also needing forgiveness. (From man as well as God) A much lesser debt but still impossible to pay, forgiveness is the only remedy. The self-righteous priests and Pharisees looked down upon the common people.

The insensitive religious leaders often threw people out of synagogues and dis-fellowshipped them.

Sorry servants who go to the Lord.

Compassionate toward their brothers, these servants are forgiving Jews among the general population of Israel. Observe no debt is required of them; they are forgiven.

Elements defined

King: God

Wicked Servant: Religious leadership of Israel throughout the ages.

Fellow servant: Common Israel

Sorry servants: Repentant, believing Israel

10,000 talents: Sin and guilt of Israel's leaders

100 pence: Guilt of common Israel's citizens

Debt: Personal guilt impossible to pay

Prison: Captivity, in Gentile nations (Diaspora) 700 BC- 1948/ present era

Tormentors: Gentiles that persecute Israel

Addendum warning:

This parable exemplifies the importance of correctly identifying a parable's elements, as well as rightly dividing the dispensation for doctrinal application. If this parable is incorrectly applied to the Church Age- then a Christian's salvation is contingent upon forgiving other Christians. If one

defines servants as Christians then one opposes the doctrine of eternal security. Furthermore, if one teaches the tormentors in prison represent hell, then the parable teaches hell is temporary. There are those who use this parable to justify belief in purgatory- or the idea that hell is not permanent. Incorrectly dividing God's words can create false doctrine.

Parable Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

Consider with the history ten tribe northern Kingdom of Israel. (See Chapters Introduction; God Divides Israel)

Matthew 25:1-13 *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

Elements needing definition:

- Ten virgins
- Virgins sleeping and slumbering
- Five foolish virgins
- Five wise virgins
- Bridegroom
- Bride (never mentioned but implied)
- Marriage
- Lamp(s)
- Oil
- Vessel
- Oil Sellers

Analysis and interpretation:

The parable teaches very involved information, but we can immediately identify several elements. The marriage is the Marriage of the Lamb; Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom; with his bride being the Church. Since the Marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven while the Great Tribulation is happening on earth, the parable provides precise doctrinal and time-line information. With five virgins ready to go and then removed from earth to attend Jesus' wedding, the parable documents a rapture during the Tribulation. And since the Bride is already in heaven preparing for her wedding, the parable confirms a pre-great Tribulation rapture for Christians.

**Who are the virgins?
why are there ten?**

Numerous reasons forbid interpreting the virgins as the Christian Church. The Church is one chaste virgin -not ten. (2nd Cor. 11:2). The Church is the singular Bride of Christ not multiple brides (Re. 21:9). And since scripture declares the Church one body (Ro. 12:4) it never divides by leaving ½ behind. Likewise, the virgins cannot be the world because five (at least) go to heaven. And, of course, the world goes to hell. Therefore, the virgins, in some capacity, represent Israel. Interestingly, God seals 144,000 Jewish virgins during Daniel's 70th Week, 12,000 from each of Israel's twelve tribes. Virgins definitely connect with Israel.

Revelation 7:4 *And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

Revelation 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

Why ten virgins? Knowing Israel consists of twelve tribes, twelve virgins would seem more logical, especially if the 144,000 have anything to do with the interpretation.

In 975 BC God divided Israel into two separate kingdoms: Judah's two-tribe kingdom and the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. While God preserved a remnant from each tribe within Judah, Israel's historical division remains an established fact. Tribes Benjamin and Judah exist in the south, and the remaining ten tribes in the north. Israel remains divided until the Millennium. In the parable each virgin represents one tribe from the northern kingdom of Israel. Ten virgins represent Israel's 10 tribe northern kingdom.

To understand the parable clearly, we must examine Israel's division with some scrutiny. Under King Solomon, great political and spiritual crisis took place. Prophecy delivered by Ahijah is a key to understanding the ten virgins. (See Chapter God Divides Israel)

1 Kings 11:29-35 *And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: **30** And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: **31** And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: **32** (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the*

tribes of Israel:.) **33** Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. **34** Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: **35** But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. See also (1 Kings 12:20-24)

From these Scriptures we learn the great division of Israel. A short time after this divide, King Jeroboam committed a terrible sin. Worried about keeping his kingdom intact, Jeroboam created a false religious system to take the place of true worship. Israel never repudiated nor repented their idolatrous religion. (See Chapter Sins of Jeroboam; Alternative Religion)

1 Kings 12:26-30 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: **27** If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. **28** Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two

*calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. **29** And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. **30** And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.*

The northern kingdom of Israel remained in idolatry until God used the Assyrians to conquer them. Around 721 BC God scattered Israel throughout Mesopotamia. Truly for the ten tribes, Diaspora had begun.

***Amos 9:9** For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

During Daniel's 70th Week (also called Jacob's Trouble) God still recognizes the division of Israel and Judah. This is very important. **Ten virgins represent only the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel.** They do not represent the two tribes Judah and Benjamin. This interpretation allows the parable to speak in exact, mathematical terms.

**GOD STILL ACKNOWLEDGES THE DIVISION
IN TRIBULATION**

Jeremiah 30:1-7 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.*

Why the virgins sleep and slumber. The virgins sleep because they still do not know Jesus is Messiah. Israel's spiritual consciousness toward God compares to someone sleeping. During the Dispensation of Grace, Israel sleeps deeply. God established the symbolism long ago.

Isaiah 29:10 *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

Since the virgins also slumber, Israel slowly wakes up during the Tribulation. Five virgins actually go to the wedding. Indeed the purpose of the Great Tribulation is to wake up Israel. With the dispensation securely identified, the parable begins to unravel.

Who is the bridegroom? The bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist clearly identified Jesus as the bridegroom. Jesus, himself, confirmed it.

John 3:27-29 *John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

Matthew 9:14-15 *Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

Who is the bride? The bride is the Church. Christians living in the Dispensation of Grace compose the bride. Before the Great Tribulation happens on earth, the Bride is taken to heaven for her marriage. Therefore, Jesus invites the virgins to his wedding, the greatest royal wedding of all time.

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Revelation 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

Where does the wedding take place?

Since five virgins go to meet the bridegroom, they went with Jesus to the marriage. The wedding takes place in the third heaven toward the end of the Tribulation period. The first ten verses in Revelation 19 takes place prior to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. This also proves a rapture for saved Jews before the Great Tribulation ends.

Revelation 19:9 *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

The virgins with oil in their vessels attend the wedding. The virgins seem more than just guests at the wedding. As we shall see, they are part of the ceremony. Psalm 45 is a description of the heavenly wedding. Notice virgins (plural) follow the bride. These are the five virgins ready to go.

Psalms 45:13-17 *The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. 15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace. 16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. 17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

What is the lamp? The lamp is the word. God's Book! Little commentary is necessary here. The Bible interprets itself. And since the virgins represent Israel- **The Lamp is the Old Testament.**

Psalms 119:105 *NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

What is the oil? We now arrive at a place where traditional interpretation fails. Historical opinion teaches oil typifies the Holy Spirit, but that

cannot be. In the first place, the virgins go and buy oil; the Holy Ghost is not for sale. Like salvation- the Holy Ghost cannot be bought. Accurate parable interpretation never contradicts correct doctrine. A remarkable passage from Acts demonstrates this truth. Consider Simon's attempt to buy the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:18-20 *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

Oil is not a type of the Holy Ghost; oil is a type of the words of God. The words are the fuel for the lamp. And the fuel provides the light. Consider these verses associating the words of God with light. The words themselves give the light.

Psalms 119:130 *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

Hosea 6:5 *Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.*

Isa 8:20 *To the law and to the testimony:
if they speak not according to this word, it is
because there is no light in them.*

Their lamps contain oil typifying God's words contained within the Old Testament. This makes sense because Jews reject the New Testament. And Old Testament verses interpret the text. **The oil specifically represents the words of God.** And since the Jews refuse Jesus Christ is Messiah, it makes sense they are missing some of the Bible. That is why two separate objects in the parable hold oil, lamps and vessels. ***(4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.)***

Discriminating reading reveals the foolish virgins' lamps went out, which means the lamps burned a little while, and therefore contained some oil-but not enough. They ran out of words. The Old Testament is not enough oil.

Matthew 25:7 *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

What is the vessel?

The vessel containing more oil or more words of God is the New Testament. One cannot buy the

Holy Ghost, but one can buy a New Testament. Remember the parable deals with Jews accepting Jesus during the Great Tribulation. And Jews accepting Jesus is synonymous with believing the New Testament. Five of the ten-tribe nation of Israel believes in Jesus Christ early enough to attend his wedding. In other words, God removes (raptures) five virgins to attend his wedding. The five foolish virgins who don't have enough oil are Jews trying to go to the wedding without believing in the New Testament. They thought the Old Testament was enough.

The nation of Judah awoke first- earlier in the Tribulation- this further establishes why there are ten virgins and not twelve. With five tribes from Israel and two tribes from Judah, this means seven tribes attend the Lamb's Marriage as wedding guests.

Zechariah 12:7 *The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.*

What happens to the five foolish virgins? To answer this question consider what Jesus says to the virgins he turns away.

Matthew 25:10-13 *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.11 Afterward came also the other*

virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Jesus does not say anything about the virgins going to hell. Rather he says "I know you not" because they are unprepared. Without believing the New Testament; they remain unbelieving Jews. Read verse 13 very carefully. Jesus gives a direct command to wait for the return of the Son of man; in other words, wait for the 2nd Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So now five foolish virgins consider why they were left behind. Their fellow virgins gave them some advice just before Jesus took them away. Look closely at the dialog just before the five virgins left.

Matthew 25:7-11 *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*

Matthew 25:9 *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: **but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.** 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

Verse 25:9 told them to buy oil for themselves. And this is exactly what they do. In verse 25:10, they go to buy oil. A discerning read of verse 11 reveals they found oil, but it was too late. Notice when the foolish virgins return they are now calling the Bridegroom- Lord. So the obvious question is from whom did they buy the oil? Or as the type implies, who led them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Analysis and interpretation thus far:

The parable is prophetic revelation taking place in the Great Tribulation period.

The ten virgins are ten tribes from the northern kingdom of Israel.

Israel is gradually waking up to the New Testament truths regarding Jesus Christ.

The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bride is the Church (Christians)

The wedding takes place in the 3rd heaven toward the end of the Great Tribulation.

½ of Israel accepts Jesus in time to be invited to the wedding.

The lamps are Old Testaments.

The vessels are New Testaments.

The oil is the words of God.

From whom did they buy the oil?

Since the dispensation is Jacob's Trouble, we search prophecies pertaining to that time.

Interestingly, two prophets during the Great Tribulation control a bowl of oil (New Testament Truth) and these two prophets convince unsaved Jews that Jesus is their Messiah. Many Bible students believe these two anointed ones are Moses and Elijah. *(At this point in the study it matters not who they are)* What matters is they have oil.

Zechariah chapter 4 and Revelation chapter 11 serve as companion texts for the ten virgins' parable. The two individuals are the two prophets in Daniel's 70th Week. Metaphor remains consistent with the symbolism in the parable. As one reads the following Scriptures notice the two prophets hold a bowl of oil and they control dispensing that oil.

Zechariah 4:1-14 *And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? ...*

11 *Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?*

12 And I answered again, and said unto him, **What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?** **13** And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. **14** Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Here, scripture speaks in symbolism, but after the symbolism is interpreted- it becomes exact doctrinal information.

Revelation 11:3-4 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. **4** These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

With the parable interpreted, God gives a vital key to understanding several prophecies. Looking closely at the conversion of Israel, observes God saves the entire nation of Israel, all twelve tribes.

Three prophecies concerning Israel's conversion during the Tribulation

100% OF ISRAEL IS SAVED

Romans 11:25-27 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **26** And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: **27** For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

Notice Israel remains blind to New Testament truths until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. I believe "*the fullness of the Gentiles is come in*" depicts the completion of the Church Age (or very near the end of it). *Romans 11:25-27* tells us all (100%) of Israel shall be saved. This is good news for five foolish virgins left behind. Sometime after the five wise virgins left with the bridegroom-but before the Second Coming, the five foolish virgins accept Jesus as their Messiah.

2/3 OF ISRAEL DIES

Another prophecy to consider is found in Zechariah. During the Great Tribulation two thirds of Israel die physically. This does not mean they are lost. It means 2/3 of the population dies a martyr's death, while 1/3 of Israel lives through the Tribulation.

Zechariah 13:8-9 *And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

At the end of the Great Tribulation just prior to Jesus' return, a remnant of people give glory to God. Although very frightened, they are praising God. Who is giving glory to God this late in the Great Tribulation period? **The remnant is undoubtedly the five foolish virgins who, by then, have accepted Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. Rev 11:13**

Revelation 11:13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

The nation Judah consisting of two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, accept Jesus as Messiah before the ten tribe nation of Israel.

As we learned, all 12 tribes of Israel do not get saved at the same time. The ten virgin parable and Jacob's Trouble *Jeremiah 30:1-7* informed us

that God still maintains distinction between the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. Prophecy reveals Judah's kingdom getting saved first. This would be fairly early in Daniel's 70th Week, perhaps, even before the Great Tribulation begins. I conclude Judah attends the wedding along with the five wise virgins.

Zechariah 12:7 *The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.*

Why does God use the term virgin?

Physical adultery and sexual immorality serve as types or pictures of idolatry. In fact, the majority of times adultery is mentioned it is a reference to spiritual immorality toward God; not a reference toward sexual sin. Israel is a convicted adulterous wife. Presently, God the Father is divorced from all twelve tribes with a written document legitimizing the separation.

Jeremiah 3:8 *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

Beulah Land

God's use of the word virgins manifests forgiveness and redemption. Once Israel accepts Jesus as Messiah, God the Father covers his people under the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus imputes his righteousness to Israel. When the Jews receive redemption and cleansing, Israel takes her rightful place as head over all nations. All sin is forgiven and God the Father remarries Israel and redeems the land. Beulah means married in the land. (See Chapter Beulah Land). Just as God the Son rejoices over his Bride - God the Father rejoices over Israel.

Isaiah 62:2-5 *And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. 3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. 4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land **Beulah**: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. five **For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.***

Ezekiel 37:21-22 *And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring*

*them into their own land: **22** And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:*

Jeremiah 31:10 *Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.*

Deuteronomy 32:8-9 *When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. **9** For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*

Isaiah 62:6-7 *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, **7** And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

Elements defined:

Ten virgins: Ten tribes, Northern kingdom of Israel

Virgins sleeping and slumbering: Israel waking up.

Five foolish virgins: five tribes not believing New Testament truth.

Five wise virgins: five tribes believing New Testament truth.

Bridegroom: Jesus Christ

Bride Christian Church, Lamb's Wife

Marriage: Marriage of the Lamb.

Lamps Old Testaments

Vessels: New Testaments

Oil: God's words

Oil Sellers: Two Witnesses in the Great Tribulation

Parable Sheep and Goats

Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 25:31-46 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? **38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? **39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. **41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: **42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:*

43 *I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44* Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? **45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. **46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Elements needing definition

- Son of man
- Throne of glory
- Brethren
- Sheep
- Goats
- Kingdom
- Hungered, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, in prison
- Everlasting punishment
- Life eternal

Analysis and interpretation

The sheep goat parable completes Matthew 25. All three parables concern the Tribulation in doctrinal application. The Son of man is the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice in *Matthew 25:31* the Son of man comes with his holy angels; clearly the Lord's

Second Coming. The throne of glory is the literal throne of David on this earth during the Millennium. In the Millennium- the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven operate together.

Luke 1:32-33 *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Matthew 19:28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Zechariah 6:12-13 *And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall*

be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

With the kingdom and dispensation identified, much of the parable becomes self-interpreting. The sheep and goats do not represent people (as individuals) they represent nations. God gathers the world's nations together before his throne, and then segregates them into two distinct groups, sheep and goats. Matthew 25:32-34. The sheep on his right typify saved nations, and the nations on his left represent lost nations. *Matthew 25:35-40* explain the nations' status, or in other words, what actions determined their fate. Observe the nations' acts or behavior are not sins like lying, stealing, murder, adultery, etc.—rather they are sins of omission, what they did or did not do to the Lord's brethren. **The brethren typify Jews/ Israel.**

Matthew 28:10 *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

John 20:17 *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

Acts 7:37 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord*

your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

Specifically, the behavior entails how nations treated Jews, while Israel was in exile (Diaspora) and during the Tribulation period. Being a stranger, naked, hungry, thirsty, sick, and in prison describe how the world treated Jews.

Genesis 12:2-3 *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

So the scene sets at the Second Coming. The Lord returns and gathers all nations together. Jesus allows some nations to enter the Millennium. Other nations God destroys. Nations that treated Jews with evil are turned into hell (everlasting punishment) and nations that treated Jews well enter the kingdom.

Elements defined

Son of man: Jesus

Throne of glory: Throne of David

Kingdom: Millennium Kingdom

Brethren: Israel/Jews

Sheep: Saved Nations

Goats: Lost Nations

Hungered, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, in prison: Description how nations treated Israel/ Jews in Diaspora and the Tribulation.

Everlasting punishment: Hell

Life eternal: Heaven

Mystery of Iniquity

Consider with Chapter Sennacherib and Rabshakeh

The mystery of godliness consists of a holy trinity God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. The mystery of iniquity consists of an unholy trinity: Satan the Dragon, Antichrist the son, and the False Prophet. Thus Satan, in an attempt to be like God, manifests himself in three beings: The satanic trinity stands in antitype or direct opposition to God. This does not mean Satan has equal power or equal ability as God. The Lord God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; Satan possesses none of those qualities; however, he imitates them all. Satan is a created being. Revelation chapter 13 reveals the satanic trinity.

**God the Father--antitype is the Dragon
Jesus Christ-- antitype is Antichrist
God the Holy Ghost---antitype is the False
Prophet**

2 Thessalonians 2:7-10 For the ***mystery of iniquity*** doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. **8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: **9** Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

1 Timothy 3:16 *And without controversy great is **the mystery of godliness**: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

During the final dispensation before Jesus' 2nd Coming, Antichrist rules the world. This period referred to as Daniel's 70th Week. God calls the final forty-two months of Daniel's 70th week the Great Tribulation. The Antichrist (also called the beast) does not rule the world without help. Satan provides a religious counterpart called the False Prophet. Just as the Holy Ghost convinces people to worship Jesus, the False Prophet convinces mankind to worship Antichrist. Satan, also called the Dragon, gives him power to work miracles and mighty wonders. Together, the Dragon, Antichrist, and the False Prophet form a satanic trinity. Although the satanic trinity has existed for thousands of years, its power climaxes during the Great Tribulation. People worship the Dragon; and they worship Antichrist on earth, while the False Prophet inspires and motivates their worship.

Technology, especially wireless internet plays a huge role in giving the illusion Satan is omnipresent. The false prophet performs as the ultimate tech wizard. Being the *prince of the powers of the air*, is one of Satan's titles. What are the powers of the air? As electrical technology advances, Satan utilizes more and more

atmospheric powers. WI-FY, internet, microwaves, and radio waves. All things in the physical world represent spiritual truth. The computer itself is a type of god. And Satan attempts to manifest attributes of God-as one stares directly at an image.

Computers give the illusion of being god

1. Omniscient- through search engines and god-like memory.
2. Omnipresent- through internet, satellite, and camera and imaging capacity.
3. Omnipotent- Computerized god like mathematical ability as the supreme operator controls world economies and armies.

***Ephesians 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

***Revelation 13:4** And they worshipped the **dragon** which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the **beast**, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*

***Revelation 13:11-12** And I beheld **another beast** coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a **dragon**. **12** And he exerciseth all the power of the*

first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, ***whose deadly wound was healed.***

Antichrist takes total control of the world's economic systems, and thereby rules mankind. The Antichrist erects an image and the False Prophet makes it seem alive. The False Prophet also compels mankind to worship the beast and his image; anyone refusing to obey suffers death. Up until this point, the beast appears to help Israel, now he is their greatest enemy.

Revelation 13:13-15 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, ***14*** And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. ***15*** And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Sometime during Antichrist's reign, he is killed and comes back to life. Notice in verse 12 the statement *whose deadly wound was healed*. Either an actual assassination or masterful deception takes place. Spiritually, however, the devil imitates

Jesus' death and resurrection. Remember he is the Antichrist. The beast imitates Christ in many ways. His resurrection, no doubt, causes religious jubilation. The world's savior was dead, but he lives again. During the terrible years that follow billions of people are killed, including 2/3 of the Jewish population. One positive result of the Great Tribulation- Israel finally believes Jesus Christ is their Messiah.

Final judgment on satanic trinity

***Revelation 19:20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

***Revelation 20:10** And the **devil** that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the **beast** and the **false prophet** are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Number Thirteen

The Bible is its own best dictionary and commentary. Always consider the rule of first mention. Observe how God uses a word the first time and then continue to interpret that word the same way throughout the Bible. Do not abandon the rule without careful consideration. Compare scripture with scripture, pay attention to context. Do not change a word's definition to fit your theology. In like manner Bible numerology (the study of numbers) observes specific numbers associate with certain themes or conditions. Whole books have been written on what Bible numbers mean. Both these learning theories supply important disciplines in a Bible believer's tool box.

The first time the word thirteen appears in scripture God connects it with rebellion.

Genesis 14:4 *Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and **in the thirteenth year they rebelled.***

The first time God uses the words sinners and wicked is in Genesis 13:13

Genesis 13:13 *But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*

In this Bible study on kings, we observed the most rebellious wicked king was Manasseh, the thirteenth king of Judah. Consider also the most rebellious judge was Samson-the thirteenth judge. King Saul, the very first king of united Israel lost the kingdom in 1 Samuel 13

1 Samuel 13:13 *And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.*

King Ahasuerus, in the Book of Esther plans genocide for all Jews on the 13th day, and the whole satanic plan recorded in verse 13.

Esther 3:12-13 *Then were the king's scribes called on the **thirteenth day** of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.*

Esther 3:13 *And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, **even***

upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

God reveals the Satanic Trinity and warns about the coming mark of the Beast 666, in Revelation chapter 13.

Revelation 13:17-18 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

Leprosy the best picture or type of sin. God devotes all Leviticus 13 to leprosy.

Leviticus 13:13 *Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean.*

The first enemy against Israel, Ishmael, a boy who at age 13 began his rebellion. . And when do children typically start to really develop their own Adamic nature? Many parents agree the common age when all teenagers start rebelling is around age 13.

Genesis 17:25 *And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.*

And on it goes

The ass is a type of a lost man who needs redemption. Consider its characteristics. The Lamb is Jesus Christ.

Exodus 13:13 *And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.*

Job 39:5 *Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?*

Rebellion and thirteen go hand in hand. In America's history when the colonies totaled thirteen-they rebelled against a king

Many western cultures and countries around the world associate number 13 as being unlucky. And they have no idea why. In fact there is a whole psychological phobia about people who are afraid of number thirteen, called Triskaidekaphobia. Many sky scrapers (perhaps most) opt to number floors 11,12,14, 15, etc. Check out the elevator numbers. Have you ever seen a #13 runway in an airport?

Judas Iscariot= 13 letters

Salvation

In the John chapter 3, Jesus makes a disturbing statement to a man named Nicodemus:

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Jesus' statement is disturbing because Nicodemus believed in God, and thought he was prepared to go to heaven, but Jesus says he was not ready. Nicodemus asks a logical question:

John 3:4 *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

What exactly does Jesus mean anyway? Being *born again* is synonymous with salvation, in other words, being ready to go to heaven. The most important decision a person can make is to be born again- *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Have you been born again? Are you absolutely certain you are saved and will go to heaven when you die?

Many people are like Nicodemus. They believe in God, and they believe they are good

enough (at least compared to lots of other people). Besides, with so much religious confusion, and everyone thinks they're right- what else can a person possibly do other than be good as possible?

Consider this:

Since Jesus said *you must be born again* this also means there was a time in your life when you were not born again. Do you remember a time when you were not saved?

Compare this question to asking a married couple when they got married. A married person may forget the day or the year of the wedding, but it is very unlikely anyone forgets being single. In other words, they remember when they were not married. Lots of people forget the exact date of their anniversary, but no one forgets the wedding happened.

Do you remember when you were not saved?

If you can't remember being lost, you are probably not saved.

Imagine standing before God on Judgment Day, and God asks, **What have you done to deserve heaven?** What is your answer? Below is a sampling of wrong answers:

- I believe in God
- Basically I'm a good person.
- Although I'm a sinner, I did my best.
- I am generous with my money.
- I help people whenever I can.
- I'm not that bad, compared to some.
- I go to church.
- I pray.
- I have been baptized.
- I have been confirmed.

These answers are all wrong because they imply a person must earn heaven by good works. Most people believe they go to heaven because they are good enough. They conclude a loving God lets them in to heaven because they are basically OK. But this conclusion also rejects one's personal need for a Saviour.

- What do you believe?
- Are you counting on good works or Jesus?
- Do you want to get just what you deserve?

Personal moral goodness does not earn salvation. One can be religiously and morally good and still reject Jesus Christ. Actually, this is the difference between Bible Christianity and all other religions. After all is said and done, every other religion (including secular humanism) teaches the way people behave (moral conduct) earns their

eternal reward. While Christianity teaches the only way to heaven is by making Jesus Christ your personal Saviour. Through faith, God covers your sin with His blood, and gives you the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Salvation is a gift; accepting that gift by faith is the only thing a person can do.

The verses below reveal God's conclusion on the moral goodness of mankind. As you can see, any bragging about personal goodness is pride and foolishness.

Romans 3:10-18 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: **11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. **12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. **13** Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: **14** Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: **15** Their feet are swift to shed blood: **16** Destruction and misery are in their ways: **17** And the way of peace have they not known: **18** There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

According to God's Word, we are all sinners and in need of a salvation. Don't deceive yourself because so many people are worse than you. It may be your life style isn't all that bad, but have you been saved? Going to church, giving money to worthy causes, and moral goodness is

commendable, but beware; you can be a good person and still be lost. When it comes to getting into heaven, the only righteousness God accepts is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And the only way to get Christ's righteousness is to believe in Him and ask Jesus to save you. When a person makes Jesus his/her Saviour, Jesus imputes or gives His righteousness to them.

Romans 3:21-25 *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 10:9-10 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto **righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

Romans 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

In our natural condition we are separated from God by our sin. The whole world is a morally fallen mess. No one is born righteous, good, or in love with God. There comes a time in your life when you must make a choice. And the choice is to get saved or to stay lost.

Have you ever acknowledged your own lost condition and your need of salvation? A person can actually believe the Bible and still be trusting in his/her own good works. A lot of church going folks never call on the Lord for their own personal salvation. Do you remember a time in your life when you prayed for the Lord Jesus Christ to save you? If your answer is no, or you are not sure, read the verses below and do it now.

Romans 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

There is no other way. No other religion. No other God. Jesus, alone, is the Saviour of your soul.

Salvation is in Christ alone. Without Jesus Christ as your Saviour you are lost. The Bible is very plain.

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 14:9 *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

1 John 5:12-13 *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

John 3:15-17 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Romans 10:9-13 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man*

believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

End

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About the author

Joseph Dulmage born 1955, in Detroit Michigan: As a Christian chaplain in The Life Connections Program, he has worked in several federal prisons including USP Leavenworth, and USP Terre Haute. He worked as the Director of Prisoner Aftercare with Volunteers of America, National Office. Previously, Chaplain Dulmage worked as the Facilitator of the Life Connections Program in FCI Milan. He has been a Freelance writer, and contributing writer for Truthought Corrective Thinking, LLC. Graduated from Eastern Michigan University, B.S., Secondary Education, History/ Social Studies. Most importantly, Joseph Dulmage was forgiven of his sins when he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and he was born again. That happened in 1975.